



Strasbourg, 26 March 2001

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CDL-JU (2001) 4
Or. Engl.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW

(VENICE COMMISSION)

Functions of liaison officers

(model letter to new liaison officers)

Ref:

Strasbourg, date

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have the honour to refer to the letter dated [...] by [...], informing us of your nomination as liaison officer to the Venice Commission in respect of the [...] 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 the [...] 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.

As you know, 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 with the liaison officers once 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. We will send you some documents by separate mail, including the report of the last meeting of the Sub-commission on Constitutional Justice with the liaison officers, and for a general description of the activities of the Venice Commission, document CDL-INF (2000) 12. The Internet site of the Commission gives, in addition, information on its members and links to participating Constitutional Courts (<http://venice.coe.int>).

Three times a year, liaison officers send summaries of important decisions - we call them *présis* - in English or French to the Secretariat of the Venice Commission. These *présis* 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 (2001) 5 containing **guidelines on how to draft the contributions to the *Bulletin*** will also be sent to you under separate cover. If you so wish, you can use the data input mask program (now included in the CD-Rom) or a standard Word-processing software (Word) for entering the *présis*.

The general **schedule for the preparation of the *présis*** is the following:

- Period from 1 January to 30 April
Deadline for contributions : 31 May
Publication date of the *Bulletin* : November
- Period from 1 May to 31 August
Deadline for contributions : 30 September
Publication date of the *Bulletin* : March
- Period from 1 September to 31 December
Deadline for contributions : 31 January
Publication date of the *Bulletin* : June

[name and address]

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 that may be 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 also in the original language and, if available, their translation into other languages. If your Court publishes its decisions in a printed official collection we would be happy to include this collection or any other publication in our Centre on Constitutional Justice.

A series of Special *Bulletins* completes the regular *Bulletins*. The Special *Bulletin* on **descriptions of the participating Courts** published in 1999 [includes a text in respect of your Court] [does not contain such a text in respect of your Court. We would be grateful if you could send us such a description].

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. [Five] *Bulletins* have been published in this series so far. A contribution by your Court was published in Issue no. [*]. In order to enable us to update the database CODICES, please inform us of any amendments to the Constitution of your country and the Law on your Court now and in the future.

The liaison officers have taken the decision to make a selection of **leading cases** decided by their Court prior to their participation in the *Bulletin*. These précis are to be included into the CODICES database to give a more complete overview of the case-law of the Courts. They will also serve as the basis for future Special *Bulletins* on specific topics to be chosen by the Sub-Commission and the liaison officers. The first *Bulletins* to be published in this special series was on "Freedom of Religion and Beliefs" and another one on "the leading case-law of the European Court of Human Rights". These decisions are to be presented in the same format as regular contributions to the *Bulletins*. To facilitate the task of the liaison officers, it was decided that the indexing of the précis according to the Systematic Thesaurus and the Alphabetical Index (see doc CDL-JU (2001) 5) can be left to the Secretariat. [Your predecessor, Mr/Mrs [...], sent us a contribution to this project for which we are grateful] [We would be grateful if you could send us a contribution to this project].

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 together with the other documents. An **Internet connection** for CODICES has been established at the address "<http://codices.coe.int>". This site is usually protected by a password. Currently, the password system is not functioning and the site is not protected. Therefore, please do not disclose the address outside of your Court.

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 short guide on how to send material via e-mail to the Secretariat CDL-JU (2001) 7).

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

Finally, as regards **financial arrangements**, I should like 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. +33 (0)3 88 41 39 08 / Fax +33 (0)3 88 41 37 38 / e-mail: Schnutz.Durr@coe.int).

I look forward to our future co-operation and 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

Documents sent under separate cover:

- Work of the European Commission for Democracy through Law [CDL-INF (2000) 12]
- Last Annual Report of the Commission
- Last Meeting Report of the Sub-Commission on Const. Justice [CDL-JU-PV (2000) 17]
- Conversion tables for non-ANSI characters used in CODICES [CDL-JU (2000) 14]
- Systematic Thesaurus version 12 [CDL-JU (2000) 26 rev.]
- Guide to indexing according to the Systematic Thesaurus [CDL-JU (2000) 12]
- List of Constitutional Courts [CDL-JU (2001) 1]
- List of liaison officers [CDL-JU (2001) 2]
- Internet links with Constitutional Courts [CDL-JU (2001) 3]
- Précis guidelines [CDL-JU (2001) 5]
- List of publications quoted in the *Bulletin* [CDL-JU (2001) 6]
- Sending contributions via e-mail [CDL-JU (2001) 7]
- List of documents available at the Centre on Constitutional Justice [CDL-JU (2001) 16]
- CODICES CD-ROM 2000/1 with User's Guide [CDL-JU (2000) 45]
- User's Guide for CODICES on CD-Rom [CDL-JU (2001) 9]
- User's Guide for CODICES on Internet [CDL-JU (2001) 10]
- Fax form for release of personal data into CODICES
- Fax reply form concerning the number of copies of *Bulletin* to be sent to the Court
- A full set of *Bulletins* and special *Bulletins* in English
- A full set of the series "Science and technique of the Democracy" in English