

# **SAN MARINO 2012 INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT**

## **Executive Summary**

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom and, in practice, the government generally respected religious freedom. The trend in the government's respect for religious freedom did not change significantly during the year.

There were no reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice.

During periodic visits to the country, U.S. government officials raised religious freedom with government and civil society leaders and offered them opportunities to participate in programs addressing religious freedom.

## **Section I. Religious Demography**

According to the National Bureau of Statistics, the population is approximately 32,500. The government does not provide statistics on the size of religious groups and there is no census data on religious group membership. However, government officials estimate approximately 97 percent of the population is Roman Catholic. Other religious groups include small numbers of Jehovah's Witnesses, Bahais, Muslims, Jews, Orthodox Christians, and members of the Waldensian Church. In recent years, the number of Orthodox Church members has increased significantly due to immigration from Eastern Europe. There are almost 5,000 foreign residents. About 87 percent of the foreign residents are Italian nationals, most of whom are Roman Catholic. Over 5,000 additional foreign workers residing in Italy cross the border daily to work.

## **Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom**

### **Legal/Policy Framework**

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom. The country maintains a public "meditation and prayer" site in the capital for use by worshipers of any religion.

There is no state religion and the law prohibits discrimination based on religion. However, Catholic symbols are common in state institutions; for example,

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crucifixes sometimes hang on courtroom and government office walls. The state provides payments to the Catholic Church from income tax revenue. Taxpayers may request that 0.3 percent of their income tax payments be allocated to the Catholic Church or to “other charities,” including other religious groups. Any charity or religious group can obtain this benefit by registering as a nonprofit organization based in the country. If a taxpayer allocates a portion of his or her income tax payment to a previously unregistered group, the tax authorities will contact the group to confirm its legitimacy and to ask to review its financial statements.

There are no private religious schools. Public schools provide Catholic religious instruction; however, students may choose without penalty not to participate.

The government observes the following religious holidays as national holidays: Epiphany, Feast Day of Saint Agatha, Easter, Corpus Domini, All Saints Day, All Souls Day, Immaculate Conception, and Christmas.

### **Government Practices**

There were no reports of abuses of religious freedom.

There were no reports of anti-Semitic acts.

### **Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom**

There were no reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice.

### **Section IV. U.S. Government Policy**

During periodic visits, the deputy chief of mission from the U.S. embassy in Rome and officers from the U.S. consulate in Florence discussed religious freedom with government representatives and offered participation in U.S.-sponsored programs involving religious freedom. Embassy and consulate officials also discussed religious freedom with civil society representatives, who reported no restrictions on religious freedom or problems involving religious minorities.