



***THE EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN
TO THE KINGDOM OF BELGIUM
MISSIONS TO THE EUROPEAN UNION AND NATO***

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**ISSUES OF DEVELOPMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN UZBEKISTAN
DISCUSSED IN BERLIN**

During the visit of delegation of the Independent Institute for Monitoring the Formation of Civil Society (IIMFCS) to Germany, the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Germany held a round table on "Actual issues of formation of civil society: experience of Uzbekistan and Germany". Friedrich Ebert Foundation became co-organizer from the German side.

Representatives of government and parliament, public, academic and scientific experts, as well as mass media of Germany, attended the round table.

The event informed the participants in detail on the development of civil society in Uzbekistan, measures undertaken in this direction, as well as strengthening the legal and institutional bases for civil society institutions.

The meeting noted that in the framework of the reforms our country has consistently implemented the principle "From strong state - to strong civil society", whose essence is increasing role of citizens in socio-political life, further development of the entire system of institutions of civil society and its harmonious integration into the process of governmental administration.

Round table emphasized that one of the key elements of development strategy of Uzbekistan for medium and long-term perspective remains Concept of further deepening of democratic reforms and formation of civil society, which was adopted on the initiative of President Islam Karimov.

Presentations by representatives of IIMFCS have aroused great interest among the German participants of round table, which pointed out that efforts on further strengthening of the civil society demonstrate a commitment of Uzbekistan to the principles of democratic development.

They emphasized that the work, carried out in the country to strengthen the role of civil society institutions, enhances active participation of the population in the development and implementation of the political and socio-economic development.

Thus, the Regional coordinator of Friedrich Ebert Foundation in

Central Asia Peer Teschendorf stressed that the country has established a solid legal framework to further strengthen and support civil society. In particular, the adoption of laws "On social partnership", "On transparency of public authorities and management" were an important step in improving the socio-political, social and economic activity of citizens, as well as the strengthening of public control over the executive authority.

- It is noteworthy that the number of non-governmental organizations in Uzbekistan has exceeded 8000 and their activity covers almost all spheres of public life, - he said. - Friedrich Ebert Foundation appreciates consistent measures implemented in Uzbekistan for the development of civil society and stands ready to provide further assistance to Uzbek partners in this process.

Research assistant at the Maecenata Institute for Philanthropy and Civil Society in Berlin Eckhard Priller said that he is working closely with the IIMFCS on issues of civil society, regularly participates in round tables and seminars held in Uzbekistan and Germany, meetings and negotiations with the Uzbek partners on this subject.

According to him, over the years of independent development, Uzbekistan achieved significant results in the formation and support of civil society. Implemented measures have laid a solid foundation to build a democratic state of law. More than 30 adopted legislative acts in the field of development of civil society suggest that Uzbekistan pays enormous attention to this direction.

- The sequence of reforms in the country allows their effectiveness and implementation of the principle "from strong state to strong civil society", determines the development of the entire system of institutions of civil society and its integration in the governance of the country, - E.Priller concluded.

Chairman of the Board of the Brandenburg Institute for Development and Support of Technologies and Innovations Edgar Klose appreciated the efforts of Uzbekistan in the development of civil society institutions. In his opinion, this would contribute to the effective implementation of many important problems of sustainable development of the country, would make it possible to use vast "social capital" of Uzbek society.

As E.Klose noted, "the promotion of civic engagement of young people deserves special attention, which is about 60% of the population".

- I had the honor to be one of international observers at the election of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on March 29 this year, I have witnessed the high level of political activeness of citizens, - he said. - More than 91% of voters attended the elections. It can serve as a good example for many countries, including Germany, where turnout is only about 50%. Thus, our today's discussion is a two way road.

That is to say, not only Uzbek specialists studying our experience in the development of non-governmental organizations, but we have something to learn from our colleagues in improving civic engagement of people.

During an interview with Information Agency "Jahon", the participants of the round table shared their views and comments on the development processes in Uzbekistan.

Susanne Lang of the Centre for co-operation of civil society of Germany said that the exchange of experience between Uzbekistan and Germany is important for both sides. In her view, this event allowed to understand more deeply the principles of formation and functioning of civil society in Uzbekistan.

Researcher assistant at the Berlin State Library Frank Riedes agreed that meeting discussions became very useful.

- From these opinions and comments of Uzbek and German experts, I have outlined some interesting ideas for the increased cooperation with Uzbek partners, - he said. - The development of civil society in modern conditions, along with other areas plays an important role as information and library science. In this regard, in the course of our further cooperation with Uzbekistan, we will also pay special attention to projects aimed at promoting the development of civil society in the country.

German expert, lawyer Thorsten Janik welcomed measures implemented in Uzbekistan in the formation of a strong civil society, support for the activities of NGOs, enhancing their role in the process of democratic renewal and modernization of the country.

- It is noteworthy that Uzbekistan pays special attention to the expansion of international cooperation in this field, in particular with relevant funds and organizations in Germany, - he said. - It is gratifying that German partners have expressed strong interest in strengthening cooperation with civil society in Uzbekistan.

Praising the efforts of Uzbekistan on further strengthening of the institutions of civil society, **Editor-in-Chief of the electronic publication "Berliner Blatt" Volker Neef** said the following:

- Development of civil society is unimaginable without education. Therefore, it is significant, that in Uzbekistan special attention is paid to education and training, including by enhancing international cooperation, study and use of the best practices of developed countries. This contributes to the further strengthening of scientific and educational potential of your country.

Along with the discussion and exchange of experience, brochures "From a strong state to strong civil society", "Development of civil society institutions in Uzbekistan: Facts and Figures", the Second National Report of Uzbekistan in achieving the Millennium Development Goals were distributed among the participants of the round table, as well as other informational materials about democratic, judicial and socio-economic reforms in Uzbekistan, the republic's foreign policy initiatives on the international arena.

Information Agency "Jahon", Berlin