

Press Release

Council of Europe Press Division

Ref: 176a08

Tel: +33 (0)3 88 41 25 60

Fax: +33 (0)3 88 41 39 11

pressunit@coe.int

internet: www.coe.int/press



47 members

Albania
Andorra
Armenia
Austria
Azerbaijan
Belgium
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bulgaria
Croatia
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
Finland
France
Georgia
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Iceland
Ireland
Italy
Latvia
Liechtenstein
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malta
Moldova
Monaco
Montenegro
Netherlands
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Russia
San Marino
Serbia
Slovakia
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
"the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"
Turkey
Ukraine
United Kingdom

Democratic Control of the Armed Forces and Judiciary – highlights of the Venice Commission's spring plenary session

Strasbourg, 12.03.2008 – The Council of Europe's European Commission for Democracy through Law (the "Venice Commission") will be meeting in Venice on 14 and 15 March (*Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista*).

In its study on the democratic control of armed forces to be adopted at the Session, the Commission discusses the variety of models used in the Council of Europe member states and reveals how democratic control over armed forces can be shaped - and improved - in order to meet both the needs of the State and the increased concerns linked to democratic values and principles. In particular, the Commission will deal with the issue of the democratic deficit of decisions concerning the participation of troops in international missions.

Three opinions deal with the Judiciary, one in respect of Bulgaria (covering the whole Constitution but with a special focus on the Judiciary), another on Serbia (draft laws on the judicial council, the status of judges and court organisation), and one in respect of Montenegro (draft law on the prosecution service). The Commission is called upon making recommendations how the guarantees for the independence of the judicial system can be improved both on the level of the constitution and that of ordinary law.

Several other points will also be submitted for adoption:

- the draft opinion on the evaluation of the Constitution of Finland;
- the interim joint draft opinion on the amendments to the Electoral Code of Azerbaijan;
- the draft opinion on the draft Law on Conflict of Interest in Governmental Institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina;

The Commission will discuss constitutional reform in Ukraine with representatives of the Ukrainian parliament and the presidential administration and be briefed on other constitutional developments in the member states.

Miglena Tacheva, Minister of Justice of Bulgaria, as well as Manuel Cepeda, Judge and former President of the Constitutional Court of Colombia, will address the Commission.

All the adopted texts are public and will be available on the Commission's website: www.venice.coe.int.

Press contacts:

Monica Petrovici, Venice Commission, Council of Europe

Tel. +33 (0)3 88 41 38 68, mobile phone during the session +39 3386498671, monica.petrovici@coe.int

Roberto Tumbarello, Council of Europe press correspondent in Italy

Mobile: +39 335 69 38 216, rtumbare@tin.it

To receive our press releases by e-mail, contact : Council.of.Europe.Press@coe.int

A political organisation set up in 1949, the Council of Europe works to promote democracy and human rights continent-wide. It also develops common responses to social, cultural and legal challenges in its 47 member states.