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PRESS RELEASE**OSCE Office co-organizes study tour on combating violence against women for Tajik officials**

VIENNA, 23 July 2009 - High-ranking governmental officials from Tajikistan concluded an OSCE Office-supported study tour to Vienna on combating violence against women today.

The one-week visit was organized by the City of Vienna's Department of Women's Affairs and its Executive Office for International Relations in co-operation with the OSCE Office in Tajikistan. The purpose of the trip was to examine the experiences, structures, functions and tasks of the various City Departments and Ministries, as well as the co-operation with Austrian non-governmental organizations involved in preventing violence against women and protecting victims.

"Both Austria and Vienna have very efficient laws, tools and institutions with regard to protecting women against violence and related fields which can be useful for the Tajik side," said Graziella Piga, the Gender and Anti-Trafficking Officer at the OSCE Office in Tajikistan. "We hope that this knowledge will help further improve the conceptual and practical approaches of the Tajik Government towards ensuring protection of women."

The delegation visited a shelter for victims of domestic violence and a City Police Department in the same neighborhood to see how the Austrian Protection Act has been implemented in practice. The programme also included a workshop on how Austrian best practices could be applied to the Tajik context and institutions. The delegation also learned about special work conducted by the Austrian Social Affairs Ministry with both men and boys to prevent violence against women.

Khairinisso Yusufi, the Head of the Committee for Women and Family Affairs under the Government of Tajikistan who took part at the study tour, said: "The tour on providing real assistance to victims of domestic violence gave the Tajik delegation a comprehensive overview."

The study tour also included meetings with representatives of the Department of Women Affairs, the Gender Mainstreaming Unit of the City of Vienna, the Gender Equality Commission of Vienna, Women Against Violence Europe, Vienna's Intervention Centre against Violence and the City Police Department, as well as with officials from the Federal Ministries of Economy, Family and Youth, Justice and Social Affairs.

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