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PRESS RELEASE

OSCE Office in Dushanbe opens Aarhus Centre in Kurgan-Tyube

DUSHANBE, 10 April 2009 - An Aarhus Information Centre to provide the public with information and legal expertise on environmental matters opened in the southwestern city of Kurgan-Tyube in Tajikistan today.

The Centre, in the Khatlon province, is supported by the OSCE Office in Tajikistan, the OSCE Secretariat and the Committee for Nature Protection under the Tajik government. The Centre will perform a broad range of activities related to the implementation of the Aarhus Convention on access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters.

"The OSCE Office is working with the Tajik government on environmental protection issues, and the opening of an Aarhus Centre in Kurgan-Tyube is a testimony to this close cooperation," - said Klaus Rasmussen, the Deputy Head of the OSCE Office in Tajikistan.

"The Kurgan-Tyube Aarhus Centre will provide a forum enabling the nature protection committee of Khatlon province and civil society to build co-operative approaches to address environmental issues."

Abdurakhmon Kodiri, the First Deputy of the Khatlon Governor, added: "The Centre will contribute to exchange of experience between civil society and authorities on environmental governance problems and will have a positive effect on awareness raising of Tajikistan's commitments within the framework of the Aarhus Convention."

The establishment of the Kurgan-Tyube Aarhus Centre is part of the OSCE's activities to support the implementation of the Aarhus convention in Tajikistan. The centre will be the third in the country after the opening of similar facilities in Dushanbe and Khujand with OSCE support in 2003 and 2005.

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