

# Transcripts of the expert meeting on the substance of EU democracy promotion

Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels

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## Summary<sup>1</sup>

The expert meeting was organized in the framework of a Jean Monnet Information and Research Activity on the substance of the European Union's (EU) international democracy promotion policy (see [www.eu-ipods.eu](http://www.eu-ipods.eu)). It was organized by Ghent University and the MZES/University of Mannheim, in collaboration with the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) at Brussels. The event brought together scholars, practitioners, representatives of civil society and researchers from think tanks to discuss what characterizes EU democracy promotion policies. Based on the different backgrounds of the participants, the meeting addressed the question of *what the EU should support when promoting democracy worldwide*.

Recent developments, in particular the Arab Spring, remind us that this question is at the basis of the EU's democracy promotion strategy. While it has not adopted an official definition of democracy, the EU has recently launched the concept of 'deep democracy'. As the controversies regarding the European Consensus on Democracy and the European Endowment for Democracy show, defining substance is central to the debate about future EU democracy promotion.

The aim of the expert meeting was to formulate and discuss recommendations for the substance of EU democracy support from the different perspectives of the participants reflecting the results of current academic research, experience of third country nationals, think tank analyses, insights from other international democracy promoters, EU practitioners and the conclusions of the Public Forum taking place in the morning (see transcripts at [www.eu-ipods.eu](http://www.eu-ipods.eu)). The discussion touched the following points among others: the importance of supporting elections in a comprehensive rather than isolated way; a critical reflection of concepts such as 'deep democracy'; the relationship between broad democratic principles and their concrete realisation on the ground, based on a thorough understanding of the local situation and the cooperation with local societies; the role of already existing international definitions of democracy for drawing up such principles; the significance of particular elements of democracy promotion such as human rights or socio-economic development; the tension between interests and democracy promotion.

Some insights have also been incorporated in a Policy Brief published by the CEPS on the topic (see <http://www.ceps.eu/book/eu%E2%80%99s-promotion-external-democracy-search-plot>).

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<sup>1</sup> Eine deutsche Zusammenfassung befindet sich am Ende des Dokuments. Op het einde van dit document vindt u een Nederlandstalige samenvatting. À la fin du document vous trouverez un résumé en français. Al final de este documento encontrará un resumen en español.

**Participants in alphabetical order:**

Steven Blockmans (CEPS)

Fabienne Bossuyt (Ghent University)

Tom Casier (University of Kent)

Gordon Crawford (University of Leeds)

George Dura (European Commission)

Marc Franco (EBRD)

Emmanuel Gyimah-Boadi (University of Ghana - Ghana Centre for Democratic Development)

Abdallah Helmy (El Sadat Association for Social Development & Welfare, Egypt)

Hoh, Anna-Lena (CEPS)

Kostanyan, Hrant (CEPS)

Milja Kurki (Aberystwyth University)

Janez Lenarčič (ODIHR)

Anja Mezeg (ODIHR)

Jan Orbie (Ghent University)

Andrea Ostheimer (Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung)

Daniel Popescu (Council of Europe)

Clara Portela (Singapore Management University)

Geoffrey Pridham (University of Bristol)

Camelia Ratiu (Dr. Phil.)

Vicky Reynaert (Ghent University)

Elien Sohier (Ghent University)

Iryna Solonenko (International Renaissance Foundation, Ukraine)

Anne Wetzel (MZES, University of Mannheim)

*The expert meeting was opened by Anne Wetzel. After a welcome to the experts and a short round of introduction, the experts coming from the target countries were asked for short opening remarks.<sup>2</sup>*

**Emmanuel Gyimah-Boadi – Opening remarks:**

In terms of what the European Union is already doing in Ghana, basically, I think, it is increasingly becoming election support activities. For Ghana, that is an important area of democracy support because I do not know if you know about the Ghanaian context. Elections there happen to be very competitive. You have at least two main parties which have been in government. Elections remain extremely competitive. But that's also because the political players and parties and candidates recognise that, for Ghanaian concerns, for now and maybe in the foreseeable future, the only way to get political power is through the ballot box. They have put a lot of sticks on elections. It is only a question that they are willing to certainly kill and live in order to win elections. When you have that kind of situation, I think it demands a lot of sensitivity, it demands a lot of support. For that I think EU elections support is helpful.

But I do think I still see a problem with the timing. Elections do not simply take place, just one election year. Much of this support is focused just a few months before elections. I think that you do not get the full benefit of election support if you concentrate your support activities around a few months for an election or an election year. That's the first point I want to make.

The second is the increasing view of budget support as a democratic support or democratic accountability promoting modality. I am not sure if democratic accountability was originally part of the intention for doing budget support. But what I see for budget support in Ghana is that it is increasingly reinforcing the power of the finance ministry, the presidency, the executive branch. That's one branch of the three main branches. So, the government gets increasingly more powerful and this comes at the expense of especially the legislator.

