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EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW
(VENICE COMMISSION)

76th PLENARY SESSION
(Venice, 17-18 October 2008)

S Y N O P S I S

The Commission

- Held an exchange of views with the representatives of the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional authorities of the Council of Europe;
- Held an exchange of views with Mr Ilir Rusmajli, President of the Legal Affairs Committee of the Assembly of **Albania**, on the recent amendments to the Constitution of Albania with a view to the adoption of an opinion at its next session;
- Adopted the joint opinion by the Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR on the amendments to the electoral code of **Armenia** of November 2007;
- Held an exchange of views with Mr Armen Harutyunyan, Armenian Human Rights Defender, and adopted the opinion on the Draft Amendments to the Law on Human Rights Defender of Armenia as well as the opinion on the issue of the immunity of persons involved in the electoral process in Armenia;
- Adopted the *amicus curiae* brief in the case of Sejdić and Finci against **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, pending before the **European Court of Human Rights**;
- Endorsed the joint opinion by the Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR on the draft amendments to the law on the right of citizens to assemble peacefully, without weapons, and to freely hold rallies and demonstrations in **Kyrgyzstan**;
- Adopted the joint opinion by the Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR on the draft law on freedom of religion of Kyrgyzstan;
- Adopted the opinion on the draft Law amending and supplementing the Law on constitutional proceedings in Kyrgyzstan and on the draft Law amending and supplementing the Law on the Constitutional Court of Kyrgyzstan;
- Adopted the joint opinion by the Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR on the electoral code of **Moldova** as amended by law N° 76-XVI;

- Adopted the opinion on the draft Law on the Constitutional Court of **Montenegro**;
- Was informed on follow-up to the Opinion on the draft amendments to the law on the State Prosecutor of Montenegro;
- Adopted the amicus curiae brief in the case of Bjelic against **Montenegro and Serbia**, pending before the **European Court of Human Rights**;
- Was informed on follow-up to the opinion on the Draft Law on the Public Prosecutors Office and on the Draft Law on the Council of Public Prosecutors of "**the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**";
- Held a preliminary exchange of views with Mr Yuksel Erdogan, Judge Rapporteur, Ministry of Justice of **Turkey** and Mr Kaan Esener, Head of Department for Human Rights, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, in view of the preparation of an opinion on the constitutional and legal provisions which are relevant for the **prohibition of political parties** in Turkey, at the request of the Parliamentary Assembly;
- Adopted the report on the **relationship between freedom of expression and freedom of religion**: the issue of regulation and prosecution of **blasphemy, religious insults and incitement to religious hatred**;
- Adopted the report on **constitutional issues raised by the ratification of the Statute of the International Criminal Court**;
- Held an exchange of views with Professor Musa Marofi, Ambassador of **Afghanistan** in Rome on possible co-operation;
- Was informed by Mr Alexander Vashkevich, former Justice of the Constitutional Court of **Belarus** on the UNDP project for the Promotion of a wider application of international human rights standards In the administration of justice in Belarus;
- Held an exchange of views with Minister Gilmar Mendes, President of the Federal Supreme Court of **Brazil** on co-operation with the Court;
- Was informed of a request for the assessment of the concept for the new law on statutory instruments of **Bulgaria**;
- Was informed on constitutional developments in **France**;
- Was informed on co-operation with the **Union of Arab Constitutional Courts and Councils**;
- Held an exchange of views with Ms Carmen Alanis Figueroa, Chief Magistrate, Federal Electoral Court and Mr Francisco Guerrero, Councillor, Federal Electoral Institute of **Mexico**;
- Held an exchange of views with Mr Guillermo Ortiz Mayagoitia, President of the Supreme Court of Mexico on co-operation with the **Ibero-American Conference on Constitutional Justice** and on the constitutional situation in Mexico;
- Discussed the draft report on the **notion of good governance** with a view to its adoption at the next session;

- Discussed the draft report on **legislative initiative** with a view to its adoption at the next session;
- Was presented the **Liber Amicorum** in honour of the late President **Antonio La Pergola**;
- fixed the dates of the next sessions as follows: 12-13 December 2008; 13-14 March 2009; 12-13 June 2009; 9-10 October 2009; 11-12 December 2009.