



Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

**Information Submitted to the  
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for  
Human Rights  
as a Stakeholder in the  
Universal Periodic Review of the Kyrgyz Republic**



**WARSAW, JULY 2014**

**The following information is submitted by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE/ODIHR) about an OSCE participating State under consideration in the Universal Periodic Review process:**

**Participating:** Kyrgyz Republic

**UPR Session:** 21st Session

## **Background**

The Kyrgyz Republic is a participating State in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and has thus undertaken and has recently reaffirmed a wide range of political commitments in the “human dimension” of security as outlined in relevant OSCE documents.<sup>1</sup> The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) has been mandated by OSCE participating States, including the Kyrgyz Republic, to assist them in implementing their human dimension commitments. OSCE/ODIHR assistance includes election observation and assessment activities as well as monitoring and providing assessments, advice and recommendations relating to implementation of commitments in the fields of human rights, democracy, tolerance and non-discrimination, and the situation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE area. The present submission provides publicly available country-specific information that may assist participants in the Universal Periodic Review process in assessing the situation in the Kyrgyz Republic and its implementation of past recommendations, as well as to formulate new recommendations that may be relevant to enhancing the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

### **Constitutional Referendum, 27 June 2010**

Following an invitation from the authorities of the Kyrgyz Republic and based on the recommendation of its Needs Assessment Mission, the OSCE/ODIHR deployed a Referendum Observation Mission (ROM) on 21 May 2010 to observe the 27 June 2010 constitutional referendum. The mission was headed by Ambassador Boris Frlec of Slovenia and consisted of a 13-member core team based in Bishkek and initially 14 long-term observers deployed to all regions in the country. Mission members were drawn from 19 OSCE participating States.

According to the mission's final report “The authorities of the Kyrgyz Republic succeeded in creating the necessary conditions for the conduct of a peaceful constitutional referendum despite challenging circumstances. Although there were evident shortcomings, the reported high turnout of 72 per cent indicated citizens’ resilience and desire to shape the future of their country. Immediate and resolute measures are required to build upon positive developments and to remedy flaws before the forthcoming parliamentary elections. At the same time, long-term reform should be envisaged for strengthening the legal framework and polling day proceedings. Strong political will is necessary to establish a democracy based on effective

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<sup>1</sup> Compendium of OSCE Human Dimension Commitments, vol 1 and 2; Astana Commemorative Declaration, 2010.

democratic institutions, rule of law, security for all and protection of human rights." The full report and recommendations, can be found at <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/70938>

### **Parliamentary Elections, 10 October 2010**

Following an invitation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic and based on the findings and conclusions contained in the final report published after ODIHR's observation of the 27 June 2010 constitutional referendum, ODIHR deployed an Election Observation Mission (EOM) on 7 September 2010 to observe the 10 October 2010 parliamentary elections. The OSCE/ODIHR EOM was headed by Corien Jonker of the Netherlands and consisted of a core team of 17 international experts based in Bishkek and 22 long-term observers deployed throughout the country. Mission members were drawn from 23 OSCE participating States.

For election-day observation, the OSCE/ODIHR joined efforts with observer delegations from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the European Parliament. Altogether, some 266 short-term observers, from 36 OSCE participating States, were deployed across the country to monitor election-day proceedings.

According to the mission's final report "These parliamentary elections constituted a further consolidation of the democratic process. Political pluralism, a vibrant campaign and confidence in the Central Commission for Elections and Referenda characterized the elections. The authorities displayed the political will to hold democratic elections in line with OSCE commitments. Nevertheless, there is an urgent need for profound electoral legal reform." The full report, together with its recommendations, can be found at <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/kyrgyzstan/74649>

### **Presidential Election, 30 October 2011**

Following an official invitation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic and based on the findings and conclusions of the OSCE/ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission conducted from 13-15 July 2011, the OSCE/ODIHR deployed an Election Observation Mission (EOM) on 16 September 2011 to observe the 30 October 2011 presidential elections. The OSCE/ODIHR EOM was headed by Corien Jonker of the Netherlands and consisted of a 14-member core team based in Bishkek and 28 long-term observers deployed to all regions.

For election-day observation, the OSCE/ODIHR joined efforts with observer delegations from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Altogether, 385 observers from 40 OSCE participating States were deployed across the country to monitor election-day proceedings.

