

ContainsDatafor

PostscriptOnly.

Strasbourg 29 January 1997

<s:\cdl\doc\97\cdl\2.e>

CDL (97) 2
Or.Fr.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW

DRAFT REPORT

**ON THE STATE OF PROGRESS
OF CO-OPERATION BETWEEN
THE VENICE COMMISSION
AND THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA**

prepared by

Mr Giorgio MALINVERNI (Switzerland)

**with the assistance of the Secretariat,
for examination and adoption
at the 30th plenary meeting of the Commission
(Venice, 7-8 March 1997)**

REPORT

on the state of progress of co-operation between the Venice Commission and the Republic of Croatia

I. Introduction

In a letter dated 7 November 1996, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Assembly Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights requested the Venice Commission to provide information on the state of progress of its co-operation with the Croatian authorities concerning the carrying into effect of the recommendations contained in the Commission's report on the implementation of the Constitutional Law on Human Rights and Freedoms and on the Rights of Ethnic Communities or Minorities in the Republic of Croatia (CDL (96) 26)). At its 29th plenary meeting (Venice 15-16 November 1996), the Commission requested Mr G Malinverni to prepare a draft report on this matter for examination and adoption.

This report was adopted at the ... meeting of the Commission (Venice,), on the basis of the draft prepared by Mr Malinverni.

The Commission's recommendations referred to in the Assembly's request are recapitulated (Chapter 1), followed by a description of the various phases in the joint efforts by the Republic of Croatia and the Commission to apply these recommendations (Chapter 2) and, lastly, by an outline of the prospects for co-operation in the near future (Chapter 3).

Chapter 1: The recommendations of the Venice Commission

In connection with Croatia's application for accession to the Council of Europe, the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly requested an opinion from the Venice Commission on 16 February 1996 concerning the constitutional situation in Croatia, more specifically the application of the Constitutional Law on Human Rights and Freedoms and on the Rights of Ethnic Communities or Minorities in the Republic of Croatia, and the machinery for the protection of human rights.

At its 26th meeting (1-2 March 1996), the Venice Commission set up a working group and appointed Messrs Matscher, Malinverni and Nicolas as rapporteurs. The latter visited Zagreb on 14-16 March 1996 and were able to consult representatives of the Croatian authorities and of the minority groups.

In their report, they focused their comments on the question of the suspension of several provisions of the Constitutional Law of 1991. The suspended clauses related to matters such as the special status granted to districts where members of ethnic and national communities represent a majority of the population. The right of representation and participation in public institutions by communities and minorities which make up more than 8% of the population in accordance with the census of 1991, together with the international supervision of the implementation of this Law and the legal protection of the rights embodied therein (including the question of the provisional Court of Human Rights in Croatia, provided for in Article 60) were also affected by this suspension. Having regard to the constitutional situation in Croatia and to the Constitutional Law of 1991 on Human Rights and the Rights of Minorities and their

Judicial Protection, the rapporteurs recommended:

"- that the suspended provisions of the 1991 Constitutional Law be revised as soon as possible in order to ensure that persons belonging to minorities are guaranteed rights in the field of local autonomy in accordance with the European Charter of Local Self-Government and Recommendation 1201 (1993);

- in order to subject the protection of minorities to a certain degree of international supervision, that an enlargement of the Constitutional Court be provided for such as to allow it, when deciding upon cases concerning the rights of minorities, to comprise international judges. Such a proposal may be considered to be an adequate confidence-building measure;

- that a large information campaign for the promotion of the legal and procedural possibilities of protection of human rights and the rights of minorities be launched, in particular through the Croatian Human Rights Institute and with the help of the Council of Europe."

On its accession to the Council of Europe, Croatia undertook to carry these recommendations into effect (see Assembly Opinion No. 195 (1996) on Croatia's request for membership of the Council of Europe, para. 9. vii).

Furthermore, under Committee of Ministers Resolution (96) 31, such membership is subject to the requirement to co-operate with the Council of Europe, *inter alia* in applying the Constitutional Law on Human Rights and Freedoms and the Rights of National and Ethnic Communities or Minorities.

