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EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW

(VENICE COMMISSION)

18th Meeting of the Sub-Commission on Constitutional Justice with the Liaison Officers from Constitutional Courts and equivalent bodies

(Košice, 4 May 2001)

S Y N O P S I S

The participants:

- took note that – in order to underline the importance of its co-operation with constitutional courts and bodies of equivalent jurisdiction – the Venice Commission intends to request the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to amend the Commission's Statute by instituting a joint body composed of representatives of the courts (liaison officers) and members of the Commission which would take the place of the current meetings of the Sub-Commission on Constitutional Justice with the liaison officers;
- agreed – subject to approval by the Plenary Commission – to a request by the Association of Constitutional Courts using the French Language (ACCPUF) to integrate its case-law into the CODICES database on condition that the Venice Commission will retain the decisive role in the development of CODICES and that it will remain possible to search the database only within the case-law of the courts directly cooperating with the Commission;

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- took note of a colloquium of presidents of constitutional courts and equivalent bodies of the Southern African region to be held in August 2001 with the goal of setting up an exchange of case-law between these courts, possibly using the model of cooperation of the Venice Commission;
 - took note of the possibility of co-operation with the Universal Encyclopaedia of Human Rights with a view to complementing the stock of constitutions contained in CODICES;
 - decided to postpone from May to September 2001 the deadline for contributions to the Special Bulletin on "The relations between the constitutional courts and the other national courts, including the interference in this area of the action of the European courts", which had been requested by the Belgian Presidency of the Conference of the European Constitutional Courts in view of the topic of the next Conference, and to ask for contributions from supreme courts mainly in respect of their relationship with the European courts;
 - invited the liaison officers to request from the Secretariat documents presenting their court, composed of the description (as published in the Special Bulletin) and the précis contained in the database CODICES;
 - approved version 13 of the Systematic Thesaurus and decided that it should enter into force for contributions to Bulletin 2001/2;
 - invited liaison officers to use the input mask (version 1.5) for the preparation of their précis, to follow the formal requirements (formatting titles, etc.) as set out in the guidelines for the presentation of the précis (CDL-JU (2001) 5) and to continue to provide full texts of decisions in electronic form;
 - invited the liaison officers to provide at least annual statistics of the activity of their courts for publication in the Bulletin;
 - requested the liaison officers to inform the Secretariat of any changes in constitutions, laws on the courts and court descriptions contained in CODICES;
 - requested the liaison officers to continue to inform the Secretariat about any changes to data contained in the list of constitutional courts (CDL-JU (2001) 1), the list of liaison officers (CDL-JU (2001) 2) and the list of web sites of constitutional courts and equivalent bodies (CDL-JU (2001) 3);
 - were informed about past and future seminars with constitutional courts and equivalent bodies (CoCoSem);
 - approved the restricted web site of the Venice Commission open only to the liaison officers: <http://venice.coe.int/ju>;
 - approved version 3.3 of CODICES, which includes links from individual articles of constitutions and the ECHR to relevant case-law and links pointing to the evolution of case-law following a decision;

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- invited the Secretariat to continue developing CODICES (merger of the English and French versions of CODICES, hierarchical search in alphabetical index keywords, annotations to keywords of the systematic thesaurus, cross-references, inclusion and indexing of constitutions);
 - reaffirmed their request to the Secretariat to provide free access to CODICES on the Internet and to lower the price for CODICES on CD-ROM;
 - approved the integration of cross-references in the Alphabetical Index into the Bulletin and CODICES (CDL-JU (2001) 19);
 - decided to put on the agenda of their next meeting the question whether contributions on leading cases should also be published in Special Bulletins grouped by countries rather than being available only in CODICES;
 - set the date of their next meeting for spring 2002, possibly upon the invitation of one of the participating courts at the seat of the latter.

A detailed meeting report is to follow.