



COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Or. Fr.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW

(VENICE COMMISSION)

61th PLENARY SESSION
(Venice, 12-13 March 2004)

SYNOPSIS

The Commission

- paid tribute to the victims of the Madrid bombings of 11 March 2004;
- held an exchange of views with Ambassador Landman, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the Council of Europe, and with Ambassador Sharkey, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the Council of Europe, on co-operation between the Committee of Ministers and the Venice Commission;
- held an exchange of views with Mr Schieder, President of the Parliamentary Assembly and with Mr Jurgens, Member of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, and was informed of the exchange of views between the Commission's Enlarged Bureau and the Presidential Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly on co-operation with the Assembly;
- held an exchange of views with Mr di Stasi, President of the Chamber of the Regions of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, on co-operation with the Congress;
- took note of the opinion on the draft amendments to the Constitution of Georgia;
- was informed by Ms Burdjanadze, Speaker of the Georgian Parliament, about the process of constitutional reform in Georgia and held an exchange of views on the Commission's future co-operation with Georgia;
- adopted the *amicus curiae* opinion on the relationship between freedom of expression and defamation with respect to unproven defamatory allegations of fact requested by the Constitutional Court of Georgia;
- endorsed the comments by Messrs Solyom and Van Dijk on the draft Law of Albania on Recognition, Restitution and Compensation of Property;
- agreed that the final version of the joint recommendations by the Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR on the electoral law and electoral administration in Albania should be sent to the Albanian authorities;

- was informed by Mr Tuori about the conference on “Constitutional Reforms in Armenia”, which the Commission organised in Yerevan on 20-21 January 2004 in co-operation with the Armenian National Assembly;
- endorsed the Recommendations on the electoral law and electoral administration in Azerbaijan, following their adoption by the Council for Democratic Elections;
- adopted the opinion on the draft amendments to the Constitution of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- adopted the opinion on the Status and Rank of the Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- was informed by the Secretariat about a request by the Secretary General concerning the legal provisions of Moldova on freedom of assembly;
- agreed that the joint recommendations by the Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR on the electoral law and electoral administration in Moldova should be sent to the Moldovan authorities;
- was informed by Mr Krivokapic, Speaker of the Parliament of Montenegro, of the progress on the constitutional reform in Montenegro;
- took note of the preliminary comments of Messrs Bartole and Aurescu on the draft Law on the Exercise of Rights and Freedoms of National and Ethnic Minorities in Montenegro and instructed the Secretariat to prepare a consolidated opinion for its next Plenary Session;
- adopted the opinion on two draft Laws amending the Law on National Minorities in Ukraine;
- adopted the opinion on the Possible Follow-up to Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1629 (2003) on “Future of Democracy: strengthening democratic institutions”;
- adopted the opinion on the draft ACEEEO Convention on Election Standards, Electoral Rights and Freedoms, following its adoption by the Council for Democratic Elections;
- adopted the report on the compatibility of remote voting and electronic voting with the requirements of the documents of the Council of Europe, following its adoption by the Council for Democratic Elections;
- adopted the guidelines on Legislation on Political Parties;
- held an exchange of view with Mr Cea Egaña, President of the 6th World Congress of Constitutional Law and member of the Constitutional Court of Chile, on possible co-operation between Chile and the Commission;
- adopted its annual report of activities for 2003;
- was informed by Ms Saunders about the activities of the International Association of Constitutional Law and decided to pursue the question of a formal agreement on co-operation between IACL and the Commission at its next Plenary Session;
- confirmed the dates of its next Plenary session (18-19 June 2004).