

ROMANIA 2013 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. Local authorities, however, continued to fail to respond to complaints of discrimination by minority religious groups. The lack of progress on restitution of Greek Catholic churches transferred by the former communist government to the Romanian Orthodox Church in 1948 remained a significant problem.

There were reports of societal discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. Some Orthodox clergy continued to display hostility toward non-Orthodox religious groups, including denying them access to cemeteries.

Embassy and visiting U.S. government officials met with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to raise concerns about the government's failure to ensure the full restitution of religious properties seized by former fascist and communist regimes. Embassy representatives met with Muslim, Jewish, and Greek Catholic leaders and communities. Embassy officials continued to support the government's efforts to acknowledge fully the country's role in the Holocaust.

Section I. Religious Demography

The U.S. government estimates the population at 21.8 million (July 2013 estimate). According to a 2011 Romanian government census, Orthodox adherents (including the Orthodox Serb Bishopric of Timisoara) constitute 86 percent of the population, Roman Catholics 4 to 6 percent, and Greek Catholics less than 1 percent. Other religious groups include Old Rite Russian Christians, Protestants, Jews, Muslims, Jehovah's Witnesses, Bahais, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), Zen Buddhists, members of the Family (God's Children), the Unification Church, and the Society for Krishna Consciousness. In a July 18 letter to the prime minister, the Greek Catholic Church challenged the results of the census, stating that they did not reflect the real size of the Greek Catholic community. The letter noted that many respondents were intimidated into not giving their true religious affiliation and that census takers sometimes refused to record Greek Catholic as a response. In response, State Secretary for Religious Affairs Victor Opaschi, who reports directly to the prime minister, rejected the complaint from the Greek Catholic Church and stated that the government did not discriminate in any way on religious or cultural grounds.

ROMANIA

Some religious groups are concentrated in particular regions. Old Rite Russian Christians are mainly located in Moldavia and Dobrogea. Most Muslims live in the southeast around Constanta. Most Greek Catholics reside in Transylvania. Protestants and Roman Catholics reside primarily in Transylvania. Orthodox and Greek Catholic ethnic Ukrainians live mostly in the north. Orthodox ethnic Serbs are primarily in Banat. Members of the Armenian Church are concentrated in Moldavia and the south. Virtually all members of the Protestant Reformed, Roman Catholic, Unitarian, and Lutheran churches from Transylvania are ethnic Hungarians. Approximately half of the Jewish population is in Bucharest.

Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom, but they impose restrictions on minority religious groups in terms of registration requirements and granting official religion status.

The law establishes a three-tier system of recognition: *grupari religioase* (“religious groups” which are not legal entities), religious associations, and religions. *Grupari religioase*, as defined by the law, are groups of persons who share the same beliefs but do not receive tax exemptions or support from the state.

Religious associations are legal entities that do not receive government funding and must be registered as such in a religious association registry. To register, religious associations must have 300 citizen members and must submit members’ personal data. The membership requirement for registration of any other type of association is three members.

Religious associations receive only limited tax exemptions. The section of the religion law on tax exemptions confers exemptions “according to the fiscal code;” however, the fiscal code does not address the issue of tax exemptions for religious associations.

Since the implementation of the religion law, the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs has approved the applications of 20 religious groups to register as religious associations, including two during the year: the Religious Association of the Christian Pentecostal Union of the Churches Baptized with the Holy Spirit, and the Association of the Apostolic Church of Faith in Jesus Christ.

ROMANIA

Religious associations are able to receive “religion” status only after 12 years of continuous activity and a minimum membership of 0.1 percent of the population (approximately 19,000 persons).

The law recognizes 18 religions: the Romanian Orthodox Church, Orthodox Serb Bishopric of Timisoara, Roman Catholic Church, Greek Catholic Church, Old Rite Russian Christian (Orthodox) Church, Reformed (Protestant) Church, Christian Evangelical Church, Romanian Evangelical Church, Evangelical Augustinian Church, Lutheran Evangelical Church, Unitarian Church, Baptist Church, Pentecostal Church, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Armenian Church, Judaism, Islam, and Jehovah’s Witnesses. Groups recognized as religions under the law are eligible for state support based on their proportional representation in the census. They have the right to establish schools, teach religion classes in public schools, receive government funds to build places of worship, partially pay clergy salaries with state funds, broadcast religious programming on radio and television, apply for broadcasting licenses for denominational frequencies, own cemeteries, and receive tax-exempt status.