The time at the table that was given to civil society is also increasingly disappearing and I think that this is a problem. As I said in the morning it seems to me that the country of Ghana still has a problem of who has the country-ownership. Ownership is limited to the government, so you are probably not talking about a national ownership.

**Abdallah Helmy – Opening remarks:**

I would like to comment on the European activities in Egypt. A lot of change has been happening in the internal political scene in Egypt, which requires a change from the other side, the European side. But this European side of change is a little bit slower than what is happening on the ground. And saying a little bit is being totally diplomatic. It is very slow for what is happening on the ground.

So, what we need is first that European politicians and decision makers on this side must realise that they must have some change in their mind to deal with the new situation happening on the ground in Egypt. We are building institutions and we are building a new way of democracy. Maybe it will not look like anything you have seen before, but again, it will answer for the same core values that democracy will answer for. So you must be open-minded enough to accept diversity, and a new-comer to the market. And do not just close the market. You must have an organic template based on values mainly.

The second problem is, you must make some decisions but you do not have any information. But the information that has been exported to you is little, limited and narrowly focused. You need to widen up your information access. You need information from the community. See and realise, and then take decisions based on this information.

There are more recommendations, but we can do that later in the discussion.

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<sup>2</sup> The transcripts were prepared by Fabienne Bossuyt, Eline De Ridder, Jan Orbie, Elien Sohier and Anne Wetzel. Funding by the EU's Jean Monnet programme is gratefully acknowledged. The responsibility for these transcripts lies solely with the authors.

### **Iryna Solonenko – Opening remarks:**

The problem is not so much the substance of democracy promotion but the problem is the 'how'-question, the tools.

The EU doesn't have a template. It is rather reactive to how the situation is on the ground. In terms of the substance, the Council of Europe is an actor, e.g. the Venice Commission.

Cooperation with political elites only is not a good way to go. What is largely missing is a strategy of how to enhance the power base of other domestic actors. The EU still misses a strategy of how to encourage civil society organisations (CSO) to play a stronger role in the reform process. The EU has shifted a bit more towards consultations with CSOs recently, but this is not enough. The EU has other instruments at its disposal, which it has hardly used. For instance, the EU has the leverage to say to political elites we will not give funding unless you take on board proposals from CSOs. Also, the EU has to strengthen its conditionality where provision of funding is concerned. Funding should not be allocated unless sector-specific conditions are met. Importantly - those sector-specific conditions should be clearly and openly communicated in order to become a reference point and a tool for civil society advocacy. For the time being CSOs are largely excluded from the process of direct budgetary support. Finally, the EU could also play a stronger role in pushing the governments to improve regulatory framework for civil society, and not only civil society, but also small and medium business (business climate), which would be the basis for the middle class and civil society development. In short, along with dealing with political elites, who are in most cases not interested in reforms, the EU needs to think long-term in order to empower local reform-minded actors. To conclude, I would like to draw your attention to the Index of European Integration for Eastern Partnership Countries, which is available online ([www.eap-index.eu](http://www.eap-index.eu)). It is a good example of the potential of civil society to organise complex monitoring and advocacy of reforms.

### **Anne Wetzel**

Thank you for these opening remarks. I would like to pick out a few points from the statements for further discussion.

First, electoral support: In the past, the EU was criticised for being too much focused on elections. Now we have heard that election support can be helpful but only if certain conditions are met.

Secondly, the role of budget support was mentioned twice. We should further discuss the substance of budget support. What democratic substance is connected to this?

For the second short introductory presentation the question emerges of what is an organic template? On which kind of values would it be based? Regarding the aspect of institution building, in our project, we found that you could actually promote autocracy with institution building when it is not accompanied with other aspects.

Another interesting point is that the EU is seen to be rather reactive. What is the case in other countries, maybe some of you have other experiences in other regions? Or the same? After all, a reactive actor may not be a bad thing, especially given the demands to really listen to the ground.

In our project we had a paper on Ukraine that concluded that the EU has a rather broad template, addressing core democratic elements and the context conditions of democracy. Maybe this is too obvious as substance? It would also be interesting to discuss whether people on the ground have a different impression than the people in the EU?

Regarding the role of civil society, we could ask what kind of civil society should be promoted. Is it a means, or an end in itself? I notice there are already a lot of questions, but first George Dura from the European Commission has the word.

## George Dura – Reply to Opening Remarks

The first thing I would like to say, having listened to the comments, is that the democracy support agenda of the EU has been evolving quite rapidly in the last few years. It is consolidating itself.

