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EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW

(VENICE COMMISSION)

**19th Meeting of the
Sub-Commission on Constitutional Justice
with the Liaison Officers from
Constitutional Courts and equivalent bodies**

and

**1st meeting of the
Joint Council on Constitutional Justice**

(Larnaca, 31 May 2002)

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 Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe had amended 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;
- elected Mr Arne Mavčič, liaison officer of the Constitutional Court of Slovenia, as co-president of the Joint Council on Constitutional Justice in respect of the liaison officers;

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- approved the User's Guide to the Venice Forum (CDL-JU (2002) 7);
 - were informed of the signature of the protocol to the co-operation agreement between the Association of Constitutional Courts using the French Language (ACCPUF) and the Venice Commission on 26-27 January in Djibouti, providing for the integration of ACCPUF members' case-law into the CODICES database and free access to the database via Internet;
 - took note of a colloquium of presidents of constitutional courts and equivalent bodies of the Southern African region held in August 2001 and of a meeting of liaison officers from these courts held in Mangochi, Malawi in November 2001 with the goal of setting up an exchange of case-law between these courts, using the model of co-operation of the Venice Commission with ACCPUF;
 - decided to pursue co-operation with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights;
 - decided that co-operation with the Conference of Constitutional Justice of Ibero-America, Spain and Portugal should proceed on the basis of an agreement to be drawn up and presented to the Joint Council on Constitutional Justice for approval;
 - were informed of the activities held in certain countries of the former USSR under the aegis of the Conference of Organs of Constitutional Control of Young Democracies and decided that co-operation with this Conference should proceed on the basis of an agreement to be drawn up and presented to the Joint Council on Constitutional Justice for approval;
 - were informed about past and future seminars with constitutional courts and equivalent bodies (CoCoSem) and approved the Guidelines for the organisation of seminars in co-operation with Constitutional Courts (CDL-JU (2002) 9);
 - reminded liaison officers of the guidelines for submitting contributions to the Bulletin and CODICES (CDL-JU (2001) 5), in particular those related to length of précis, headnotes and the citation of articles of Constitutions;
 - invited the liaison officers to send any amendments or further contributions to the Special Bulletin on "relations between the constitutional courts and the other national courts, including the interference in this area of the action of the European courts" to the Secretariat by 28 June at latest;
 - approved the publication of a special issue of the Bulletin containing leading cases from contributing courts, grouped by country;
 - approved version 4.2 of CODICES, which includes the merger of the English and French versions of CODICES, a new book on the Alphabetical Index, cross-references between index keywords, hierarchical searching in alphabetical index keywords, geographical groups allowing for searches to be conducted by continent or international organisation and improved query masks;
 - invited the liaison officers to use the data input mask (version 1.6 T13, available on the CODICES CD-ROM with an Internet version to be available soon on the restricted web-site of the Commission) 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;

- approved version 14 of the Systematic Thesaurus and decided that it should enter into force for contributions to Bulletin 2002/3 (contributions due in January 2003);
- requested the liaison officers to inform the Secretariat of any changes in constitutions, laws on the courts and court descriptions (published 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 (2002) 3), the list of liaison officers (CDL-JU (2002) 4) and the list of web sites of constitutional courts and equivalent bodies (CDL-JU (2002) 5);
- set the date of their next meeting for 9 May 2003, in Oslo, at the invitation of the Supreme Court of Norway.

A detailed meeting report is to follow.