Under the religion law, state-provided funding is determined by the number of adherents of each recognized religious community reported in the most recent census and “the religion’s actual needs,” which is left undefined. The Romanian Orthodox Church receives the majority of these funds.

The law entitles the 18 recognized religions to bury, without restriction, their deceased members in cemeteries belonging to other religious groups in localities where they do not have cemeteries of their own and there is no public cemetery.

Ministry of Justice regulations provide for unrestricted access by recognized religions and religious associations to any type of detention facilities, even if their assistance is not requested specifically. The regulations also prohibit interference by the management of penitentiaries with religious programs and forbid the presence of officials at meetings between representatives of religious groups and prisoners. By statute, prison representatives in charge of religious assistance may not be priests or representatives of any religious community.

Distribution of religious publications is not subject to any restriction.

The law allows clergy from recognized religious groups to minister to military personnel.

ROMANIA

Legislation combating anti-Semitism bans fascist, racist, and xenophobic organizations and punishes the denial of the occurrence of the Holocaust in Romania.

Public schools conduct religious instruction. To be excused from religion classes, students must submit requests in writing. The 18 recognized religions are entitled to hold religion classes in public schools. The law entitles students to attend religion classes in their faith irrespective of their number. The instruction is based on the religious affiliation of the students' parents. The constitution and the law allow the establishment of state-subsidized educational institutions administered by recognized religions.

The law provides for long-stay visas for persons conducting religious activities. Visa requirements include approval by the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs and submission of evidence that applicants represent legally established religious organizations. Visas can be extended up to five years.

The government does not permit unrecognized groups to engage in profit-making activities.

The law provides for the restitution of religious properties confiscated between 1940 and 1989. The law also allows the Jewish community additionally to pursue property restitution on ethnic grounds. A new restitution law, adopted in May, extends the period of time for which current occupants are entitled to stay in properties that have been restored to previous owners. The law, however, does not address the return of Greek Catholic churches confiscated by the former Communist government and transferred to the Orthodox Church in 1948. A separate law permits the Greek Catholic Church to pursue court action when attempts to obtain restitution of its churches through dialogue with the Orthodox Church are unsuccessful.

The government is a member of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, formerly the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research.

Government Practices

Government restrictions and harassment affected minority religious groups across a broad spectrum of activities, in particular preventing them from obtaining the

ROMANIA

restitution of previously confiscated properties. Jewish groups were concerned about memorials honoring the country's pro-Nazi World War II figures and the activities of current day pro-fascist political parties.

In September the Secular Humanist Association (ASUR) resumed a campaign against "religious indoctrination" it had initiated in previous years to inform parents and schools that parents had the right to withdraw children from religion classes. President of the National Antidiscrimination Council (CNCD) Csaba Asztalos declared that automatic enrollment of students in religion classes infringed upon the right to the freedom of conscience.

Representatives of the Bahai Faith stated that an 11th-grade Orthodox religion textbook containing "defamatory" content continued to be used nationwide. The book described the emergence of the Greek Catholic Church in the 18th century as the result of "Catholic proselytizing" and called Jehovah's Witnesses, Bahais, and Mormons "sects that represent a genuine threat to society."

Unrecognized groups, such as the Bahais, continued to criticize as discriminatory the minimum membership requirement for acquiring religion status. Bahai representatives stated that the number of adherents of some recognized religions was much lower than the 0.1 percent of the population required by the law and advocated amending this provision of the religion law so that the required number of members would be equal to that of the recognized religion with the lowest number of members.

In many cases minority religious groups were unable to gain restitution of confiscated properties in accordance with the law. Claimants complained that some local authorities opposed restitution or consistently delayed providing information about claimed properties to the Special Restitution Commission (SRC) of the National Authority for Property Restitution (ANRP), thereby obstructing the restitution process despite laws stipulating fines for such delays. Since 2003 the ANRP received 14,814 applications for property restitution from recognized religious groups and restituted 1,554 of them as of the end of 2012, of which only 135 properties belonged to the Greek Catholic Church. In some cases local authorities delayed enforcement or did not enforce decisions. The ANRP continued the restitution of religious property at a very slow pace, restituting only 12 properties to religious denominations during the year. The Greek Catholic Church and the Jewish community criticized the new restitution law, saying that it will generate further delays in the restitution of religious properties.

