

47+1(2021)R8

4 February 2021

8TH MEETING OF THE CDDH AD HOC NEGOTIATION GROUP ("47+1") ON THE ACCESSION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Meeting Report

Tuesday 2 February 2021 (10:00 a.m.) – Thursday 4 February 2021 (4:30 p.m.)

(Due to the COVID-19 situation, the meeting was held through the KUDO videoconferencing system)

Council of Europe

1. The CDDH ad hoc negotiation group ("47+1 Group") on the accession of the European Union (EU) to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) held its 8th meeting from 2-4 February 2021. Due to the COVID-pandemic, the meeting was held via videoconference. The list of participants is attached as Appendix II.

Item 1: Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

2. The Chair of the "47+1 Group", Ms Tonje MEINICH (Norway), opened the meeting and asked delegates about the adoption of the agenda. The Group adopted the agenda without further changes (Appendix I).

Item 2: Discussion of the principle of mutual trust between the EU member states

- 3. The Secretariat introduced a compilation of cases in the area of Basket 3 ("The principle of mutual trust between the EU member states"), which related to judgments of both the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the European Union in this area and which were adopted since Opinion 2/13 was rendered by the latter in December 2014.
- 4. In light of this overview of case-law, but bearing in mind its continuous dynamic development, delegates noted a degree of convergence in the case-law of both European courts since 2014 which would appear to alleviate some of the concerns that existed at the time when Opinion 2/13 was rendered by the Court of Justice of the European Union. The EU submitted that this would not mean that the need for a solution had become obsolete in the meantime, and that such solution should also allow for the case-law of both European courts to develop. This was particularly important because the case-law of the Court of Justice of the European Union since 2014 dealt with certain areas where the principle of mutual trust applies, but not with others (e.g. child abduction cases with a transnational element). The representative of the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights suggested that a solution could take some inspiration from the leading case of Avotins v. Latvia (no. 17502/07, Grand Chamber judgment of the European Court of Human Rights of 23 May 2016), which had considered the principle of mutual trust as wholly legitimate from the standpoint of the Convention (paragraph 113), while at the same time requiring that domestic courts do not apply the principle automatically and mechanically but examine serious and substantiated complaints that the protection of a Convention right has been manifestly deficient (paragraph 116).
- 5. The Group agreed that the discussion should be continued on the basis of concrete proposals for Basket 3. The Chair invited delegations, notably the EU, to submit proposals for the next meeting.

Item 3: Discussion of the situation of EU acts in the area of the Common Foreign and Security Policy that are excluded from the jurisdiction of the Court of Justice of the European Union

6. The EU introduced a compilation of cases in the area of Basket 4 ("The Common Foreign and Security Policy"), in which it recalled the relevant provisions in the Treaty on European Union, the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. It elaborated on the fact that the jurisdiction of the Court of Justice of the European Union is in principle excluded from the area of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (to be interpreted strictly), which is however subject to certain exceptions. The EU provided an overview of cases of particular interest in which the Court of Justice of the European Union had interpretated the scope of the limitation of its jurisdiction in the area of the Common Foreign and Security Policy. These cases related to either restrictive measures against natural and legal persons and dealt with the jurisdiction of the Court of Justice of the European Union in different types of procedures (preliminary ruling procedures and

action for damages respectively), or they related to acts adopted in the area of the Common Foreign and Security Policy other than restrictive measures (public procurement and staff management respectively).

7. The EU stated that, in the absence of a reasonable prospect that the limitations of the jurisdiction of the Court of Justice of the European Union in the area of the Common Foreign and Security Policy would be repealed by treaty amendment in the foreseeable future, a solution would have to be found by taking other avenues. It was recalled that the Common Foreign and Security Policy was an important area and should remain as an element for further consideration (see also paragraph 39 of the report of the 6th meeting (CDDH47+1(2020)R6)). The Group agreed that the discussion should be continued on the basis of concrete proposals for Basket 4. The Chair invited delegations, notably the EU, to submit proposals (which could also be in the initial form of building blocks) for the next meeting.

