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Democracy Building in the EU's External Relations

Greens/EFA motion for a resolution

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and in particular Article 21,

- having regard to Articles 3, 6, 11 and 19 of the Treaty on European Union and Articles 177, 300 and 310 of the EC Treaty,

- having regard to all agreements between the EU and third countries and the human rights and democracy clauses contained in those agreements,

- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union proclaimed in Strasbourg on 12 December 2007,

- having regard to the UN General Assembly resolution, 'UN Millennium Declaration', 8 September 2000, A/RES/55/2,

- having regard to the UN General Assembly resolution, 'Promoting and consolidating democracy', 4 December 2000, A/RES/55/96,

- having regard to UN General Assembly resolution, '2005 Work Summit Outcome', 15 September 2005, A/RES/60/1,

- having regardto the UN General Assembly resolution, '2005 Work Summit Outcome', 15 September 2005, A/RES/60/1,

- having regard to UN General Assembly resolution, Enhancing the role of regional, sub-regional and other organizations and arrangements in promoting and consolidating democracy, 23 March 2005, A/RES/59/201,

- having regard to the Commission communication on EU Election Assistance and Observation (COM (2001) 191),

- having regard to its resolution of 15 March 2001 on the Commission Communication on EU Election Assistance and Observation,

- having regard to the Commission communication on the EU's role in promoting human rights and democratisation in third countries (COM (2001) 252),

- having regard to its resolution of 25 April 2002 on the Communication from the Commission on the European Union's role in promoting human rights and democratisation in third countries,

- having regard to the European Security Strategy, 12 December 2003,

- having regard to the Commission Communication on "Governance and Development" (COM (2003) 615),

- having regard to its report, A5- 0219/2004, on the Commission's Communication,

- having regard to the European Union Consensus on Development, 2005,

- having regard to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, 2005 and the Accra Agenda for Action, 2008,

- having regard to the Commission Communication on "Governance in the European Consensus on Development -Towards a harmonised approach within the European Union" (COM (2006) 421),

- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 1889/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on establishing a financing instrument for the promotion of democracy and human rights worldwide (EIDHR),

- having regard to the decision of its Bureau of 18 June 2007 establishing the Office for Promotion of Parliamentary Democracy,

- having regard to the May 2008 "EP resolution on EU election observation missions: objectives, practices and future challenges",

- having regard to the May 2009 Council conclusions on Support to Democratic Governance towards an enhanced EU framework,

- having regard to the question of 30 September 2009 to the Commission on democracy building in external relations (O-00xx/2009 - B7?0xxx/2009),

- having regard to Rules 115(5) and 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas democracy and human rights are fundamental values of the European Union and its Member States, and, have been integral to the process of European integration from the outset,

B. whereas the basic treaties of the European Union underline a firm commitment to democracy and human rights and the Copenhagen political criteria of ' stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and, protection of minorities' have been a key feature of the enlargement process,

C. whereas the promotion and protection of all human rights is a basic prerequisite for the existence of a democratic society as reaffirmed in the UN General Assembly resolution 59/201,

D. whereas the broad understanding of democracy has been integrating successfully civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights within the EU as enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights and in the two relevant international covenants and has been key in bringing stability and prosperity in a fashion unseen in world history,

E. whereas Article 11 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) states that one of the key objectives of the Common Foreign and Security Policy is 'to develop and consolidate democracy and rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms',

F. whereas Article 21 of the Lisbon Treaty states that "the Union's action on the international scene shall be guided by the principles which have inspired its own creation, development and enlargement" and that "the Union shall ensure consistency between the different areas of its external action and between these and its other policies",

G. whereas democratic systems may vary in forms and shape, as is the case within the EU, but democracy is a universal value and its essential principles or elements are enshrined in numerous international declarations and conventions. These elements, as defined by two UN UN General Assembly resolutions in 2000 and 2005 (A/RES/55/96 & A/RES/59/201), include:

- Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, inter alia, freedom of association and peaceful assembly, freedom of expression and freedom of opinion
- The right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives, to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic free elections by universal and equal suffrage and by secret ballot guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the people
- A pluralistic system of political parties and organisations
- Respect for the rule of law
- The separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary
- Transparency and accountability in public administration
- Free, independent and pluralistic media

H. whereas as stated in the Millennium Declaration, democratic and participatory governance based on the will of the people can best assure the right of men and women to live their lives and raise their children in dignity, free from hunger and from the fear of violence, oppression or injustice,

I. whereas the ability of men and women to participate on equal terms in political life and in decision-making is a prerequisite of genuine democracy,

J. whereas democracy, development and respect for all human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights, are interdependent and mutually reinforcing,

K. whereas democracy is also clearly linked to security, as recognised by the European Security Strategy, which states that 'spreading good governance, supporting social and political reform, dealing with corruption and abuse of power, establishing the rule of law and protecting human rights are the best means of strengthening the international order',

L. whereas the European Union disposes of a wide range of instruments and tools, from political dialogue and diplomatic initiatives to specific instruments of financial and technical cooperation to support democracy and human rights worldwide,

M. whereas the European Union external financial instruments, such as the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and the Instrument for

Stability (IfS), all provide significant possibilities for democratic governance and institutional and capacity building support,

N. whereas the Cotonou Agreement provides at the same time a political dialogue and technical and financial cooperation through the European Development Fund (EDF) for ACP countries; whereas this agreement contains a human rights and democracy clause, which is considered as an essential element of the agreement, and a mechanism for consultation and exchange of information prior to the temporary suspension of the agreement,

O. whereas the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) is a key financial assistance instrument in human rights and democracy, being global in scope, able to work without the host country consent, and directly supportingcivil society organisations; whereas EU Election Observation Missions, financed by the EIDHR, is an essential element of the EU's contribution to democratic institutional building which notably includes the follow-up to the recommendations of the EU EOMs,

P. whereas there is a need for a better overview and in-dept analysisof the democracy support currently provided by the EU, of how the EU's large arsenal of tools and instruments to support democracy worldwide delivers in partner countries and how those different instruments and actors operate and connect,

Q. whereas the 2004 EP report on the Commission's Communication on Governance and Development stressed 'the importance of pursuing electoral and parliamentary reforms, beyond the establishment of multi-party electoral systems, to ensure more extensive and effective political activity among the population',[1]

1. Shares the view that there is a crucialneed for a more coherent and uniform framework to make EU support for democracy-building throughout the world more effective;

2. Considers at the same time that the coherence and effectiveness of the EU external action lies in the building up of awareness and consensus throughout the EU on the importance of democracy and human rights issues with regard to other priorities;

3. Welcomes the efforts by former and current EU Presidencies regarding a cross-pillar initiative on democracy building in EU external actions with the aim to refine its policy and reinforce its action and coordination of efforts, and underlines the need for a sustained action in this field as part of the Council Conclusions to be adopted in November 2009; stresses in this respect that some key principles such as transparency, access to documents, consultation and accountability must be duly taken into consideration by the Council in addressing this issue;

4. Recommends the Council conclusions to include concrete and practical suggestions for improving coordination of democracy support in the EU foreign, human rights and development policy instruments; calls in this spirit on the current EU Presidency to propose a standard methodology for guaranteeing that democracy and human rights be a core cross-cutting issue in all external political, contractual and financial instruments; considers once again that the adoption of a Country Strategy on Human Rights and Democracy to be considered as a reference document establishing country-specific priorities in this field and mainstreamed into all relevant external EU policies and instruments with the third country concerned could substantially reinforce the consistency, coordination and effectiveness of the EU external action;

