

Transcripts of the public forum on the substance of EU democracy promotion

Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels

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Summary¹

The public forum took place 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). The organizers were Ghent University and the MZES/University of Mannheim, in collaboration with the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) at Brussels. The forum aimed to disseminate the findings of an academic research project on the content of EU international democracy promotion to a broader audience of civil society representatives, the professional field including EU institutions, and the general public, including people from target countries. It addressed the EU's understanding of democracy in democracy promotion and the democratic substance that the EU promotes in practice through four sessions dealing with (I) the question whether the EU has a 'deep' or 'shallow' agenda of democracy promotion, (II) the potential tensions between EU development and democracy promotion policies, (III) the comparison between the EU and other international democracy promoters, and (IV) the resonance of EU democracy promotion policies in the domestic context of the target countries. Recent developments, such as the Arab Spring, and their implications for the content of democracy promotion were discussed throughout.

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

A **video documentary** of the event can be accessed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3fSLUDO9nJc&feature=youtu.be>

¹ 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.



*The public forum was opened by **Karel Lannoo**, Chief Executive Officer of the Centre for European Policy Studies. Among others, he said that²*

We know that the internal integration of financial markets is deeply and rapidly declining. I hope that we cannot say the same for our external cooperation. Let's say that we do not see that this integration is declining. It should be increasing all the time. And often when I am speaking about this in certain areas, citizens do not know sufficiently, for example, in the area of what we did in the Strait of Hormuz, the actions against Iran, what we did now on Syria, which was also in the Council conclusions of Friday (i.e. June, 29th, 2012). This shows that things are going forward, which, because of this financial crisis, may not get the headlines. So, I hope we can have an interesting conference today.

*The inaugural address was delivered by **Pierre Vimont**, Executive Secretary General of the European External Action Service*



Thank you very much Karel. Let me tell you how pleased I am to be back here at CEPS, because this is a place I have known for some time in my previous postings here in Brussels and it is always a very interesting experience to come here, to discuss and to try to answer questions.

I think, Karel, you made a very good point about the fact that usually when we are at the brink of falling to a big hole, the European Union manages more or less to get out of this situation and we saw it again on Thursday and Friday. And I think that tells a lot about the way this European construction that we are building

slowly, which is always an on-going process, remains a project that has a lot of vitality in it, and a lot of hope in it, even when we are facing difficult issues like the one you intend to discuss today.

Let me tell you very honestly that today the few words I would like to say at the beginning will be mostly questions. Questions that put the EU as somebody who is trying to practice this promotion of democracy at the moment when we are facing more and more interesting challenges – I am thinking about the Arab Spring of course but one could say the same thing about other growing or increasing democracies, promoting democracies, all around the world. The questions you raise, in the introductory remarks I have read, just like all of you, before coming here, were about: what is deep democracy, do you oppose it to shallow democracy, the distinction between democracy and development, is there one model, et cetera. I think these are very thoughtful questions and very interesting ones, once again, but to be honest, I think you could put a lot more

² The transcripts were prepared by Fabienne Bossuyt, Eline De Ridder, Jan Orbie, Elien Sohler and Anne Wetzels. Funding by the EU's Jean Monnet programme is gratefully acknowledged. We thank Vicky Reynaert for her help in organising the public forum. The responsibility for these transcripts lies solely with the authors.

on the table. Let me just throw in a few questions and without trying to give you answers, maybe just to try to set the framework of what could be today your discussions.

First, when we are talking about introducing democracy, let's look for instance at the Arab world. To avoid the mistakes we have made in the past – it was in the Communication of the European Commission and the High Representative – we launched this idea of 'more for more and less for less'. In other words, adapting ideas of assistance programmes to the reality on the ground of the democracy as it is moving on in these countries. This was a very nice motto, it is there on the table and we are moving ahead. But as we are moving ahead, we found out it is not an easy principle to set into motion and that it is somewhat complicated by the fact that we are facing a political reality on the ground that is more and more complex.

The second question that you may ask is – coming back once again to try to understand the reality on the ground – to understand what is exactly the kind of model of democracy that we are trying to push forward and promote in these countries. Quite often linked to the whole issue about human rights but also maybe adding more elements about which we must think and refer a little bit more. I will come back to that in a second.

But when I am saying that, it seems to me very obvious that we need more thorough thinking if we want to understand what we are talking about because of the situation on the ground, with many of our interlocutors, many of our partners, think about Egypt, think about Yemen or think about what has happened in Paraguay in the last few days, or in Columbia, or even in Mexico. We are facing difficult challenges and quite difficult questions that are not easy to relate to.

The third kind of questions we could throw on the table is: do we have the right instruments for the promotion of democracy? Under the Presidency of Poland [1 July – 31 December 2011] we have launched a new instrument that we are slowly implementing. We have just gone through a new step: now we have the statute. Now we need the money, of course, which is maybe more complicated as you can imagine but the European Endowment for Democracy is there now. And we should all rejoice but we all know also that it will have to find its place and to get its small room in a landscape where you have already a lot of other instruments. How do you avoid confusion? How do you organise all your instruments and tools in order to be as efficient as possible? Sometimes I wonder whether – as we move ahead and we invent new instruments – we have really thought about all this.

So how can I help your discussion and how can I be helpful as you are going to move ahead? Maybe by trying to clarify a little bit the debate, clarify the questions that may be raised without trying or daring to answer these questions at this stage. But I am sure you will find the right answers as you move along.

Maybe the first set of questions I would throw in is: what are we really talking about, what are we trying to do when we talk about promoting democracy? Is it mostly about values and principles and convictions, values of dialogue, tolerance, justice, respect for human rights, women's rights whatever it is? These of course are very important. But quite often this is where we have heard more and more about democracy. It is quite often about something else. It is about constitutional and electoral processes. It is sometimes even more than that, it is about setting up a state of law, a rule of law in the field of justice, setting up a public administration in all these countries, to try to set up a democratic framework, to have the right balances and to have the right efficient institutions to move ahead and of course this is not exactly the same. In the end values and convictions have to be embodied in institutions or procedures or constitutions. It is still not exactly the same and it is still mainly different ways of implementation and different working methods.

And this brings us to the second question. How do we promote these values or these processes? It seems to me that there too we have to make a distinction. There are some processes that relate to some well-known practices: the whole issue about elections, where what we do usually is send an election observation mission, try to give guidelines the best way possible to the local authorities, try to move ahead. There is also everything that relates to constitutional processes, changes of institutions; we have more or less the instruments and the tools for that. But then you have more complicated issues, which you see very easily when you are discussing the future of a country like Libya for instance. It is about how you give the capacity for this country to have a state and administration and proper institutions that they may need and lack for the moment because for the last forty-fifty years, there was nothing of that sort in a country like Libya. So it is about capacity building processes, which in my opinion is something rather different. It is about setting not only the right legislation but setting the right administration, the right institutions and that may need time.

And thirdly, of course, how do you promote democracy? You may have to introduce also the whole economic dimension, because you cannot build democracy in total void. You have to take into account the economic realities of each country. Today when you go and discuss with other partners in Egypt or Libya, even Yemen, and you try to see with these new powers and these new governments – quite often interim governments, provisional authorities – how could you push forward the electoral process? Quite often these people come back to you telling that they have more immediate and urgent matters to solve, whether it is the economic aspect or sometimes how to fight terrorism, and you need to act at the same time on parallel tracks on all these different issues.

This is only to say that, in my opinion, what we have more and more to understand as we talk about democracy promotion and promoting democracy, is that this is a rather long, on-going process that needs patience, tolerance and understanding. That this may take some time and that we need to have a new attitude as we face this new reality. I would like just to underline a few things about this kind of attitude I think we should have to adopt – and this would be my last observation. I think there are three or four ideas maybe that I could throw in here. I think that, in spite of the economic complexity of the situation we face, we must not give up our own conception of democracy, and we must not give up our values. This is not what I am talking about. These values must remain as the reference to which we can test our ability to move ahead and to convince our partners that there is a way through and a way forward.

But at the same time and that's my second point, we have to take into account the complexity of what we are facing and we have to be much more in a listening mode and in a tolerant mode than we sometimes have been in the past. Quite too often today, for instance in the Arab world, as we are discussing with our partners how to move ahead, we hear a lot of remarks, observations about how often the European Union in the past has been lecturing and patronising. And I think we have to be aware that as we are discussing about democracy in these countries we are quite often in the heart of what is a rather complex discussion on the sharing of power and on the beginning of a democratic process that still will need a lot of time. Let me give you an example. A few days ago, as you have all seen, we have been going through a difficult moment in Egypt with the constitutional court deciding that the parliament should be dissolved and that we should go for new elections, where the military supreme council decided for the time being to take over the legislative process, right in the middle of a second ballot for the presidential elections. We were pushed by and put under great pressure of [EU] member states to condemn all this and to say that this was not a proper way to handle a democratic process at whatever the state it is at the moment. We were rather cautious. We were blamed for that, coming out with statements that I thought were pointed rather clearly but at the same time keeping the door open for what we thought was obviously a difficult dialogue between the military authorities and the Muslim brotherhood, the political parties in Egypt. Look at the way they have slowly managed to find some balance, which is still a very delicate balance where everybody is watching everyone very carefully. One understands that to come up with a very strong affirmative statement on what should be done and what should not be done in a very complex situation that puts into the fray many, many different problems - whether they be of a religious dimension, or a political dimension, a question about the past and the future, how do you make a transition process et cetera - on issues like that Europeans should be rather humble while sticking to their principles to see how we can work with our partners in a proper way.