Item 4: Discussion of proposals submitted on the EU's specific mechanisms of the procedure before the European Court of Human Rights

- 8. The Secretariat introduced a discussion paper for items 4 and 5 and elaborated on the individual proposals. Delegations welcomed the paper which would give impetus to the discussion and with regard to agenda item 4 could constitute a basis for further drafting. There was an understanding in the Group that other proposals, which had already been or will be tabled at a later stage, should also be considered at future meetings.
- 9. Regarding a proposal for a new paragraph 3 of Article 2 ("Reservations to the Convention and its protocols")¹ which clarifies that reservations made under Article 57 ECHR shall retain their effect if the High Contracting Party which made such reservation is a co-respondent to the proceedings, the Group reached agreement on the Secretariat proposal with an amendment as well as a linguistic correction in the French translation of the proposal. The Secretariat was invited to draft corresponding paragraphs for the explanatory report, which would both indicate a link with the principle of joint responsibility under Article 3, paragraph 7 and the fact that any such reservation is without prejudice to an assessment of its validity by the European Court of Human Rights.
- The Group considered a proposal for a new paragraph 4a of Article 3 which would deal with the systematic information by the European Court of Human Rights of the EU of cases notified to its member states, and vice versa. The EU considered it important that any such information would allow it to make, at an early stage of the proceedings, a proper assessment of whether the co-respondent mechanism could apply. It also stated that some inspiration could be taken from Rule 44, paragraph 1 of the Rules of the Court, which regulates the information provided to potential third-party interveners under Article 36 ECHR. The representative of the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights explained that the Court had communicated in 2020 a total of 2775 applications to EU member states. Sharing all applications with the EU may not only raise data protection issues but would also put a disproportionate burden on the Registry in view of the very rare occasion that a case qualifies for the co-respondent mechanism. Many delegates agreed in principle with the proposal, which would however need to be concretised with possible amendments of the text itself and corresponding provisions in the explanatory report (which would then also specify the exact type of information to be provided, e.g. the application form) and be mindful of the workload of the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights. It was noted that current rules already provide for informing parties about the proceedings. Further clarification would be useful on the number of cases which could have triggered the co-respondent mechanism. The question of whether additional information can be provided before

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¹ Any provisions in this meeting report without further reference are those of the draft Accession Agreement.

the decision on the co-respondent mechanism was also raised. The Group agreed to continue working on the proposal, including its ultimate placement in the accession instruments and by also considering corresponding provisions of the explanatory report, which it tasked the Secretariat to draft for the next discussion.

