**Understanding Central Asian Islam: Contemporary Research Standards**

**Workshop at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek**

**12-13 September 2013, Bishkek**

**Draft Programme**

Language: English

Invited speakers:

* Dr Tim Epkenhans (University of Freiburg, Germany)
* Dr Pauline Luong (University of Michigan)
* Dr Sophie Roche (Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin)
* Dr Julie McBrien (University of Amsterdam
* Dr Johan Rasanayagam (University of Aberdeen)
* Dr David Montgomery (University of Pittsburgh)
* Dr John Schoeberlein (Nazarbaev University)

**Concept**

Islam in Central Asia continues to be an exciting field of research as well as a contentious political topic. The current discourses on religion in the region are characterized by essentialist and securitized readings of religious practices, as well as confusion between theological dispute and scholarly research on religion as a social phenomenon.

The idea of the seminar, which was first time held in 2011, is to bring together the leading experts on Central Asian Islam and the young Central Asian scholars to discuss the concept of Islam in the regional context. The seminar is a combination of presentation of latest research results on the topic and discussion of new research ideas, notably those proposed by the junior Central Asian scholars. Thus the outcomes of the seminar will be both a scholarly discussion and capacity raising for future research endeavors in the region.

Formulating a meaningful research question requires a sound conceptualization of religion, understanding of its social context, as well as validity of observations of religious behavior. We shall look at the issues of measurement of religiosity, as well as contextualizing religion from social, anthropological, political and historical angles. In this vein, the seminar addresses the problem of politicization and securitization of religion in Central Asia, and in particular includes a keynote speech by Dr Johan Rasanayagam *Topics of “extremism” and “radicalization” in academic research – academic vs political agenda?*

We are welcoming applications from young Central Asian researchers as well as those whose professional work is connected with the topic, for participation in this seminar. The OSCE Academy will bear the travel and lodging expenses of all the invited participants.

**Tentative Schedule (as for 14 July 2012)**

**11 September Arrival of Participants -- *Ak Keme hotel***

**12 September 2013**

9:00-9:15 Welcome & Introduction

9:15-10:45 **Panel 1**: Controversies of measurement & Institutions

Dr Pauline Luong: **Measuring religiosity**

Dr Tim Epkenhans: **The religious Field – Institutionalization, Control and Competition**

Discussant: Dr Maxim Ryabkov

10:45-11:15 Break

11:15-12:45 **Panel 2**: Episteme and Categorizations

Dr Julie McBrien: **Central Asian or Muslims? The politics of academic categories**

Dr David Montgomery: **Towards a Theory of the Rough Ground: Merging the Policy and Ethnographic Frames of Religion in the Kyrgyz Republic**

Discussant: Dr Pauline Luong

12:45-14:00 Lunch

14:00-15:30 Panel 3: **Religion, politics and security**

Presentations:

Dr Sophie Roche: **Discussion on Islam in security and politics**

Dr John Schoeberlein: TBA

Discussant: Dr Tim Epkenhans

15:30-16:00 Break

16:00-17:30 Dr Johan Rasanayagam’s Keynote address: ***Topics of “extremism” and “radicalization” in academic research – academic vs political agenda?***

Discussant: Dr. John Schoeberlein

17:30 – group photo and a small reception at the OSCE Academy

**13 September 2013**

9:15-10:45 **Open Discussion**: Where to go? What to do?

10:45-11:15 Break

11:15-12:45 Group work

12:45-14:00 Lunch

14:00-16:00 Group presentations and concluding discussion

18:00 – Concluding dinner with invited speakers

**14 September - Departure**