Could I have another point for instance? We have just come out from a very difficult session of negotiations in Geneva, Friday and Saturday, on the whole issue of how you handle a transitional process, a political process towards democracy in Syria, at the moment when we are witnessing, as we all know, the violence on the ground, a strong military confrontation, an armed confrontation between the present regime and the opposition, where we have a lot of financial resources, weapons, all kinds are being delivered at the moment on the ground. And where in the middle of all this one has to try to find the pass to stop that violence and slowly move in a transitional process where you go from the present regime to a real and deep democracy. And of course that goes with compromises and I have heard a lot about observation and comments on the meeting on Saturday and this was not the way through that one should have said that Assad should go immediately, of course. A lot of those who were round the table were about that opinion. We have stated more than a year ago now, that President Assad should step aside and that a new political authority should step in. But again, as I was saying previously, if we want to move in a direct direction, sometimes it is important to see that this is going to be a very long process, progressive one, gradual, while you go step by step to reach your objective. I said that about Syria, about Egypt, I could talk about Yemen, talk about many others.

One could talk about Paraguay, where we have witnessed, some would say, a coup d'état, but at the same time what is done in a more legal proper way that one could see. All the right articles of the constitution have been applied. And all those who have been watching from the outside know that there was something not acceptable and that nobody can feel very comfortable with that. How do you get that? How do you get out of that situation? How do you move ahead while not only sticking to statements but also looking with the regional organisation how we can all work together in the right direction?

I think all this is only to say that in the end, if we want to keep on promoting more democracy, we need to be more aware that we are facing very complex situations, because most of the countries we have been dealing with have become more complex themselves. They have grown; they have already tested quite often some form of democracy, not enough of course, but we are in a sort of a long process and we must work with them in the best way possible. I have been talking quite too long, I know. I have thrown more questions than answers there, but I am sure that you will have the answers by the end of the day. Thank you very much.



There were two questions from the audience. The first one was about the humanitarian implications of the Arab Spring and the civil wars that broke out subsequently. The second question was raised by Steven Blockmans from CEPS and dealt with the conclusions that can be drawn half a year after the release of the 2011 Joint Communication on democracy promotion [COM(2011) 886 final, 12.12.2011]. Pierre Vimont replied the following:

On the first question, about the Arab Spring, everybody knows that democratic transitions are very difficult and what you are saying is true. But that does mean, if we follow you precisely, that other countries that have so far not gone through reform should not do anything. I am not so sure and once again we all know that this would be difficult. It will take time. Those who had thought that everything will come around and we will have no problem were misleading, observers and commentators. It is going to be long. If you look at the way democracy was brought back in Latin America, it took several years. It wasn't an easy ride, so I think, once again, coming back to what I have said before, one has to be very tolerant and patient and I would add very humble and there I would totally go along with your lines when you were talking about democracy.

Of course we still have – and I hope it will go on– full-fledged democracies, with constitutions, liberal constitutions, electoral processes et cetera. But what we are witnessing through the financial crisis we are facing at the moment is that democracy at the European level needs to be improved, we all know that, this has been going on for some time. One cannot feel totally at ease and comfortable with what has happened for instance in Greece, when the former prime minister was criticised for asking for a referendum. And now more or less all the governments, even in the bigger countries, are saying that we will have to go for a referendum, when there was a first ballot in Greece and everybody said we need to go for a second one because the results are not the ones we want et cetera. We can easily feel that there is something that needs to be improved there and this is why I think we have to be very humble when we are talking about democracy even if we have been working on this for several centuries and I think we have some experiences there, that we can provide to others. But it takes time, which brings me to the second question.

One year after our Communication I think we have made some progress here and there. We managed to launch some programmes about capacity building for the civil society, about helping here and there, some different communities. But it is taking a lot of time, it is rather difficult and painful and one of the reasons that it is difficult is that we are trying to work in a political and social environment that is still very complex and normally so, as I was saying before. People are telling us: what are you doing more at the moment in Libya or in Yemen, to take these two examples. Because in Libya you have an interim government for a long term. Thus, we do not do anything for the time being because we do not think we have any legitimacy and we had to discuss with them to see how then at least we could help to prepare the ground for what we hope will be free and fair elections on the 7th of July. In Yemen we are facing a very difficult economic situation, with a lot of displaced people, looking for food in dire straits and we had to take that into account. At the same time we are trying to help the interim authorities to launch a constitutional process that will bring, I hope, a more firm and strong constitutional and institutional framework as we move ahead. Once again, we need time and I think this is something we all have to be aware of, otherwise I think we would miss a lot of the point. It is about commitment. Because I am French, I guess I do not use the proper word, and for me it is conviction, principles, values what we Europeans and democracies believe in, and that we have to push forward, and that we have to be loyal to. But at the same time, as I was saying before, taking into account that for the other side, for those with whom we want to work, sometimes these ideas are still very far away from their own ideals and values. And therefore it is about bridging the gap and working together and trying to move ahead rather than trying to impose our ideas without listening enough to the other. This is what I think is at the heart of a rather difficult process but a fascinating one. If we want to succeed.

*The moderator **Jelmen Haaze** welcomes the guests and introduces the panellists*

- *Mr Balthasar Benz, EEAS*
- *Dr Milja Kurki, Aberystwyth University*
- *Ms Jacqueline Hale, Open Society Institute*
- *Prof. Emmanuel Gyimah-Boadi, Ghana Centre for Democratic Development/University of Ghana, Legon*
- *Mr Pirkka Tapiola, EEAS*
- *Prof. Gordon Crawford, University of Leeds*
- *Prof. Jan Orbie, Ghent University*
- *Dr Anne Wetzel, MZES, University of Mannheim*

At the beginning of the discussion, the thematic sessions 1.A and 1.B were briefly introduced



Anne Wetzel – Introduction to Session 1.A: Deep vs. Shallow Democracy:

Deep vs. shallow democracy are two terms that read like antonyms. They are taken from the EU's discourse and the findings of our research project, respectively.

'Deep democracy' or 'deep and sustainable democracy' can be heard quite often in the EU, especially in relation with the European Neighbourhood Policy. According to a Joint Communication by the European Commission and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, it contains:

free and fair elections; freedom of association, expression and assembly and a free press and media; the rule of law administered by an independent judiciary and the right to a fair trial; fighting against corruption; security and law enforcement sector reform (including the police); and the establishment of democratic control over armed and security forces (JOIN(2012) 14 final – Delivering on a new European Neighbourhood Policy: 11)

Shallow democracy is a term that we used in our research project to characterise a typical pattern of EU democracy promotion, namely the focus on context conditions of democracy such as state administrative capacity, civil society and – a topic we will turn to in the second session – socio-economic development (cf. European Foreign Affairs Review 16(5), 2011).

It will be very interesting to discuss why we arrive at such different characterisations.

What is more, with these two terms, the list of terms that characterise EU democracy promotion is not complete. There are at least three more terms from EU discourse and from another research project:

- The first one is 'democratic governance', which was introduced in the Commission Communication 'Governance in the European Consensus on Development' in 2006. It includes a broad list of issues, ranging from respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms to the management of migration.
- In contrast to this broad concept, some scholars have found the contrary to be true, at least in certain countries, namely a very narrow focus on electoral democracy.
- Very recently, a research project led by Milja Kurki has come to the conclusion that the EU's approach can rather be characterised as 'Fuzzy democracy' at the conceptual level. This would be the third term.

Considering this conceptual variation, the question emerges why there is still no European Consensus on Democracy, providing a general definition of democracy in EU democracy promotion. The discussion has been on-going since 2006. However, also the new Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy does not add much to conceptual clarification.

Jan Orbie – Introduction to Session 1.B: Development versus Democracy?

This session is about the potential tension between the promotion of democracy and development.

In the academic literature, but also in practice, there is a wide consensus that these two objectives should always go together and cannot be disconnected. However, there has been a long debate about what comes first: according to democratizers, reform of the political system is a priority because it will shape the conditions for economic development. On the other hand, developmentalists argue that economic development takes precedence over democratic reforms.

When it comes to the EU, most studies find that – on this continuum – the EU is on the developmentalist side; if only because development aid policy has always been at the heart of the European project (with a substantial budget involved!) whereas the EU only started to have a democracy promotion policy in the 1990s.

Some of our research partly confirms the developmentalist position of the EU. For example, the EU has been rather lenient towards the democratic situation in countries that are doing relatively well economically, such as Uganda, Ruanda, and Ethiopia.

However, we also found (tentatively) that EU democracy promotion may be more political than it seems at first sight (the EU may have a soft approach but it also has a hard substance towards democracy promotion), and

also it seems that recently democracy promotion has been rising on the EU's priority list (coming closer to development objectives).

Start of the discussion

Pirkka Tapiola:

Thanks, extremely interesting questions and I think one comment I would make is that sometimes we dwell too much on conceptualising democracy because it is wonderful to find a good concept but – and I think Pierre Vimont referred to this in his remarks – you need also to get a little bit on to the ground. I start by your question of 'Are we focusing on development or democracy?'. I think one of our answers to the Lisbon Treaty, one of the big aims of the Lisbon Treaty is to bring more coherence into the EU external action and this takes time. We have seen more coherence with the European Neighbourhood Policy Communication. We see more tools have been brought together and so on. So we are going somewhere, we are in a process but it will take a while before the full coherence between different instruments is realised. So I would answer that yes, we are looking more from the political point of view; yet I think there are some parts of the EU which also look from different viewpoints. I think we need to be realistic.

