

Press release

Need for strong fair trial guarantees stressed at OSCE meeting on Armenia's new criminal procedure code

YEREVAN, 19 November 2010 - Armenia's new criminal procedure code should include strong fair trial guarantees, officials from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the OSCE Office in Yerevan said today at a meeting to discuss the development of the new code with government officials and legal practitioners.

Ambassador Sergey Kapinos, the Head of the OSCE Office in Yerevan, welcomed the authorities' interest in seeking OSCE expertise in their efforts to move forward criminal justice reform: "The process of drafting this new legislation will undoubtedly benefit from the input of our experts who bring to the table a wealth of experience from other participating States."

The Justice Ministry presented a concept for the new criminal procedure code, prepared by a working group led by the Justice Minister. The working group was tasked to follow up on the recommendations included in a March 2010 ODIHR report on the trials that took place in the aftermath of the March 2008 post-election violence in Yerevan. One of the key recommendations calls for the improvement of human rights safeguards in criminal proceedings.

"The concept contains a number of positive elements and we look forward to their implementation", said Vasil Vashchanka, Deputy Chief of ODIHR's Rule of Law Unit.

He stressed that ODIHR stands ready to assist the authorities in the process of drafting the new criminal procedure code in line with international fair trial standards.

The new code is to be submitted to parliament in March 2011.

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