With respect to a number of the issues discussed here today, we are aware of them and they are being more and more addressed as well, so they are on our radar screen.

And I think that now we even have the frameworks in place to address them. To give you some examples:

- Since last year, after the events in the Arab world, in the framework of the ENP, we have the ‘deep democracy’ concept, that was discussed this morning I imagine.

- But more essentially for the wider democracy support of the EU is the Agenda for Change that was adopted in October 2011. The Agenda for Change states that democracy, governance and human rights become one of the pillars of EU external action and assistance; the second pillar being sustainable and inclusive growth. And also at the same time, the EC adopted the Communication on budget support, which links budget support to a commitment to reform in democratic governance.

There are also the Council Conclusions on democracy support of 2009, which are still being implemented. There is a pilot phase for this: we have roughly ten countries, where the EU’s comprehensive approach to democracy support is being implemented and is currently under assessment. And basically there we have introduced a more coherent and coordinated approach towards support, introducing also more joint programming, basing ourselves on principles like local ownership, partnership and dialogue with the third countries.

So this is just to give you a rough sketch and framework.

Coming to the specific points raised, concerning elections, it is true that elections have over the years been sort of the more visible aspect of our democracy support work. At the same time, it is rather limited. The budget is limited to 30 to 35 million euros per year, so it is quite small but it has a high visibility impact and it is also useful for the EOM (Election Observation Mission) recommendations. So we are moving away from a short term, in and out elections-based support towards a longer term approach, covering more actors and more recommendations in our democracy support work. We want to avoid having democracy support activities on the one hand, and elections on the other, which are disconnected. This is also in line with our comprehensive support: we have a legal reform programme, assist with electoral reform, cover the electoral cycle, engage all the actors involved at various stages of the electoral process. We are arriving two or three years before the elections and we are not leaving directly afterwards, so we are not just focusing on the election day. This is increasingly becoming integrated in our broader democracy support.

Concerning budget support, as I mentioned, the idea here is to tie it more to democratic reform and commitments to democratic reform. It is still work in progress, but at least there will be a change compared to existing practices.

Concerning the point of a template - and I would not call it perhaps an ‘organic’ template - we do not have a template. It is a mantra: "we do not export our model of democracy, there is no EU model; there are 27 plus models in the EU". Naturally, from our actions and activities which we implement in this field you can find some pattern of course, and trace a cultural bias. But we see it more as a series of activities that we provide. The position of the EU is that of a facilitator and not someone who wants to drive the reform. We want to support domestic processes. So it is not so much coming in and telling people what to do. If our assistance is required then we stand ready to assist. I mean, this is probably a change in paradigm, in our approach to democracy support and that has become visible especially since the Arab spring. So I would not speak about a model or a template but rather about activities in this area.

I can agree with the reactive actor assessment. It is true in this regard, because when we developed democratic support activities, it was also using a multi-stake holder approach: we try to increasingly involve civil society and not only government. So we do not want to spend money only on institutions, state institutions. This is important to have in certain countries but at the same time, we move away from this by working a lot more with parliaments, civil society actors, political society actors, who can give sustainability to this whole process. The role of civil society is quite crucial, we have specific instruments, such as the EIDHR. We have the

geographic instruments that are more long term, where we tend to work with the institutions but, we are going more and more towards a service delivery of the state institutions towards their citizens.

These are some initial points, which I'm happy to discuss further.

### **Anne Wetzel**

So to sum up the question of the essence of the substance: the EU is a facilitator, not someone in the driving seat, rather someone who reacts, implements instead of acts. This morning we discussed the notion of 'deep democracy', which Michael Emerson said is rather a euphemism. Does the EU need substance at all? Let's first ask this question to Milja Kurki.

### *Start of the discussion*<sup>3</sup>

**Milja Kurki** explained that democracy promotion is about 'promoting something', thereby indicating that it is a value driven project. The question, however, is what kind of values the EU exactly promotes, since this is not always very clear to the recipients. Therefore, the US tends to be preferred by recipients as a democracy promoter because the values it promotes are much clearer (cf. the big L of liberal values). Many recipients want the EU to promote alternative models such as social democracy, but can – and should – the EU promote a model? Unlike the US, the EU is not a unitary political actor and has 27 different models, which have to be somehow reunited. As a consequence, the EU's democracy promotion is characterised by conceptual fuzziness. This creates practical problems and contradictions in the sense that in some cases the EU is found to promote electoral democracy while in other cases it supports socio-economic development and in yet other instances it promotes market openness as a core value. However, this conceptual fuzziness implies a certain level of flexibility, which serves EU interests and values quite well. The fact that the EU does not have clear values and has a fuzzy model creates a context where having openness to various entry points is actually an asset. For some recipients, this means that there is a potential of greater plurality. The EU is maybe more in tune with the current world order than other actors, because the liberal world order is changing; liberal international ideas are no longer the dominant paradigm. As a piece of advice for the EU, Milja Kurki therefore argues that the EU should not push for more coherence but rather embrace the plurality that the conceptual fuzziness of its democracy promotion agenda allows for.

