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Strasbourg, 08.10.2009

Lustration in Albania, discrimination in Montenegro, electoral laws of Serbia and Ukraine among the highlights at the Venice Commission Plenary Session

Dates: 9 and 10 October 2009

Location: Venice, Italy (Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista)

Organised by the Venice Commission (European Commission for Democracy through Law) which is the consultative body of the Council of Europe on constitutional issues.

Description: At its 80th plenary session, the Commission is expected to adopt opinions on the following issues:

- **Albania** - at the request of the Constitutional Court of Albania, the constitutionality of *the Albanian law of 22 December 2008 on lustration (*)* which allows a newly created administrative body to terminate, for an indefinite period of time and through a specific procedure, the mandates of the President, the MPs, the ministers, the judges of the Constitutional and the High Courts.
- **Montenegro** – at the request of the former Minister for the Protection of Human and Minority Rights of Montenegro, the *draft law on the prohibition of discrimination*. The intention of the Montenegrin authorities to adopt a single comprehensive anti-discrimination act is to be welcomed and encouraged. The act is likely to constitute a significant step in combating discrimination in the country.
- **Serbia** - at the request of the Public Administration and Local Authorities Ministry of Serbia, *three draft electoral laws*: on the State Election Commission of Serbia, on the draft Law on the Unified Register of Voters of Serbia and on the draft Law on the Election of Councillors of Serbia.
- **Ukraine** – at the request of the Verkhovna Rada, the amendments to certain legislative acts on *elections of the President of Ukraine*. The amendments deal in particular with the composition of electoral commissions, voters' lists and electoral disputes.

Other questions on the agenda include:

- **Armenia** – the draft law amending the Civil code concerning the rules on compensation of victims of defamation by the press;
- **Georgia** – the draft amendments to the law on occupied territories;
- **Latvia** – the draft amendments to the Law on the Constitutional Court;
- **Montenegro** – the amendments to the Law on the protector of human rights and freedoms.

The Commission will be informed on progress of work on the opinion on the draft revision of the Constitution of **Luxembourg**.

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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.

Josefina Topalli, Speaker of the Albanian Parliament, Akaki Minashvili and Chiora Taktakishvili, MPs of Georgia, as well as Andriy Portnov and Valeriy Pysarenko, Members of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, will take part in the discussions.

All Venice Commission opinions are public following their adoption and are available on the website of the Venice Commission shortly after the session: www.venice.coe.int

(*) Lustration refers to the disqualification from public office of those allegedly associated with abuses under the prior regime.

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The Venice Commission (*European Commission for Democracy through Law*) is the consultative body of the Council of Europe on constitutional issues.