



COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 28 February 2005

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW
(VENICE COMMISSION)

with the assistance of
THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

**SECOND EUROPEAN CONFERENCE
OF ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BODIES**

Strasbourg, 10 – 11 February 2005

Council of Europe, Palais de l'Europe, Room 8 (2nd floor)

SYNOPSIS

The Venice Commission with the assistance of the European Commission organised the Second European Conference of Election Management Bodies, at the Council of Europe headquarters, in Strasbourg, on 10-11 February 2005.

Since its creation the Venice Commission has been very active in the field of electoral law. However, this is the first time that the Commission has organised an activity bringing together representatives of the national authorities and different international organisations specialised in electoral matters.

The main aim of this meeting was to discuss the problem of voters' turnout during elections, the impact of the new technologies on the participation of citizens in electoral process and to explore the different electoral systems and experiences of a number of national electoral administrations and agencies.

Representatives from Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, France, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom participated in the conference. Other participants of the event included representatives of the Council for Democratic Elections of the Venice Commission, the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, the European Commission, as well as international organisations such as ACEEEO, IFES, IDEA and OSCE/ODIHR and the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE, Mexico).

Reports were presented by the following speakers: Mr Gabriel O'DUFFY, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Ireland); Mr Domingos MAGALHAES, Director of Services, Technical Secretariat for Electoral Processes, (Portugal); Mr Peter PACZOLAY, Deputy Head, Office of the President of the Republic of Hungary, Member of the Council for Democratic Elections; Mr Mate RADICS, Association of Central and Eastern European Electoral Offices (ACEEEO); Professor Richard SINNOTT, Department of Politics and Institute for the Study of Social Change, University College Dublin (Ireland); Ms Maria GRATSCHEW, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA); Mr Thomas M. BUCHSBAUM, Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Austria); Mr Stephan De MUL, Federal Public Service Home Affairs (Belgium); Ms Kristina LEMON, Election Authority (Sweden); Mr. Carlos NAVARRO FIERRO, Director, International Affairs Unit, Federal Electoral Institute (Mexico) and Ms Nicola SCHMIDT, IFES Ltd, (UK).

The reports and discussion sessions were followed by a presentation of the Venice Commission's 'VOTA' database¹.

Following a fruitful exchange of views the participants agreed on the following:

- 1) to request the Venice Commission to:
 - co-organise with participating countries yearly meetings of the Electoral Management Bodies;
 - to set up and maintain an internet discussion forum restricted to representatives of electoral management bodies and intergovernmental organisations;

¹ *Database of electoral legislation of countries co-operating with the Venice Commission.*

- 2) to invite the participating institutions to come up with proposals for the topic of the next conference on the basis of the list of subjects adopted at the conference;
- 3) to extend the invitation to participate in forthcoming activities to the Electoral Management Bodies to all Council of Europe Member States;
- 4) to contribute with regular up-dates of the legislation to the Venice Commission's 'VOTA' Database;
- 5) to encourage the participating countries to support and to contribute to different research projects in the electoral field led by international organisations and research institutions (such as, for example, the research project on voters' turnout run by Professor Sinnott, University College Dublin, Ireland).

The texts of the reports of this seminar will be published by the Venice Commission in due course.