



The Representative on Freedom of the Media
Dunja Mijatović

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PRESS RELEASE

OSCE media freedom representative welcomes Tajikistan's steps to decriminalize defamation, calls for remaining provisions to be abolished

VIENNA, 31 May 2012 – The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Dunja Mijatović, welcomed today a decision by the Tajik Parliament to make libel and insult a civil tort, saying she hoped all remaining criminal provisions related to defamation would eventually be abolished.

“I welcome President Emomali Rahmon’s initiative and the Parliament’s subsequent steps to decriminalize defamation. Once implemented, they will help safeguard freedom of expression and freedom of the media in Tajikistan,” Mijatović said.

The Majlisi Namoyandagon lower house of Parliament today unanimously approved a Presidential proposal to scrap Articles 135 (Defamation) and 136 (Insult) of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Tajikistan. The decision needs to be approved by the Majlisi Milli upper house of Parliament and signed into law by the president to enter into force.

The changes, however, do not entirely decriminalize defamation as they do not affect existing legal provisions which make publicly insulting the president a crime punishable by a fine or between two and five years in jail.

“I hope these remaining criminal provisions will soon be abolished,” Mijatović said.

As of today, 14 OSCE participating States have partially or fully decriminalized defamation: Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Estonia, Georgia, Ireland, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States.

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