Now, liberal democracy, and this is something that Pierre Vimont talked about too, more asking questions – and I am not trying to answer questions which my boss asked. I will try to do that inside the office, I suppose that would be an appropriate forum for that. But we do talk about liberal democracy a lot and I think that one of the fundamental and underlying assumptions of, for instance, our European Neighbourhood Policy and elsewhere, but especially of the Neighbourhood Policy, is that we have a certain liberal democratic European model, we put tools out there and the countries will so by and large grab them, especially in the Eastern Neighbourhood. Take those tools and start building your institutions and hopefully you will have democracy. Realities, historical traditions, experiences are very different, at first. So I think we are increasingly seeing that Eastern Europe is not the same as the countries which joined in 2004 and the same sort of value systems are not self-evident. And I think that we need to look very closely at what is achievable, in what time, and in terms of accountability and of human rights, corruption and so on. The underlying question should be what democracy is fundamentally about, and that's ownership of political processes and accountability of leadership. Thank you.

Gordon Crawford:

We are talking about how democracy can be promoted from the outside but democratization is essentially an internal process. I think that the concept of 'country ownership' has introduced a recent change of focus amongst donors from democracy promotion to democracy support, which can be viewed positively. Nonetheless, I would suggest that country ownership is not strong enough; instead we should talk about 'country authorship', with democratic reforms guided from the inception by a range of internal actors. It is not an easy process, the way to country authorship is complex and problematic, but it moves the discussion to one that is internally focused rather than externally imposed.

Jacqueline Hale:

Actually I couldn't resist coming in on that, because there is also an assumption that countries would already be in the process of democratisation. If you take some of the most closed countries worldwide, you hope that the EU nevertheless pursues a democratisation policy, yet it is often not the case. For example, in the case of Uzbekistan country authorship would not be easy to pursue. I think that some useful concepts, the notion of different stages of democratization, the contact, are important, but principles are important because how else will the EU otherwise deal with the closed society, brutal dictatorship, that it is approaching. And here I wanted to come back actually to the question of the internal dimension, because when it comes down to it why does

the EU not have a single form of democracy? I think because it cannot afford to have one, because of 'Hungary'. So there is something really there. I find the EU despite an increasing rhetoric of the last twelve months with the deep democracy, with the European Endowment, this is all a step in the right direction but I still feel that fundamentally the Union is uncomfortable with democracy promotion or democracy support as the preferred rhetoric because it cannot afford a single conceptualisation of democracy, because the European Court of Justice cannot take the member state to court on democracy questions.

Moderator:

Mister Benz seems to disagree.

Balthasar Benz:

Absolutely. The EU is the proof of the very concept that there is not one model. All member states have their own model, and the historic context is very different. They are all fully functioning democracies but the British system would be unacceptable in my native country Germany. We have 27 models.



Emmanuel Gyimah-Boadi:

I speak from several vantage points. First, I speak about Africa, which I am most familiar with. Second, I also speak as somebody involved with tracking public opinion in Africa. It seems to me, at least, that for Africa, there has to be better recognition of the fact that democracy is taking place in spite of the wishes of many of the autocratic leadership. Sometimes, it is taking place because there is a critical mass of domestic support for it, and there is domestic preference for it; and sometimes it is taking place because of pressure from Africa's external donors. From the Afrobarometer surveys which covered some 20 countries in the last round (four cycles of the survey have been conducted since 1990), the public demands more democracy and the things that go with democracy than the amount of democracy they think they are receiving. There are also instances where the public believes it is being supplied with more democracy and things that come with democracy than there is actual demand for it. And that brings me to the complex issue of ownership or authorship. It also links up to something that the keynote speaker said about listening to the people on the ground. Now the question about that, linked to the ownership question, for many African countries, you really cannot be talking about a monolithic ownership; you cannot be talking about national ownership in a situation where both the leadership and the public are not all in agreement on what needs to be done and exactly how. So when you say as external democracy supporter or promoter, you are going to be dealing with ownership questions, it seems to me you have to answer hard questions about exactly whose views and opinions you are talking about: the leadership or the citizenry or both.

Milja Kurki:

It is a very value driven, ideological project, it always has been for the USA, it always has been for a number of democracy promotion workers afterwards. What is interesting for the EU context for promotion of democracy is that of course you have a much more rich and pluralistic tradition in terms of thinking about democracy, in terms of experiences with democracy. So I absolutely agree with Balthasar Benz that the EU has to reflect the pluralism of experiences and practices of democracies within the Union itself. I do not think the pluralism of the 27 models necessarily is coming through in democracy promotion of the EU at the moment and that might be something that the EU can actually focus on, actually building in to some of the conceptual debates about what democracy might mean. This, I think, is Jan Orbie and Anne Wetzel's key finding from the project, that what happens in the EU democracy promotion is that various different models of liberal democracy actually come through in the exercise of democracy promotion.

I have also come to the same conclusion that it is partly a result of the lack of clear conceptual foundations of what is actually being practised. This is why they end up with having different kinds of practices on the ground, why they end up with different kind of conceptions of democracy amongst people working for say DG Development and people working for DG Trade. There are different conceptions of democracy and political economy being played out in democracy promotion. So I would, for my part, reinforce the findings of the project, that we are discussing here today but there is some need when you think about the conceptions of democracy, critically interrogate what the meaning of the 'deep democracy' actually might be. I think it is a very useful thing that the EU has moved conceptually to recognise the idea of deep democracy as being different from what it has practised before. I am not sure that the substance is there, in terms of actually really what deep democracy is. I see at the core of deep democracy a fairly standard liberal democratic definition of democracy. This is not what the recipients are necessarily calling for. In the context of the financial crisis, in the context of the Arab Spring, in the context of the kinds of challenges our own democracies are facing but also the democratic practitioners out there are calling for. I think it is important to reflect on the fact that there are multiple different models of democracy that could be practised in the EU. That could be practised in the development states and to get towards the point to have more meaningful local ownership, whatever you might call it, I think there has to be reflection from within the EU on the fact that there are actually multiple models that the EU is practising but also could be promoting even if their promotion is somewhat contradictory in practice. That's all I wanted to say for now.

Emmanuel Gyimah-Boadi:

I am a bit perplexed to hear that there is no consensus on the concept of liberal democracy or internal democracy and my question would be, is it true that European scholars have no common understanding of democracy or is it a problem for practitioners, or are both practitioners and scholars equally confused about it?

Moderator:

Mister Benz, you talked about different structures, thus, institutional democracy, such as the differences between France and Great Britain. But with human rights also being an element of democracy, the question remains: is there no consensus? What is the substance?

Balthasar Benz:

On this particular point, I think, although there is no such thing as a European consensus, a definition agreed by the Parliament, Council and Commission, there is obviously a basic understanding about what the basic ingredients and underlining principles and procedures of a democracy are. It starts with Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which means the principle of equality, Article number 2 is the principle of non-discrimination and so on and so forth, the right to stand for public office, the right to vote, to have regular votes, independent, the freedom of expression, the freedom of media. All this is universally agreed, basic ingredients of democracy.

Of course democracy is more than human rights. Mr Vimont spoke about values, about convictions, about principles. You have the accountability, the transparency. So we have the common understanding but we do not have an agreed list of ingredients of what a democracy is or what needs to be there in order to have it, also again because of the large variety of democratic expression in the European Union. I mean obviously you do not have a full separation of powers everywhere, like in the United Kingdom or the Kingdom of Sweden, but obviously we promote a separation of powers all over the world. Of course in the case of the UK, in the case of Sweden there are other mechanisms that allow for perfect building of control of our forces, et cetera. But we cannot settle on the principles, we can never settle on a full shopping list, that's why we are not promoting any model, that's why we are supporting processes, we support legislation, legislative frameworks. We have to set up constitutional frameworks whenever we are asked that respect its mains principles but we are not promoting a model, we just try to support processes on the ground, structures on the ground, legal frameworks and normative frameworks on the ground in order to get the best practices, the best international

or regional practices into a very specific and local context, which is the result of its own cultural and historic development.

Moderator:

So Mr Tapiola, there is no agreed list of democracy?



Pirkka Tapiola:

If we look at the European models of democracy and inside the models of the EU, I am not sure whether we should look how different they are, but rather look what they have in common. It defines our own value basis to a larger extent. And I will use a couple of examples of discussions I have with third countries where the value differences are huge. I mean if we look at this basic viewpoint of inclusiveness, this sort of bottom-up approaches, we haven't talked much about political parties. And if you have political partnerships which change their old leaders, set their own programmes and so on, this is part of the deep democracy and the deep democratic frameworks you find inside the EU. You do not need to go very much further, and have round tables and discussions with the so called democracy activists and, suddenly the idea of democracy is for elites. And if you look at the Russian debate, sometimes also the Ukrainian debate, this is a very avant-garde elite based way of thinking. I have heard so many people say that the basic masses in these countries are there to be led and given opportunities rather than to be included in politics. And there you already see that you are in a fundamental value base and I think it is then a fundamental breakdown of values. Now of course in the Neighbourhood which I know best, here I would say that you have this whole concept of liberal democracy, and we may be much closer than we think that our understanding of liberal democracy doesn't quite work the same way and we haven't quite recognised that. Of course, the Council of Europe, which nobody mentioned, is a very important part of our own democracy promotion and the cooperation we have with the Venice Commission, which is there basically to help transformation of societies and also our own societies in fact, to have fundamental laws, which are in line with the norms and standards. Now here too, we are increasingly finding that this was – you do not have to go to Paraguay to see these things being done – maybe according to the letter of the law but very far from the spirit of it. And this is a debate we have informally with the Venice Commission on political context, which kind of recommendations and why something may look good on paper, what is the underlying reality there. So I think that there are big differences between every single EU member state but I think the fundamental question of the liberal democratic model, the differences which we do see and we do not always realise going away from it, is the attitude even among democracy activists to the populations at large and whether to include them or whether to lead them.

