

Press Release

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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.

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