ROMANIA

Courts delayed hearings on many restitution lawsuits filed by the Greek Catholic Church, and the lawsuits were often impeded by appeals or change of venue requests from the Orthodox Church, such as in the case of the churches in Sapanta and Salonta. In Salonta a lawsuit that began in 2006 remained unresolved. In some instances, such as two cases concerning former Greek Catholic churches in Ungheni and Iris, courts ruled in favor of the Orthodox Church on the grounds that it had more members than the Greek Catholic Church. On May 16, the High Court of Cassation and Justice upheld the decision by the Cluj Court of Appeal in 2012 to overturn a Baia Mare court's ruling to restore the former Greek Catholic Cathedral in Baia Mare to the Greek Catholic Church on the grounds that the number of Orthodox believers represented a majority in the city.

In May State Secretary for Religious Affairs Victor Opaschi addressed the issue of restitution of Greek Catholic churches, stating that present-day Orthodox believers were former Greek Catholics or their descendants, who felt that the former Greek Catholic churches belonged to them. Opaschi also said that in such cases, "Restitution cannot take place automatically based on property rights; local sensitivities and the needs of local communities should also be considered."

In June the Greek Catholic Church took possession of the church of the Greek Catholic Seminary in Oradea pursuant to a lawsuit that had begun in 2006.

Representatives of the Greek Catholic Church continued to state that the government did not respond adequately to their complaints regarding the restitution of properties and acts of discrimination by local officials. On October 29, the Greek Catholic Church sent a letter to the president, prime minister, and local authorities calling for the enforcement of a 2011 "final and irrevocable" court ruling restoring to the Greek Catholic Church some buildings and land belonging to a monastery in Bixad (Satu Mare County), and criticizing the attitude of the local authorities, who continued to oppose the court ruling. The Greek Catholic Church also complained to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) about this case in March. On November 7, a large number of Orthodox priests blocked the road to the monastery and over 100 villagers, reportedly mobilized by the Orthodox Church, came to stop the enforcement of the court's ruling. On the same day, the Satu Mare county council obtained an injunction provisionally suspending the enforcement of the court ruling, after filing a lawsuit claiming that one of the buildings was its property. On November 13, the Greek Catholic cardinal addressed a letter to the prime minister, urging him publicly to express the government's position regarding the obstruction to the enforcement of the court ruling. On November 13, a U.S.-based Greek Catholic Association sent a letter to

ROMANIA

the president of the Satu Mare county council asking for clarification of the council vice president's statement that the court ruling represented "an abuse" and that only "part of it" would be enforced.

Non-Orthodox religious groups continued to face difficulty in accessing cemeteries and in obtaining land to establish cemeteries. In Pesceana, Greek Catholic community members reported that authorities and local Orthodox priests continued to deny them access to the local public cemetery despite a 2006 court ruling that a Greek Catholic priest could conduct religious services for deceased Greek Catholics in the cemetery. A Greek Catholic complaint of a violation of religious freedom related to this denial of access has been before the ECHR since 2007. The Orthodox Church, seeking to become the owner of the cemetery, initiated a lawsuit in 2012. Similarly, local authorities and the Orthodox Church continued to deny to the Greek Catholic Church access to the cemetery in Sapanta.

Bahai leaders continued to complain that because the Bahai Faith did not have formal religion status, its leadership was not notified by the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs about the secretariat's consultations with recognized religions regarding proposed amendments to legislation affecting religious affairs. The Bahais called the situation highly discriminatory. Bahai leaders also emphasized the need to amend the provisions of the religion law to allow the burial of unrecognized religious groups.

According to several religious groups, military chaplains were exclusively Orthodox priests with the exception of one Roman Catholic priest and one pastor from the Evangelical Alliance.

The Greek Catholic Church continued to report that authorities generally allowed only the Orthodox Church an active role in annual opening ceremonies at schools and other community events. Greek Catholic priests from Transylvania continued to report they were never invited to official local events.