The final report concluded that "The 30 October 2011 election was conducted in a peaceful manner, but shortcomings underscored that the integrity of the electoral process should be improved to consolidate democratic practice in line with international commitments. Candidate registration was inclusive, giving voters a wide choice, and the electoral campaign was open and respected fundamental freedoms. This was overshadowed by significant

irregularities on election day, especially during the counting and tabulation of votes.” Inconsistencies in registration procedures and a lack of transparent and formal regulations on managing the voter registration system were noted as serious shortcomings by the OSCE/ODIHR EOM. The full report, together with its recommendations, can be found at <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/86926>

### **Election-related legislation reviewed by the OSCE/ODIHR**

Upon request by authorities of an OSCE participating State, the OSCE/ODIHR reviews draft or enacted legislation of OSCE participating States on electoral matters for its conformity with OSCE commitments and other international standards. The legal reviews and opinions are often produced in co-operation with the Council of Europe’s Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission). In the case of the Kyrgyz Republic, the OSCE/ODIHR reviewed election-related legislation in 2011 and 2014.

*Joint Opinion on the Draft Law on Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, the Draft Law on Elections to Local Governments and the Draft Law on Formation of Election Commissions of the Kyrgyz Republic (Opinion No. 625/2011, issued jointly by ODIHR and the Venice Commission on 23 June 2011)*

This opinion noted that: “While a number of amendments to the draft laws mark progress, some concerns remain, including significant limitations to certain civil and political rights.” “The text of the draft laws requires improvement in order to respect OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections. There are also technical drafting concerns with the draft laws that have been noted in this opinion. All of these concerns should be addressed in order to create a sound legal framework for democratic elections.” The full text of the joint opinion can be found at <http://www.osce.org/odihr/80842>

*Joint Opinion on the Draft Electoral Law of the Kyrgyz Republic (Opinion No. 767/2014, issued jointly by ODIHR and the Venice Commission on 16 June 2014)*

The opinion noted that: “While some amendments to the draft law mark progress, major concerns remain, including significant limitations to certain civil and political rights.” “The text of the draft law requires improvement in order to respect OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections. There are also technical drafting concerns with the draft law that have been noted in this joint opinion. All of these concerns should be addressed in order to create a sound legal framework for democratic elections.” The full text of the joint opinion can be found at <http://www.osce.org/odihr/119906>

### **Tolerance and non-discrimination issues, including incidents of and responses to hate crime**

OSCE participating States have made a number of commitments to promote tolerance and non-discrimination and specifically to combat hate crime, and the OSCE/ODIHR supports states in their implementation of those commitments. In this context, the OSCE/ODIHR produces an annual report on hate crime – *Incidents and Responses* – to highlight the prevalence of hate crimes and good practices that participating States and civil society have adopted to tackle them. It also helps participating States to design and draft legislation that effectively addresses hate crimes; provides training that builds the capacity of participating States’

criminal justice systems and the law-enforcement officials, prosecutors and judges that staff them; raises awareness of hate crimes among governmental officials, civil society and international organizations; and supports the efforts of civil society to monitor and report hate crimes.

The report relies mainly on information and statistics provided by governments, since such data collection is primarily the responsibility of states, as is the responsibility to respond to hate crimes. As of 2012, 55 of the 57 OSCE participating States had appointed National Points of Contact on Combating Hate Crimes, to support ODIHR in its task of serving “as a collection point for information and statistics collected by participating States”. The bulk of information for the report was gathered through the completion of an online questionnaire by National Points of Contact. The questionnaire for 2012 contained questions about the following areas: data-collection methods; legislation; reported hate crime data; and policies and initiatives.

Information concerning Kyrgyzstan in the most recent (2012) edition of the annual hate crimes report<sup>2</sup> includes the following:

Kyrgyzstan<sup>3</sup> regularly reports information to ODIHR. Information reported to ODIHR consists of hate speech offences and “extremist” crimes.

Kyrgyzstan’s Criminal Code contains a specific penalty-enhancement provision and a substantive offence to be used in hate crime prosecutions. Data are collected by the Ministry of Interior. Data are not made publicly available.

In 2012, ODIHR, OSCE Centre in Bishkek, OHCHR, Ministry of the Interior and State Committee on Religious Affairs (SCRA) co-organized a seminar for law enforcement officials in Bishkek on the freedom of religion or belief. In 2011, ODIHR organized the capacity building seminar on freedom of religion or belief for the State Committee on Religious Affairs of Kyrgyzstan. Participants learned about international norms and standards pertaining to freedom of religion or belief, including the broad range of OSCE commitments in this area.<sup>4</sup>

### **Roma and Sinti issues**

N/A

### **Legislation reviewed by ODIHR (other than electoral legislation)**

Upon request by authorities of a participating State, and OSCE field operation or another OSCE institution, the OSCE/ODIHR reviews draft or enacted legislation of OSCE participating States on topics relating to the human dimension of security for its conformity with OSCE commitments and other international standards. The legal reviews and opinions, often produced in co-operation with the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, are available at [www.legislationline.org](http://www.legislationline.org).

