



Strasbourg, 9 February 2005

CDL(2005)004syn
Eng. only

EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW
(VENICE COMMISSION)

in cooperation with

**THE COMMISSION ON THE ISSUES OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION OF THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA**

in the framework of

**THE ARMENIAN CHAIRMANSHIP OF
THE SOUTH CAUCASUS PARLIAMENTARY INITIATIVE**

and with the assistance of

THE CENTRE FOR PROSPECTIVE RESEARCH AND INITIATIVES

CONFERENCE

“OUR CHOICE – EUROPEAN INTEGRATION”

Ljubljana, Hotel “Grand Media”, 19 January 2005

SYNOPSIS

The Venice Commission organised, in co-operation with the National Assembly of Armenia, a conference on “Our choice – European Integration” in Ljubljana on 19 January 2005. The conference took place during the 3rd Plenary Assembly of the “South Caucasus Parliament Initiative” (further SCPI) (17-19 January 2005) and in the framework of the Armenian Presidency of SCPI (July 2004 – January 2005). Organisational and financial aspects of the SCPI meetings are facilitated by the NGO “Links” (The London information network on conflicts and state-building).

The Council of Europe delegation consisted of Mr H.-H. Vogel, substitute member of the Venice Commission in respect of Sweden, Mr D. Conostas, member of the Venice Commission in respect of Greece, Mr H.-G. Heinrich, Professor of Political Science, Vienna University, Mr J. Hamer, consultant, UK, Ms C. Ravaud, Head of the Secretariat of the PACE Monitoring Committee, Mr Sc. Dürr and Ms T. Mychelova, respectively Head of the Constitutional Justice Division and External Relations Officer of the Venice Commission.

The Conference was mainly attended by members of the Parliaments of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia; the Head of the European Commission Delegation to Slovenia Mr E. Fouere addressed the conference; Ms E. Conkievich, Deputy Head of the OSCE Mission in Armenia, represented her organisation.

The presentations and discussions concentrated upon the different aspects of the European integration and the compliance with the Council of Europe PACE monitoring procedure requirements. It was stressed that the South Caucasus was historically, economically and culturally a part of Europe and strove to further integrate into the European structures. Notwithstanding the specific mandates of other IGOs active in Europe, respect for the Council of Europe values through honouring of obligations and commitments taken upon the entry to the Organisation is a major means and precondition of further integration of the South Caucasian countries into Europe. The PACE monitoring is not a mere supervision procedure but a dialogue in the process of achieving the goals that were set in agreement with the states upon their accession. It was emphasised that honouring of the obligations and commitments was in the interest of the people of the member states. The relevant PACE resolutions are to be seen as a roadmap to further progress and not a finger-pointing exercise.

The atmosphere at the conference was constructive; the participants expressed their appreciation of the event.

The proceedings of the Conference will be published by the National Assembly of Armenia.