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PRESS RELEASE

OSCE Office hosts civil society meeting on electoral law reform in Tajikistan

DUSHANBE, 6 March 2009 - Ahead of the parliamentary elections that are expected to take place in February 2010, the OSCE Office in Tajikistan hosted a working meeting at which representatives of 14 non-governmental organizations discussed the national parliament election law.

During the three-day event, ending today, participants discussed reforms needed in the parliamentary election laws. Among key reforms requested was the inclusion of non-partisan observers representing civil society during the election period. Participants will deliver their suggestions to the Parliament and hope the proposed changes will be in force well before the elections.

"The involvement of civil society in electoral reform as well as in the election process in Tajikistan is a welcome step," said Ambassador Vladimir Pryakhin, Head of the OSCE Office. "This is in line with OSCE recommendations to further motivate the participation of Tajik citizens in elections."

In June and July 2008, with the assistance of the International Foundation for Election Systems, Tajikistan's parliamentary election laws were reviewed by all eight registered political parties, the National Association of Political Scientists of Tajikistan and the Central Commission on Election and Referenda. The results and recommendations stemming from the review were presented to Parliament. The OSCE Office participated in the review meetings as an observer and later, in co-operation with the Government, held a roundtable meeting on elections in Tajikistan.

The last election of the 63 members of Tajikistan's lower house of parliament took place in February 2005.

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