Chapter 2: Implementation of the recommendations

2.1 Revision of the Constitutional Law

The suspended provisions of the 1991 Law conferred specific rights of representation and participation in public institutions (parliament, government and supreme judicial bodies) to all minorities representing 8% of the population; these provisions were designed mainly to protect the largest minorities in Croatia, particularly the Serb minority, by granting them effective representation at different levels of the legislative, executive and judicial institutions. Although there are 16 minorities present in Croatia, only the Serb minority was affected by these provisions. All the provisions relating to the rights of minorities amounting to at least 8% of the population have been suspended. This also applies to provisions granting special status to districts with a Serb majority.

At the meeting of the Commission working group (comprising Messrs Matscher, La Pergola, Russell, Nicolas and Nick) attended by representatives of the Croatian authorities and held in Paris on 20-21 June 1996, the Croatian authorities announced the setting-up of a group to study the revision of the Constitutional Law under consideration. They also announced their intention of inviting members of the Venice Commission to take part in the work of this group.

On 10 October 1996, the Government of Croatian Republic created the study group to examine and propose the revision of the Constitutional Law. The membership of this group is as follows:

- Mr Vladimir Seks, Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies, Commission Chairman,
- Ms Ljerka Mintas-Hodak, Deputy Prime Minister,
- Mr Davorin Mlakar, Minister for Administration,
- Mr Miroslav Separovic, Minister of Justice,
- Mr Marijan Prus, Director of the Governmental Bureau for Legislation,
- Ms Dubravka Simonovic, Head of Human Rights Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
- Mr Smiljko Sokol, member of parliament,
- Mr Branko Smerdel, Professor at the Zagreb Faculty of Law.

In a letter dated 16 October 1996, the Croatian authorities announced the creation of the study group to revise the Constitutional Law and requested the Council of Europe's assistance.

At its 29th plenary meeting (Venice, 15-16 November 1996), the Venice Commission learned of these developments and appointed the following members to take part in the proceedings of the above-mentioned Croatian group: Messrs Gérard Batliner, (Liechtenstein), Jan Helgesen (Norway), Godert Maas Geesteranus (Netherlands), Franz Matscher (Austria), Ergun Özbudun (Turkey), Ms Hanna Suchocka (Poland). The Commission Secretariat informed the Croatian authorities accordingly on 3 December 1996, requesting them to send details for the timetable of meetings of the study group and proposals regarding a first meeting between the group and members of the Venice Commission.

At the time of adopting this report, the Venice Commission had not yet received details of the dates of the meetings of the study group to revise the Constitutional Law.

2.2 Enlargement of the Constitutional Court

In their report, the Venice Commission rapporteurs suggested that, when taking decisions on matters relating to minority rights, the Constitutional Court could sit with an enlarged membership. For considering such cases, the Constitutional Court would consist of Croatian constitutional judges assisted provisionally by a number of international judges; with this enlarged membership, the Constitutional Court would deal exclusively with cases relating to alleged violations of minority rights.

At the 27th plenary meeting of the Commission (Venice, 17-18 May 1996), the representatives of Croatia announced that, owing to the difficulties entailed and the time necessary for a constitutional amendment of the kind proposed by the rapporteurs, it would be preferable to appoint international advisers or advisors, rather than international judges to

participate in the deliberations of the Court, a measure which would be possible under the Court's rules of procedure which authorise the consultation of experts. The Venice Commission found this proposal fully compatible with the rapporteurs' conclusions and instructed the latter to continue their efforts, in conjunction with the Croatian authorities, to study the technical aspects of this proposal.

At successive meetings to discuss the participation of international advisers in the work of the Constitutional Court (Paris, 20-21 June 1996; Venice, 12 September 1996), the Venice Commission and the representatives of the Croatian authorities reached agreement on the legal basis for participation by international advisers, the arrangements for their appointment, the qualifications they should possess and the publication of their opinions. In order to ensure the independence of these advisers, it was suggested that their participation in the deliberations of the Croatian Constitutional Court should be financed by the Council of Europe (see Appendix I).

On 12 September 1996, the Croatian authorities submitted to the Venice Commission draft rules of procedure for the participation of international advisers in the deliberations of the Constitutional Court. After studying this text, the Commission concluded at its 28th plenary meeting (Venice, 13-14 September 1996):

- that the participation of international advisers in the work of the Constitutional Court should be implemented through the designation by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe of two advisers and two or three substitutes, chosen from a list proposed by the President of the Croatian Constitutional Court and the President of the Venice Commission; that the said advisers should be authorised to participate in the deliberations of the Constitutional Court, without the right to vote; that the Court decision should mention their participation; and that their opinions should be published;
- that the necessary steps should be taken to organise the proposed participation of international advisers in the near future;
- that the participation by international advisers should be regarded as a provisional measure; in principle, it should last until ratification by Croatia of the European Convention on Human Rights, but should not extend beyond 1999; the possibility should be considered of extending the advisers' term of office on the expiry of the aforementioned period.