Gordon Crawford:

Firstly, I don't think that it is a problem that there is no consensus about democracy, and this is precisely because democracy is a contested concept. It always has been and it always will be. And I think this aspect of the project brings out and highlights conceptual differences about democracy, which is a good thing, especially when it extends beyond liberal democracy. Going back to Professor Gyimah-Boadi's point about the monolithic ownership in countries, I think that's a very important point, and it does raise hard questions about whose views and whose opinions should matter. I think that is a challenge to democracy promoters and democracy supporters alike, and part of that challenge is to listen to pro-democracy voices that are outside the mainstream. I think this is also where we come back to the importance of the conceptual aspect of democracy because one's concept of democracy always underpins one's practice, whether consciously or not. A particular conceptual orientation may lead to a focus on particular actors, so, for example, a more liberal concept may lead to an emphasis on actors who support economic liberalization, whereas a more radical concept may lead to a focus on a different set of actors who have a different economic outlook.

Balthasar Benz:

Can I just say in response to Mr Crawford's point that democracy is a contested concept: There is one group of people for whom democracy is not a contested concept, notably dictators, who always look for the legitimacy of democratic elections - of course wrecked elections - but they always look for the legitimacy of elections. So how to do that in five years, I don't know the exact number of years for every dictator. But this is something which should maybe be taken more into account and discussed. Do half-functioning or half way free and fair elections give legitimacy to the elected and give certain responsibilities to the one who is elected, which we probably do not take into account sufficiently in our debate and our cooperation? On the other hand, what is unquestionable in this position towards legitimacy is that only a democratic election can give to democratic leadership representative leadership. I think maybe we should talk about that a little bit more in the future.

Moderator:

Just a note on timing, in about five minutes we are going to round up this first part of the session.

Jacqueline Hale:

I just want to come back to the issue of the relationship between democracy and human rights and the EU practices and conceptualisations. I think we can see this in the EU's response to the Arab Spring. What we have seen in the last week is the adoption of a very ambitious framework, a strategic framework for human rights. It is called human rights and democracy but in short it is called a strategic framework for human rights and we have now in the EU a Special Representative appointed for human rights. I know there was an internal debate about whether it be for human rights or for democracy. I find it very interesting that, at the end of the day, the EU decides on the side of human rights. And so, I just say it also from the ground side, it is a safer bet too. When you talk to activists, who are really under pressure in the countries of Central Asia where I travelled quite a lot, also in countries like Azerbaijan, they do not have much truck at the moment with EU democracy, because they see some serious double standards going on. Not only in the sense of internal /external but also in terms of the coherence of the European project. And Azerbaijan having its oil and gas wealth, precludes certain behaviour for the EU towards Azerbaijan that it shows for example towards similarly authoritarian Belarus. So what they call for, and what the EU recommends to them, are human rights standards. So thinking about how the EU can do better at promoting democracy also by ensuring that the standards are in force, and amongst other things through the Council of Europe which I agree is an extremely important institution, that's really about where the European standards are.

Moderator:

Thank you, there is also a question from the audience.

Abdallah Helmy:

I am Abdallah Helmy, advisor for the Egyptian parliament, and I am very happy to hear what is happening on the ground. Now for about seven years I have been working around democracy, in an authoritarian regime that existed already for 50 years. Let's define democracy, politically defining from our perspective, not the European perspective. Democracy is not the door itself, the door is prosperity. Democracy is not a bridge to go, the process of democracy is not the ultimate goal, it is not important. What is important is the achievement of democracy, freedom and prosperity. How we see democracy, how we try to view every citizen, in this context, a lot of important questions; from Cairo today to Cairo tomorrow. It is very important to know what we see and what we want. We must forget the old concepts. The first pillar is equality and forget assistance, money is not the issue at all. The main issue is equality, you must think of new partners as equal partners. Equal partners start from here, equal opportunity, help and assistance to partnership, clearly highlight our interests together, what is your interest and what is my interest and put them together on the table. Let our intellectual partners

think together, that's why we have democracy, from one to one and speak freely so I can go back to my country and change.



Milja Kurki:

Just coming in to your point, I think you very brightly highlighted, there are different value ranks but the core values can be quite the same: equality, liberty, and freedom can be the same for all kinds of democrats and they mostly are. The issue is that there are a lot of different value ranks, different ways of understanding the relationship between equality, economic justice and political liberty. So, a model of democracy that starts from a near liberal emphasis on market freedom and individuals is quite different from one that starts from dignity of the human individual, for bread, for food. There are different

conceptions about democracy at the heart of these debates and that I think is what is crucial to recognise today. Today, in a lot of democratising countries but also in Europe, there are different kinds of voices calling for different kinds of democracy. There are variations of liberal democracy but they are variations nevertheless. I think it is important to notice that one of the key things about liberal democracy is that it is a diverse concept that can facilitate the adoption of various different balances of democratic and libertarian values. So I think those questions about recasting the meaning of liberalism and liberal democracy are central today in democracy promotion. It is not really tackled today in democracy promotion because I think there is an underlying feeling in a lot of the debates of democracy promotion that we actually kind of know what democracy is in the West somehow, and that democracy promoters can promote particular technical improvements or particular public administration structures, or particular economic legal structures for neighbourhood countries and so. With those assumptions come particular models and implicitly in democracy through trade policy, the EU does have a model of democracy, a liberal model of democracy and an understanding that liberal economic structures should go together with liberal democracy. Well, for some people in developing countries this might not be the conception of democracy and that creates an imbalance in the debate, in the dialogue about what exactly is being done. So what I would highlight is that the debate here is very interesting and I think the debate that the project pushes forward is a very important one. I very much welcome the balance I also read in the Commission documents, the multiple experiences of democracy in Europe but I think it must be a little bit more concrete pushing and opening up. Also, as Pierre Vimont was saying, a possibility that there are multiple models that could be put forward.

Moderator:

Thank you, see you all back here at eleven o'clock.

Part II of the Public Forum

*The moderator **Jelmen Haaze** welcomes the guests back and introduces the panellists of the second session:*

- *Mr Balthasar Benz, EEAS*
- *Dr Milja Kurki, Aberystwyth University*
- *Ms Jacqueline Hale, Open Society Institute*
- *Mr Pirkka Tapiola, EEAS*
- *Mr Abdallah Helmy, El-Sadat Association for Development and Social Welfare, Egypt*
- *Ms Iryna Solonenko, International Renaissance Foundation, Ukraine*
- *Dr Vicky Reynaert, Ghent University*
- *Dr Fabienne Bossuyt, Ghent University*

At the beginning of the discussion, the thematic sessions 2.A and 2.B were briefly introduced



Vicky Reynaert – *Introduction to Session 2.A: The Substance of EU Democracy Promotion in Comparison with Other International Actors*

For this panel we have a new topic that is linked to the topics of the first session. Next to the EU there are also other international actors which are promoting democracy. For instance we have the United States, but also the Council of Europe, and NGOs such as the Open Society Institute. In this panel session we want to discuss whether the EU has a different understanding of democracy in comparison with other international actors and whether it gives a different priority with regard to the substance of democracy. According to the academic literature, the US and the Council of Europe have a more political approach than the EU, which has a more economic approach. So these are the kind of things we want to discuss in this session. This discussion will give us a deeper insight into the distinctiveness of EU and democracy promotion. In addition, we want to learn more about capability, the different understandings of democracy, sharing work on the ground and learning. So therefore we have actually two main questions. First of all, compared to other international democracy promoters such as the US, the Council of Europe and international NGOs, how distinct is the EU? And second, how does the EU cooperate with these international actors when it comes to democracy promotion?

Fabienne Bossuyt – *Introduction to Session 2.B.: Domestic Resonance of the EU's Model of Democracy Promotion*

And then the next topic of discussion is the domestic resonance of the EU's model of democracy. If you look at the academic debate, until recently scholars have argued that the EU is projecting one single model of democracy promotion across the world without much differentiation. However, if you look at more recent studies, the EU is taking the domestic context into account. This was also being confirmed this morning by practitioners from the EU itself.

So if you look in depth at how the EU is taking democratic resonance into account, and to what extent, then what you find is that on one hand, the EU looks at the needs of the democratic country as perceived by the EU, and on the other hand, it looks at the degree of political openness and political liberalisation. At the same time, and this is also something that has been discussed at the first session, the idea of liberal democracy being a universal set of values is increasingly being challenged and this is now also the case through the emergence of nondemocratic rising powers in particular China and Russia. This then leads to another question, how much should the EU take into account the domestic context in its democracy promotion?

Moderator:

Thank you. My first question for Mr Helmy: you already have got experience with several international donors. Do they indeed have different models of democracy and how does that translate on the ground?

