

Diplomats Propose Respect for the Independence of NGOs

The Finnish Ambassador in Venezuela, Mikko Pyhälä, suggested to the Commission of Foreign policy of the National Assembly that they study the International Treaty on Civil and Political Rights during the elaboration of the proposed Law of International Cooperation.

In order to hear the opinions of the Diplomatic Corps in Venezuela regarding the proposed law, the parliamentary committee invited them yesterday to the Legislative Palace.

During his intervention, the diplomat stated that in studying the proposed law, it would be useful for the National Assembly to review the aforementioned pact, which has been signed by Venezuela, because it establishes a series of obligations, among them the freedom of association and the actions of civil society.

"We also expressed the desire that all official agreements between Venezuela and our countries and international organizations be respected", he stated.

The Finnish Ambassador clarified that in the meeting the diplomats did not make observations on the content of the proposed law, considering that it would be incorrect to enter a debate on specific articles. "We are referring only to general principles. We do not want to enter into a debate on legislative processes", he added.

The German Ambassador in Venezuela, Georg Clemens Dick, affirmed that in his country, respect for the independence of nongovernmental organizations is fundamental.

"In Germany we have rules that assure the independence of nongovernmental organizations", he said.

He emphasized that in his country there is an NGO registry, but it is simply to ensure that the organizations are non-profit, "nothing about controls, nor of a centralized fund". He felt that the meeting with the parliamentarians was positive.

After the meeting, the president of the Foreign Policy Commission, Saúl Ortega, made assurances that the recommendations of the diplomats would be analyzed, along with the documents received. The documents contained norms and regulations of foreign cooperation in existence in various countries.

Next week, he announced, the proposed law will be discussed with different NGOs around the country. He also invited those organizations which have not received formal communication from the Parliament to participate. Ortega did not discard the possibility that the proposed law would be ratified during the current legislative session.

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