On 22 October 1996, in accordance with Rule 21, paragraph 1, sub-paragraph 4 of its Rules of Procedure, the Constitutional Court took the decision approving participation by international advisers in the proceedings of the said court (see Appendix II).

This decision was communicated to the Venice Commission on 17 January 1997.

In accordance with the decision by the Constitutional Court, which complies with the terms agreed between the representatives of the Croatian authorities and the Venice Commission at the latter's 28th plenary meeting, the Committee of Ministers will be called upon to appoint two advisers and three substitutes drawn from a list prepared by the Croatian Constitutional Court and the Venice Commission. This list should be finalised at the next

meeting of the Venice Commission (7-8 March 1997).

Costs pertaining to the translation of documents, interpretation during hearings and the publication of advisers' opinions (in the Official Gazette simultaneously with the Court's decision) are to be borne by the Constitutional Court. On the other hand, other costs relating to participation by the advisers (travel and subsistence and other allowances) are to be borne by the Council of Europe.

At its 30th plenary meeting (Venice, 7-8 March 1997), the Commission, in consultation with the Croatian Constitutional Court, drew up a list of ... persons.

This list was submitted to the Committee of Ministers which is responsible for appointing the two advisers to the Constitutional Court and their three substitutes.

The Commission understands that Article 5, para 2 of the decision of the Constitutional Court will be interpreted and implemented in such a way as to allow the international advisers to attend not only the hearing but also the deliberations of the Constitutional Court as agreed between the representatives of the Croatian authorities and the Commission at its 28th plenary meeting.

The Commission also understands that the necessity or opportunity to prolong the mandate of the international advisers will be considered on its expiry, i.e. at the time of the ratification by Croatia of the European Convention on Human Rights or at the end of 1999 (Article 9 of the decision of the Constitutional Court), in the light of the experience acquired, as agreed at the abovementioned meeting.

2.3 Information campaign on possibilities for protecting human rights and minority rights in Croatia

In order to restore confidence among the minority populations concerned, the Venice Commission had suggested launching a vast information campaign on human rights and minority rights.

This proposal met with the approval of the Croat authorities.

At the 28th plenary meeting of the Commission, the Croatian delegation announced that a translation of the European Convention on Human Rights had been widely distributed throughout the population. The Commission welcomed this initiative, while stressing that the campaign should also cover the legal and procedural possibilities for protecting human rights and minority rights available under Croatian domestic law.

Since January 1997, the Venice Commission has been preparing a brochure describing the legal means for securing the protection of human rights and minority rights in Croatia. This publication could be distributed among the population, including those persons currently placed under United Nations administration.

Chapter 3: Prospects for co-operation in the near future

Although the efforts already made give cause for considerable satisfaction, co-operation should undoubtedly be intensified in the near future.

The Commission hopes that the Croatian commission responsible for **revising the Constitutional Law** will begin operating as soon as possible, that it will make rapid progress and that the specifically nominated members of the Venice Commission will soon be invited to participate. The Commission had already noted the importance of the proposed revision and the undoubted disincentive resulting from the suspension of certain provisions of the Constitutional Law for members of minorities. Any prolongation of the suspension of the constitutional guarantees, which by the same token would prolong uncertainty regarding the legal system to be applied in the long term to minorities, would put the latter at a disadvantage. The Commission recalls that, in its report adopted on 17-18 May 1996, it expressed the wish that the Constitutional Law should be revised as soon as possible. It notes that several months have since elapsed.

On the other hand, the Commission can only welcome the adoption of the rules concerning the **participation of international advisers in the deliberations of the Constitutional Court**. Though it has proved possible, thanks to the efficiency and spirit of co-operation of the Constitutional Court, to devise a technical arrangement in a relatively short space of time, its application is now a matter of great urgency.

With regard to the **campaign on the means of protecting human rights**, activities should be launched in close collaboration between the Croatian authorities and the Council of Europe. The conference on the legal aspects of the integration of the area controlled by UNTAES (United Nations Transitional Administration in Eastern Slavonia) into Croatia, to be organised in Strasbourg on 24-25 February 1997, and the brochure which the Venice Commission is preparing on the protection of human rights and minority rights in Croatia, form part of this exercise.