Abdallah Helmy:

Thank you. We have been working with similar donors for the last seven years, including USAID and European donors and we find that the most open minded people are those in the embassies. Dealing with the European Union as a union is very sophisticated and very complicated. We have not yet managed to successfully apply for funding from the EU, we never get through, I do not know why. Actually the Americans are a little bit more flexible in this regard. The EU has lots of money for our government, really lots of money: 200 million Euros for our government and about one or two million for NGOs. The problem is that the EU puts so much money with no oversight whatsoever. 200 million Euros with no supervisor. Just put in the pocket of our corrupted government. They do whatever they want to do with this money. Many there put it at their interests and benefits, new cars, conferences, things like this and this money is used for big salaries, huge salaries: 28,000 Euros a month and so on. In contrast, NGOs on the ground are working with people with a very narrow budget and very complicated procedures and oversight. Only few people can get through this application process. So to introduce democracy promotion, why not just let NGOs oversee the spending of the funding: do not give them money but let them oversee the 200 million Euros. Do not change your politics but open up your system for European NGOs and for local NGOs to enter into a partnership, to oversee the EU funding in the country. This is a huge step and a huge correction actually for what is happening in terms of empowering local NGOs. The bureaucracy of the European Union democracy assistance is too sophisticated to change, so we do not ask to change your policy. I know it is very hard but just to introduce some tricks like public and local oversight of a project and not only after you decide to give money but introduce local and European NGOs in the planning process of the strategic cooperation and make it part of the public debate, more than just a government to government relation.

Moderator:

Thank you very much. Perhaps a question to the EEAS: are you working on context factors?

Pirkka Tapiola:

I think that we do work a lot on context factors. The whole discussion on more for more is basically one on looking more at what is done with the money and withholding support if that money isn't accurately used. I

know certain governments, governments in our Southern Neighbourhood, dislike the word conditionality. We're talking about mutual accountability. So I say we are moving in the right direction. On budget support, we have seen that in some neighbouring countries for instance the IMF programmes are not being followed so we do not give the promised budget support either. So it is a clear link there. Now, with civil society this is a discussion which we had a number of times in different forums. I think that we have made a serious effort to work with civil society. If you look at the whole, the sea shifts after the Arab spring, we're talking about partnership with society, and this is not just in words.

But then comes the question of, how can I say it, the representativeness of civil society. I am not saying politics of civil society. We have introduced a lot of initiatives involving civil society. We have for instance an Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, and we have some similar type of networks in the Southern Neighbourhood. But, then what constitutes civil society, at least in some parts of our Neighbourhood, my experience is that we are talking with elite groups, almost, groups which remind me more of think tanks rather than of civil society organisations (CSOs), which write very good papers and make very good analyses. This is all valuable work but working with them and designing policy with them, taking their desire as a fundamental part also becomes a little bit difficult when you are working with governments because then comes the question who do you represent? What is your 'constituency' base?

So if you have a vibrant society which is more grass root level, and this is what I was talking about in the previous session, a real bottom-up process; if civil society works more with its own population rather than its diplomatic core and then from that interaction certain ideas emerge and all that is taken into consideration in a completely different manner than if it is donor funded analysis, coming to a diplomatic core under the guide of civil society support.

So this is a very complicated issue. We are committed to working with civil society, that's why we have the civil society platforms, that's why we want platform engagement, but then there is the legitimacy question. Thank you.

Moderator:

The legitimacy question is a very important question, Ms Hale?



Jacqueline Hale:

Yes I think it is extremely important, it is something that we as a foundation have been grappling with. Also when we are looking at the different ways that NGOs are funded and what makes a sustainable NGO beyond donor support. What we see is a model that exists in Western Europe to an extent but not as much as we would like, and which hasn't really replicated itself, even in Central and Eastern Europe and further afield. Take the membership based movements which are more like a civic movement NGOs, I mean the most obvious example would be Amnesty International and you could even compare that organisation with Human Rights Watch, and you have completely different funding models and that has an impact on their mode of operation, their motivation, how they take decisions, internal democracy, how they listen to members. These are really interesting questions that the donor community is only really now beginning to map. We ourselves do the mapping of Central and Eastern Europe, you know a little bit in the vein of lessons learned and what would happen if we withdrew tomorrow: Would the organisations all collapse, and what does that mean in terms of impact and also in sustainability and also the do-no-harm principle, what have we been spending? We are working with private funds, we are not accountable to taxpayers in the same way the EU is, so we have a little bit more flexibility there but nevertheless there is the question about effectiveness and impact at the end of the day. On the legitimacy question I do have some sympathies with what Pierre Vimont just said and again it poses challenges for donors to move beyond working with the same people, people who we're familiar with. If you have a flexible *modus operandi*, it turns out to lend itself to ultimately working with the same people, because the situation of donor-grantee relations is more based on trust and familiarity and delivery, but also what will you do with the funds? I think Iryna can talk more about this than I

can because I am sitting in Brussels. But more generally, it is also about looking at different constituencies, trade unions, churches, faith based organisations, which a lot of international donors have a little bit been blind to. So the question is how to engage these communities which perhaps we also feel ourselves a little bit less comfortable with. In the area where I work, in Central Asia, a lot of the indigenous and growing civil society movements are Islamic. And you know, whilst not wanting to predetermine any outcomes, in the pre-Arab Spring scenario whereby the international donor community isn't reaching out necessarily to some of the local and indigenous actors it is therefore not really understanding the complexity range of needs and concerns. I just want to make one quick point before I hand over the floor. About the EU's role in all of this, where there is a point to make about think tanks being valuable but somehow there has been this growth of think tanks and experts; I know it quite well in the Eastern Neighbourhood. I also have to bring it a little bit back on the EU because the way the EU has worked, specifically in its Neighbourhood Policy but now increasingly through the Eastern Partnerships as a European Neighbourhood Policy 'plus' is very much driving the interaction with civil society along EU policy directives and according to the demands of EU policy frameworks. You see a situation where the donor's policy priorities are driving the interests of civil society. It is not only the EU as a donor here, it is also the EU as a policy actor in its Neighbourhood. It is driving what they write, how they interact and I think it is also reinforcing somewhat this gulf between the grass roots and the elite-based NGOs.

Moderator:

Thank you very much. We first give the floor to Mr Benz to respond.

Balthasar Benz:

Yes, just to respond to the initial question and to your remark. It is true we are a very difficult donor. We are not a regional organisation, we are not an international organisation in the field of democracy support. We are a donor in the first place – what makes us very different from others like the Council of Europe – which does extremely valuable work on constitutional reform and legal frameworks, so we basically use their expertise for instance in the Southern neighbourhood.

We are difficult, yes. We are trying to introduce more flexibility, especially for small NGOs, which simply cannot fulfil many of the requirements, financial et cetera, very often, simply for the reason that they are very new. For example, in Egypt under Mubarak there were no real independent NGOs so we were not necessarily with them. We might be working with some faith groups or some women groups or this or that but it was a different situation. Now, you have hundreds, thousands of NGOs, which are newly founded and have no real track record. We want to support their work but it is very difficult if you come from an extremely rigid financial and contractual background. The [US] State Department is much more flexible, they have a different philosophy. If you say you want to spend one million and you spend it well it is ok and you're lucky. And if you lose one million – well, you have tried. We do that in emergency aid, in ECHO, but we do not have that flexibility on budget support, unfortunately. We are getting there a little bit but it is still very rigid. How do we cooperate with other donors and actors? Well this is something where we have been increasingly trying not only to play an active role in donor coordination but also to take the leadership.



Moderator:

Just a quick extra question: so we are getting there, but is the Endowment [European Endowment for Democracy] going to make a difference?

Balthasar Benz:

Possibly, but the Endowment [European Endowment for Democracy] will not be a European instrument. What we are trying is to make our existing instruments like the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights or the Instrument for Stability, even certain budget lines of development cooperation such as the Non State Actors budget, more flexible, more responsive, quicker, faster. About the Endowment you cannot really say much, we have a statute but we have nothing else, we have no money, we have not even a working group, or staff. And it is not a European instrument, it is an independent foundation. We have to see also how the coordination is going, but it will be rather limited funding probably at least in the beginning. So it might make a difference in a very difficult, in a very specific situation, but on the other hand we also have the possibility of more flexibility under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights through e.g. supporting the Syrian opposition from outside, supporting the opposition in Belarus etc.

Moderator:

Thank you.

Iryna Solonenko:

I would like to make a few points on EU model as compared to models of other actors. Actually, I agree with other speakers that there is no other model. Most international democracy promotion actors share the same basic principles and values. The differences appear when it comes to specific areas of interest, level of expertise and tools. But we still talk here about the same model. For instance, if we compare the EU and the Council of Europe, we see some division of labour here. Basically the EU works at a more general level, whereas the Council of Europe has a very specific expertise and works mostly on very detailed issues. Also, if you compare the EU with the US, from what I see the US can sometimes be blunter and more critical whereas the EU is more diplomatic and more cautious.