5. Calls on the Commission and EU Member States when designing the new external action service to institutionally ensure an effective mainstreaming of human rights and democracy building in all policy areas and to draw lessons from current process and experience with a view to translating it into progress on the ground;

6. Reiterates that democratisation, electoral process andgood governance are not only ends in themselves, but also vital for poverty reduction, sustainable development, peace and stability. Democracy, as demonstrated by the EU internal integration progress, helps to deliver not only political and civil rights but also economic, cultural and social rights, including solidarity;

7. Considers that the embedding of democracy and democratic processes in third countries offers the best prospects for developing effective policies related to global issues which are also of concern to EU citizens. Democratic systems can, for instance, better combat transnational crime and trafficking; protect the environment; stresses at the same time that the credibility of the Union's external action is a must for a successful support towards democratic developments abroad; calls in this spirit on EU Member States and the Commission to ensure that EU internal policies such as anti-terrorism policies or asylum and migration policies guarantee the full respect of the principles enshrined in the UN relevant Conventions;

8. Recommends the EU, in order to strengthen concerted worldwide actions to promote democracy, to publicly endorse the 2005 UN General Assembly's democracy definition as the reference point of its own democratisation work;

9.Stresses that democracy cannot be exported or imposed from the outside; and underlines the EU's continued commitment to the principles of ownership of development strategies and programmes by partner countries. However, these processes can be supported by all the different EU instruments, adapted to the specific situation of each country;

10. Proposes the Council and the Commission to proceed with a comprehensive and detailed analysis of all EU democracy and human rightssupport in a sample of partner countries, allowing as such practical recommendations to be brought forward;

11. Recommends the Council and the Commission to implement the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action on Aid Effectiveness in their democracy support work. Suggests in particular to see joint EU democracy assessments, joint EU programming and burden-sharing to take place in order to increase impact and visibility of EU democracy support work;

12. Suggests to the Commission to integrate systematically a state of democracy and human rights section in the Country Strategy Papers and mainstream democracy and human rights support in the cooperation programmes with partner countries as well as in all other political and financial instruments;

13. Underlines the need for a better coordination of the activities carried out under the different external financial instruments, to fully explore the complementarity between geographical and thematic instruments; considers that, for achieving more effectiveness in this field, all these efforts must also be accompanied by an enhanced coordination among EU donors; shares the view that the Commission should explore the possibility to support projects under the United Nations Democracy Fund aiming at strengthening the activities of local civil society organisations and promoting human rights;

14. Urges the Council and Commission to carry out broad-based, comprehensive consultation with all EU and third-country stakeholders with a special focus on NGOs and human rights defenders, including institutional and regional and local actors, before launching new democracy-building initiatives;

15. Calls on the Commission to systematically engage all stakeholders, including NGOs and Human Rights defenders and particularly parliaments of partner countries, in the preparation, the implementation and the assessmentof country-specific instruments such as agreements between the EU and the country concerned and Country Strategy Papers;

16. Underlines the need for EU democracy support to be comprehensive, addressing all issues covered by

the UNGA 2005 resolution, and to take a long-term approach in its delivery;

17. Welcomes the positive contribution made by EU EOMs in strengthening democratic processes, enhancing respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, good governance and the rule of law, and, in particular, reinforcing electoral processes around the world, but stresses the need to ensure a coherent post-electoral policy based on the follow-up to EU EOM recommendations with the involvement of the civil society, where development support is consistent with democratic principles and democratic governance values; considers in this respect that EU EOM and electoral assistance are more likely to have a durable impact when they are based on a long term electoral approach and are embedded in an overall strategy involving the civil society in all phases of this process;

18. Calls on the Commission to further build on successful cooperation with United Nations on electoral Observation Missions and to strengthen common strategy building and project design with the UN and other regional organisations such as OSCE and AU for the promotion of democracy and human rights;

19. Stresses that EU democracy building efforts should systematically include a special focus on the independence of the judiciary and free, independent and pluralistic media by financing in priority projects in these areas;