Conclusions

The Commission is satisfied with the co-operation established with the Republic of Croatia which has already produced a number of commendable results. This co-operation, which testifies to Croatia's attachment to the values on which present-day Europe is founded, would not have been possible without the expertise and efficiency of the delegation of the Croatian Republic at the successive meetings of the Commission and without the unstinting collaboration of the Croatian Constitutional Court.

The Commission trusts that this co-operation will intensify in the coming months and will begin to produce practical results in the field of human rights and minority rights.

APPENDIX I

Strasbourg 23 July 1996

<s:\cdl\croatia\meet023\memo.e>

EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW

Meeting of the Working Group on the Implementation of the Croatian Constitutional Law on the Protection of Human and Minority Rights

Paris, 20-21 June 1996

MEMORANDUM

Introduction:

At the request of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly, Mr Matscher, Mr Malinverni and Mr Nicolas went to Zagreb from 14 to 16 March 1996 and drew up a report on the implementation of the Constitutional Law on human rights and freedoms and on the rights of national and ethnic communities and minorities in the Republic of Croatia.

As part of the procedure for joining the Council of Europe, Croatia officially undertook to implement the recommendations resulting from the opinion of the European Commission for Democracy through Law and in particular to cooperate with the Council of Europe in the implementation of the Constitutional Law (Opinion No 195 (1996) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on Croatia's request for membership of the Council of Europe, paragraph 9 (vii); Resolution (96) 31 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe).

The report on the implementation of the Croatian Constitutional Law adopted at the 27th plenary meeting of the Venice Commission recommended, inter alia:

- that the suspended provisions of the Constitutional Law on the protection of human rights and the rights of minorities be revised as soon as possible;
- that an enlargement of the Constitutional Court be provided for in order to subject the protection of minorities to a certain degree of international supervision.

At its 27th plenary meeting, the Venice Commission instructed its Rapporteurs to pursue their work in close cooperation with the representatives of the Republic of Croatia. A working group made up of Mr Matscher, Mr La Pergola, Mr Russell, Mr Nicholas and Mr Nick and representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Dr Šimonovi_, First Vice-Minister), the Ministry of Justice (Ms Imamovi_, Counsellor, Department of International Relations), the Constitutional Court (Mr Mal_i_, Constitutional Court judge) met on 20 and 21 June 1996 in Paris. Mr Buquicchio, Mr Giakoumopoulos and Ms Martin also participated.

I. Revision of the suspended provisions of the Constitutional Law on the protection of human rights and the rights of minorities: the Croatian authorities announced that a working group would be set up in the near future (before September 1996) which would be responsible for studying the revision of the constitutional law in question, taking into account the European Charter on Local Self-Government and Recommendation 1201 (1993) of the Parliamentary Assembly. Members of the Venice Commission would be invited to participate in this group's work.

II. Enlargement of the Constitutional Court: the working group studied the technical aspects of this matter and agreed on the points outlined below.

- Legal basis of the participation of international advisers

The participation of international advisers would initially be based on the Constitutional Court's current rules of procedure, Article 21 paragraph 4 of which allows the Constitutional Court to adopt "separate acts" concerning cooperation with international organisations. Enlargement of the Constitutional Court to comprise international advisers would thus be possible without amending the Constitution or the Constitutional Law on the Constitutional Court, thereby avoiding a long and complex legislative procedure (which requires a two-thirds majority in the two chambers of Parliament) whose outcome would, moreover, be uncertain. Under Article 21 of the rules of procedure, separate acts are adopted by a simple majority of the Constitutional Court.

Subsequently, the participation of international advisers in the Constitutional Court's work might also be incorporated into the revised text of the Constitutional Law on the protection of human and minority rights.

- Appointment of international advisers

It was agreed that the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe would be requested to draw up a list of candidates comprising 7 persons with extensive experience in constitutional matters involving the protection of minorities.

When a case brought before the Constitutional Court required the participation of international advisers, the President of the Venice Commission and the President of the Constitutional Court would select two persons from the list who would participate in the Croatian Constitutional Court's work on the case in question.

Alternatively, international advisers could be called on to participate in accordance with a rotation system.

The term of office of international advisers could be provisionally last to the end of 1999 and would be renewable.

