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EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW
(VENICE COMMISSION)

**in co-operation with the
Union of Arab Constitutional Courts and Councils
and
the Supreme Court of Lybia**

SYMPOSIUM

**13TH REGULAR MEETING
OF THE UNION OF ARAB CONSTITUTIONAL COURTS
AND COUNCILS (UACCC)
AND 6TH INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC FORUM OF THE
UACCC**

**"ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL RIGHTS FROM A
CONSTITUTIONAL POINT OF VIEW"**

TRIPOLI, LYBIA, 10-11 JANUARY 2010

SYNOPSIS

During the 13th Regular Meeting of the UACCC and the opening of the 6th Scientific Forum, both the President and the Secretary General of the UACCC underlined the key importance which the Union attaches to the co-operation with the Venice Commission.

In his opening speech, Mr Buquicchio (President, Italy) recalled the importance of the co-operation with the Southern Rim of the Mediterranean Sea and Arab countries at large for Europe and the Venice Commission in particular. His presentation focused on the European Social Charter while that of Mr Mifsud Bonnici (Member, Malta) dealt with the origin and universality of human rights. Mr Gstöhl (Member, Liechtenstein) made a presentation on political rights contained in the European Convention on Human Rights.

The Presidents and Judges of the Arabic Courts and Councils explained their constitutional guarantees of human rights and presented decisions on laws, which were annulled because they were found to be violating human rights and found unconstitutional. Some speakers also insisted on difficulties in implementing the constitutions. The independence of judicial councils was identified as a key issue for judicial independence. The relationship between Islamic law and national constitutions was discussed and often a link between humanist values contained in the Koran and constitutional principles was established. For Libya, the constitutional value of the Great Green Document of 1988 and its consequence for the case-law of the Libyan Supreme Court was discussed. The debate showed also that the Arabic courts follow with interest the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights. Some speakers criticized double standards of the West when dealing with Arabic countries in the field of human rights.

In a number of interventions the co-operation with the Venice Commission was underlined and the General Assembly of the Union of Arab Constitutional Courts and Councils, which met at the occasion of the Scientific Forum, decided to set up a Committee with the mandate to prepare amendments to the Statute of the Union, which should allow it to work more effectively with the Commission. The Union also confirmed its support for the establishment of the World Conference on Constitutional Justice.

In line with the rotation system set out in the Statute, the Supreme Constitutional Court of Egypt took over the Presidency of the Union from the Supreme Court of Libya.