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PRESS RELEASE

OSCE Office fosters dialogue on amendments in Tajik media law

VARZOB, Tajikistan, 30 September 2010 - A workshop bringing together media law experts from the lower house of the Tajik Parliament, civil society and academia concluded today with concrete proposals to improve the existing law on press and other mass media.

The three-day expert workshop, supported by the OSCE Office in Tajikistan, was initiated by civil society during a public debate following the publication of draft amendments to the law. The Members of Parliament who authored the draft amendments, as well as Andrei Richter, director of the Moscow Media Law and Policy Institute, also took part.

"The public debate on this legal initiative and the openness of members of parliament to listen to the arguments from media law experts in civil society and academia and international expertise at an early stage are an excellent praxis in media law making," said Dunja Mijatovic, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, in a message to workshop participants.

Ambassador Ivar Vikki, the Head of the OSCE Office in Tajikistan, said "The workshop made it possible for expert opinions, and civil society expertise and experience to be heard by decision-makers in the legislative process."

Olim Salimzoda, the Head of the Parliamentary Committee for International Relations, Public Organizations and Information, added: "The discussions in this workshop give us excellent insight into issues that are of concern for civil society with regard to the regulatory framework for the media in Tajikistan. We will consider them together with our colleagues in the parliamentary committee in the ongoing discussion on this law."

The workshop resulted in detailed recommendations on the draft which take into account experience with the practical implementation of the current law, as well as key OSCE commitments on media freedom, including access to information, defamation and libel and freedom of expression.

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