International advisers would benefit from privileges and immunities similar to those of members of international courts, on the basis of an agreement to be made between the Council of Europe and Croatia. A draft agreement would be drawn up based on the second, fourth and sixth protocols to the General Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Council of Europe.

- Powers of international advisers

The participation of international advisers would be solicited as follows in cases concerning minority rights brought before the Constitutional Court: automatically in cases of alleged violation of a right guaranteed by the Constitution, the Constitutional Law on the rights of minorities or an international instrument for the protection of rights of minorities; and by a decision of the President of the Constitutional Court in any case relating to minorities or members of minorities.

According to information provided by the Constitutional Court, of the 107 constitutional appeals made between 1991 and 1996 which were accepted by the Court as falling within its sphere of competence, 74 were brought by members of minorities. It could thus be anticipated that international advisers would be called on several times per year.

The Constitutional Court would provide the two international advisers with the main elements of the case file in one of the two official languages of the Council of Europe.

The advisers would submit a provisional written opinion within a maximum period of three months so as not to delay the procedure.

The international advisers would participate in any debates and deliberations of the Court. Interpreters would be provided by the Croatian Constitutional Court.

Constitutional Court judgments would mention the participation of international advisers.

- Publication of provisional and final opinions of international advisers

Provisional opinions would be made public at the request of international advisers.

It was also agreed that the final opinion of international advisers would be published. The Croatian Constitutional Court would be in charge of publication under the following conditions: any dissenting opinion must be published; concordant opinions would be published at the request of the international advisers.

The publications of the Croatian Constitutional Court could constitute a means of circulating the provisional opinions of international advisers.

The Croatian authorities would be invited to propose any other publication in order to increase the possibilities of access by the public and professionals to the views of international advisers.

Provisional and final opinions of international advisers should be published in their original language and in translation as soon as possible after judgment has been delivered by the Constitutional Court; final opinions should in principle be concomitant with the publication of the judgment in the Croatian Official Gazette (*Narodne novine*).

- Financing

The participation of international advisers in the Croatian Constitutional Court's work should, to help ensure their independence, be financed by the Council of Europe.

* * *

This memorandum of the Rapporteurs of the Venice Commission on the technical aspects of enlargement of the Constitutional Court will be sent to the Constitutional Court so that it can prepare the necessary act on the basis of the working group's proposals.

The participation of international advisers in the Constitutional Court's deliberations should thus be possible in the very near future.

APPENDIX II
(no translation available)

TRADUCTION NON OFFICIELLE

Aux termes de l'article 21, paragraphe 1, alinéa 4 du règlement de la Cour constitutionnelle de la République de Croatie, la Cour constitutionnelle lors de sa séance tenue le 22.10 a prononcé

LA DECISION

*sur la participation des conseillers internationaux dans la procédure de protection
des droits des minorités nationales auprès de
la Cour constitutionnelle de la République de Croatie*

Article 1

Les conseillers internationaux participeront au travail de la Cour constitutionnelle dans les procédures de protection des droits constitutionnels des minorités nationales et des personnes appartenant à une minorité nationale (par la suite: les droits des minorités) portées devant la Cour par une plainte constitutionnelle conformément à l'article 28 de la Loi sur la Cour constitutionnelle de la République de Croatie. Les modalités et les conditions de la participation des conseillers internationaux sont précisées par cette Décision.

Article 2

Les conseillers internationaux participeront à toutes les procédures de protection des droits des minorités dans lesquelles le requérant se réfère directement à l'infraction de ses droits constitutionnels de l'article 15 de la Constitution de la République de Croatie ou indirectement - se référant à l'infraction des droits des minorités précisé par la loi constitutionnelle, par le traité international de l'article 134 de la Constitution de la République de Croatie ou par d'autres règlements.

Article 3

Les conseillers internationaux participeront, à l'invitation de la Cour constitutionnelle, aux autres procédures dans lesquelles la personne appartenant à la minorité se réfère à l'infraction d'autres droits constitutionnels et affirme que l'infraction a été commise pour la raison de son appartenance à une minorité.

Article 4

Dans les cas mentionnés dans les Articles 2 et 3 de la présente Décision, la Cour constitutionnelle va remettre aux conseillers internationaux les dossiers principaux de l'affaire traduits dans l'une des deux langues officielles du Conseil de l'Europe (l'anglais ou le français).

