



Strasbourg, 19 June 2017

**CDL-PL-PV(2017)002syn**  
Or. Engl

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW**  
**(VENICE COMMISSION)**

**111<sup>th</sup> PLENARY SESSION**  
**(Venice, 16-17 June 2017)**

**SYNOPSIS**

## The Commission

- Held an exchange of views with Ms Arpine Hovhanissyan, Vice-President of the National Assembly of **Armenia**, on legislative developments and the situation following the parliamentary elections of 2 April 2017 and adopted the opinion on the draft law on the Constitutional Court of Armenia:
- Was informed on progress of work in the preparation of the opinion on the draft judicial code of Armenia and, in the light of the urgency of the matter, authorised the rapporteurs to send a preliminary opinion to the authorities of Armenia prior to the October Plenary Session;
- Held an exchange of views with Mr Yavor Notev, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of **Bulgaria**, and adopted the joint opinion with OSCE/ODIHR on the amendments to the Electoral Code of Bulgaria, previously adopted by the Council for Democratic Elections on 15 June 2017;
- Held an exchange of views with Mr Irakli Kobakhidze, Speaker of the Parliament of **Georgia**, and with Ms Anna Dolidze, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of Georgia, and adopted the opinion on the draft revised Constitution of Georgia, previously examined by the Sub-Commission on Democratic Institutions on 15 June 2017;
- Held an exchange of views with Mr László Trócsányi, Minister of Justice of **Hungary**, and adopted the opinion on the Draft Law on the Transparency of Organisations Receiving Support from Abroad, following the Preliminary Opinion which had been sent to the Hungarian authorities with the authorisation of the Bureau;
- Authorised the rapporteurs to issue a preliminary opinion on the amendments to the Law on Tertiary Education of Hungary and to send it to the authorities prior to the October session;
- Held an exchange of views with Mr Maxim Lebedinski, Adviser to the President of the **Republic of Moldova** on institutional relations and legal issues, and adopted the opinion on the President's Proposal to expand the President's powers to dissolve Parliament, previously examined by the Sub-Commission on Democratic Institutions on 15 June 2017;
- Held an exchange of views with Mr Andrian Candu, Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, and with Messrs. V. Ghiletschi and V. Bolea, MPs, and adopted the joint opinion with OSCE/ODIHR on the draft law of the Republic of Moldova relating to the electoral system for the election of the Parliament, previously adopted by the Council for Democratic Elections on 15 June 2017;
- Held an exchange of views with Mr Pavlo Pinzenik, First Deputy Chair of the Committee on the rules of Procedure and Internal Organisation of the Verkhovna Rada of **Ukraine**, and was informed on progress of work on the draft opinion on the Draft Law on amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Verkhovna Rada;
- Was informed on **follow-up** to the Amicus Curiae brief for the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldova on the criminal liability of judges; to the Opinion on the Amendments to the Organic Law on the Constitutional Court of Georgia and to the Law on the Constitutional Legal Proceedings of Georgia; to the Joint opinion with OSCE/ODIHR on the draft checklist of the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities for compliance with international standards and best practices preventing **misuse of administrative resources** during electoral processes at local and regional level; to the Opinion on the amendments to the Constitution of **Kazakhstan**; and to the Draft Law on the Constitutional Court of Ukraine;

- Was informed on recent constitutional amendments in **Palestine\*** and **Tunisia**;
- Was informed on future co-operation with **Poland**;
- Was informed on the results and conclusions of the **Seminar** on “the international legal order in a challenging world: challenges for the monitoring procedure of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (Helsinki, 16 May 2017), of the **5th Intercultural Workshop on Democracy** on “Interaction between Constitutional Courts and equivalent jurisdictions and ordinary courts” (Nicosia, 3-4 April 2017), of the **Conference** on “The interaction between the political majority and the opposition in a democracy” (Bucharest, 6-7 April 2017) and of the **14th European Conference of Electoral Management Bodies** on “Operational EMBs for democratic elections” (Saint Petersburg, 15-16 May 2017);
- Held an exchange of views with Mr Igli Totozani, former Advocate of the Albanian People and former President of the Association of the Mediterranean Ombudsmen (AOM) and with Mr Marc Bertrand, Mediator of Wallonia, of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (Belgium) and President of the Association of Ombudsmen and Mediators of the French-Speaking World (AOMF) and, upon the proposal of the Chair of the Scientific Council and as previously discussed at the joint meeting of the Scientific Council and the Sub-Commission on Fundamental Rights on 15 June 2017, decided to compile a **list of constitutional and legal principles pertaining to Ombudsman institutions**;
- Agreed to establish a working group on **referendums**;
- Was informed that the Bureau had authorised the conclusion of two **co-operation agreements** with the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States and with the National Electoral Institute (INE) of Mexico;
- Was informed on an exchange of letters between the President of the Commission and the President of Catalonia (Spain) concerning the question of a **possible referendum on self-determination of Catalonia**;
- Was informed on the results and conclusions of the meeting of the **Joint Council on Constitutional Justice**, held in Karlsruhe, Germany, on 18-19 May 2017;
- Was informed on the results and conclusions of the meeting of the **Council for Democratic Elections**, held on 15 June 2017;
- Held an exchange of views with representatives of the **Committee of Ministers**, the **Parliamentary Assembly** and the **Congress** of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe;
- Confirmed the dates of the **next Plenary Sessions** as follows: 6-7 October 2017 and 8-9 December 2017 and fixed the dates for the 2018 sessions as follows: 16-17 March 2018; 22-23 June 2018; 19-20 October 2018 and 14-15 December 2018.

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\* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of Council of Europe member States on this issue.