Orthodox religion teachers reportedly harassed and intimidated Greek Catholic children in Ungheni and Borod, where the Orthodox priest pressured the children not to attend the Greek Catholic Church.

Mormons continued to criticize the existence of a "predominant state-sponsored church," stating it created problems for minority religious groups. They also stated members of minority religious groups found it difficult to opt out of Orthodox religion classes at public schools because of social pressure, and the influence of

ROMANIA

the Orthodox Church prevented its members from declaring their conversion for fear of adverse societal reactions. Mormons said their members were unfairly financially burdened because a portion of their taxes supported other religious groups, primarily the Orthodox Church, with no opt-out provision for smaller religious groups. Mormons continued to report discrimination through arbitrary and uneven application of laws, ordinances, and regulations, including provisions of the law that provided different funding for and taxation of religious groups. They complained that police protection was inadequate and in Timisoara and Ploiesti police forbade their missionaries to talk to people in the streets and to invite people to their free English language courses. In September in Timisoara, the police reportedly told the Mormons that they had to pay a fee to hand out information, although it was not a commercial solicitation, and asked them to remove their English class posters.

Mormons also reported continuing difficulties in renting space for their meetings. For example, local authorities and public servants in Feldioara turned down their request, stating that the Orthodox Church was using all the available space. Local authorities also denied Mormon requests to perform community service in Bucharest and Ploiesti.

On June 20, the Bucharest Court rejected a request from the Prosecutor's Office to the Bucharest Tribunal, made in 2012 on behalf of the Elie Wiesel Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania (Wiesel Institute), to ban the "All for the Country" political party because of its pro-fascist doctrine and its use of symbols originating from the fascist, xenophobic, and anti-Semitic Legionnaire Movement of the 1930's.

The mayor of Bucharest Sector 1 did not respond to a complaint filed by the Wiesel Institute in February to remove the Legionnaire flag from the headquarters of the present-day Legionnaire Movement.

The local council in Targu Ocna granted honorary citizenship to a former legionnaire, Valeriu Gafencu, but withdrew it in June after repeated requests by the Wiesel Institute. The local council in Baia Sprie also granted honorary citizenship to a denier of the Romanian Holocaust.

In violation of existing legislation, the mayor of Tirgoviste continued to refuse to cancel the title of honorary citizen given to Marshal Ion Antonescu, Romania's pro-Nazi leader during World War II, who was executed as a war criminal responsible for the murder of 280,000 Romanian and Ukrainian Jews.

ROMANIA

In October the general mayor of Bucharest refused to execute a January 23 “final” court ruling to demolish an illegally-constructed office tower next to the Roman Catholic cathedral. According to the ruling, the tower was deemed a risk to the physical integrity of the cathedral. In October the Romanian Catholic Bishops Conference urged the mayor to enforce the ruling and the Council of European Catholic Bishops Conferences expressed concern about the general mayor’s failure to enforce the court ruling.

The Center for Monitoring Anti-Semitism in Romania (MCA Romania) urged the Prosecutor General’s office to investigate public radio station Radio Romania Cultural for having “promoted the image of the Legionnaire Movement and Ion Antonescu as entities that had no connection with anti-Semitism and crimes against Jews,” during a program on August 17. The Wiesel Institute also asked the National Audiovisual Council to take measures against the station. The public radio company expressed regret in a communique and distanced itself from the statements made by the program’s producer.

The director of the county museum in Arges wrote a letter to the Arges County Council in September rejecting a request made at the behest of the Wiesel Institute to remove from the museum hallway a bust of Marshal Antonescu. The museum director argued the law permitted the display of such statues in museums.

The government continued to implement the recommendations of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania (Wiesel Commission) Report and to promote Holocaust education in school curricula. The Ministry of National Education (MEN) provided written materials and maintained a website with a guide for teaching about the Holocaust designed to assist teachers nationwide. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in October signed a five-year agreement with the MEN and the Wiesel Institute regarding Holocaust education and research. National Holocaust Remembrance Day, October 9, was commemorated in schools nationwide.

