Press Release

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Moldova: Delay in the adoption of legislation meeting European standards in the field of freedom of religion

Strasbourg, 08.02.2006 - The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe today noted with concern the delay in the full implementation by the Moldovan authorities of the judgment delivered by the European Court of Human Rights on 13 December 2001 in the case of Metropolitan Church of Bessarabia and Others v. Moldova.

The Committee noted that, under the legislation currently in force, the executive continued to enjoy a wide discretion in granting, suspending or withdrawing registration of religious denominations, and that the relevant legal provisions fail to adequately reflect the requirement of proportionality of possible restrictions on the exercise of religious freedom.

The Committee therefore stressed the need for the Moldovan authorities to accelerate their work on a new law on Religious Denominations, fully respecting the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights and taking into account also the conclusions and recommendations provided by the Council of Europe experts. It decided to resume consideration of the case at its meeting of 28-29 March 2006, with a view of deciding on further action if adequate progress is not achieved in the meantime.

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Under the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Court's judgments require respondent states - under the supervision of the Committee of Ministers - to adopt all necessary measures to grant the applicants appropriate redress and to prevent further similar violations in the future.

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