

## RECENT EVENTS



### ROL SEMINAR SHOWS WAY FORWARD FOR CIVIL SOCIETY IN TURKMENISTAN

A high-level seminar on the development of civil society in Turkmenistan, was held in Ashgabat on April 26, 2016. The seminar was co-organised by the EU-Central Asia Rule of Law Platform and the United Nations Development Programme in Turkmenistan. It aimed to support the National Plan of Action in the field of human rights for 2016-2020 signed by the President of Turkmenistan on January 15, 2016.

Opened by Mr. Atamurad Tailyev, Chairman of the Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in the Mejlis (Parliament) of Turkmenistan, it was also addressed by representatives of the Turkmen National Institute of Democracy and Human Rights and of the Ministry of Justice of Turkmenistan.

Approximately 30 representatives of civil society organisations participated to the seminar, which was also attended by the heads of the diplomatic missions of France, Germany and the European Union in Ashgabat. Delegates had the opportunity to exchange experiences with experts from France, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Moldova, Ukraine and the UNDP, and to acquaint themselves with case law from the European Court for Human Rights.

Topics discussed included the legal framework of public associations (including new provisions of the Turkmen Constitution); the role of civil society as a partner to the state; ways in

which civil society can contribute to social and economic development; and good practices on coordination of NGO activities, capacity-building and establishing an effective and regular dialogue with the Government.

The seminar follows a meeting of EU Special Representative Peter Burian with civil society associations during his visit to Ashgabat in March 2016. These included associations providing hotline services and legal advice for victims of trafficking and environmental rights, as well as support to migrants and refugees.

### KYRGYZ SCHOOL PROJECT GOES NATIONWIDE

A conference was held in Bishkek on June 3, 2016, on the next phase of the “Introduction to Law for Pupils of Kyrgyz Schools” initiative. This was part of an assessment week following a six-month Pilot Phase. The initiative is a joint effort of the Kyrgyz Bar and the Paris Bar, within the framework of the EU-Central Rule of Law Initiative. The project enjoys the high patronage of the Deputy Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic, Mrs. Gulmira Kudaiberdieva, and of Kyrgyzstan’s Ministries of Education and Sciences and of Justice.

Described by Mrs Kudaiberdieva as “one of the most important initiatives undertaken to improve education and enhance the legal culture of the population”, the project involves application of an innovative method developed by the Paris Bar and now deployed in 18 EU countries. This aims to help pupils become aware of their rights and duties and of the rule of law; to provide with the ability to stand up for their rights throughout their lives; and to make them responsible citizens. A practicing lawyer visits pupils twice per academic year, organising the presentation of real cases. Pupils are invited to simulate real situations, identify with parties, and analyse and argue both sides of a hypothetical legal

### The Rule of Law Platform:

The Rule of Law Platform acts as a coordination mechanism to facilitate policy dialogue and promote the measures needed to encourage and support legal and governance reforms in each of the Central Asian countries.

issue adapted to their age group, modelled after those employed in real cases. Such simplified mock trials are seen as an entertaining and interactive way of making children aware of their rights and obligations.

The Pilot Phase, which ended in April, saw the scheme applied in two Kyrgyz schools—one rural, the other in the capital Bishkek—with approximately 1.000 pupils between 9 and 18 years old benefitting. Twenty Kyrgyz lawyers were involved, while members of the Kyrgyz Bar from the country’s nine regions have been further associated and trained with the objective of deploying the initiative nationally.

Assessment of the Pilot Phase has been positive, with pupils and schools reportedly enthusiastic, and a national roll-out of the scheme is imminent. The practicalities of building a network of lawyers, creating a website, publishing articles and holding information meetings are under consideration. Emphasis at present is on topics related to criminal law, with civil law issues to be addressed more in future. Topics of particular interest appear to be corruption, sexual assault, the

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Constitution, racketeering and marriages with minors.

The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic decided to include the initiative in its Interministerial action plan “on prevention of suicides, offences and crimes committed by children and youth in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2016-2018,” approved on 22 March, 2016.



Among those addressing the June 3 event were Deputy Prime Minister Gulmira Kudaiberdieva; Ms. Emmanuelle Baumes (London-based Attorney and, Member of the Paris Bar); Ms. Nazira Sopubekova (Attorney, Member of the Kyrgyz Bar, Professor of Criminology at the Kyrgyz State Law Academy); Ms. Gulniza Kojomova, Chair of the Board of Advocates of the Kyrgyz Republic; H.E. Mr. Stéphane Catta, French Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic; and Mr. Johannes Stenbaek Madsen, Head of Operations at the Delegation of the European Union to the Kyrgyz Republic. Representatives of the Ministries of Education and Sciences and of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic were also present, as were members of the nine regional offices of the Kyrgyz Bar who are trainers for the initiative, directors and professors of

schools, and representatives of the Rule of Law Platform.

### REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

A regional conference on “Networks of Judicial and Legal Training Institutions: Factor for the Success of Judicial Reform” took place on June 22-23, 2016, in Bishkek in the Kyrgyz Republic. It had support from two European Union-funded projects: “Promotion of the Rule of Law in the Kyrgyz Republic” and “EU Central Asia Rule of Law Platform.”

The conference considered the current state of play in judicial and legal training in Central Asia—the institutions and curricula in place and the challenges faced. Best training practices were discussed, with special reference to resources and new technologies (legal databases, e-justice and distance learning. Dr Antonov, Associate Professor to the Higher School of Economics presented the main assessments and conclusions of his research towards a Model Curriculum for professional and legal training commissioned by the Rule of Law Platform. A final session discussed networks of judicial and legal training institutions, stressing the benefits of cooperation and networking within the profession—including bar organisations, international networks and establishment of a regional network.

It is hoped that the conference will foster dialogue and exchange of experience

on the need to develop programmes of initial and on-going vocational judicial and legal training, in the area of decision drafting, methodology, execution of court decisions, and sharing of comparative law information and best training practices.

The conference was attended by deputies of Zhogorku Kenesh (the Kyrgyz parliament) and by representatives of the Supreme Court, the Constitutional Chamber, the Council for the Selection of Judges, the Council of Judges, the General Prosecutor’s Office, and Training Centres for judges, prosecution officers and lawyers, and the Central Asian League of Lawyers. Experts and representatives of training centres from France, Germany, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Russia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan also took part in the conference. Speakers included Almambet Shykmamatov (Deputy-Chair of the Jogorku Kenesh Committee on Constitutional Legislation, State Administration, Judicial and Legal Issues), H.E. Stéphane Catta (Ambassador of France to the Kyrgyz Republic), Anders Lundgren (Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Germany), Johannes Madsen (EU Delegation), Nicole Cochet (Director of Justice Cooperation International), Radost Matheron (Key expert of the “Promotion of rule of law in the Kyrgyz Republic” project) and Xavier Barré (Team Leader, EU-Central Asia Rule of Law Platform).



### Next on the Rule of Law Platform agenda

July 7, 2016

- ✓ A seminar on the “Implementation of International Conventions and National Laws” will be held in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan