

Press Release

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Secret detentions, Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the South Ossetian conflict: Venice Commission meets in plenary on 17 and 18 March

Strasbourg, 15.03.2006 – The legal aspects of issues such as secret detentions and inter-state transport of detainees, the Presidential election procedure in Bosnia and Herzegovina and property restitution to the victims of the South Ossetian conflict are on the agenda of the 66th plenary session of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe (17-18 March at *Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista* in Venice).

The Venice Commission is to adopt an opinion on the international legal obligations of Council of Europe member States in respect of secret detention facilities and inter-state transport of detainees. This opinion follows the request submitted on 15 December 2005 by Dick Marty, Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly's rapporteur on alleged secret detentions in member states and it comes also in the framework of the ongoing inquiry by the Secretary General of the Organisation, in accordance with the article 52 of the European Convention of Human Rights.

Following the request made by the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, on 2 March 2006, the Venice Commission will formally endorse its draft opinion on the three different proposals for the election of the collegial Presidency of the country.

The Commission will also adopt its opinion on the restitution of property to the victims of the South Ossetian conflict. Based on comments of several experts and on exchanges of views with Georgian authorities, South Ossetian NGOs and international organisations present in Georgia, this opinion follows a visit to the country in February this year.

Participation of political parties in elections and the revision of the electoral code of Georgia will also be discussed by the Council for Democratic Elections (CED) – a tripartite organ of the Council of Europe comprising representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress and the Venice Commission – which will hold its meeting during the session.

The Commission will also hold an exchange of views on parliamentary immunity in Albania with Jozefina Topalli, Speaker of the Albanian Parliament, and Deputy Speaker Ylli Bufi.

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The Venice Commission is the Council of Europe's advisory body on constitutional matters. All the opinions of the Commission become public after adoption at the plenary session and will be available on its website www.venice.coe.int shortly after the session.

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