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EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW

(VENICE COMMISSION)

70th PLENARY SESSION
(Venice, 16-17 March 2007)

SYNOPSIS

The Commission

- heard an address by Mr Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe;
- heard an address by Mr Fiorenzo Stolfi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of San Marino and President of the Committee of Ministers;
- was informed on the request by **Morocco** to become a member of the Commission;
- adopted the preliminary report on **blasphemy, religious insults and inciting religious hatred**, at the request of the Parliamentary Assembly;
- adopted the opinion on **video-surveillance** of public places and human rights, at the request of the Parliamentary Assembly;
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- adopted the opinion on the **Convention on standards of Democratic Elections, Electoral Rights and Freedoms in the member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States**, at the request of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe;
- adopted the **Code of Good Practice on Referendums**;
- adopted the joint opinion with OSCE/ODIHR on the revision of the electoral code of **Armenia**;
- held an exchange of views with Mr Gia Kavtaradze, Minister of Justice of **Georgia**, and adopted the opinion on the Law of Georgia on Disciplinary Responsibility and Disciplinary Prosecution of Judges of Common Courts, at the request of the Parliamentary Assembly;
- was informed on a visit of a Commission delegation to **Kyrgyzstan** in February 2007;
- was informed by Mr Khabilsaiat Abishev, member of the Constitutional Council of **Kazakhstan**, on recent constitutional development in that country and on possible co-operation;

- held an exchange of views with Mr Ranko Krivokapic, Speaker of the Parliament of **Montenegro** on developments with respect to the adoption of a new Constitution in that country;
- held an exchange of views with Mr Zoran Loncar, Minister of Public Administration and local self-government of **Serbia**, and adopted the opinion on the new Constitution of that country;
- was informed on preparations for a future Constitution of Kosovo;
- held an exchange of views with Mr Mihajlo Manevski, Minister of Justice of “**the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**”, and adopted: the opinion on the draft law on the legal status of a church, a religious community and a religious group; the opinion on the draft laws on the public prosecutor’s office and on the council of public prosecutors; and the joint opinion with OSCE/ODIHR on the draft revision of the electoral code;
- held an exchange of views with Mr Serhiy Kivalov, Chairman of the Committee on Justice of the Verkhovna Rada of **Ukraine** and adopted the opinion on the draft law on the judiciary and the draft law on the status of judges in Ukraine;
- authorised the reporting members to finalise the preliminary opinion on the draft law on the parliamentary opposition in Ukraine on the basis of the discussions held during the session and to forward it to the Ukrainian authorities;
- agreed to adopt the opinion on the law on amendments to certain laws concerning the status of Deputies of the Verkhovna Rada of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and of Local Councils of Ukraine at its next session in June 2007 and decided to send in the meantime the draft opinion and the individual comments of the reporting members to the Monitoring Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly;
- held an exchange of views with Ms Danièle Smadja, Director for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights and with Mr Ladenburger, Legal services, European Commission, on co-operation with the **European Union** and was informed on the activity of the European Commission in the electoral field;
- adopted its annual report of activities 2006;
- adopted the Commission’s position paper on “Judicial Appointments”;
- elected, as from the next session: Mr La Pergola as President of the Commission; Ms Suchocka and Messers Tuori and Zorkin as Vice-Presidents; Messrs Colliard, Paczolay, Holovaty and Endzins as members of the Bureau; the chairs of the sub-commissions as follows: Mr Helgesen (Fundamental Rights); Mr Closa Montero (Federal State and Regional State); Mr Dimitrijevic (International Law); Mr. Velaers (Protection of Minorities); Ms Flanagan (Judiciary); Mr Jowell (Democratic Institutions); Mr Mifsud Bonnici (External Relations); Mr Torfason (Administrative questions); Mr van Dijk (Joint Council on Constitutional Justice); Ms Lazarova as Vice-President of the Council for Democratic Elections;
- was informed on recent constitutional developments in **Albania**, in the **Republic of Korea** and in **Morocco**;
- was informed on progress in the preparation of the next Forum for the Future of Democracy;

- fixed the dates of the next sessions as follows: 1-2 June, 19-20 October and 14-15 December 2007 and the date of the meeting of the Joint Council on Constitutional Justice for 29-30 May 2007.