

CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN JUDGES
(CCJE)



Strasbourg, 24 November 2008

Mr Stoil SOTIROV
President
The Bulgarian Association of Judges
2, Vitosha Blvd
Court Palace
Sofia 1040, Bulgaria

Re: Adoption of a Unified Code of Ethics

Dear Sir

I make reference to your letter, by which you submitted to the Consultative Council of European Judges the Bulgarian Association of Judges' worries concerning the elaboration, on the part of the Supreme Judicial Council of Bulgaria, of a Unified Code of Ethics for judges, prosecutors and investigation service members. In particular, you expressed your preoccupation as to the possible infringement in the above mentioned drafting process of some international principles as well as of domestic legislation conferring competence to adopt ethical codes to professional organisations.

I have the honour to inform you that this matter has been discussed by the Plenary of the CCJE during its 9th meeting held in Strasbourg on November 12-14, 2008.

The Plenary, having considered the contents of your letter, takes the view that the approach expressed in the letter by the Bulgarian Association of Judges to the Supreme Judicial Council of Bulgaria, which you kindly enclosed to your letter, reflects and corresponds with the principles which are set out in the CCJE's Opinions, in particular, the principle that ethics should be kept separate from disciplinary offences. The CCJE hopes that it will be possible to reach a corresponding solution in Bulgaria.

The Plenary has decided to ask the Chair, by the present letter, to inform the Bulgarian Association of Judges that the CCJE, under its terms of reference, is available to provide practical assistance with this matter, in order to ensure a proper implementation of European standards concerning justice.

In view of the above, I should be grateful if the Bulgarian Association of Judges :

- a) could inform of the above the Supreme Judicial Council of Bulgaria;
- b) could, if the relevant Bulgarian authorities so request, organise a meeting, during which the matter might be further discussed with the participation of the persons interested.

Yours faithfully



Julia LAFFRANQUE
Chair of the Consultative Council of European Judges (CCJE)