The second point I would like to make is that there is still a lot of potential for joint cooperation between these organisations or international donors. I think what is missing is political visibility of some joint actions. The EU supports financially a lot of activities of the Council of Europe, but on the ground this cooperation is not visible. The EU has political leverage and funding, whereas the Council of Europe has the expertise. So it makes sense to come up with some joint action/public statement, since otherwise you have these different comments, but you do not see that they come from the same endeavour. Or worse, there are areas, for instance judiciary reform, where the actions of both sides are contradictory. The Council of Europe comments on the judicial reform, which is not going in the right direction, whereas at the same time the EU is funding projects in this area. This is an example from the ground, which seems to be counterproductive. Also, I agree with the point that the EU could cooperate more with the civil society, although I admit that such cooperation has progressed significantly in the past years. Just one example from the US-Ukraine policy dialogue where high level political actors from both sides as well as civil society experts are invited to participate and speak. In such a format civil society becomes a part of the policy process. The EU could think of inviting civil society experts to participate in EU- partner countries Cooperation Committees or Subcommittees (institutions set up within Partnership and Cooperation Agreements)

When it comes to definition of civil society I agree that there are problems with what you regard as civil society. The EU has indeed attempted to broaden the scope of civil society partners to include, for instance, trade unions or consumer associations. But a problem with these organisations is that they do not necessarily perceive themselves as actors who should attempt to promote policy change. They are not organised enough to do qualitative advocacy. Moreover they often do not have an expertise on EU standards. For example with regard to the Association Agreement (AA), which will become an important tool of policy change given the list of *acquis communautaire* provisions that the EU partner countries have to incorporate, the above-mentioned organisations in Ukraine do not necessarily know what the *acquis* means for their work and how they can use the AA as a tool in their work. Capacity-building is needed here along with enhancing linkages between think tanks that have expertise and civil society groups that can organise advocacy.

Moderator:

You say we have to make linkages and define civil society. Here we notice the USA being blunter than the EU and declaring: "Our message is simple: if you take the risks that reform entails, you will have the full support of the United States."³ Could it ever be this 'simple' for the European Union ? Should it ever be this 'simple' for the European Union ?

Pirkka Tapiola:

Well, I am not sure whether I can give you a very conclusive answer to that. But I remember the discussions when we were starting to talk about democracy, a few years back, it was still during the Bush administration, we were in the post-Iraq situation, and democracy promotion and regime change were often mentioned in the same sentence. From that point of view institution building and building accountable institutions was the way to go, in order to be able to do what we wanted to do in terms of democracy promotion. I think that in many ways there is also some sort of tradition to look at how the European Union was formed, for good governance, rule of law, have been sort of fundamental values for the EU and democracy is also part of those. So I think that the EU's message is much more consistent but it sounds less sexy, it is not a message which would be formulated in an aggressive manner in big statements, but it has been trying and continues to try to address an incremental transition to a more democratic society. So I think we shouldn't talk about apples and oranges and try to compare them, we have a very consistent approach, it doesn't come out quite in such declaratory manner as some other approaches and I do not think it ever will.

Jacqueline Hale:

I just come back a little bit on that, because I think that it is potentially moving in that direction. However, with the External Action Service, having these empowered local delegations, we have increasingly seen local EU delegations' statements, but if you ask an activist normally the statements they are looking for are the US embassy statements. There is room for the EU to be more declarative. For example, one of the most coherent and in depth processes I have seen is by the EU. The EU developed a set of human rights country strategies. I know that we are now talking the language of democracy but I stand by the fact that I do not think the EU does talk the language of democracy very often. But what it does talk a lot is the language of human rights. And that is something that activists can work with, as a minimum, and they developed these human rights country strategies through coordination between the embassies, the EU delegations on the ground and the geographical and human rights people in Brussels. This is a major endeavour. But what did they do? They locked them in a drawer. They have not allowed them to be made public. How will human rights country strategies begin to have teeth, be benchmarked, begin to resonate, monitored; how can their impact be benchmarked, how can the government be put under pressure? Well, that's by allowing these strategies to be made public or at least their priorities to be made public. It seems to me as a sort of self-emasculation that this great process that really brings together all the actors on the ground – the Commission, the new delegations of the EEAS – is not made public.

Also in the international forum like the UN, like on the death penalty abolition which is a success story, it is worth bearing in mind whether the EU actually makes a statement on something and follows it through, whether it has the same impact as the US. A few weeks ago Hillary Clinton visited Azerbaijan and the day before her visit, Azerbaijan released a prominent political activist, a human rights defender. It basically gave us a *quid pro quo* and the president of Azerbaijan had to release this activist more with the Clinton visit than with the EU. So I think there are certain principles there that we have to think through further.

³ President Obama, *A Moment of Opportunity, May 19, 2011* Retrieved from <http://mepi.state.gov/> on October 23, 2012



Abdallah Helmy:

I think that at this time democracy delivery promotion is important. People must realise this and feel that democracy works for them. Again, as I said in the last session, it is not about European money to be given to our countries, even budget support. If you put 200 million Euros as a budget support, our budget deficit is twenty hundreds times over this, so this is nothing. So this is not something that is effective, it is just an open gate for the European Union to speak to the government and actually to a corrupted government. So let's focus more on democracy deliverability. How can the normal citizen feel 'democracy is

working for me'? This is focusing more on citizens' interests, not government needs. But citizens' needs are totally different, in education, technology transfer and prosperity. This is how you can tell every citizen that because you are a democratic country, you can have freedom and prosperity, a lot of other things that you love. So changing your mind is very important. I know it is very hard, changing the European mind-set on what we really want and what the EU's role is in this. I will give you an example of how your aid structure can be a part of aid assistance, to be a partnership, a cooperation project, direct to citizens. So one simple example, maybe you like it maybe you do not, in relation to higher education: We have around 16 universities that have a very bad educational level. However, in Europe we find a lot of highly ranked, credible universities, so we are speaking about a cooperation programme, where maybe the London School of Economics may have a branch in our country. But opening a branch implies a lot of money. So the EU will not open a branch, you will get a floor, in one of our universities, they manage it, put the scholars, educational materials and they certify people, so what is the European Union's role in this? If you finance the London School of Economics to do this, it will be much more money to pay and it will be money to give more jobs to European citizens. European taxpayers will earn the money so you get more taxes for the member states, so it is your money in your system. However, the deliverability on the ground in Egypt is about 20.000 highly capable educated persons a year, to be deployed by investors in new ventures and so on. I think this is an immigrant qualification product so you qualify migrants rather than giving fishermen and giving visas that you do not like to have in your society, instead you are getting highly educated people to be in Europe after a while.

This is one thing you have – education; the other thing is technology, the third thing is market and I can name more than two hundred things we can cooperate on rather than money. I ask everyone to invest some time in going deeply inside new cooperation strategies, new partnership strategies that answer to the interests of both nations that will be much more applicable and important to our situation and to yours in the current financial situation.

Moderator:

Thank you very much. So, citizens must feel democracy is working and we are going to try to implement that here as well, we open the floor for questions.

Prof. Leif Johan Eliasson, East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania:

A few comments on the US approach, specifically concerning NGOs. The tradition in the US is that 98 per cent of development aid - that is private sector, private channels through NGOs, not through official aid - is military assistance. And it took us 220 years to get the US development agency, and then to understand its own structure. The models are very different and, going to that of NGOs, I think the Europeans have more going on than what Ms Solonenko has mentioned. In the first of hopefully many department reviews, specifically on democracy promotion under Hillary Clinton and Anne-Marie Slaughter, there is much more focus on promoting support for NGOs who work on the ground because, as small as the actual development policy budget is right now, it will be severely cut in the coming years; there is little doubt about that, the House of Representatives' intent on slashing in official development aid. So I think the more the EU can involve itself with civil society and NGOs in that process of democracy promotion, the more productive it can be. The high level promotion of freedom for political prisoners will stay highly political dependent on government base support and so on, but the actual implementation on the ground is much more on supporting NGOs rather than public funding of projects.

Question from the audience

I have a question for Mr Helmy: How can you be independent if your house, salary, your office, your work is paid by foreigners? You have to understand that we had the tourism industry, now we have the human rights industry. You have many people living from that. In Jordan, just near the prime minister's office, you have a palace and it is the human rights office. We have now more than 200-300 organisations that are civil society just to have money. You said we have 16 universities. We have many universities in Cairo, we have many good universities. You can ask to collaborate but if you want to be free, from equal to equal, you do not have to come here and to ask money.

Mr. Ramzan Shamiliov, Vereniging Tsjetsjeense Gemeenschap België:

Promoting democracy is also possible here in Europe, with migrants. They are Arab speaking, there is a kind of solidarity, you can appeal to them. They have contact by internet, skype, email, they can support democracy.

Moderator:

Let's give some room to the panellists to answer to their questions.

Abdallah Helmy:

One question is about donors and donor cooperation and I see more donors is more competition not cooperation. They even refuse to meet in projects; they would like to meet individually with local organisations. I do not see any donor cooperation in such a context of competition. The second thing is independency and this is very important. My organisation has two kinds of financing: we have membership, we are a membership based organisation, and we get some money out of donors and projects. But I tell you something, independence is here [referring to his head]. You can just buy our time and our project but you cannot buy our mind, our belief and our mission. Our mission is our mission and no one will dictate our mission and no one will tell us what to do because we know people and we know how we would need to act. And our mission cannot be altered for an amount of money. So we are clear, independency is in our belief.

The second thing about the 200 million Euros in our budget deficit. We are not here to call for more money. Europe is not that rich to give money, but if you are giving support or hold any cooperation programme, we say that you must have local oversight of your money, not to give this money to local NGOs. I am sorry if I was not that clear. [And towards the second questioner] Thank you very much for your sympathy for our organisation. Egypt is strongly influential locally and regionally and nationally; our stability and our new democracy model will promote itself, it will promote democracy around and we really believe in this, we are really keen to have a model that will be replicated easily around the Arab countries. Thank you.