- 11. The Group considered a proposal for a new paragraph 5 of Article 3 (replacing the previous paragraph 5) on the triggering of the co-respondent mechanism. Several delegations recalled the purpose of this mechanism, which would enable the applicant to obtain a binding judgment also against the High Contracting Party which may not have acted, but which is a necessity for the applicant to have the judgment executed in a proper manner. By becoming a co-respondent, a High Contracting Party indicates that, in case the Court finds a violation, it stands ready to be convicted and to help remedy the situation. In that sense, the request to become co-respondent was also a kind of anticipated choice of the means to use for the proper execution of a future judgment. The complexity of the mechanism should however not disguise the fact that its use in practice would be very rare.
- The proposal for a new paragraph 5 of Article 3 left the assessment of the conditions for the 12. co-respondent mechanism (which would be maintained in paragraphs 2 and 3 of Article 3) for the EU, while the European Court of Human Rights would retain the decision to apply the mechanism. The EU pointed out that the Secretariat's proposal follows a very different logic from the EU proposal, and that the Group should not prematurely close off alternative options. The EU expressed the view that, if the material conditions for becoming a co-respondent are to be kept in paragraphs 2 and 3, and if a formal decision is to be maintained, the Accession Agreement and the explanatory report should be more explicit and precise about who ultimately assesses if the material conditions are met. Several delegations felt that the Secretariat's proposal can be a workable proposal, provided that the explanatory report would clarify that the assessment of EU law by the EU was final and authoritative for the purposes of this provision and the extent of this assessment (i.e. the distribution of powers between the EU and its member states) was clarified therein. Other delegations expressed concern that the wording was not efficiently clear with regard to the Court having the last word on the decision and remain "master of its proceedings". It should also be explained that the Court's decision would relate to all aspects except the assessment of the distribution of powers within the EU law and which fall into the Court's exclusive competence (e.g. considering a request premature in light of ongoing deliberations about the admissibility of an application).
- 13. Given that the EU would assess the applicable EU law in such a scenario, delegations expressed differing views about the utility for the European Court of Human Rights of hearing the views of the parties concerned or setting a specific deadline for an invitation/request and the assessment, and if these aspects were to be maintained or taken on board their placement in the accession instruments. Other delegations inquired about the sequence in which a request to become co-respondent (in combination with a reasoned declaration) would be made and the views of the other parties would be heard. The EU suggested that inspiration could be taken from Rule 44 of the Rules of the Court. In order to clarify or streamline the draft text, several delegations proposed additional amendments. The Chair welcomed the constructive discussion and considered that the current proposal (with amendments in brackets) can serve as a working basis for a future discussion. The Secretariat was invited to draft possible corresponding paragraphs for the explanatory report. Delegations were invited to submit any additional proposals in writing for both the text of paragraph 5 and the explanatory report.
- 14. The Group considered a proposal of a new paragraph 5a of Article 3 for the termination of the co-respondent mechanism. The proposal was based on the idea that the termination of the co-respondent mechanism served as *actus contrarius* to the application of the mechanism and would thus follow the same procedure, which was consequently underlined by a reference to the procedure outlined in paragraph 5. Given the particular importance of a termination and its potential

disadvantage for the parties, some delegations considered that the proposal for the termination of the co-respondent mechanism should spell out its procedure in more detail. In particular, some delegations considered that the hearing of the views of the parties to the case would be necessary before a decision is taken on the termination of the co-respondent mechanism and the EU makes the assessment of the applicable EU law. The situation may not be entirely similar to that foreseen in the proposed new paragraph 5 because the decision of the EU to terminate the co-respondent mechanism might be in detriment of the responding country and the applicant. Several delegations stated that the role of the European Court of Human Rights in taking the decision to terminate the corespondent mechanism should be further clarified, solidifying the concept of the Court having the last word of taking this decision and being master of its own proceedings. Additional questions were raised as to whether the termination by the co-respondent should be jointly declared with the respondent party (as originally envisaged in paragraph 59 of the explanatory report), and as to whether the procedural stage (e.g. in cases in which a Chamber judgment had already been delivered which could be referred to the Grand Chamber) should have an influence on whether the termination of the corespondent mechanism should be possible. Some delegations proposed additional amendments to the draft of the text. In light of the discussion, the Group invited the Secretariat to refine the proposal by taking account of the various proposed amendments and to also draft corresponding provisions for the explanatory report.

Item 5: Discussion of proposals submitted on the operation of inter-party applications (Article 33 ECHR) and of references for an advisory opinion (Protocol No. 16) in relation to EU member states, and of proposals submitted in respect of Article 53 ECHR