In 2010-2014, ODIHR issued 9 law reviews on draft/existing legislation or legislative policy of the Kyrgyz Republic (on topics other than elections), either by itself or jointly with the Council of Europe’s Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission):

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<sup>2</sup> <http://tandis.odihr.pl/hcr2012/>

<sup>3</sup> Please see Kyrgyzstan’s data reported to ODIHR at <http://hatecrime.osce.org/kyrgyzstan>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.osce.org/odihr/93799?download=true>

*Joint OSCE/ODIHR-Venice Commission Opinion on the Draft Law on Peaceful Assemblies of the Kyrgyz Republic (22 December 2010)*<sup>5</sup>

The Joint Opinion was requested by the Ministry of Justice and noted improvements to the Draft Law since it had last been reviewed in 2009. While ODIHR and the Venice Commission found that the Draft Law generally complied with relevant international standards, they nevertheless noted areas for improvements, particularly regarding the simplification of the notification procedure and related requirements, and revisions of all provisions which may amount to blanket prohibitions. The Joint Opinion recommended that the principles of legality and proportionality in relation to any restrictions to the right to freedom of peaceful assembly be clearly enunciated in the Draft Law.

*Follow up:* ODIHR and the Venice Commission travelled to the Kyrgyz Republic in June 2011 to discuss the recommendations made in their opinion with relevant stakeholders at a roundtable organized by the OSCE Centre in Bishkek, ODIHR, UNDP and OHCHR. The draft Law prepared by the Ministry of Justice was eventually sent back to the Ministry by the Cabinet. New draft amendments were then prepared, but without consultation with ODIHR or the Venice Commission – they were eventually adopted in early 2012.

*Comments on Amendments and Additions to the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic 'On Freedom of Religion and Religious Organizations of the Kyrgyz Republic' (22 March 2012)*<sup>6</sup>

The Comments, prepared in response to a request by the OSCE Centre in Bishkek, were provided in an attempt to enhance the respective amendments' conformity with international law. The Comments noted that overall, the Amendments to the Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations actually reinforced provisions of the Law permitting censorship over religious material by unduly intruding into the autonomy of religious organisations and employing vague terminology to restrict the exercise of the fundamental right to manifest religious freedom through the production and distribution of religious material. It was therefore recommended that the Amendments be reconsidered in their entirety.

*Follow up:* ODIHR representatives subsequently travelled to Bishkek to present the Comments and discussed related issues at a follow-up event. During the event, authorities appeared to take a rather conservative stance on freedom of religion or belief issues, and were reluctant to accept ODIHR's recommendations on amendments.

*Opinion on the Legal Framework Regulating Population Registration in the Kyrgyz Republic (14 June 2012)*<sup>7</sup>

The Opinion, prepared upon the request of the Deputy Chairman of the State Registration Service of the Kyrgyz Republic, reviewed the legal framework on Population Registration in light of international standards on freedom of movement, data protection, freedom of information and other related rights, as found in the international agreements and commitments ratified and entered into by the Kyrgyz Republic. It recommended in particular

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<sup>5</sup> Available at <http://www.legislationline.org/documents/id/16087>.

<sup>6</sup> Available at <http://www.legislationline.org/documents/id/16881>.

<sup>7</sup> Available at <http://www.legislationline.org/documents/id/17179>.

to include in the law on population register sufficient safeguards to ensure data protection and security, clear responsibilities, transparency of processes, rights of data subjects (individuals), as well as provisions regulating access to data, based on the purpose of data and necessity of access. It also noted the need to specify internal control measures and external supervisory mechanisms in the law, and ensure transparency throughout to limit the types of information that should be registered in a population register.

*Follow up:* See next Opinion.

*Opinion on the Draft Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on the State Population Register and Draft Amendments to Related Legislation (22 November 2012)*<sup>8</sup>

The Opinion, a follow-up to the previous opinion issued in June 2012, was prepared upon the request of the Chairman of the State Registration Service under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. The Opinion recommended in particular to ensure greater protections of the rights of the individual whose data is managed by the State Population Register, the separation of powers between data holders, data users, operators and the responsible authority for processing personal data; and to introduce more detailed information on liability, ensuing procedures, and complaint and appeals procedures.

