

RAISING AWARENESS

Fighting Infringements in the Kyrgyz Army



European Union

European Instrument for
Democracy and Human Rights 2010



Working with the Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Defence and a local NGO “Soldiers’ Mothers, Kyrgyzstan” – involved in the protection of human rights and civil education of military men since 1994 – an EU project was able to help improve Human Rights awareness and conditions for conscripts in the Kyrgyz National Army.

Praised by military commanding officers, the project was inspired by a lack of public knowledge of human rights in the Central Asian and former Soviet republic of Kyrgyzstan, particularly in the army, about soldiers duties and rights, leading to arbitrary treatment and a lack of resistance to legal infringements. Imprisoned soldiers suffering from an absence of legal support and bad nutrition and shelter were also informed of their rights and given legal advice.

The project allowed more than 1000 soldiers to receive legal advice and psychological support. An estimated 90,000 citizens were informed of actual conditions in military units through media campaigns including a prime time TV documentary and the targeting of 2300 publications.

After human and civil rights training held in his military unit, Colonel Kanybek Iskakov commented: “We, the commanding officers, were surprised by the creativity of our soldiers during these training sessions and by their good knowledge of legal matters...after their return to their homes, they will train their countrymen about election rights.”