- 15. With regard to Protocol No. 16, the Group considered a proposal for a new Article 5a. According to this proposal, the EU would be given the opportunity, in the case a court or tribunal of a EU member state makes a request to the European Court of Human Rights for an advisory opinion, to clarify in an EU-internal procedure whether the procedure under Article 267 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union had been circumvented by such request. If this was to be confirmed, the European Court of Human Rights should exercise its discretion under Protocol No. 16 not to accept the request as far as it was violating EU law. The EU welcomed the approach of the proposal. Several delegations expressed concern that the issue which the proposal was trying to resolve already existed today (and thus was not directly linked to the EU's accession to the ECHR) and was in principle an internal matter for the EU and its member states. Those delegations also underlined that the European Court of Human Rights should have the final say on accepting a request. but the formulation in the proposal regarding the Court's use of its discretion appeared too ambiguous to that effect. The representative of the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights suggested that, in principle, a mechanism which could provide an authoritative statement from the EU (regarding which of several questions in a request for an advisory opinion falls into the scope ratione materiae of EU law) could be useful in helping the European Court of Human Rights to determine whether, and if so, that what extent a request for an advisory opinion falls within the scope of Protocol No. 16. It was also suggested that advisory opinions will not affect the distribution of powers between the EU and its members states. In light of the discussion, the Chair concluded that the issue of Protocol No. 16 needed further reflection. Delegations were invited to support the Secretariat with any additional proposals which could be used for further discussion.
- 16. When discussing the issue of inter-party applications under Article 33 ECHR, the EU provided further clarifications on the scope and rationale of Article 344 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. In its presentation, the EU considered that the finding of a solution would have to entail two elements: 1. That the methods of settlement under the EU treaties should apply in lieu of the procedure under Article 33 ECHR in respect of, first, disputes between the EU and its member states and, second, disputes between EU member states in relation to the Convention insofar as such

disputes fall within the scope *ratione materiae* of EU law; and 2. that only the Court of Justice of the European Union can establish authoritatively whether and to what extent a dispute between EU member states falls within the scope *ratione materiae* of EU law. Delegates welcomed the further clarifications on Article 344 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and invited the EU to present these clarifications in writing to continue the discussion. A number of delegations indicated that this matter appears to be an internal issue of EU law, and expressed concern about preserving the competence of the European Court of Human Rights, as well as retaining the equal footing of all Parties to the Convention and equal level of protection for all applicants. Some delegations noted that a comparison between EU member states which are Parties to the Convention and constituent entities of federal states would be misplaced. The Chair concluded that a proposal by one delegation regarding the possibility for a withdrawal of inter-party cases brought in violation of EU law deserved further attention and invited that delegation together with the Secretariat to look further into it for possible discussion at the next discussion. She also invited any other delegation to support the Secretariat with any additional proposals which could be used for further discussion.

Item 6: Exchange of views with the Human Rights Directorate (Department for the Execution of Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights) and the Secretariat of the Committee of Ministers regarding Article 7 of the draft Accession Agreement

17. The Group held an exchange of views with Mr Christophe Poirel (Director, Human Rights Directorate), Ms Geneviève Mayer (Deputy to the Secretary to the Committee of Ministers), Ms Claire Ovey (Head of Department for the Execution of the Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights) and Ms Zoë Bryanston-Cross (Secretariat of the Committee of Ministers) on the practice of the Committee of Ministers in the supervision of the execution judgments of the European Court of Human Rights since 2011. These representatives of the Secretariat elaborated on the procedure of the Committee of Ministers when supervising the execution of judgments by the European Court of Human Rights. Although the deliberations are held in camera (and the manner in which decisions are taken remains therefore confidential), they stated that it could be maintained that the vast majority of decisions taken by the Committee of Ministers are based on consensus, with very few subject to voting. Some delegations disagreed with these statements and stated that the practice of decisions taken by vote in the Committee of Ministers had increased in recent years, including voting on both the adoption and content of items covered by draft Rule 18 as well as on other matters, and that this issue should be re-discussed at future meetings.

Item 7: Presentation by the Secretariat of a paper on the estimated expenditure related to the Convention regarding Article 8 of the draft Accession Agreement

