

SLOVENIA 2012 INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT

Executive Summary

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom. 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 discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice.

The U.S. embassy held extensive discussions on religious freedom with the government and religious leaders.

Section I. Religious Demography

The population is approximately 1.9 million, according to a U.S. government source. According to the 2002 census, 58 percent of the population is Roman Catholic, 23 percent is "other or unspecified" religion, 2 percent is Muslim, 2 percent is Orthodox Christian, and 1 percent is "other Christian." Three percent of the population is classified as "unaffiliated," and 10 percent state no religion. The Orthodox and Muslim populations generally correspond to the immigrant Serb and Bosniak populations, respectively.

Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom. The constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion, inciting religious discrimination, and inflaming religious hatred and intolerance.

The law codifies the government's respect for religious freedom, legal status and rights of churches and other religious communities, rights of members, process of registration with the government, rights of registered religious groups, and responsibilities of the government's Office for Religious Communities.

The constitution and military law provide for conscientious objection to military service based on "religious, philosophical, or humanitarian belief."

SLOVENIA

There are no formal requirements for government recognition of religious groups, and the government does not restrict the activities of religious groups, regardless of whether they register with the government. However, religious groups must register with the Office for Religious Communities to be considered legal entities entitled to rebates on value added taxes. Religious groups must submit a basic application to the Office for Religious Communities providing the names of the group's representatives, a description of the foundations of the group's religious beliefs, and a copy of its organizational act.

The government allows religious education in both private and state-subsidized schools and preschools only on a voluntary basis outside of the school curriculum.

Individuals can file informal complaints of human rights violations by national or local authorities, including violations of religious freedom, with the human rights ombudsman.

During the year, Slovenia became a member of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research.

The government observes the following religious holidays as national holidays: Easter Sunday and Monday, Pentecost, Assumption, Reformation Day, and Christmas. Members of religious groups observing other religious holidays have the right to use regular annual leave on those days.

Government Practices

There were no reports of abuses of religious freedom.

By year's end, the government had adjudicated approximately 99 percent of the 1,191 Catholic denationalization claims for properties nationalized after World War II. The justice ministry no longer tracked data for the remaining unsettled cases.

There were no reports of new restitutions of Jewish communal or heirless properties confiscated or nationalized during and after World War II. The Justice Ministry reported that 99.6 percent of such property restitution cases were settled.

SLOVENIA

The government promoted tolerance and anti-bias education through programs in primary and secondary schools, and made the Holocaust a mandatory topic in the primary and secondary contemporary history curriculum.

In September the Ljubljana municipal government approved the construction of a mosque to serve as the country's only full-purpose mosque, replacing a temporary structure now in place. The Islamic Community of Slovenia purchased the land for the mosque complex in 2008 and expected to begin construction by mid-2013.

During the year, the Office for Religious Communities registered one new religious group, a 20-member group called Mitra, a pre-Christian Mithraic "mystery religion." There were 44 registered religious groups in the country.

Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom

There were no reports of societal abuses and discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. Interfaith relations were generally amicable.

On April 27, Catholic Archbishop Anton Stres met Chief Rabbi Ariel Haddad of the Slovenian Jewish community as Catholic and Jewish congregations celebrated Easter and Passover. On September 4, the Jewish community, supported by local government officials, celebrated the European Day of Jewish Culture in the Murska Sobota Regional Museum with an evening dedicated to Jewish culture.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

Embassy representatives met regularly with representatives of all major religious groups and relevant government officials to discuss religious freedom.