*Follow-up:* An ODIHR representative travelled to Bishkek to discuss the recommendations made in the Opinion with key stakeholders in December 2012. Since then, and while the authorities did not take on board ODIHR's recommendation to pass a law on the establishment of the population registration, the Government adopted a decree which contains very specific provisions regulating the establishment and operation of the population register and reflects to a large extent the recommendations made by ODIHR so far in the context of the right approach in establishing population register in Kyrgyzstan.

*Opinion on the Draft Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on Forensic Examination (9 April 2013)*<sup>9</sup>

The Opinion was prepared following a request by the Minister of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic to review the Draft Law against the background of its compatibility with international standards. While the Opinion notes positively the priority given to securing human rights in the process of forensic examination, it notes that the system of forensic evidence provided by the Draft Law allows only certain bodies, e.g. courts, investigators and prosecutors, to request forensic expertise, and notes the risk to place excessive and unwarranted reliance on the testimony of such experts, which may affect the universal principle of equality of arms before courts.

*Follow up:* The Kyrgyz Republic adopted the law earlier than anticipated and announced, and thus the opinion was not able to influence discussions on the draft.

*Opinion on Key Legal Acts regulating the Prosecution Service of the Kyrgyz Republic (16 October 2013)*<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Available at <http://www.legislationline.org/documents/id/17682>.

<sup>9</sup> Available at <http://www.legislationline.org/documents/id/17892>.

<sup>10</sup> Available at <http://www.legislationline.org/documents/id/18547>.

The Opinion was prepared following the request from the Office of the Prosecutor General of the Kyrgyz Republic. It noted that the prosecution service of the Kyrgyz Republic is still construed as an organ of supervision reminiscent of the Soviet prokuratura model, rather than as a modern, reformed organ of criminal investigation and prosecution. The Opinion thus mainly recommended to fundamentally reassess the role of the prosecution service within the government and criminal justice system, and to reform it by removing its general supervisory powers and confining it to first and foremost, criminal prosecution.

*Follow-up:* On 19 November 2013, ODIHR travelled to Bishkek to discuss the recommendations made in the opinion with representatives of the prosecution service. While certain recommendations pertaining to the selection, appointment, in-job training and disciplinary procedures were accepted, the overall recommendation to reassess the role of the prosecution service was largely rejected, and it is thus doubtful whether such extensive reforms will take place in the near future.

*Joint OSCE/ODIHR-Venice Commission Opinion on the Draft Law Amending the Laws on Non-Commercial Organizations and Other Legislative Acts of the Kyrgyz Republic (16 October 2013)*<sup>11</sup>

The joint interim legal opinion by the OSCE/ODIHR and the Venice Commission was prepared in response to a request by the Chairperson of the Human Rights, Constitutional Legislation and State Structure Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic's parliament. The joint opinion noted that the draft amendments would, if adopted, breach international human rights standards and OSCE commitments on freedom of association. In particular, the joint opinion expressed strong reservations about the term "foreign agent" in the draft law, and noted that, due to this and other unclear terminology in the draft, the term could be applied to a wide variety of associations. The joint opinion also noted that, if passed, the law would provide state authorities with largely unfettered powers to monitor and intervene in the work of such organizations and that the special reporting requirements for associations are overly burdensome, and likely to impede the work of non-commercial organizations receiving foreign funding.

*Follow-up:* On 18 November 2013, an ODIHR representative travelled to Bishkek to attend a parliamentary hearing on the draft Law, at which he also presented the joint opinion and its main recommendations. Numerous experts and civil society representatives supported the findings of the Joint Opinion, and the Chairperson of the respective Parliamentary Committee noted that it was unlikely that the draft Law would be passed. At the time, the President of the Kyrgyz Republic also noted that such law was not necessary. However, based on recent information, it appears that the draft Law has now been reintroduced into Parliament (with no changes).

*Comments on "The Concept Paper on State Policy in the Sphere of Religion of the Kyrgyz Republic" (27 March 2014)*<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Available at <http://www.legislationline.org/documents/id/18406>.

<sup>12</sup> Available at <http://www.legislationline.org/documents/id/19041>.

The Comments, prepared in response to the request by the Head of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek analysed the compliance of the “Concept Paper on State Policy in the Sphere of Religion of the Kyrgyz Republic” with OSCE commitments and international human rights standards. The Comments noted a number of general areas of concern, notably that the Concept Paper did not fully apply the key principles of secularism and state neutrality, as it appeared to favour particular religions, while seeking to suppress the activities of religions new to the Kyrgyz Republic.