With respect to the EU's electoral support, **Geoffrey Pridham** feels that the EU is not wrong in focusing on elections in target countries, as these are crucial events in democratic transition. The focus should be on the different stages of the democratisation process, of which elections are a central element for the first stage, such as in Egypt last year and Ukraine at the time of the Orange revolution. However, as the European Commission defined in 2011, democracy is not only about the democratic institutions but also involves an independent judiciary, a dynamic civil society etc., which is more or less equivalent to what is called 'substantive democracy' in democratisation studies. However, it takes a long time before a country achieves this kind of democratic consolidation. Egypt may now perhaps be moving in that direction, but it will take a long time; Ukraine, for instance, is currently regressing. It is clear that in our neighbouring countries, and particularly countries without EU membership prospect, it will take decades before democracy consolidates. As a result, Geoffrey Pridham concludes that the term 'deep democracy' is premature for promoting democracy in these countries.

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<sup>3</sup> From this point onwards, paraphrases of what was said are provided rather than the literal word-for-word transcript.

According to **Janez Lenarčič** there is no need to define democracy, at least not for the members of the OSCE, since the OSCE/CSCE adopted the Copenhagen agreement back in 1990, which defines democracy as containing all the aspects already mentioned, including rule of law, civil society, etc. This is not an EU document, but an OSCE document agreed by all members, and thus not imposed by some on others. Janez Lenarčič goes on to argue that the diversity of EU models is an asset: the EU can tell the target countries that there is room for national specificities; however, there are some universal standards for democracy, which need to be respected regardless of the model chosen. With regard to elections, Janez Lenarčič stresses that it is important to continue to focus on elections as it remains useful as an empirical test of the effectiveness of democracy promotion. However, election support is only useful if it is focused on systematic follow-up of the recommendations issued by election observers.

In coming back to some of the issues discussed, **Daniel Popescu** uses the metaphor of the elephant in the room, highlighting that there are four elephants in the room. The first elephant is the question 'what is European democracy?' According to Daniel Popescu there is no EU model, but there is a European model. The second elephant is the question what European democracy should become. The Council of Europe was going to launch a world forum on democracy, a Davos kind of event where important people and relevant thinkers focus on democracy and discuss what we should change in 'our own house'. The third elephant is the question what we should promote in the target countries. For instance, how to take account of local traditions and guarantee ownership? The fourth elephant is the question 'how can we cooperate'? How can we obtain the best value for money? What works best? Converting into a democracy is a painful process, think of countries like Romania, where the GDP dropped by 40 per cent during its transition into a liberal democracy.

**Emmanuel Gyimah-Boadi** takes up the question of defining democracy. He points out that, first, the United Nations has more member states than the European Union, and it also has a broad definition of democracy. In his opinion, if the UN can have a definition, the EU can have one, too. Second, he demands that we should not make it too hard but come up with a rather useful, practical operationalisation of democracy promotion. In his view, elections are important, but not elections alone. Based on his experience, he claims that one cannot have good elections on their own but only in combination with other issues, e.g. electoral education.

Coming back to the concept of 'deep democracy', **Andrea Ostheimer** agrees that it has become a buzzword. She underlines that instead of a one-size-fits-all approach, a tailor-made approach is what the EU needs. She argues that democracy is not taking place in a vacuum. What needs to be considered is not only the civil society, but mainly the political parties, which were much neglected actors in the past. Also, democracy promotion does not stop after the election day, and it is important to engage with political parties beyond the election day. What is needed is to create the necessary checks and balances in the system, which also means that the role of and support to national parliaments has to be reconsidered. Thus, instead of looking for an EU model, the aim should be much more modest, by supporting for example competition, participation, political and civil rights.

With regard to a so-called EU template, **Tom Casier** mentions that the EU is not very original in its views on democracy; it is often referring to the Council of Europe and other institutions. He points to the example of the Action Plans based on the Venice Commission, behind which the EU is putting its weight.

Still, the EU tends to be selective and ambiguous. Some aspects are emphasized in particular the formal, institutional aspects of democracy, while aspects of substantive democracy are underemphasized. He gives the examples of Belarus and Russia and concludes that there is also an advantage or self-interest for the EU in being vague. As the concept is ill-defined, researchers should be careful not to use the term 'deep democracy'. There are other terms that fit the purpose better. Also, Tom Casier reminds us that one should not look at it as purely consolidation, but as a condition for democracy: there will not be democracy if some conditions are not fulfilled (e.g. independent judiciary, anti-corruption measures, free media). There is a stronger focus needed on these issues, because they are vital in assuring that democratisation goes beyond the institutional facade.