The government made progress in efforts to teach the history of the Holocaust, which was included in history courses in the seventh, ninth, eleventh, and twelfth grades. During the 2012-2013 school year, 106 high schools offered the optional course, “History of the Jews-The Holocaust.” The MEN sponsored national and international seminars on teaching Holocaust history and provided additional educational resources to help combat anti-Semitism. In May the government, in cooperation with the Yad Vashem Institute and the International School for

ROMANIA

Holocaust Studies, organized Holocaust education seminars for history teachers in Bucharest, Bacau, and Brasov. In October the MEN, the Wiesel Institute, the Memorial Library and Art Collection of the Second World War Society (New York), and the Association for Eastern Europe Studies agreed to organize a national school competition, “The Memory of Holocaust,” during the 2013-2014 school year.

Several public officials, including Minister of Foreign Affairs Titus Corlatean and Senate President Crin Antonescu, issued statements of condemnation when public television station TVR 3 broadcast on December 6 a performance by folk group Dor Transilvan, which included a so-called carol glorifying violence against Jews. The National Audiovisual Council fined TVR 3 50,000 lei (\$15,385).

On February 6, the CNCD ruled on a 2012 complaint filed by the Baptist Church that Member of the European Parliament Gigi Becali stated on a talk show that Baptists and “Neo-Protestants” (defined as including Baptists, Pentecostals, Seventh-day Adventists, Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and others) in general are “Satanic cults” and not Christians. The CNCD decided the statement was discriminatory and fined Becali 8,000 lei (\$2,462).

The Seventh-day Adventist Church expressed dissatisfaction that the national television station did not respond to its requests to broadcast a brief program, despite frequent grants of broadcast time to the Orthodox Church. The Seventh-day Adventist Church, however, noted increased official openness toward the observance of the religious rights of minority religious groups. Church representatives stated authorities were more responsive to religious freedom and discrimination issues.

In February 23 civic organizations asked parliament to end the public financing of religious denominations on the grounds that Romania was a secular state, without a state religion.

Government Inaction

For the 15th year, the government refused to enforce a prior government emergency order restoring to the Roman Catholic Church a building that housed the Baththaneum library and an astronomical institute, despite a 2012 ruling by the ECHR ordering the government to pay compensatory damages and trial expenses totaling 25,000 euros (\$34,435) to the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Alba Iulia,

ROMANIA

and to put an end to the violation of Article 1 of Protocol 1 of the European Convention of Human Rights.

The Greek Catholic Church reported that local authorities did not grant construction permits for places of worship, although they had no legal grounds for refusing. In Sapanta the Greek Catholic Church continued unsuccessfully to obtain a construction permit for a new church on land purchased in 2003. The Greek Catholics attributed the authorities' refusal to grant the construction permit to pressure from the Orthodox Church.

Local authorities continued to refuse to enforce a 2010 final court ruling providing restitution of a Greek Catholic church in Casva despite the church's appeal to the president, prime minister, interior minister, and the Mures County prefect. Local authorities also failed to enforce court rulings restituting land to the Greek Catholic Church in Valcau de Jos and Salonta.

Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom

There were reports of societal discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice.

The Wiesel Institute continued to be very active in educating the general public regarding the Holocaust. Most mainstream politicians continued to publicly denounce anti-Semitism and attempts to deny the Holocaust. There were, however, cases of anti-Semitic or Holocaust-denying statements.

Participants in talk shows broadcast by private and public television stations and in internet discussions expressed anti-Semitic views and attitudes. MCA Romania and the Wiesel Institute continued to urge authorities to enforce existing legislation against anti-Semitism and xenophobia because of their continued online dissemination. Media sources linked to extremist organizations, including the Greater Romania Party, published anti-Semitic articles. The New Right movement and similar organizations and associations promoted in the media and on the internet the ideas of the Iron Guard, a para-military arm of the Legionnaire Movement.

On February 14, during the launch of the Encyclopedia of the Communist Regime at the Romanian Academy, historian Vladimir Iliescu, a professor at the University of Aachen, stated that the Holocaust had occurred only in Germany and Hungary and that in Romania, Jews had been persecuted but there had been no Holocaust.

ROMANIA

The audience applauded the speech. Academics, prominent figures, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including Transparency International and Pro-Democracy, wrote to academy president Ion Haiduc, urging him to firmly disassociate himself from Iliescu's "false and irresponsible" statements.

