

SLOVENIA

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The government generally respected religious freedom in law and in practice. There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom by the government during the reporting period.

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

The U.S. government discusses religious freedom with the government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights.

Section I. Religious Demography

The country has an area of 7,827 square miles and a population of two million. According to the 2002 census, 58 percent of the population is Roman Catholic, 2 percent is Muslim, and 2 percent is Orthodox Christian. Groups that constitute less than 1 percent of the population include evangelical Protestants, "other Christians," "other Protestants," "Oriental" religious groups, "other" religious groups, agnostics, and Jews. In addition, 3 percent of the population is classified as "believers but belonging to no religion," and 10 percent as "unbelievers/atheists"; 16 percent gave no reply in the census, and 7 percent are classified as "unknown."

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

Please refer to Appendix C in the *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* for the status of the government's acceptance of international legal standards <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/appendices/index.htm>.

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom and, in practice, the government generally enforced these protections. The constitution

prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion as well as inciting religious discrimination and inflaming religious hatred and intolerance.

The Religious Freedoms Act 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 churches and religious communities, and responsibilities of the government's Office for Religious Communities. The National Council (the upper house of parliament) challenged the constitutionality of the act shortly after it came into force in 2007. In June 2010 the Constitutional Court annulled provisions of the act relating to the payment of social security contributions for priests in hospitals and prisons, as well as provisions relating to registering with the government. The court gave parliament a period of one year from the ruling to change these provisions. Parliamentary action was pending at the end of the reporting period.

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

There are no formal requirements for recognition of religious groups by the government, and activities of religious communities are unrestricted regardless of whether they register with the government. However, religious communities must register with the Office for Religious Communities if they wish to be legal entities, a status that entitles such groups to rebates on value-added taxes. Religious communities must submit a basic application to the Office for Religious Communities providing proof that requirements are met as well as the names of the community's representatives in the country, a description of the foundations of the community's religious beliefs, and the organizational act of the church or community. The Office for Religious Communities did not receive any new applications during the reporting period.

According to the Office for Religious Communities, it has been government policy since 1991 to pay the social insurance contribution for clergy and other full-time religious workers that an employer normally pays. The Religious Freedoms Act directs the government to pay social insurance contributions for one religious employee per 1,000 members of a recognized religious community. However, in June 2010 the Constitutional Court ruled that the government could not make those contributions for priests working in hospitals or prisons.

At state-licensed schools the law forbids lessons with the goal of educating children in a particular religion and prayer meetings. The government partially

finances teachers' salaries at religiously affiliated schools. Licensed schools may not display religious symbols, but students may wear religious symbols. At unlicensed private religious schools, religious lessons generally are mandatory.

The government finances small grants for recognized religious organizations.

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

The government observes the following religious holidays as national holidays: Easter Sunday and Monday, Pentecost, the Assumption, Reformation Day, and Christmas. Members of religious communities whose important religious festivities do not coincide with those work-free days have the right to use their regular annual leave on their holy days.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

The government generally respected religious freedom in law and in practice. There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom by the government during the reporting period.

By the end of the reporting period, the government had adjudicated approximately 99 percent of the 1,191 Catholic denationalization claims for properties--church buildings and support buildings, residences, businesses, and forests--that were nationalized after World War II. Catholic claims were only a small portion of the total number of denationalization claims (39,635), of which by January 2010 the government had settled 99.9 percent. The Ministry of Justice no longer tracks data for numbers of unsettled cases, because there are so few remaining cases.

At the end of the reporting period, there had been no restitution of Jewish communal and heirless properties confiscated or nationalized during and after World War II. In 2007, acting on a tender awarded by the Ministry of Justice, the Institute of Contemporary History researched a report on such properties. Also in 2007 the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO) funded a separate report that was researched by two experts affiliated with the Institute for Ethnic Studies. The Ministry of Justice stated that the Institute of Contemporary History finished its report in spring 2008, and the WJRO finished its report in March 2010; neither report was published. The Ministry of Justice, the WJRO, and the Jewish

Community of Slovenia met in March 2010 to discuss restitution after both reports were complete but had not begun negotiations by the end of the reporting period.

There were no reports of abuses, including religious prisoners or detainees, in the country.

Section III. Status of Societal Actions Affecting Enjoyment of Religious Freedom

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

The government promoted tolerance and antibias education through its programs in primary and secondary schools and made the Holocaust a mandatory topic in the primary and secondary contemporary history curriculum.

On January 27, Prime Minister Borut Pahor attended "Shoah—We Remember," a memorial held in the country's only synagogue, in Maribor. On September 5, the Jewish community, supported by local government officials, held the fifth annual European Day of Jewish Culture festival. President Danilo Tuerk was the honorary patron for the celebrations held in Ljubljana, Maribor, and Lendava.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. government discusses religious freedom with the government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights. The embassy continued to support efforts to reach a just and mutually acceptable solution to the question of Jewish property restitution.