**Marc Franco** starts his intervention with a question: To what extent is the EU in a position to promote democracy (or for that matter, is the US in such a position?)? He maintains that in external policy security and economic interests are often stronger than the interest in promoting democracy and human rights. He continued by quoting two illustrations supporting this consideration. Before the Arab spring, Tunisia was able to get away with severe human rights violations, without any condemnation in official EU documents, because of economic interests. In Egypt, Mubarak could equally strengthen his authoritarian rule and the police repression of opponents, using the excuse of the fight against terrorism and because of the security importance of Egypt for Israel.

In addition, EU foreign policy is very much headquarter-centred because of the need to get all member states on board. Which policy would be best from a European point of view, is often of secondary importance to the question what member states can accept. This leads a strong Eurocentric approach (that of course also characterises the bilateral external relations of MS with third countries) and limits the understanding of local situations and specific meaning of political concepts that emerge in the new situations.

Marc Franco illustrates this point with the example of Egypt, where initial (almost naïve) enthusiasm about Egypt finding the way democracy turned into disillusionment because the ups and downs of the political process. There was a lack of understanding about the difficulties of building democracy in a country having lived through several decades of dictatorship and characterised by extreme inequality of income. After having been considered for decades as a dangerous organisation, Muslim Brothers became the interlocutor and a secular political system now moves in the direction of political Islam. In the process, many decisions have been taken that may not be strictly “democratic” from a European point of view, but the basic fact is that the process of democratisation has been kept on track and that the political scene remains “open”. The evolution has been assessed too negatively, seen through western eyes and using an inappropriate set of western concepts, in particular about the relationship between religion and politics.

These considerations related to the real importance (as opposed to the declared importance) of a Human Rights component of External Policy and the limited understanding of the socio-political situation in third countries should constitute the necessary backdrop of any discussion on how to formulate and implement Human Rights and Democracy support actions in External Policy.

**Gordon Crawford** makes the audience aware that we should not only look at substance but also need to think about the *lack* of substance and democracy support. He points to his previous work that showed a gap between rhetoric and reality, for example in the context of Ghana, which is a favourable context for democracy promotion, and Central Asia, which is an unfavourable context, and in the Southern Mediterranean countries. 'He concludes that we can find a lack of emphasis on democracy promotion in various country contexts, including ones where conditions are relatively favourable (e.g. Ghana), as well as those where autocratic stability is prioritised as more likely to deliver competing foreign policy objectives, often self-interested ones, (e.g. Central Asia).

**Abdullah Helmy** takes up the point of the lack of a template and says that this is a responsibility the Europeans cannot bear: You can agree on values (e.g. the value of equal access to decision making or participation in local budget making) while leaving the mechanisms to the local community.

With regard to the interplay of democracy promotion and interests, he advances the view that democracy should be highlighted ‘not because you love democracy, but in order to protect your own interests. People will not like you because you love democracy.’ He demands that democracy promoters be transparent with regard to their interests in democracy promotion. He continues to stress the importance of deliverables for democracy. Democracy promoters should ask what is in the citizens’ interests. They should work with citizens and not only governments. Further to that, empowering citizens should be promoted, e.g. work on education, technology transfer, agricultural cooperation, NGO partnerships and partnerships with political parties. Direct money to Egypt is not desirable in his view because it is impossible to control, it is better to put money in the systems that you can control. He gives the examples of education and cooperation between universities, and garbage (technology) versus energy so that citizens will defend democracy.

Based on her research, **Clara Portela** reconsiders the question of what the connection between democracy and human rights is and asks: 'Do they not usually go hand in hand, or are they separate fields?' Her own experience is that those aspects that the EU promotes in human rights are close to the democratic process. When the EU imposes sanctions in the name of HR and democracy, it does so most of the time in order to address crises related to the democratic process. It reacts to incidents that are normally the violent repression of pro-democracy demonstrations or to reversals of the democratic process. In her view, they are justified in terms of human rights violations, but the kind of human rights that have been breached are linked to democracy: freedom of the press, of association, of demonstration etc.

**Andrea Ostheimer** joins the debate on this point by adding that if one looks at the EU, one gets the impression that there is a dominance of human rights whereas democracy is limited to the electoral process. Among others things in the EIDHR there is a dominance of human rights. Also in calls and support schemes, there is often a dominance of human rights, while other aspects of democracy support are limited. She refers back to Iryna Solonenko's initial question of how democracy promotion is done. She concludes that the EU is tilting even more towards the human rights side, there is not really a balance.

