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EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW

PRESENTATION OF SUMMARIES

Presentation of summaries

The nine Zones are:

- Zone 1: Identification number of the summary: this Zone is left blank by the liaison officers; it is filled in by the Secretariat in Strasbourg.
- Zone 2: References of the decision divided into seven Sub-Zones, labelled a) to g).
- Zone 3: Keywords of the systematic thesaurus.
- Zone 4: Keywords of the alphabetical index.
- Zone 5: Headnotes (*Leitsätze*, *Massime*) of the reported decision.
- Zone 6: Summary of the decision containing reasoning, circumstances, etc.
- Zone 7: Supplementary information (optional).
- Zone 8: Possible cross-references (to be left vacant for the moment).
- Zone 9: Languages (of the official decision - possibly the languages of translations approved by the court).

No numbers shall be inserted in front of the titles of the zones. The titles should be immediately followed by the sign ":".

Zone 2 - Identification

Zone 2, which contains the references necessary for the identification of the decision presented, is divided into seven Sub-Zones:

- a) country;
- b) name of the court;
- c) chamber (if appropriate);
- d) date of decision;
- e) number of decision;
- f) title (if appropriate) of decision;
- g) Official publications (in the Court's collection of decisions or in the Official Gazette) and unofficial publications. Official publications by the court would be included without brackets, whereas other publications should be given in square brackets. References of later publications should be communicated to the Secretariat to be included in the database.

Terminate the Sub-Zones a) to f) of the Identification Zone with a slash "/"; Zone g) is terminated with a point ".".

The date, appearing under **d**), is given in three parts separated by a stop: the first part gives the day of the month (for example "06"), the second the month of the year (for example "10" for "October") and the third the year in full (for example "1993"), which for a decision of 6 October 1993, gives the entry "**d**) 06.10.1993 /".

The indication, under **e**), of the number of the decision should be limited to this number only, not preceded by anything else, such as "Decision". The entry should simply be limited to, for example, "**e**) 2 BvR 2134/92 /".

Thus for example, Zone 2 for decision 2 BvR 2134/92 of 12 October 1993 of the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany, will be as follows:

Identification:

a) Federal Republic of Germany / **b)** Federal Constitutional Court / **c)** Second Chamber / **d)** 12.10.1993 / **e)** 2 BvR 2134/92 and 2 BvR 259/92 / **f)** Maastricht / **g)** to be published in the official digest of the Federal Constitutional Court; [ILM 33 (1994), 388; EuGRZ 1993, 429].

Zone 3 - Keywords of the systematic thesaurus

Zone 3 gives the keywords of the systematic thesaurus, respecting the latter's tree structure, order and logic. The Sub-Commission decided that keywords with reference to procedural questions should only be included if the procedural point is of interest.

Keep to the full chain of the keywords of the systematic thesaurus without making short-cuts or mixing two keyword chains; the parts of the keyword chain always begin with a capital letter; the chains are always terminated by a point ".".

The following mixing of two keyword-chains **would not be permissible**:

Institutions - Principles of State organisation - Sovereignty - Democratic make-up of the State.

Zone 4 - Keywords of the alphabetical index

Zone 4 contains the keywords of the alphabetical index. The liaison agents are free to add new keywords to the alphabetical index. A repetition of keywords of the systematic thesaurus should be avoided. Keywords may consist of more than one word but their total length must not exceed 40 characters including spaces between words.

The most important element of keywords entry should determine the place in which it appears in the index at the end of the Bulletin.

Example: "Administration of local collectivities" becomes "Local collectivities, administration"

This rule, however, does not apply to well determined legal terms.

Zone 5 - Headnotes

Zone 5 contains a short summary with the headnotes (*Leitsätze, Massime*) of the decision. It is recalled that the contributions should always be accompanied by the full text of the judgments in its original language.

The Headnotes should not contain extracts of the decision, but a summary of the main contents of it. This information should be general and not contain any reference to the particular contents of the case. The main legal elements of the case should be briefly presented in the form of full sentences. A mere enumeration of points raised should find its place in the systematical thesaurus or in the alphabetical index.

Headnotes should only indicate the content of legal norms, not their citation (e.g. "Article 3").

Headnotes:

The constitutionally protected right to vote and to stand for elections forbids a transfer of duties and responsibilities of the Federal Parliament, such as to weaken the legitimization of State power gained through an election, and the influence of the people on the exercise of such power, to the extent that the principle of democracy is violated.

Zone 6 - Summary

For this Zone the liaison officers provide a summary of the decision which should briefly describe the main facts of the case, the procedure followed, the decision taken, dissenting opinions and the main legal reasoning (*ratio decidendi*) without repeating the headnotes.

Legal texts should be referred to in the following way: "Article 3, section 2, sub-section a" becomes "Article 3.2.a"; for legal texts, in particular internal legislation, which do not use articles, please use "Section" or the sign "§" as used in your country irrespective of the language of your contribution (English or French) e.g. "Section 3.2.a" or "§ 3.2.a".

The sign "§" will remain unchanged in both language versions, the word "Section" will be replaced with "Article" in the French version of the Bulletin.