18. The Secretariat presented a paper on the estimated expenditure related to the Convention regarding Article 8 of the draft Accession Agreement, which focused in particular on the numbers applied under this provision for 2011 in comparison to 2021. The Group also held an exchange of views with Ms Alison Sidebottom (Director of Programme and Budget) and Ms Tara Nagle (Head of Division, Directorate of Programme and Budget). Ms Sidebottom explained that the 15% of overheads costs in Article 8 differed from other agreements with third parties which participate in Council of Europe Conventions because, *inter alia*, certain expenses (e.g. IT, logistics) were already included in the overall budget of the Court. The Secretariat will look into the percentage-point in Article 8, paragraph 2 and how the number was decided upon by the "47+1 Group" in 2012. The Group will keep this issue on the agenda, also in light of the fact that the Secretariat estimated that the expenses related to the functioning of the Convention in relation to the Ordinary Budget of the Council of Europe had changed from 34% in 2011 to 36% in 2021. Some delegations saw benefit in raising the percentage to 36% in such a case. It was also suggested that wider questions relating to the

functioning of this provision would need to be addressed, and the Chair stated that such questions should be raised when the Group addresses this provision at a future meeting.

Item 8: Discussion of other issues which are not contained in the Chair's "Paper to structure the discussion at the 6th negotiation meeting"

19. The Group will come back to this issue at its next meeting.

Item 9: Any other business

20. The Group took note of the dates for the 9^{th} negotiation meeting (23-25 March 2021) and the 10^{th} meeting (29 June – 2 July 2021), as well as the tentative dates for the 11^{th} meeting (5-8 October 2021) and the 12^{th} meeting (7-10 December 2021).

Item 10: Adoption of the meeting report

21. The Group adopted the present meeting report before the closure of the meeting.

APPENDIX I

Agenda

- 1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda
- 2. Discussion of the principle of mutual trust between the EU member states
- 3. Discussion of the situation of EU acts in the area of the Common Foreign and Security Policy that are excluded from the jurisdiction of the Court of Justice of the European Union
- 4. Discussion of proposals submitted on the EU's specific mechanisms of the procedure before the European Court of Human Rights
- 5. Discussion of proposals submitted on the operation of inter-party applications (Article 33 ECHR) and of references for an advisory opinion (Protocol No. 16) in relation to EU member states, and of proposals submitted in respect of Article 53 ECHR
- 6. Exchange of views with the Human Rights Directorate (Department for the Execution of Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights) and the Secretariat of the Committee of Ministers regarding Article 7 of the draft Accession Agreement
- 7. Presentation by the Secretariat of a paper regarding the estimated expenditure related to the Convention regarding Article 8 of the draft Accession Agreement
- 8. Discussion of other issues which are not contained in the Chair's "Paper to structure the discussion at the 6th negotiation meeting"
- 9. Any other business
- 10. Adoption of the meeting report

Working documents

Draft revised agreement on the accession of the European Union to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms	CM(2013)93 add1, Appendix 1, pp. 3-9
Draft declaration by the European Union to be made at the time of signature of the Accession Agreement	CM(2013)93 add1, Appendix 2, p. 10
Draft rule to be added to the Rules of the Committee of Ministers for the supervision of the execution of judgments and of the terms of friendly settlements in cases to which the European Union is a party	CM(2013)93 add1, Appendix 3, p. 11

Draft model of memorandum of understanding between the European Union and X [State which is not a member of the European Union]	CM(2013)93 add1, Appendix 4, p. 12
Draft explanatory report to the Agreement on the Accession of the European Union to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms	CM(2013)93 add1, Appendix 5, pp. 13- 28
Position paper for the negotiation on the European Union's accession to the European Convention for the protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms	<u>47+1(2020)1</u>
Paper by the Chair to structure the discussion at the 6 th negotiation meeting	47+1(2020)2
Compilation by the Secretariat of recent cases in the area of Basket 3 ("The principle of mutual trust between the EU member states")	47+1(2020)4rev
Negotiation Document submitted by the European Union on 2 November 2020	Restricted
Compilation by the European Commission of recent and currently pending cases before the Court of Justice of the European Union in the area of Basket 4 ("Common Foreign and Security Policy")	Non-paper
Non-paper prepared by the Secretariat on the estimated expenditure related to the Convention regarding Article 8 of the draft Accession Agreement	<u>47+1(2021)6</u>
Proposals by the Secretariat for discussion of agenda items 4 and 5	Non paper