Referring back to the morning session and George Dura's earlier statement, **Geoffrey Pridham** claims that the idea of '27 EU models of democracy' does not correspond with reality. There are four or five models: parliamentary, semi-presidential, centralized and federalized systems (plus possibly the EU as a confederalist type). What matters more (and worries us more) is not the systemic differences between member states, but policy differences between EU institutions: the substance of democracy promotion depends on which institution is at play. He gives the example of the European Parliament's emphasis (here different from the European Council) on human rights dialogue. He also mentions that these differences were less in the case of the Eastern enlargement: in the run-up to the 2004 enlargement process it was the European Commission that was in charge, but this is no longer the case.

**George Dura** acknowledges that it is true that democracy has been neglected a bit. Human rights objectives have had more visibility and there is more money involved. But he stresses that the EIDHR caters to the demand side of both. On linking democracy and development he mentions that this is happening in EU policies. He refers to the example of the two pillars of the Agenda for Change, which states that one needs democratic development before economic sustainability. He adds that the EU also emphasizes the domestic accountability aspect. The Commission works with actors such as civil society organizations, watchdogs etc. There is a multi-stakeholders approach and they try to integrate different stakeholders. The EU also plans to draft democracy profiles, a sort of 'democracy action plans' of partner countries to bring more coherence in the delivery of democracy support activities.

**Marc Franco** takes up the point of elections again and emphasizes the importance of the preconditions for elections. It is important to link the two, not only the elections, but also other issues such as torture, freedom of assembly etc.

**Gordon Crawford** replies to Clara Portela's question that both democracy and human rights objectives should be interlinked and compatible. The first generation of civil and political rights are an essential element of democracy (cf. David Beetham's democratic pyramid), the second generation of economic, social and cultural rights concerns the ability to address social and economic inequalities which have the potential to undermine political equality, which is a key democratic principle. So, both are interlinked, at least in theory. However, he points to the danger that in practice human rights support will be limited to civil and political rights, which would undermine the human rights principles and the indivisible nature of human rights.

The point of social and economic rights was taken up by **Marc Franco** who asks to consider that concentrating on democracy as such without on the one hand on human rights and fundamental freedom, and on the other hand social and economic rights, is something very vague. He points at the case of Egypt, which has an illiteracy rate of 40 per cent.

**Anne Wetzel** closes the discussion by thanking the participants for their very interesting contributions. She draws some brief conclusions from the discussion:

- elections are important, but not as a stand-alone issue, preconditions need to be met, and follow-up after elections is important; thus, an embedded focus on the electoral process is necessary
- we need to be careful when taking over fixed concepts such as 'deep democracy'
- flexibility: there should be some substance in terms of generally accepted broad values, or general UN/OSCE values, but flexible enough to adapt to local conditions; in order to be able to do this, it is of crucial importance to understand local conditions
- things that at first sight do not seem democracy promotion (e.g. garbage technology transfer) may still be relevant for democracy promotion; thus, democracy promotion should be conceived much broader (already attempts through environmental or other sectoral cooperation)

*End of the expert meeting*

## Appendix

### Zusammenfassung

Das Expertentreffen fand im Rahmen einer *Jean Monnet „Informations- und Forschungsaktivität“* zum Inhalt der Demokratieförderung der Europäischen Union (EU) statt. Es wurde von der Universität Gent und dem Mannheimer Zentrum für Europäische Sozialforschung (MZES) der Universität Mannheim in Kooperation mit dem *Centre for European Policy Studies* (CEPS) in Brüssel organisiert.

Auf der Veranstaltung diskutierten Wissenschaftler, Vertreter aus der Praxis, Repräsentanten der Zivilgesellschaft und Forscher aus Thinktanks, was EU-Demokratieförderungen charakterisiert. Aus den verschiedenen Blickwinkeln der Teilnehmer wurde der Frage nachgegangen, *was die EU in ihrer weltweiten Demokratieförderung unterstützen sollte*.

Aktuelle Entwicklungen, insbesondere der Arabische Frühling, führen vor Augen, dass diese Frage die Grundfesten der EU-Demokratieförderstrategie betrifft. Während die EU bis heute keine offizielle Definition von Demokratie angenommen hat, stellte sie kürzlich das Konzept der „vertieften Demokratie“ (*deep democracy*) vor. Wie die Kontroversen um einen Europäischen Konsens über die Demokratie und den Europäischen Demokratiefonds zeigen, ist die Definition von Förderinhalten zentral für die Debatte über die zukünftige EU-Demokratieförderung.

