

# **SLOVENIA 2013 INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT**

## **Executive Summary**

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom. In practice, the government generally respected religious freedom.

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

The U.S. embassy held extensive discussions on religious freedom with the government and religious leaders, particularly regarding the inauguration of the country's first mosque in September.

## **Section I. Religious Demography**

The U.S. government estimates the total population at 2 million (July 2013 estimate). According to the 2002 census, 58 percent of the population is Roman Catholic, 23 percent is "other or unspecified" religious group, 2 percent is Muslim, 2 percent is Orthodox Christian, and 1 percent is "other Christian." In addition, 3 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 generally 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 and their 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."

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There are no formal requirements for government recognition of religious groups, and activities of religious groups are unrestricted, 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 proof that requirements are met, as well as the names of the group's representatives in the country, 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 school and preschools only on a voluntary basis outside of the school curriculum. Holocaust education remains mandatory in schools.

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

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**

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 Ministry of Justice no longer tracked data for the remaining unsettled cases.

The government promoted tolerance and anti-bias education through programs in primary and secondary schools.

Top leaders, including Prime Minister Bratusek, gathered September 14 for a foundation stone laying ceremony for the country's first mosque, along with an estimated audience of 10,000. The ceremony capped a 44-year effort by the small Muslim minority to build a mosque. The Catholic archbishop and Muslim and Jewish community representatives also attended.

In October Prime Minister Bratusek spoke to the Slovenian Protestant Association for a Reformation Day event. She stressed that those who make the rules and the

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law should be good examples for the rest of society, instead of violating their own precepts.

### **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.

In March representatives of the Center of Jewish Cultural Heritage and the Austrian Cultural Forum opened a photo exhibition entitled *Biti Jud (To be a Jew)*, which aimed to promote interfaith awareness.

### **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. In addition to attending the mosque groundbreaking ceremony, the Ambassador met with then Catholic Archbishop Anton Stres. He also attended events for the Catholic, Jewish, and Bahai communities. Embassy staff regularly met with representatives of the Islamic community to monitor progress on the mosque project and maintained regular communication with the head of the government's Office for Religious Communities.