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## **EU AND KYRGYZSTAN DISCUSS COOPERATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS**

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Representatives of the European Union and the Kyrgyz Republic held on 26 June in Bishkek their annual Human Rights Dialogue and discussed cooperation in human-rights related areas, the Delegation of the European Union to the Kyrgyz Republic said.

They discussed work of national human rights institutions, with the EU encouraging further strengthening of the Ombudsman institute and the National Centre for Torture Prevention. The EU welcomed the renewed effort to implement reforms in the judicial system and emphasised the importance of efficiency and independence of the judiciary. The 2nd phase of the EU Rule of Law Programme will support this with €13 million over the coming years.

The EU and Kyrgyz representatives discussed the freedom of expression, including the freedom of the media as well as individual cases of journalists. The EU highlighted the positive role of Human Rights Defenders and civil society for creating civic spaces both in the EU and Kyrgyzstan.

The EU acknowledged the steps taken to prevent torture and ill-treatment, as well as plans to pursue reforms in the law enforcement sector. While Kyrgyz authorities have made efforts in areas of child protection and the rights and empowerment of women, more needs to be done to address the issue of domestic violence and women's participation in public and economic life. The EU has launched a new programme to support prevention and fight against forced and under-age marriages, implemented in 16 local communities.

Good governance, freedom of religion or belief and the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups were also discussed.

The EU acknowledged Kyrgyz cooperation with the United Nations mechanisms, stressing that the authorities should use the opportunity of the last year of Kyrgyzstan's UN Human Rights Council membership to be an active player in human rights multilateral diplomacy.

Compliance with fundamental human rights conventions is also an obligation under GSP+. Back to back to the Human Rights Dialogue, the EU held a series of dialogue with authorities and other stakeholders to monitor progress in implementation of the other GSP+ relevant conventions (in the field of labour rights, environment and good governance).

The Kyrgyz delegation was led by Ms Dinara Kemelova, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, while the EU delegation was led by Mr Boris Iarochovich, Head of the Central Asia Division at the European External Action Service. The next round of the EU-Kyrgyz Republic Human Rights Dialogue is expected to take place in Brussels in 2019.

<https://www.timesca.com/index.php/news/19928-eu-and-kyrgyzstan-discuss-cooperation-on-human-rights>

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