Ziel des Expertentreffens war es, aus den verschiedenen Perspektiven der Teilnehmer Empfehlungen zum Inhalt der EU-Demokratieförderung zu formulieren und zu diskutieren, welche die Resultate aktueller Forschung, Erfahrungen von Menschen aus den betroffenen Drittstaaten, Thinktank-Analysen, sowie Erkenntnisse anderer internationaler Demokratieförderer, EU-Beamter und aus der öffentlichen Forumsdiskussion, die am Morgen stattgefunden hatte (Protokoll unter [www.eu-ipods.eu](http://www.eu-ipods.eu)), widerspiegeln. Die Diskussion berührte unter anderem folgende Punkte: die Bedeutung von umfassender statt isolierter Unterstützung von Wahlen; die kritische Reflexion von Konzepten wie „vertiefte Demokratie“; die Beziehung zwischen allgemeinen demokratischen Prinzipien und ihrer konkreten Umsetzung vor Ort auf Grundlage der detaillierten Kenntnis der ortsspezifischen Situation und der Zusammenarbeit mit den lokalen Gesellschaften; die Rolle bereits existierender internationaler Demokratiedefinitionen für das Aufstellen solcher Prinzipien; die Bedeutung einzelner Demokratieelemente wie Menschenrechte oder sozio-ökonomische Entwicklung und das Spannungsverhältnis zwischen Interessen und Demokratieförderung.

Einige Resultate sind in einen von CEPS herausgegebenen *Policy Brief* eingeflossen (siehe <http://www.ceps.eu/book/eu%E2%80%99s-promotion-external-democracy-search-plot>).

### Résumé

Cette réunion d'experts a eu lieu dans le cadre d'une Activité d'Information et de Recherche Jean Monnet concernant la substance de la politique d'avancement de la démocratie de l'Union européenne (UE) (voir [www.eu-ipods.eu](http://www.eu-ipods.eu)). La réunion a été organisée par l'Université de Gand et la MZES/Université de Mannheim, en coopération avec le Centre d' Etudes de Politique européenne (CEPS) à Bruxelles.

L'événement a réuni des académiques, des officiels, des représentants de la société civile et des chercheurs de groupes de réflexion pour discuter de ce que caractérise la politique d'avancement de la démocratie de l'UE.

Selon les différentes provenances des participants, la réunion a abordé la question de ce que l'UE devrait avancer à travers sa politique de démocratisation internationale.

Des développements récents, et surtout le Printemps arabe, nous souviennent que cette question est à la base de la stratégie d'avancement de la démocratie de l'UE. Alors que l'UE n'a pas encore adopté de définition officielle de démocratie, elle a récemment lancé le concept de « démocratie profonde ». Comme les controverses concernant le « Consensus européen pour la Démocratie » et le « Fonds européen pour la

Démocratie » ont montré, l'exercice de définir la substance est central au débat sur la politique de démocratisation de l'UE.

Le but de la réunion était de formuler et de réfléchir sur des recommandations pour la substance du soutien européen à la démocratisation venant des différentes perspectives des participants et reflétant les résultats de recherche académique récente, l'expérience des personnes des pays bénéficiaires, des analyses de groupes de réflexion, des aperçus d'autres acteurs internationaux soutenant la démocratisation, des officiels de l'UE et les conclusions du Débat Public qui avait eu lieu le matin (voir les transcrits sur [www.eu-ipods.eu](http://www.eu-ipods.eu)).

La discussion a abordé les sujets suivants entre autres: l'importance du soutien aux élections de façon compréhensive au lieu de façon isolée; une réflexion critique sur des concepts comme « démocratie profonde »; la relation entre des principes démocratiques abstraits et la réalisation concrète sur le terrain, basée sur une compréhension profonde de la situation locale et la coopération avec des acteurs de la société civile; le rôle de définitions internationales déjà existantes pour formuler de tels principes; l'importance d'éléments particuliers de l'avancement de la démocratie comme les droits humains ou le développement socio-économique; la tension entre les intérêts stratégiques et l'avancement de la démocratie.

Quelques aperçus de la réunion ont été incorporés dans un *policy brief* publié par CEPS (voir <http://www.ceps.eu/book/eu%E2%80%99s-promotion-external-democracy-search-plot>).

### *Samenvatting*

Deze experten bijeenkomst over 'de inhoud van het internationale democratiebeleid van de Europese Unie (EU)' vond plaats in het kader van een Informatie en Onderzoeksactiviteit gesponsord door het Jean Monnet programma van de Europese Commissie (zie [www.eu-ipods.eu](http://www.eu-ipods.eu)). Het werd georganiseerd door de Universiteit Gent en de MZES/Universiteit van Mannheim, in samenwerking met het Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) in Brussel. Op deze bijeenkomst gingen academici, praktijkmensen (inclusief ambtenaren van de EU-instellingen), vertegenwoordigers van de civiele samenleving, en onderzoekers uit denktanks in dialoog over de inhoud van het internationale democratiebeleid van de EU. De centrale vraag luidde meer bepaald: wat zou de EU precies moeten promoten onder de noemer 'democratie' in de rest van de wereld?