In March during a rally against the implementation of biometric passports sponsored by Orthodox clergy, a group of six children, holding icons and pictures of Legionnaire founder Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, performed the Nazi salute.

Media and independent observers occasionally reported cases of graffiti with swastikas on the walls of buildings in Bucharest and Timisoara.

Nationalist organizations, including the New Right Organization, the Professor George Manu Foundation, the Legionnaire Movement, and the All for the Country Party, held public events in Tiganesti, Fetea, Ploiesti, Rasnov, Tancabesti Forest, and Bucharest with anti-Semitic themes, and continued to sponsor religious services, symposia, and marches commemorating leaders of the Legionnaire Movement such as Horia Sima and Codreanu.

In October the MCA protested anti-Semitic statements by Cosmin Guse, a former political figure and one of the owners of Realitatea TV. He stated on Realitatea TV on September 13 that "...American Jews are extremely venal and greedy in their effort to steal capital." The MCA said that inciting ethnic or religious hatred was against the law and equated Guse's statements with those of notorious anti-Semites. The MCA urged Guse to withdraw his statements and apologize.

The Greek Catholic Church continued to report that in many localities Orthodox priests harassed and intimidated its members. In rural areas Greek Catholics reported Orthodox priests used threats and other forms of intimidation to prevent people from joining the Greek Catholic Church.

Although the law allows religious groups access to cemeteries belonging to other churches, Orthodox priests denied minority religious groups access to cemeteries in some places. Members of some minority religious groups, including the Greek Catholic Church, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and the Bahai Faith, reported Orthodox priests would not allow the burial of non-Orthodox deceased in denominational cemeteries or in public cemeteries (often treated as denominational by Orthodox priests) unless certain conditions were met; the burials had to take place in isolated sections of the cemetery or Orthodox religious services had to be used in the burials. In November an Orthodox priest reportedly forbade the burial

ROMANIA

of an Adventist woman in Cocorastii Colt and filed a complaint with the police against the woman's relatives who wanted to bury her next to other family members in the Orthodox cemetery.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church stated that private employers frequently refused to hire Seventh-day Adventists, particularly in Alba Iulia and Galati.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church noted that the number of discriminatory articles in the media decreased during the year.

Orthodox clergy generally opposed and delayed returning churches to Greek Catholics, arguing that formerly Greek Catholic places of worship belonged to the congregations currently using them. Orthodox clergy also argued that the low number of Greek Catholics did not justify the return of their properties. Tensions continued in localities where the Orthodox Church refused to comply with court-ordered restitutions, or where the Greek Catholic Church initiated lawsuits for restitution.

In cases where courts ordered the Orthodox Church to return churches to their former owners, Orthodox priests frequently encouraged the local population to oppose enforcement of the orders and local authorities often hesitated to enforce such rulings. Although the Greek Catholic Church offered to hold alternating religious services with the Orthodox Church in the churches it regained, in most cases, the proposals were rebuffed.

The Orthodox Church continued to demolish or modify former Greek Catholic churches to remake them in the Orthodox style, including in Sapanta and Salonta.

In many rural localities with two churches where at least one of them was Greek Catholic before Communist era confiscation, such as in Starciu and Crucisor, the Orthodox Church did not allow the Greek Catholic Church to use either place of worship.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

Embassy officials continued to raise concerns with government officials about the slow pace of religious property restitution, particularly properties belonging to the Greek Catholic and Hungarian churches. Embassy representatives and visiting U.S. government officials also continued to discuss with government officials the importance of full official recognition of the Holocaust in the country,

ROMANIA

improvements in Holocaust education, and complete implementation of the 2004 recommendations of the Wiesel Commission.

Embassy representatives and visiting Department of State officials met regularly with leaders of the Greek Catholic Church to discuss Orthodox-Greek Catholic relations, local discrimination incidents, and relations with the national government. Embassy officials also met regularly with Muslim community leaders and attended iftars in Constanta on July 9 and August 7.

The Charge d'Affaires and other embassy representatives attended a session of the parliament to commemorate National Holocaust Remembrance Day on October 8 and a wreath-laying ceremony at the National Holocaust Memorial on October 9.

The embassy supported the activities of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in its efforts to access the Romanian National Archives and to further Holocaust education, including embassy co-sponsorship of a Holocaust teacher training course in Cluj in November.