

SAN MARINO

Executive Summary

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom and, in practice, the government generally respected religious freedom. The government did not demonstrate a trend toward either improvement or deterioration in respect for and protection of the right to religious freedom.

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

The U.S. government discussed religious freedom with government representatives.

Section I. Religious Demography

The government does not provide statistics on the size of religious groups, and there was no census data on religious membership; however, it was estimated that approximately 97 percent of the population is Roman Catholic. Other religious groups include small numbers of Jehovah's Witnesses, Baha'is, Muslims, Jews, Orthodox Christians, and members of the Waldesian Church. In recent years the number of Orthodox Church members has increased greatly due to immigration from Eastern Europe.

Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom. The country maintains a public "meditation and prayer" site in the capital for use by worshipers of any religion.

Although Catholicism is dominant, it is not the state religion, and the law prohibits discrimination based on religion. Catholic principles permeate state institutions symbolically; for example, crucifixes sometimes hang on courtroom and government office walls. The Catholic Church receives direct benefits from the state, funded by income tax revenue. Taxpayers may request that 0.3 percent of their income tax payments be allocated to the Catholic Church or to "other

charities,” including other religious groups. Any charity or religious group can obtain this benefit by registering as a nonprofit organization based in the country. If a portion of an income tax payment is allocated to an organization, the organization will be contacted by tax authorities to prove its legitimacy and to make available its financial statements. It can register and prove its status as a nonprofit at that time and still receive the allocation.

There are no private religious schools; the school system is public and state-financed. Public schools provide Catholic religious instruction; however, students may choose without penalty not to participate.

The government observes the following religious holidays as national holidays: Epiphany, Feast Day of Saint Agatha, Easter, Corpus Domini, All Saints’ Day, Commemoration of the Dead, Immaculate Conception, and Christmas.

Government Practices

There were no reports of abuses of religious freedom. The government generally respected religious freedom in law and in practice.

Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom

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

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

During their regular visits, officers from the U.S. consulate in Florence discussed general religious freedom issues with government representatives. The U.S. government discussed religious freedom as part of its general strategy to promote human rights.