Iryna Solonenko:

Two points. First, I think we cannot approach civil society in neighbourhood countries with the same paradigm we apply for civil society in EU member states. The EU's Eastern neighbours did not have some hundred years to produce a domestically grown civil society and we cannot expect this to happen twenty years after the fall of communism. It takes time. I think what we should do is to see what groups and efforts are available on the ground and try to enhance their capacity and domestic power-base in the longer run.

Second, I think the EU should and can be more sensitive to some developments which are not directly linked to democracy promotion but are essential as conditions. If you see entrepreneurs representing small and medium businesses protesting and demanding better taxation legislation: it is not about democracy promotion, but about favourable conditions for the growth of middle class. If you think about democracy, you need a strong

middle class. This is where the EU could probably step in and make a statement and support the efforts of local actors. Or, for instance, if you have NGOs in some countries demanding a better legal framework for themselves, better procedures for registration and operation, then the EU should also step in. In short, there are issues that are indirectly linked to democracy-promotion and the EU needs to play a role there as well.

Balthasar Benz:

I just wanted to make one remark, this is concerning what you should do on the ground and what would be better if we would do it differently et cetera. One big lesson we have learned from the Arab Spring is that we can do exactly as much as what we are asked to. We were very quick in Tunisia providing expertise to the commission for political reform, we continued with that later on with the provisional government, invited some observers in the elections, et cetera. We direct funding so this was a very constructive cooperation on all levels: government level, provisional authority level, civil society level, political party level. We had lots of emergent political parties also to get organised et cetera, not on the manifesto side, but on the operational side. Egypt is exactly the contrary, we were asked not to do anything, to stay away, we were explicitly not invited to the elections, so it is much more difficult. And if you know how much other international donors give to the military and if you know who they resolve in Egypt, then it is slightly different of course from the situation of Tunisia. So we can do in Egypt as much as we are allowed to do, asked to do, but we have a context of comprehensive planning and negotiating and we will see where we go. We are not in the driving seat in Egypt.

Emmanuel Gyimah-Boadi

I just wanted to react on the discussions and debate of those who believe there is something wrong with civil society. Just to remind all of us, many of our governments are already substantially dependent on external donors for moral and financial support, if this is not undermining the good governance in those countries. I do not think that the civil society's so-called dependence on the same sources will be undermining at all.

Just a final suggestion: yes, the EU's democratic support is less political than that of the USA. However, I think that exaggerates the difference if you forget about the activities of the European Foundations, European governments, NGOs and so on, including government funded European NGOs.

Olga Burlyuk:

[asked a question about civil society and Belarus]

Guy Haaze

Since I noticed the EU has been supporting democratic processes for many years with limited success compared to the very rapid evolution influenced by the new media in general and social networking in particular, what is your view on the role media, and social media in particular shall play in future democratic reform and, with this in mind, should the EU adapt its media approach?

Pirkka Tapiola:

Well, since I was asked directly on Belarus, which I have been working on for a number of years: You know that the European policy on Belarus is rather stringent at this moment and we do have much more of our support going to civil society. The point I was making was that we need to look also at the mirror ourselves and not on the ground and see how we can better support civil society. I am not talking about revolutionary or other terms, heaven forbid no, it usually doesn't work, but trying to find evolutionary tracks. Because fundamentally, at least in a liberal democratic model, democracy will work when people start taking care of their own interests in cooperation and not expect states to develop to give things for them. If everything will come from above, if that is the expectation, you open up the door of authoritarianism. If the basic point of departure is that we are

going together, let's say to clean up the stairway, or look after this garden or look at our consumer rights and so on, then you create cultural accountability. That doesn't mean that we wouldn't continue pushing the ways we are doing but looking more in a, sort of, asking ourselves, that we understand what civil societies are.

Jacqueline Hale:

If we are going to make final statements this will be my final statement. Just to say I agree with what Pirkka just said, I think we are missing a trick on social movements, all of us. I do think there is a false divide, nevertheless there is a real divide and it is conceived by local organisations as well, between service providing NGOs and political NGOs. I think that for donors there is more work to do to bring those two notions of service provision and political action together.

Now on the question of social media, I think it is a very valid point. I think the notion of networks helps us very much here because it is not only about how people are connected by facebook, twitter or to Al Jazeera which I think is far more responsible for the Arab Spring than the new technologies, but also networks which we heard our colleague speak about here in Europe. And this is I think where action can be taken in the future, along the line of this mutual interest because Europe and certainly its neighbourhood are bound together and many solutions have to be found together. There is a lot to be done in terms of very long term thinking about how Europe can frame the incentives in a way that it really gets people, citizens, buy into the notion that democracy will perform for them. Especially since at home, democracy is not working so well.

Milja Kurki:

Let me just re-emphasize a couple of points. One of them is this great opportunity of the EU in terms of civil society support. I think it is very good that the nature of civil society is actually discussed in the EEAS. It is a fundamental question, civil society means again different things for different people and thinking about the question what it actually might mean for different actors on the ground is crucial. Being able to get into concrete context and find all kinds of a different sort of actors – trade unions, homeless people associations – and not just women's organisation and children's schools which are easier in some regards to fund, because they are less politicised. I think one of the key issues about civil society is the political civil society. The EU has kind of an advantage when dealing with those kind of questions. The US also has great problems in trying to engage with civil society as already pointed out. As a remedy, there is a tendency to give US contacts to private companies, which then subcontract people on the ground. But this is also civil society representation, this is private subcontracting and that is not necessarily the ideal way to go either. The key question in all of these questions we are trying to come up with in the right way of engagement with civil society is the question of accountability and it is a crucial question: People promoting democracy in third countries are accountable to Western donors, and not to the people in the target countries. So, questions about accountability and moving to actually some kind of mutual accountability I think is equally important. So that is something perhaps to raise at the moment. I leave it there.

Abdallah Helmy:

Democracy is about delivery. So if we do not help democracy to deliver it will be short term and then again we will lose. I invite everyone to think about your possibilities of cooperation rather than financial cooperation and help and assistance. You have a lot, a lot to do on this perspective.

Iryna Solonenko:

I think the EU has examples of good instruments to promote democracy and civil society development, the latter being closely related to democracy. Let us take the Visa Free Action Plan - the instrument the EU offers to Eastern Partnership countries. Whether the EU intended it or not, but it provoked quite an active position from civil society organisations that promote and advocate for non- legislation, since such legislation is demanded by the Action Plan. At least this has been the case in Ukraine and Moldova. Another example from

Ukraine - different associations that deal with people with disabilities. The Visa Free Action Plan demands equal access to different facilities, which issue identity documents, and the above-mentioned associations have used it as a reference point in their domestic advocacy. In short, the Visa Free Action Plan is a good example of how the EU opens up some incentives (potential lifting of visa requirements) and links those to certain reform actions. Such bilaterally binding documents can encourage domestic civil society advocacy groups and strengthen their position. At the end of the day this leads to more vibrant civil society that is capable of promoting reforms. The EU might think of replicating the example of the Visa Free Action Plan (i.e. clear linkage between incentives and reform demands) in other reform areas. In short, I would say it has more to do with appropriate instruments, rather than the substance of democracy promotion.

Michael Emerson (CEPS) concludes the discussion with some final remarks



Ok, I have a few thoughts. One, I think it was a very good debate and the publication is very valuable [referring to the special issue of the *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 2011, no. 5, edited by Anne Wetzel and Jan Orbie, see <http://www.eu-ipods.ugent.be/publications>]. My first point is that this democracy promotion business is inherently an extremely tricky business for a very simple logical reason. If your partner country is already a democracy, you do not have to promote democracy there, and if it isn't a democracy its leaders probably do not want to become per se democratic because they have strong vested interests in the status quo. So where do you go from there? Well, that is the reason why you have this business into bits and pieces which looks rather

lacking in strategy and coherence. There are severe analytical criticisms but basically this is the function of the nature of the business.

One remark on the publication edited by Anne Wetzel and Jan Orbie: basically, you just need to simplify, you just need to take table 1 and figure 1. Table 1 shows the picture of embedded democracy and figure 1 shows how 15 case studies rank in terms of how the EU has acted on the multiple components of so-called embedded democracy. These two pieces of paper here really are excellent. The embedded democracy concept, I think, is a very true representation of what Europeans, I would say Westerners, think democracy is. It encompasses five core features and actual regimes – electoral regime, civil rights, political rights, horizontal accountability, and effective power to govern – and then has three enabling conditions: the capacity of the state, the activity of civil society, and socio-economic conditions going right down to questions of development. Well, by the time you got down to that last enabling condition of course you are right in the middle of the development debate and you haven't at all resolved the tension between the democracy promoters versus those developmentalists. So I mean there, they are both in there together and reading in the publication is not really helping you resolve that tension, if you like, between practitioners with different specialisations.

