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EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW
(VENICE COMMISSION)

**in co-operation with
the National Assembly of Albania
and the Albanian Central Election Commission**

**under the auspices of the Albanian Chairmanship
of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe**

CONFERENCE ON

**“THE EUROPEAN ELECTORAL HERITAGE:
TEN YEARS OF THE CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE
IN ELECTORAL MATTERS”**

**Tirana, Albania, 2-3 July 2012
Hotel Tirana International
Skanderbeg Square, Build. 8 , Entr. 1**

SYNOPSIS

The Venice Commission organised in co-operation with the National Assembly of Albania and the Albanian Central Election Commission and under the auspices of the Albanian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, a Conference on “The European Electoral Heritage: Ten years of the Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters”.

Around 50 participants participated in this event which took place in Tirana on 2-3 July 2012. The Conference brought together in particular academics, representatives of electoral administrations, politicians as well as other specialists on electoral questions.

The Conference was opened by Ms Jozefina Topalli, Speaker of the Parliament of Albania; Mr Jan Velaers, member of the Venice Commission; Mr Arben Ristani, Chairman of the Central Election Commission of Albania; Mr Eugen Wollfarth, Ambassador of the OSCE Presence in Albania.

Ten years after the adoption by the Venice Commission of the Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters, the Council of Europe’s reference document in this field, the Conference focused on its implementation. Consequently, the following presentations were made: the experience of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Ms Gudrun Mosler-Törnström, Chamber of Regions, Member of the Council for Democratic Elections, Austria); The Role of the Code in the Albanian Reforms (Mr Viktor Gumi, Member of the Venice Commission, Albania) and The Participation of the Albanian Society in the Electoral Process and its Relation to the Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters (Mr Kristaq Kume, Former Chairman of the Central Election Commission, Albania). Mr Florian Grotz, Professor, Germany made a presentation on the Recurrent Challenges and Problematic Issues of Electoral Law – and therefore the obstacles to the Code’s application.

Three specific themes were thereafter dealt with: Electoral Administration, How to ensure the Representativeness of elected bodies and The Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters in the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights.

Two reports were presented on Electoral Administration: “The Organisation of Elections by an Impartial Body” (Mr Nikolai Vulchanov, Consultant, Bulgaria) and “The Model of Political Management of Elections: Advantages and Disadvantages” (Mr Arben Ristani, Chairman of the Central Election Commission).

The representativeness of elected bodies was first of all examined from the perspective of the Representation of Women in Elected Bodies (Mr Pierre Garrone, Head of the Division of Elections and Referendums, Secretariat of the Venice Commission in the absence of Ms Lydie Err, Ombudsman, Member of the Venice Commission, Luxembourg), and then from the perspective of “Electoral Law and Representation of Minorities” (Mr Jan Velaers, Professor, Member of the Venice Commission, Belgium).

The role of the Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters in the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights was introduced by Mr Vincent Berger, Jurisconsult, European Court of Human Rights.

Mr Viktor Gumi, Member of the Venice Commission, Albania summed up the discussions and underlined the importance of an effective application of the Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters in law as well as in practice.

The reports presented at the Conference will be published.