Zone 7 - Supplementary information

Zone 7 contains additional information that, in contrast to Zone 6, is not part of the decision itself. This Zone is optional and may be used to put the reported cases in context, for example by using such entries as "settled case-law" or "compare with such and such a decision". Liaison officers might also wish to give information about the general political context of a decision.

Zone 9 - Languages

Here the languages of the official decision could be given if this information is of interest (for example for Belgium or Switzerland).

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Example:

Identification:

a) Federal Republic of Germany / **b)** Federal Constitutional Court / **c)** Second Chamber / **d)** 12.10.1993 / **e)** 2 BvR 2134/92 and 2 BvR 259/92 / **f)** Maastricht / **g)** To be published in the official digest of the Federal Constitutional Court; [ILM 33 (1994), 388; EuGRZ 1993, 429].

Keywords of the systematic thesaurus:

Constitutional justice - The subject of review - International treaties.

Constitutional justice - Constitutional proceedings - Types of claim - Claim by a private body or individual.

Institutions - Principles of State organisation - Sovereignty.

Institutions - Principles of State organisation - Democratic make-up of the State.

Fundamental rights - Civil and political rights - Electoral rights.

Keywords of the alphabetical index:

Democracy / International Organisations / Transfer of sovereign powers.

Headnotes:

The constitutionally protected right to vote and to stand for elections forbids a transfer of duties and responsibilities of the Federal Parliament, such as to weaken the legitimation of State power gained through an election, and the influence of the people on the exercise of such power, to the extent that the principle of democracy is violated.

Germany is not prohibited from becoming a member of a supranational intergovernmental community, provided that the legitimation and influence which derives from the people will be preserved within an alliance of States.

The programme of integration and the rights assigned to a supranational Community must be precisely specified.

The sovereignty of a community of States must be legitimated through the member States' national parliaments. It is important that the democratic foundation upon which the European Union is based is extended concurrently with the process of integration, and that a living democracy is maintained in the member States while integration proceeds.

The Federal Constitutional Court and the European Court of Justice exercise jurisdiction in a "co-operative relationship".

Summary:

The case was brought as a result of constitutional complaints filed by two classes of complainants - a. a group of politicians and professors and b. several German members of the European Parliament belonging to the Green Party. The complaints challenged the constitutionality of the Treaty on European Union (Maastricht Treaty). This Treaty provides for closer integration within the European Communities by, inter alia, setting various economic goals, introducing a single currency and a European Central Bank, implementing a common foreign and security policy, and introducing a Union citizenship that gives Union citizens the right to vote and stand in European and local elections in all Member States. The complainants alleged inter alia that the Treaty would lead to an unconstitutional transfer of powers which would result in the elimination of the constitutional order set forth in the German Constitution.

The Court found that only one complaint, relating to the diminution of democracy in the European Union, was admissible, but that it was not well-founded.

The Court ruled that an individual claim may be based on electoral rights, that is to say the right to vote and to stand for election (Article 38 of the Constitution), in respect of a treaty conferring sovereign rights on a supranational organisation. The electoral right prohibits the national Parliament from being deprived of its democratic functions by the transfer of powers to a supranational organisation to the extent that the principle of democracy, which is declared inviolable by the Constitution, is violated. The principle of democracy does not, however, prevent Germany from becoming a member of a supranational community provided that the legitimation and influence which derive from the people will be preserved.

The electoral right is also violated if a national statute which opens up the national order to the direct application of the acts of a supranational organisation is not sufficiently clear. This means that essential subsequent changes to the Union Treaty will not be covered by the original statute of ratification.

The Court emphasised that the obligations of the German State deriving from the Maastricht Treaty remained foreseeable. The Treaty confirmed the principle of limited individual powers previously applied to the European Communities. It established a "community of States" (*Staatenverbund*), not a State. Germany did not subject itself to an uncontrollable, unforeseeable process that will lead inexorably towards monetary union. The assignment of tasks and powers to European institutions left the German Federal Parliament with sufficient tasks and powers of substantial political import.

The Court reserved the right to control acts of European organs with respect to the limits of their competences. The acts of a supranational organisation may affect the fundamental rights guarantees in Germany and are therefore subject to the jurisdiction of the Constitutional Court whose tasks are not limited to protecting fundamental rights *vis-à-vis* organs of the German State. However, the Constitutional Court exercises its jurisdiction on the application of secondary community law in a relationship of "co-operation" with the European Court of Justice.

The Court concluded that the Treaty established a new level of European integration without the corresponding intensification and extension of the principles of democracy.

Supplementary information:

Former decisions concerning the relationship between national and community law: *Entscheidungen des Bundesverfassungsgerichts* (decisions of the Constitutional Court) (BVerfGE), Vol. 37, p. 271; 58, p. 1; 73, p. 376. The decision constitutes a departure from BVerfGE, Vol. 58, p. 1 as far as the possibility to challenge acts of a supranational organisation affecting fundamental rights is concerned.

The Federal President delayed the signature of the instrument of ratification in order for the Federal Constitutional Court to be able to pronounce on the constitutionality of the treaty.