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EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW
(VENICE COMMISSION)

IN CO-OPERATION WITH
THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT OF LITHUANIA

AND
VILNIUS UNIVERSITY

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON “STANDARDS
OF EUROPE’S CONSTITUTIONAL HERITAGE”**

**Vilnius University, Lithuania,
25 October 2012**

SYNOPSIS

The Constitutional Court of Lithuania and the Venice Commission in co-operation with Vilnius University organised an international Conference on “Standards of Europe’s constitutional heritage” on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Constitution of Lithuania. The event took place at the Vilnius University on 25 October 2012.

The Council of Europe’s delegation consisted of Ms Danutė Jočienė, Judge, European Court of Human Rights, Mr Gianni Buquicchio, President of the Venice Commission, Mr Sergio Bartole, Italian substitute member of the Commission and Ms Tatiana Mychelova, External Relations Officer of the Venice Commission.

The following participated in this conference:

- Current and former Presidents and Judges of the Constitutional Court of Lithuania and members of its registry; Speaker of the Parliament Ms Irena Degutienė; academics and students;
- Presidents and judges from the constitutional courts of Latvia, Poland and Ukraine; a judge from the Constitutional Court of the Czech Republic;
- Mr Aleh Dzyarovich, National Academy of Science of Belarus, Institute of History.

The conference evolved around two main topics, namely the history of the Lithuanian state and Constitution, on the one hand, and the European constitutional heritage, on the other. Professor Bartole prepared an excellent report on Europe’s constitutional heritage (cf. CDL-JU(2012)020).

He noted that the Venice Commission referred to the European constitutional heritage as a yardstick in the preparation of its opinions and its consultative support aimed at facilitating constitutional reforms and the implementation of the constitutions in its member States. He went on proposing the concept of this heritage covered both the legal provisions in force in the legal orders of the European countries and the scientific doctrine on the implementation and development of these texts. This definition implied that the terms of reference of the concept were, on one side, the normative experience of the European countries and, on the other side, the scientific doctrine and theories which underpin this experience. Mr Bartole also analysed the development of the Lithuanian constitutionalism and its place in European constitutionalism.

The conference was followed by a visit to an exhibition of historical documents, in particular of the originals copies of the first Constitution of the Polish-Lithuanian state. The official celebration of the anniversary was held at the palace of the President of Lithuania. Juozas Žilyls, the first President of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania (1993–1999) gave an interesting presentation entitled “Constitution – the Basis of Stability of Society and the State”.