Article 5

Lorsqu'il aura été décidé de leur participation à la procédure, la Cour assurera aux conseillers internationaux:

1. La rédaction de l'opinion écrite antérieure à la transmission à la Cour constitutionnelle au plus tard trois mois après réception du dossier, ainsi que la publication de l'opinion antérieure si l'expert international le demande.
2. La participation à l'audience consultative, qui est obligatoirement organisée pour toute procédure selon l'article 44 du Règlement de la Cour constitutionnelle, et au cours de laquelle la Cour assure la traduction dans l'une des langues du Conseil de l'Europe.
3. La participation aux autres audiences concernant la procédure, à l'exception de celle où ont lieu la prise de décision et le vote.
4. La transmission et la publication de l'opinion définitive suite à la décision de la Cour, obligatoirement si l'opinion n'est pas en accord avec la décision et sur demande des conseillers s'il s'agit d'une opinion conforme à la décision mais pas à l'explication de la décision.

Article 6

La Cour assure la publication de l'opinion mentionnée à l'Article 5 de cette décision dans une publication à laquelle a accès le public et ce, dans la langue dans laquelle a été rédigée l'opinion et dans sa traduction croate.

L'opinion définitive est publiée simultanément à la publication de la décision dans le Journal Officiel.

La liste des deux conseillers internationaux et de trois suppléants est déterminée par le Conseil des Ministres du Conseil de l'Europe sur la base d'une proposition conjointe de la Cour constitutionnelle et de la Commission de Venise.

Pour chaque procédure prévue dans cette décision, participent deux conseillers désignés conjointement par le Président de la Cour constitutionnelle et le Président de la Commission de Venise.

Article 8

Les frais de traduction des documents concernant la procédure et l'opinion des conseillers, de même que la traduction au cours des audiences consultatives et autres audiences seront pris en charge par le Cour constitutionnelle.

Tous les autres frais liés à la participation des conseillers internationaux au travail de la Cour constitutionnelle seront pris en charge par le Conseil de l'Europe.

Article 9

Cette décision entre en vigueur le jour de son adoption et sa validité cesse le jour de la ratification, par le Parlement de la République de Croatie, de la Convention européenne pour la protection des Droits de l'Homme et les libertés fondamentales et, au plus tard, à la fin de 1999.

APPENDIX III

CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE VENICE COMMISSION AND THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA - CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

16 February 1996	Request by the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights for a report on the implementation of the Croatian Constitutional Law on Human Rights and the Rights of Minorities.
1-2 March 1996	Creation of a group of rapporteurs of the Venice Commission on the implementation of the said Croatian Constitutional Law (Messrs Malinverni, Matscher and Nicolas).
14-16 March 1996	Visit by the group of rapporteurs to Croatia.
29 March 1996	Preparation of the said report.
24 April 1996	Parliamentary Assembly Opinion No. 195 (1996) on Croatia's request for membership of the Council of Europe (commitment by Croatia to implement the Venice Commission's recommendations).
17-18 May 1996	Examination and adoption of the rapporteurs' report by the Venice Commission at its 27th plenary meeting (document CDL (96) 26).
20-21 June 1996	Meeting in Paris between the Commission working group (Messrs Matscher, La Pergola, Nick, Nicolas, Russell) and the Croatian delegation. Examination of questions concerning the participation of international advisers in the deliberations of the Constitutional Court.
2 July 1996	Committee of Ministers Resolution (96) 31: invitation to Croatia to become a member of the Council of Europe.
12 September 1996	Meeting in Venice of the Commission working group and the Croatian delegation. Examination of the draft rules adopted by the Constitutional Court on the participation of international advisers in the deliberations of the Constitutional Court.
13-14 September 1996	28th plenary meeting of the commission. Examination of the state of co-operation with Croatia in the presence of the delegation of the Republic of Croatia.
10 October 1996	Creation of the commission to revise the Croatian Constitutional Law on Human Rights and Minority Rights.

- 16 October 1996 The Council of Europe is invited to assist the Commission responsible for revising the Croatian Constitutional Law on Human Rights and Minority Rights.
- 22 October 1996 Adoption by the Constitutional Court of the rules on the participation of international advisers.
- 15-16 November 1996 29th plenary meeting of the Venice Commission. Messrs Batliner, Helgesen, Maas Geesteranus, Matscher, Özbudun and Ms Suchocka nominated to participate in the work of the Commission to revise the Constitutional Law.
- ... Preparation/adoption of the list of candidates to act as international advisers to the Constitutional Court.