*Follow-up:* On 6 May 2014, ODIHR representatives and experts presented the Comments at an event on the State Policy in the Sphere of Religion organized by the NGO 'Search for Common Ground' in co-operation with the British Embassy Bishkek. While ODIHR's Comments were appreciated, it is not clear whether they will be taken into account; during the event in May, a revised policy paper was circulated, which still retained numerous issues that had been criticized in ODIHR's Comments.

*Joint OSCE/ODIHR-Venice Commission Opinion on the draft Amendments to the Legal Framework on the Disciplinary Responsibility of Judges in the Kyrgyz Republic (16 June 2014)*<sup>13</sup>

The Opinion, prepared jointly by the OSCE/ODIHR and the Venice Commission in response to requests by the Secretary of the Council for Judicial Reform of the Presidential Administration and by the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Judiciary Issues and Legality of the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic, analysed the compliance of the Draft Amendments to the Legal Framework on the Disciplinary Responsibility of Judges in the Kyrgyz Republic with relevant international human rights and rule of law standards, OSCE commitments and Council of Europe standards. The Opinion noted that the Draft Amendments could benefit from certain revisions and additions, and in particular that the grounds for disciplinary liability of judges needed to be clearly and narrowly phrased, and that disciplinary procedures should be held before an independent and impartial body, and should ensure the fair trial rights of the affected judges.

*Follow-up:* The Opinion, which was already shared with the requesting partners in English, is currently being translated into Russian. The Russian version will be sent to the requesting partners, and will also be published on ODIHR's website and online legislative database [www.Legislationline.org](http://www.Legislationline.org)

**Country-specific ODIHR monitoring, assessment, co-operation and assistance activities  
(Other than elections)**

*Rule of Law – Judicial Independence and Criminal Justice Reform*

ODIHR conducted a number of activities during the reporting period to assist the Kyrgyz authorities in strengthening the rule of law through judicial reform. In particular, ODIHR conducted expert roundtables with a view to providing recommendations and policy advice for criminal justice reform and judicial independence. On 30 March 2012 the OSCE and ODIHR published a report on the *Selection of Judges in the Kyrgyz Republic and International*

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<sup>13</sup>[http://legislationline.org/download/action/download/id/5424/file/248\\_JUD\\_KYR\\_16%20June%202014\\_en.pdf](http://legislationline.org/download/action/download/id/5424/file/248_JUD_KYR_16%20June%202014_en.pdf).

*Standards on Judicial Independence*<sup>14</sup>, which elaborates on the conclusions from an earlier training the OSCE and ODIHR organized for members of the newly established Council for the Selection of Judges in November 2011. The report offers recommendations on further reform of the system for selecting judges, to bring it in line with international standards and good practices on judicial independence. The recommendations address *inter alia* transparency in the procedures for the selection of members of the Council for the Selection of Judges and its selection of judges, the composition of the Council for the Selection of Judges, and the role of the President and Parliament in appointing judges.

As part of its assistance activities, ODIHR organized the Expert Forum on Criminal Justice for Central Asia in 2010 in Kyrgyzstan<sup>15</sup> and in 2012 in Kazakhstan<sup>16</sup> with the aim of providing a regional platform for exchange of good practices and discussion on international standards and OSCE commitments in the area of criminal justice reform. Key reform issues for Kyrgyzstan such as the role of the judge, the prosecutor and investigator in the criminal process, the need for judicial authorization of pre-trial detention and the possible introduction of jury trials were debated at both Forums. Kyrgyz judiciary, prosecutorial offices, ministry of justice and interior, lawyers, academics and civil society participated in these regional events and shared their experience with counterparts from the region. A similar Forum is tentatively planned for the fall in 2014, to be organized in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

As a follow-up to the 2012 Criminal Justice Forum, ODIHR conducted a regional roundtable on legal aid in criminal proceedings in May 2013 in Bishkek, highlighting the ongoing necessity in the region to offer professional and effective legal assistance to vulnerable defendants. Representatives of the Kyrgyz Ministry of Justice, Parliament, courts, Bar association and civil society were present at the event.<sup>17</sup>