The ideal framework, I think, is what we know in Europe about democracy, basically the same as all mature western democracies. The next question is whether that should be all the EU knows about. Does it have a plausible claim to be something like a universalisation, a universalised concept of democracy or not? Well, I would say as the mainstream proposition, yes, it is not a ridiculous proposition. And, one comment on your remark that our conception of democracy is in the defensive in relation to critique from the emerging countries. I do not buy that argument. I mean if you take G20 and the BRICs, in particular the BRICs: you have Brazil, India and South-Africa who are absolutely in line with our concept of democracy, and with respect to Russia, they have been a bit on the back foot these days and even China is a bit on the back foot with respect to their authoritarian regime. So I mean also in the G20, Indonesia, Turkey are far from undemocratic, so the proposition of universal validity is not that bad. I think it is correct that the EU doesn't try to project any other model, but there are other models. Number one would be Russia's concept of sovereign democracy. Ok, it is not a stupid proposition saying that if we do not want an authoritarian state we still want a strong state. It is better than having a chaotic dysfunctional democracy of which we have some examples, which Iryna [Solonenko] knows about in Ukraine. They have got a point, you do not have to agree with them, you are not going to promote it, but they got a point. Now, with our other neighbours in the South. You have Islamist political parties, and now most of them are saying – we've had very interesting conversations with them in the

past year: we know about European democracy, it is only a few miles across the Mediterranean Sea. It is quite nice but it is not quite what we want because it has no ethical or moral content. It is empty. This chart here [points to the table in the publication] is completely empty of moral or religious concepts and we admit to say, yes, we have certain concepts, ethical concepts, we think they are fundamental; we want to embed that in our concept of democracy. Well again, the European Union is not going to promote that, is it? But it is still a serious argument.

And then the third example, which I think is even more relevant to the European Union, is how you establish any kind of normative hierarchy amongst regimes that are not model democracies, but that have different defects. Do we have a view about that? The answer here is that the European Union certainly does not have a view. I haven't seen any attempt to do that. However, there is an animal with a long European dignified history called enlightenment, the enlightened despot. Now would we prefer to see in various countries an austere, religious, ethical and non-corrupt authoritarian state to a much more democratic and a corrupt one? That's quite a tough choice, and I guess that will become more relevant in the future, because I think the Islamist parties in the Arab world are serious about being austere and non-corrupt, that's part of their brand. So if you get that together with perhaps a little bit less liberalism and pluralism, is that a mix that the European Union is going to like?

My final point is about what the EU is saying it wants to do and what it should do. All of its multiple agencies have to look for the entry points in the partner countries. The partner states tend to be diverse and when you are going to Uzbekistan you have many entry points. So this leads to the kind of patchwork that is revealed in your table. Well, this is not a lack of coherence, it is a matter of, if you like, intelligent pragmatism.

My final point is on the language. Nowadays the language is about 'deep democracy' and 'more for more'. Well, sorry, independent observers have to say, these are just euphemisms. 'Deep democracy' is a catchy expression that was brought in because there was recently a period when the European Union ignored democracy in North Africa. It didn't even appear in very long comprehensive documents. They forgot about the D-word and now we get the Arab Spring and the European Union says 'ah we got that wrong but now we get serious about democracy'. We could not say we forgot about democracy but now we are in democracy again, there had to be 'this time it is "deep" democracy". So it is just a game of words. Do not look for the depth of this concept. And then come to the 'more for more' business, then we heard it from the high priest Pierre Vimont himself. The Arab world, Cairo in particular, doesn't like the word conditionality, so I quite understand, we just give you 'more for more' in exchange.

[End of the public forum]



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Appendix

Zusammenfassung

Das öffentliche Diskussionsforum 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.

Ziel des Forums war es, die Resultate eines Forschungsprojektes zum Inhalt der internationalen EU-Demokratieförderung einem breiterem Publikum aus Vertretern der Zivilgesellschaft, der Demokratieförderpraxis, einschließlich Vertretern aus EU-Institutionen sowie der Allgemeinheit, einschließlich Vertretern aus den Zielländern, vorzustellen. Es ging den Fragen nach dem Demokratieverständnis der EU im Rahmen ihrer Demokratieförderpolitik und den in der Praxis geförderten Inhalten in vier Blöcken zu folgenden Themen nach: (I) der Frage, ob die EU eine „vertiefte“ oder „oberflächliche“ Demokratieförderagenda verfolge; (II) den möglichen Spannungen zwischen EU-Entwicklungs- und Demokratieförderungspolitik; (III) dem Vergleich der EU mit anderen internationalen Demokratieförderern und (IV) der Resonanz von EU-Demokratieförderpolitik im innenpolitischen Kontext der Zielländer. Aktuelle Ereignisse wie zum Beispiel der Arabische Frühling sowie deren Auswirkungen auf den Inhalt von Demokratieförderung wurden in allen Themenblöcken diskutiert.

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>).

Eine Video-Dokumentation des Forums befindet sich unter: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3fSLUDO9nJc&feature=youtu.be>

Résumé

Le forum public a eu lieu dans le cadre d'une Activité d'Information et de Recherche, subventionnée par le programme Jean Monnet de la Commission Européenne, sur «le contenu de la politique internationale de démocratisation de l'Union européenne (UE) (voir www.eu-ipods.eu). L'événement a été organisé par l'Université de Gand et le MZES, Centre européen de la Recherche sociale de l'Université de Mannheim, en coopération avec le Centre d' Etudes de Politique européenne (CEPS) à Bruxelles.

Le but du forum consistait à disséminer les résultats d'un projet de recherche académique concernant le contenu de la politique internationale de démocratisation de l'UE parmi un public plus large contenant des représentants de la société civile, des praticiens (entre autres des fonctionnaires des organismes de l'Union européenne) et le public en général, y compris des gens des pays bénéficiaires.

Le forum a discuté de la question comment l'UE comprend la notion de démocratie dans sa politique internationale de démocratisation et quel contenu démocratique l'UE avance exactement. La discussion comprenait quatre parties concernant respectivement (I) la question si l'UE pratique une vision 'profonde' ou 'superficielle' d' avancement de la démocratie, (II) la tension potentielle entre la politique européenne de développement et la politique de démocratisation, (III) la comparaison entre l'UE et d'autres acteurs internationaux avançant la démocratie, et (IV) la résonance de la politique internationale de démocratisation de l'UE dans le contexte domestique des pays bénéficiaires. Des développements récents, entre autres le "Printemps arabe", et leurs conséquences pour le contenu de l'avancement de la démocratie ont également fait le sujet de la discussion.

Quelques idées et recommandations de l' événement ont été incorporées dans un "Policy Brief" publié par le CEPS (voir <http://www.ceps.eu/book/eu%E2%80%99s-promotion-external-democracy-search-plot>).

Un documentaire télévisé de l' événement est accessible sur <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3fSLUDO9nJc&feature=youtu.be>

Samenvatting

Dit publiek forum over 'de inhoud van het 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). 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.

De bedoeling van het forum was om de resultaten van een onderzoeksproject over de inhoud van het democratiepromotiebeleid van de EU te verspreiden naar een breder publiek. Er werd meer bepaald gestreefd naar een dialoog tussen academici en vertegenwoordigers van de civiele samenleving, ambtenaren van de EU-instellingen en van andere overheden, en het brede publiek in het algemeen, inclusief mensen uit de doellanden buiten de EU.

Centraal stond de vraag hoe de EU het begrip 'democratie' invult in haar extern beleid, door vier specifieke sessies te organiseren die achtereenvolgens gingen over (I) de vraag of de EU een 'diepe' dan wel een 'holle' democratie agenda heeft, (II) de mogelijke spanningen tussen enerzijds het democratiepromotiebeleid en anderzijds het ontwikkelingsbeleid van de EU, (III) de vergelijking tussen de EU en andere actoren die internationaal actief zijn inzake democratiepromotie, en (IV) de mate van overeenstemming van het EU extern beleid inzake democratie met de lokale context in de doellanden. Recente ontwikkelingen zoals de Arabische Lente, en de implicaties hiervan voor de inhoud van het EU democratiepromotiebeleid, kwamen uiteraard aanbod doorheen het hele forum.

Enkele resultaten en aanbevelingen van het evenement zijn terug te vinden in een door CEPS uitgegeven *Policy Brief* (zie <http://www.ceps.eu/book/eu%E2%80%99s-promotion-external-democracy-search-plot>).

Een video documentaire van het forum kan worden geraadpleegd onder <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3fSLUDO9nJc&feature=youtu.be>

Resumen

El foro público ha tenido lugar en el contexto de una Actividad de Información y de Investigación subvencionada por el programa Jean Monnet de la Comisión Europea, sobre "el contenido de la política internacional de democratización de la Unión europea" (UE) (ver www.eu-ipods.eu). El evento fue organizado por la Universidad de Gante y el MZES, Centro europeo de Investigación social de la Universidad de Mannheim, en cooperación con el Centro de Estudios de Política europea (CEPS) de Bruselas.

El objetivo del foro consistía en difundir los resultados de un proyecto de investigación académica sobre el contenido de la política internacional de democratización de la UE dentro de un público más extenso formado por representantes de la sociedad civil, de practicantes (entre otros funcionarios de los organismos de la Unión europea) y el público en general, incluidos representantes de los países beneficiarios.

El foro discutió sobre la cuestión de lo que la UE entiende por la noción de democracia en su política internacional de democratización y qué contenido democrático la UE propone exactamente. La discusión se componía de cuatro partes abordando respectivamente (I) la pregunta si la UE practica una visión "profunda" o "superficial" en la promoción de la democracia, (II) la tensión potencial entre la política europea de desarrollo y la política de democratización, (III) la comparación entre la UE y otros actores internacionales, y (IV) la resonancia de la política internacional de democratización de la UE en el contexto doméstico de los países beneficiarios. Acontecimientos recientes, entre otros la "Primavera árabe", y sus consecuencias para el contenido del progreso de la democracia formaron igualmente parte de la discusión.

Algunas ideas y recomendaciones de la actividad 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>).

Un documental televisivo del evento está accesible en <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3fSLUDO9nJc&feature=youtu.be>