20. Recommends the introduction of a specific strategy to support newly and democratically elected parliaments with a view to permanently entrenching democracy, the rule of law and good governance;

21. Confirms its own determination to contribute to the reinforcement of democratic processes by enhancing its involvement in election observation, follow-up to EU EOMs and parliamentary capacity-building; calls in this respect on its Office for Promotion of Parliamentary Democracy (OPPD) to present a comprehensive action plan to the relevant parliamentary committees which should necessarily includes a clear mechanism of cooperation with interparliamentary delegations and joint parliamentary committees;

22. Encourages Commission Delegations to partner with the OPPD when considering or initiating parliamentary support programmes;

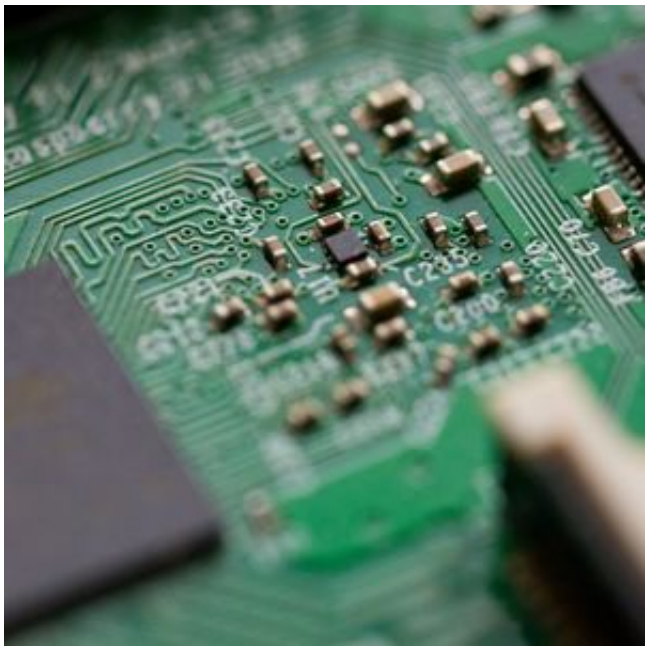
23. Recommends an Action plan to be part of the November Council conclusions and a review of the progress to be foreseen by the end of 2010; invites the current and forthcoming EU Presidencies to present the outcome of the General Affairs and External Relations Council before the relevant committees of the Parliament;

24. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the Member States.

[1] A5-0219/2004

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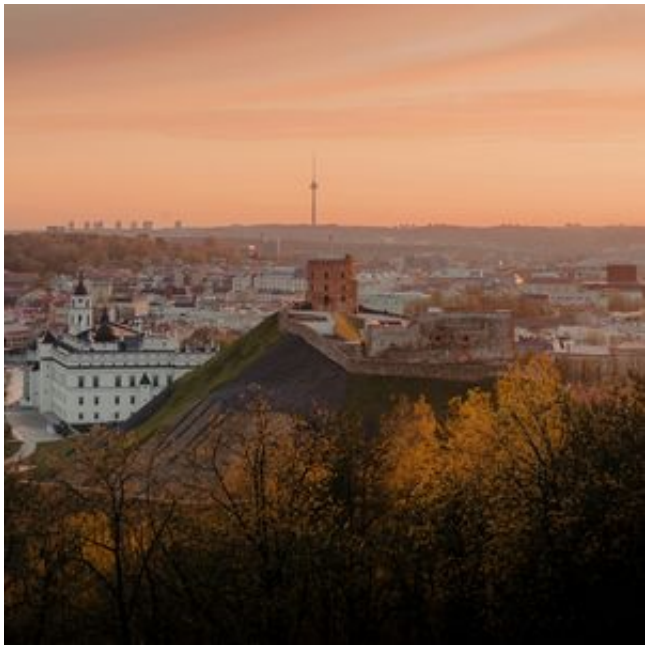
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