### **Other assessments and recommendations contained in ODIHR reports on thematic human issues**

ODIHR notes that serious concerns have been raised about the conduct of and motivation behind the prosecution and conviction, resulting in the continuing imprisonment, of Azimjan Askarov. Azimjan Askarov is a journalist and human rights defender whose work prior to his arrest included documenting and publicizing police abuse and misconduct in southern Kyrgyzstan. In September 2010, Askarov was sentenced to life imprisonment and confiscation of his property on charges of organizing mass disorder, inciting inter-ethnic hatred, hostage taking and incitement to murder. International observers, including those from ODIHR, at Askarov's first and second instance trials quoted over-reliance on police evidence and the failure of the authorities to adequately address the intimidation of defence witnesses and lawyers, to consider exculpatory evidence, and to effectively follow-up on allegations of torture.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.osce.org/odihr/89289>

<sup>15</sup> See Report from the 2010 Forum: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/81134>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.osce.org/odihr/99506>

<sup>17</sup> See <http://www.osce.org/odihr/104375>

### Migration and Freedom of Movement

Since 2010, ODIHR has been assisting the State Registration Service of Kyrgyzstan in reforming the system of population registration. Central to these reforms is the establishment of a unified state population register and the simplification of the procedures for residency registration. The unified state population register, once fully functional, will stand as a source of information on one's identity and residency, and it will be used, among other purposes, in the process of producing travel and identity documents, the creation of voter lists as well as for planning and the delivery of state provided services. ODIHR in co-operation with the OSCE Centre in Bishkek also supported the State registration Service in the development of a set of legislation to govern the establishment and maintenance of a state wide population register. In 2012, ODIHR compiled the "Assessment on the Prospects for the Establishment of a Population Register" with the aim to support State Registration Service in the development of terms of references for the implementation of state wide population register which contains a set of recommendations for the improvement of the registration system.<sup>18</sup> The Kyrgyz government plans to establish the population register until the next parliamentary elections in 2015.

### Gender Equality and Democratic Governance

In Kyrgyzstan, ODIHR provided policy advice and assistance in building the capacities of democratic institutions to help them become more responsive, responsible to and representative of their citizens. Currently, women's representation in the parliament of Kyrgyzstan stands at 23.3 per cent, which can be seen as significant progress from having no women parliamentarians in 2006. Still, women's representation is below the 1995 UN Beijing Platform for Action target of 30 per cent women in decision-making and below the Council of Europe recommendation for a minimum 40 per cent representation of women in parliaments and other elected assemblies by 2020. In turn, ODIHR implemented activities in the following areas:

- ODIHR continued to implement its "Women in Political Parties" project in 2013, aiming to build the capacity of political stakeholders – in particular, political party members and female candidates for elected public office – to apply measures to increase women's political participation in five pilot countries, including Kyrgyzstan.
- A roundtable-training was organized by ODIHR in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan from 17 to 19 April 2013, in partnership with the OSCE Centre in Bishkek, and supported by the Office of the President of Kyrgyzstan, UN Women, and the National Democratic Institute (NDI). A half-day roundtable at the Kyrgyz Parliament, with participation of political parties and civil society representatives, was followed by a 2.5-day training seminar that strengthened the political skills of 35 women leaders in Kyrgyzstan.
- ODIHR organized a follow-up Regional Workshop on Women's Political Leadership in November 2013 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, which brought together 25 women leaders from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to share good practices in supporting women's political leadership and enhance cross-party co-operation on gender equality issues.
- Within the framework of the Workshop, ODIHR also organized a half-day Roundtable on Parliamentary Structures for Women MPs on 25 November 2013, presenting its

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<sup>18</sup> Kyrgyzstan, Assessment on the Prospects for the Establishment of a Population Register, 24 July 2012 <<http://www.osce.org/odihr/92337>>

*Comparative Study of Structures for Women MPs in the OSCE Region* (available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/105940>). Participants from Kazakhstan and Tajikistan were particularly interested in how women deputies of the Parliament of Kyrgyzstan were able to overcome party discipline and allegiance in order to advocate on key issues across party lines.

- A representative of the Office of the Ombudsman of Kyrgyzstan participated in the “Regional Expert Workshop for National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) on Gender Equality,” held in June 2012 in Almaty. The event brought together 25 NHRI experts from Central Asia, the South Caucasus and Eastern Europe to discuss institutional efforts to protect and promote women’s rights and gender equality, and share good practices as contained in ODIHR’s *Handbook for National Human Rights Institutions on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality* (available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/97756>). The Office of the Ombudsman of Kyrgyzstan also contributed to the development of the above study, by submitting a detailed survey response and contributing to a Workshop for NHRIs on Gender Equality, held in Prague in March 2011.