Naar aanleiding van recente ontwikkelingen, in het bijzonder de Arabische Lente, leven dergelijke vragen heel duidelijk binnen de EU. Hoewel de EU geen officiële definitie van democratie naar voren schuift, werd onlangs het concept van 'diepe democratie' gelanceerd. Zoals de controverses over de 'Europese Consensus over Democratie' en het 'Europees Fonds voor Democratie' illustreren, is het van cruciaal belang om de substantie van het begrip 'democratie' nauwkeuriger te omlijnen.

De bedoeling van de experten bijeenkomst was om beleidsaanbevelingen te formuleren over de inhoud van het democratiebeleid van de EU. Dit op basis van de verschillende perspectieven van de deelnemers, en dus verder bouwend op bestaand academisch onderzoek, op de ervaringen van mensen uit de doellanden, op ideeën van ambtenaren werkzaam bij de EU, en op de conclusies van het Publiek Forum dat plaatsvond in de voormiddag (zie transcripties op [www.eu-ipods.eu](http://www.eu-ipods.eu)). Volgende thema's kwamen aan bod tijdens deze bespreking: het belang om verkiezingen te ondersteunen binnen een alomvattende strategie die breder gaat dan enkel de stembusgang; een kritische reflectie over concepten zoals 'diepe democratie'; de relatie tussen algemene democratische principes en hoe die concreet vertaald worden op het terrein, rekening houdend met een grondige kennis van de lokale situatie en op basis van samenwerking met de bevolking; het belang van specifieke elementen van democratie zoals mensenrechten en sociaal-economische ontwikkeling; de spanning tussen belangen en democratie bevordering.

Enkele inzichten en aanbevelingen zijn ook opgenomen in een Policy Brief gepubliceerd door het CEPS (zie <http://www.ceps.eu/book/eu%E2%80%99s-promotion-external-democracy-search-plot>).

## Resumen

Esta reunión de expertos sobre «el contenido de la política internacional de democratización de la Unión Europea» ha tenido lugar en el marco de una actividad de Información y de Investigación subvencionada por el programa Jean Monnet de la Comisión Europea (ver [www.eu-ipods.eu](http://www.eu-ipods.eu) ). Ha sido organizada por la Universidad de Gante y el MZES, Centro europeo de la Investigación Social de la Universidad de Mannheim, en cooperación con el CEPS, Centro de Estudios de Política Europea de Bruselas.

El evento que reunía a académicos y practicantes (entre otros funcionarios de los organismos de la Unión Europea), representantes de la sociedad civil e investigadores de grupos de reflexión invitó a discutir de la política internacional de democratización de la Unión Europea y a poner como cuestión principal: ¿Qué debería la Unión Europea incentivar bajo el denominador «democracia» en el resto del mundo?

Algunos acontecimientos recientes y sobre todo la «Primavera árabe» nos recuerdan que esta pregunta se manifiesta claramente dentro de la UE. Aunque que la UE no avanza ninguna definición oficial de democracia, acaba de lanzar el concepto de «democracia profunda». Como las controversias en cuanto al «Consenso Europea de la Democracia» y el «Fondo europeo para la Democracia» han demostrado, el ejercicio de definir de manera más precisa el contenido de la idea de «democracia» se revela crucial.

El objetivo de la reunión de expertos consistía en formular y en reflexionar sobre recomendaciones para el contenido de la política internacional de democratización de la Unión Europea, provenientes de las diferentes perspectivas de los participantes y reflejando los resultados de la reciente investigación académica, la experiencia de los habitantes de los países beneficiarios, las ideas de los funcionarios de la UE y las conclusiones de los análisis formuladas por el Foro Público, que ha tenido lugar la misma mañana (ver las transcripciones en [www.eu-ipods.eu](http://www.eu-ipods.eu)). La discusión avanzó los temas siguientes: la importancia del apoyo a las elecciones de manera comprensiva y no aislada; una reflexión crítica sobre conceptos como «democracia profunda»; la relación entre los principios democráticos abstractos y su realización concreta sobre el terreno, teniendo en cuenta la comprensión profunda de la situación local y la cooperación con los actores de la población local; la importancia de elementos específicos de democracia como los derechos humanos y el desarrollo socio-económico; la tensión entre los intereses y la promoción de la democracia.

Algunas ideas y recomendaciones de la reunión fueron incorporadas en un «Policy Brief» publicado por el CEPS (ver <http://www.ceps.eu/book/eu%E2%80%99s-promotion-external-democracy-search-plot> )



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