Reference documents

Ad hoc terms of reference concerning accession of the EU to the CDDH(2010)008 Convention given to the CDDH by the Ministers' Deputies during their 1085 th meeting (26 May 2010)

Decision by the Minister's Deputies Committee of Ministers at its 1364 th meeting (15 January 2020) on the continuation of the ad hoc terms of reference for the CDDH to finalise the legal instruments setting out the modalities of accession of the European union to the European Convention on Human Rights	CM/Del/JAN(2020) 1364/4.3
Decision by the Minister's Deputies Committee of Ministers at its 1364 th meeting (15 January 2020) on the continuation of the ad hoc terms of reference for the CDDH to finalise the legal instruments setting out the modalities of accession of the European union to the European Convention on Human Rights	CM/Del/JAN(2020) 1364/4.3
Letter of 31 October 2019 by the President and the First Vice- President of the European Commission to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe	DD(2019)1301
Opinion 2/13 of 18 December 2014 of the Court of Justice of the European Union	A-2/13 ; EC LI: EU: C : 2014: 2454
Protocol No. 16 to the European Convention on Human Rights and its <u>explanatory memorandum</u>	Council of Europe Treaty Series No. 214

APPENDIX II

List of participants / Liste des participants

MEMBERS / MEMBRES

ALBANIA / ALBANIE

Ms Inida METHOXHA, Department of Treaties and International Law, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs

Mr Luis VORFI, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Albania to the Council of Europe

Ms Sidita GJIPALI, Deputy to the Permanent Representative

ANDORRA / ANDORRE

Mr Joan FORNER ROVIRA, Permanent Representative of Andorra to the Council of Europe

ARMENIA / ARMENIE

Mr Tigran H. GALSTYAN, Head of Department of Treaties and International Law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ms Manushak ARAKELYAN, Head of Multilateral Treaties Division / Treaties and International Law Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ms Zoya TOVMASYAN, Attaché of the Division of Multilateral Treaties, Department of Treaties and International Law

AUSTRIA / AUTRICHE

Mr Gerhard JANDL, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative

Ms Brigitte OHMS, Deputy Government Agent of Austria, Deputy Head of Department, European and International Law, Human Rights, Federal Chancellery

Mr Martin MEISEL, Head of Department for EU Law, Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs

AZERBAIJAN / AZERBAIDJAN

Mr Habib Abdullayev, Senior consultant, Human Rights Protection Unit, Law Enforcement Bodies Department, Administration of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan

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Ms Belma SKALONJIC, Office of the Government Agent of the Council of Ministers of BiH

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Ms Maria SPASSOVA, Director of Human Rights Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria

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Ms Narcisa BECIREVIC, Minister Plenipotentiary, Deputy to the Permanent Representative of Croatia to the Council of Europe

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Ms Ana FRANGES, Head of Unit, Directorate for European Affairs, International and Judicial Cooperation

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Mr Demetris LYSANDROU, Senior Counsel, Law Office of the Republic of Cyprus

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Ms Triin TIISLER, lawyer, International Law Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Ms Satu SISTONEN, Legal Counsellor, Unit for Human Rights Courts and Conventions, Legal Service, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

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Ms Elísabet GISLADOTTIR, specialist at the Icelandic Ministry of Justice

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Ms Kristine LICE, Government Agent, Representative of the Government of Latvia before International Human Rights Organisations

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Ms Vytautė KAZLAUSKAITE—ŠVENCIONIENE, Senior Legal Advisor, Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania

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Ms Brigitte KONZ, Présidente du Tribunal, Tribunal d'Arrondissement de Diekirch

Mr Robert BEVER, Conseiller - Coordination Justice et Affaires intérieures

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Ms Tonje MEINICH, Deputy Director General, Legislation Department, Ministry of Justice and Public Security, Chair of the "47+1 Group"

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ROMANIA / ROUMANIE

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RUSSIAN FEDERATION / FEDERATION DE RUSSIE

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