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EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW

(VENICE COMMISSION)

59th PLENARY SESSION
(Venice, 18-19 June 2004)

S Y N O P S I S

The Commission

- held an exchange of views with Ambassador Froysnes, Permanent Representative of Norway to the Council of Europe on co-operation between the Committee of Ministers and the Venice Commission;
- held an exchange of views with Mr Holovaty, Member of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, on co-operation with the Assembly;
- held an exchange of views with Mr Martini, Member of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, on co-operation with the Congress;
- held an exchange of views with Mr Alomar, Governor of the Council of Europe Development Bank, on the Bank's activities and on possible co-operation with the Commission;
- held an exchange of views with Ambassador Strohal, Director of ODIHR, on co-operation between the Commission and ODIHR;
- endorsed the Guidelines for legislative reviews affecting religion of beliefs, prepared by OSCE/ODIHR in co-operation with the Commission;
- adopted the opinion on constitutional aspects of the draft law on the criteria to be established for the reorganisation of the administrative territorial division of the Republic of Albania;
- took note of the comments on the amendments to the Law on the status of former political prisoners of Albania;
- postponed the examination of the draft opinion on the law on the procedure for conducting gatherings, meetings, rallies and demonstrations in the Republic of Armenia;
- was informed by Mr Torossian about progress as regards constitutional reform and the amendments to both the law on political parties and the electoral code in Armenia;
- adopted the opinion on the draft rules of procedure of the Constitutional Court of Azerbaijan;
- endorsed the comments on the law on political parties in Azerbaijan;

- was informed by Mr Tuori about progress in the restructuring of the Ombudsman institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- adopted the opinion on the draft Constitutional Law concerning the status of Adjara;
- adopted the opinion on the draft law concerning support for Romanians abroad;
- was informed by Mr Hazaparu about recent constitutional developments in Romania;
- adopted the opinion on the revised draft Law on the Exercise of Rights and Freedoms of National and Ethnic Minorities in Montenegro;
- was informed by Mr Djeric about the state of constitutional reform in Serbia and Montenegro;
- held an exchange of views with Mr Kiliç about the introduction of the right to individual complaint to the Constitutional Court of Turkey and adopted the opinion on the relevant draft constitutional amendments in Turkey;
- endorsed the comments on the draft law on the Prosecutor's Office in Ukraine;
- adopted the opinion on the draft law on the concept of state ethnic policy of Ukraine;
- adopted the opinion on the latest version of the draft law amending the law on national minorities in Ukraine;
- was informed by Mr Mifsud Bonnici about the OSCE Human Dimension Seminar of 12-14 May 2004 and about the work of the High Level Group on the Future of Democracy;
- was informed by Mr Bedjaoui, President of the Constitutional Council of Algeria, about control of constitutionality in Algeria and held an exchange of views on future co-operation between Algeria and the Commission;
- was informed by Mr Colombo Campbell, President of the Constitutional Tribunal of Chile, about recent constitutional developments in Chile and held an exchange of views on future co-operation between Chile and the Commission;
- was informed by Mr Cardoso da Costa about recent constitutional developments in Portugal;
- was informed by Mr Chaskalson, Chief Justice of South Africa, about the creation of the Southern African Judges Commission (SAJC), which he presides, and held an exchange of views on future co-operation between SAJC and the Commission;
- pending confirmation by OSCE/ODIHR, adopted the joint recommendations of the Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR on the electoral law and the electoral administration in Moldova,;
- pending confirmation by OSCE/ODIHR, adopted the joint recommendations of the Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR on the electoral law and the electoral administration in Albania;
- adopted the questionnaire on the use of referendums;
- was informed about progress in the preparation of a study concerning the citizenship requirement in the general definition of "national minorities" and of the co-operation between the Commission and the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the Group of experts on the European Charter on Regional

or minority Languages, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the UN Sub-Commission on Human Rights notably on this matter;

- was informed about progress in the preparation of the opinion on the human rights situation in Kosovo;
- during an exchange of views with Mr Rosenfeld, Former President of the International Association of Constitutional Law, approved a draft co-operation agreement between the Association and the Commission;
- confirmed the dates of its next Plenary session (8-9 October 2004) and of the sessions for 2005 (11-12 March; 10-11 June; 21-22 October; 16-17 December 2005).