



Strasbourg, 6 December 1999

<cdl\doc\1999\cdl-ju\30-e>

Restricted
CDL-JU (99) 30
Or. Fr.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW
(VENICE COMMISSION)

**Conference of the Secretaries General of the Constitutional Courts
and courts of equivalent jurisdiction
(Kyiv, Ukraine, 25-26 November 1999)**

SUMMARY

The Venice Commission, in co-operation with the Constitutional Court of Ukraine and with the financial support of the *Deutsche Stiftung für internationale rechtliche Zusammenarbeit* and the OSCE, organised the first Conference of the Secretaries General of the Constitutional Courts and other courts of equivalent jurisdiction, held on 25 and 26 November 1999 in Kyiv, Ukraine.

The Conference, organised on the initiative of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine, made it possible to bring together for the first time the Secretaries General of the Constitutional Courts and courts of equivalent jurisdiction. All the Constitutional Courts of the Greater Europe were invited to this event, and despite the short notice given the Secretariat of the Venice Commission can be satisfied at having been able to bring together for the first time representatives of over 30 Constitutional Courts and other courts of equivalent jurisdiction, the great majority of them Secretaries General. A total of over 60 participants attended the Conference.

The first day was devoted to the presentation by the Secretaries General of the Constitutional Courts of Germany, Belgium, Spain, Hungary, Italy and Ukraine, of the broad lines of the structure, organisation and powers of the Secretariats of their Courts. A member of the Constitutional Council of Kazakhstan and the PHARE Counsellor of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina also described the activity of the Courts they represented.

A Constitutional Court's international relations and relations with the press were discussed by the Secretaries General of the Constitutional Courts of Austria, Lithuania, and Switzerland and by the Heads of the international relations services of the Constitutional Courts of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Latvia. The necessary dissemination of the case-law of the Constitutional Courts is now taking place in new ways, thanks in particular to the possibilities opened up by the Internet. The changes under way in Constitutional Courts in this connection led to an instructive exchange of information and discussion of various experiences in this field.

The Conference also provided an opportunity to discuss more specific matters such as case management, where the experience of the European Court of Human Rights interested the participants, as did that of the Constitutional Court of the "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia".

Lastly, matters relating to the budget of a Constitutional Court, a subject already discussed at a workshop organised by the Venice Commission in co-operation with the Constitutional Court of Ukraine in January 1998, were raised by the Secretary General of the Constitutional Court of Albania and the Director of Administration of the Constitutional Court of the Czech Republic, giving rise to a fruitful exchange of views between all the participants.

On all these issues, the contributions by the representatives of both old and newly created Courts were very instructive for all participants, who showed lively interest during the presentations and in the discussions that closed each half day of work.

The Conference also provided a unique occasion for participants to establish or strengthen contacts with a large number of counterparts from other countries. It also helped build the necessary collaboration and co-operation between the Constitutional Courts of the entire European continent, in line with the Venice Commission's desire to promote the emergence of a common constitutional heritage.

In this connection everybody expressed satisfaction at the initiative to hold this Conference and hoped that it would be followed by others, acknowledging that the Venice Commission had been able to provide an appropriate framework for this type of event which had not been able to take place earlier under other auspices.

The Conference was very well covered by the media.

The reports presented at this Conference will shortly be published in their original languages.