

Strasbourg, 19 May 1998  
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**CDL-JU (98) 15**  
Or. Eng./Fr.

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW**

**Model letter for new liaison officers**

**1998 version**

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Strasbourg, \* 1998

### **Model letter for new liaison officers**

Dear [...]

I have the honour to refer to the letter by [...] nominating you as liaison officer to the Venice Commission in respect of the [Constitutional Court] of .. ... It is a great pleasure for me to be able to welcome you in this function. I am sure that our co-operation will be most fruitful for both your Court and the Venice Commission as well as for all readers of the Bulletin on Constitutional Case-Law and the users of the CODICES database.

Together with Constitutional Courts and Courts of equivalent jurisdiction, the Venice Commission has established a network of liaison officers with the prime goal of producing the Bulletin on Constitutional Case-Law and the database CODICES. The Sub-Commission on Constitutional Justice of the Venice Commission usually meets once or twice a year at the seat of the Commission, in Venice or at the invitation of a court at the seat of the latter, in order to discuss the editing of the Bulletin and the progress with the production of the CODICES database. Enclosed, you will find the report of the last meeting of the Sub-Commission on Constitutional Justice with the liaison officers. For a general description of the work of the Venice Commission, please refer to document CDL-INF (98) 2 also enclosed. The Internet site of the Commission gives, in addition, information on its members and links to participating Constitutional Courts "<http://www.coe.fr/venice>".

Three times a year, liaison officers send summaries of important decisions - we call them *précis* (singular and plural alike) - in English or French to the Secretariat of the Venice Commission. These *précis* are adapted, formatted and translated into the other language and finally published in the Bulletin on Constitutional Case-Law by the Secretariat. Document CDL-JU (98) 11 containing guidelines on how to draft the *précis* is enclosed. If you so wish you can use the entry mask program which will be sent to you on diskettes under separate cover or a standard Wordprocessing software (Word/WordPerfect) for entering the *précis*).

[...Name and address]

The schedule for the preparation of the précis is the following:

- Period from 1 January to 30 April  
Last date for contributions : 31 May  
Publication date : September
- Period from 1 May to 31 August  
Last date for contributions : 30 September  
Publication date : January
- Period from 1 September to 31 December  
Last date for contributions : 31 January  
Publication date : May

The choice of decisions to be published in the Bulletin lies with the liaison officer or with the Court as you prefer. A criterion for selection can be the interest raised by a decision in other countries, which will in most cases be one of constitutional law. Important decisions which have a major political impact in the country can, of course, feature in the Bulletin as well. Editorial modifications will be sent to you only in cases of major changes, due to the heavy volume of contributions sent in.

In addition to the précis, we would be grateful if you could send us the full texts of the summarised decisions in the original language and, if available, their translation into other languages (preferably English or French but also other languages). If your court publishes its decisions in a printed official collection we would be happy to include this collection in our Centre on Constitutional Justice.

A series of Special Bulletins completes the regular Bulletins. The Special Bulletin 1994 contains descriptions of the participating Courts. Since then, we have published in regular issues of the Bulletin similar descriptions with regard to Courts which were not yet participating when this Special Bulletin was edited. If you so wish you could prepare such a text in respect of [the Constitutional Court of ...]. It is, of course, entirely up to you whether you would like to draft such a text.

Another series of Special Bulletins, which we call "Basic Texts", contains the laws governing the work of the participating Courts together with extracts of the constitutions concerning the Courts. [Four] Bulletins have been published in this series so far. A contribution by your Court could be published in a future issue.

Finally, a new series of Special Bulletins on 'Leading Cases' will present the most important decisions of participating courts prior to their participation in the Bulletin. In a first step, it is planned to publish two Special Bulletins on the European Courts (European Court of Human Rights and, subsequently, Court of Justice of the European Communities). Within a timeframe of one to two years, as from October 1997, the liaison officers concerned (i.e. those from courts with existing case-law prior to participation in the Bulletin) are to report in the form of précis (adding full texts on paper and wherever possible on diskette/e-mail) the most important case-law of her/his Court prior to its participation in the Bulletin. The selection of cases will of necessity be much more restrictive than the one for the regular

Bulletin. This would result in a maximum of not more than 100 précis for the longest existing Courts.

Once the CODICES database has been fed with these précis, the Sub-Commission and the liaison officers will decide on subjects for Special Bulletins on specific themes. These thematic Special Bulletins will then be produced directly from the database by the Secretariat. The liaison officers will receive the draft publication for comments and will have the possibility to amend these texts or to provide further précis in the light of this publication.

All the regular and Special Bulletins together with the full texts of the decisions we have received on electronic storage media have been included in our database CODICES which has been published on CD-COM. The CD-ROM will be sent to you under separate cover. An Internet connection for CODICES has been established at the address "<http://www.coe.fr/codices>". In addition, it was decided to include into CODICES the constitutions of the participating countries. Here, I would like to ask you whether you could send us on diskette or via e-mail the [...] Constitution in the original language and if possible, its translation into other languages.

In order to allow for their inclusion into CODICES, it would be most helpful if you could send all the previously mentioned texts on diskette or via e-mail (see attached the short guide on how to send material via e-mail to the Secretariat).

In its introductory part, CODICES contains a list with the names of the liaison officers. If you would like to have your postal and/or e-mail address and fax or telephone numbers included in the database, please fill in the attached form and return it to the Secretariat.

For your information, you will receive under separate cover a complete set of previous Bulletins in English and French together with a full set of our series "Science and Technique of Democracy" in [English, French and some in Russian] as well as the last annual report of the Venice Commission.

Finally, as concerns financial arrangements, I have to inform you that the expenses incurred by the journey to the place of meetings of the Sub-Commission with the liaison officers, are borne by the Court which has nominated the liaison officer. The Venice Commission cannot, unfortunately, provide any financial contribution to the valuable work the liaison officers perform and for which the Venice Commission is most grateful.

Mr Schnutz Rudolf Dürr, who is in charge of the production of the Bulletin and CODICES is at your disposal for any further questions (Tel. +333 88413908 / Fax +333 88413738 / e-mail [schnutz.durr@coe.fr](mailto:schnutz.durr@coe.fr))

I look forward to our future co-operation. I hope you will be able to participate in the next session of the Sub-Commission on Constitutional Justice with the liaison officers in [...] on [...]. An invitation to this meeting will be sent to you in due course.

Yours sincerely

G. BUQUICCHIO  
Secretary of the Commission

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- Work of the European Commission for Democracy through Law [CDL-INF (98) 2]
- Précis guidelines [CDL-JU (98) 11]
- Sending contributions via e-mail [CDL-JU (96) 16]
- Fax form for release of personal data into CODICES
- Last Meeting Report of the Sub-Commission on Const. Justice [CDL-JU-PV (97) 13]
- Systematic Thesaurus version 10 [CDL-JU (97) 57]
- List of liaison officers [CDL-JU (98) 2]
- List of Constitutional Courts and Courts of Equivalent Jurisdiction [CDL-JU (98) 4]
- List of documents available at the Centre on Constitutional Justice [CDL-JU (98) 16]
- CODICES CD-ROM with User's Guide [CDL-JU (97) 52]

Under separate cover:

- Series of all previous Bulletins (in English and French + Special Bulletin 1994 in Russian if appropriate)
- Input Mask diskettes with User's Guide [CDL-JU (97) 14 rev.2]
- Full set of "Science and technique of democracy" series (in the working language + Russian if appropriate\*\*\*)
- Last annual report of the Venice Commission