



## United States Mission to the OSCE

# **Statement on Kazakhstan: Registration of Democratic Choice; Rejection of Media Law**

As delivered by Deputy Representative Douglas Davidson  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
May 13, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I should like to thank the distinguished ambassador of Kazakhstan for the informative statement that he has just made and at the same time to take the opportunity to recognize several positive steps forward in Kazakhstan in both the legislative and electoral sectors.

First, we note with satisfaction that the political party "Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan" successfully registered on May 4th. The registration was completed within the 10 days prescribed by the Law on Political Parties. Prompt and proper registration of new political parties will lend credibility to the entire electoral process.

We understand that Democratic Choice plans to propose candidates for local electoral commissions and also plans to compete in the parliamentary elections this autumn. These elections will be governed by the new election law signed by President Nazarbayev on April 14th. We look forward to ODIHR's assessment of the new law, which we hope will serve as the basis for free and fair elections.

The United States is also pleased that the Government of Kazakhstan rejected the proposed Media Law after the Constitutional Council determined that it was unconstitutional. The Law was judged by many both inside and outside Kazakhstan -- my country included -- to be seriously flawed.

We and others raised our concerns in the Permanent Council on March 25th and urged President Nazarbayev not to sign this bill into law. We are convinced that he made the right decision, as the draft law fell far short of international standards and OSCE commitments.

Mr. Chairman, getting the right laws into place and implementing them thoroughly is a difficult task, but a sound legal framework is what underpins a democracy. We applaud Kazakhstan's efforts to put such a legal framework in place and its willingness to reject seriously flawed legislation. We look forward to seeing further progress that will strengthen the environment for holding free and fair elections in Kazakhstan this autumn.

I thank you.