



JOINT STATEMENT ON THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE 'NEIGHBOURHOOD, DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION INSTRUMENT (NDICI)' OF THE EU BUDGET (MULTI-ANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK (MFF 2021-2027))

The Office of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) to the European Union, the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD), and the European Network of Political Foundations (ENoP) welcome the publishing by the European Commission of its detailed proposal for establishing the 'Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)' of the next EU budget, which covers the majority of spending beyond EU borders.

As democracy support actors, we are encouraged by the importance the European Commission attaches to the European Union's external action. We view the proposed Euro 123 billion for the NDICI, including the increase of funding for the democracy and human rights programme, in a positive light. Based on our previous Joint Statement on, *'The importance of democracy and democracy support in the EU Multi-annual financial framework (MFF 2021-2027)'*, of 23 May 2018¹, we acknowledge that the NDICI proposal has certain distinct advantages. However, the proposed regulation in its current version lacks detail in many areas to make a comprehensive analysis of its impact on democracy and democracy support. To this end, and based on available information, we are concerned that the latest proposal could denote, inter alia, the following:

- The absence of a strategic approach to democracy support, focussing on addressing short- to medium-term priorities, while diminishing the importance of promoting shared interests and values for sustainable democracy and effective democracy support;
- Lack of clarity and short on specificities in relation to sustainable democracy and effective democracy support, including dedicated and guaranteed ring-fenced funding for democracy support;
- Reduced participation and inclusion of local authorities as democracy actors;
- No specific mentioning and hence no guarantee for dialogue with high- and middle income countries to cooperate on democracy support and the implementation of the Agenda 2030;

¹ See joint statement on the importance of democracy and democracy support in the EU Multi-annual financial framework (MFF 2021-2027) <https://www.idea.int/news-media/news/joint-statement-importance-democracy-and-democracy-support-eu-multi-annual-financial>

- Lack of clarity on NDICI modalities for the promotion of coherence, linkages and improved communication, including the application of a degree of flexibility that the instrument is introducing in funding for external actions; and
- Reduced oversight from key institutional democracy and development actors, in particular the European Parliament.

We hope that the aforementioned concerns would be addressed and clarified during the ongoing consultative process on the MFF that involves the European Commission, European Council and EU Member States, European Parliament, and all democracy support actors. To further contribute to this consultative process, we would like to make the following **recommendations** in relation to democracy and democracy support in the next MFF 2021-2027:

i) Include democracy support as one of the top EU political priorities

Assured EU leadership on democracy, promotion of human rights, rule of law, and inclusive governance is both a reflection of EU values and a critical way of addressing EU priorities. Democracy should be regarded as a long-term and non-linear process that can help to foster long-term stability, security, and peace, as well as complement sustainable development in the EU's neighbourhood and beyond in accordance with Agenda 2030.

ii) Follow an inclusive approach for the implementation of democracy support programmes

Continue to ensure that all relevant public and private sector non-profit organisations, international organisations, civil society organisations and foundations, including political foundations, national, regional and international parliamentary bodies are consulted as appropriate, and considered as possible implementing partners in democracy support under the NDICI. Such an inclusive approach to democracy support contributes to improved implementation, and the strengthening of EU leadership in democracy and democracy support.

iii) Ensure a clearly defined and comprehensive articulation of the scope of democracy support

Under existing EU financing instruments for external action, the scope of instruments is contained in the main act, whereas the NDICI proposal supports the scope of sectors in various annexes (Annex III for democracy and human rights). These should be more clearly defined, moved to and captured in the main NDICI act in order to reflect their central importance. Further, it is also important to capture and make reference to all relevant and existing EU democracy and democracy support policy

documents² in the NDICI text. This would allow for greater consistency, transparency and accountability.

iv) Ensure wider consultation and coordination among EU Institutions, EU Member States, and democracy support actors for EU democracy support policy

There is a need for the development and implementation of an overarching and strategic EU democracy support policy that includes EU institutions, EU Member States and democracy support actors. This would provide a clearly defined framework for the implementation of democracy support programmes under the NDICI.

v) Guarantee full compliance with processes and procedures for the approval and implementation of EU financing instruments under the next MFF

The MFF covers a period of 7 years, and it is therefore important to ensure that sufficient time is allocated for dialogue and consultation during the negotiation process. To this end, full compliance with the processes and procedures for the approval of the MFF by the Council of the European Union and European Parliament, should be guaranteed, irrespective of time and other pressures. Further, the governance procedures for the new proposed instruments must be more clearly outlined, including the oversight role of the European Parliament.

The Office of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) to the European Union, the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD), and the European Network of Political Foundations (ENoP) reiterate our commitment to collaborate with EU Institutions and EU Member States on the Multi-Annual Financial Framework to ensure strategic, effective and accountable EU democracy and external democracy support. It is our endeavour to remain seized of this important matter, and we will release further joint statements in the future to contribute to the approval of a MFF that promotes the full implementation of Agenda 2030, including support for sustainable democracy globally.

Brussels, July 2018

² For example the 2009 Council Conclusions on 'Democracy Support in the EU's External Relations', 2012 'EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy', 2012 Commission Communication on 'The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations', 2014 Council Conclusions on 'A rights-based approach to development cooperation, encompassing all human rights', and following edition of the 2015-2019 'Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy'.

International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) is an intergovernmental organization with the mission to advance democracy worldwide, as a universal human aspiration and enabler of sustainable development. We do this by supporting the building, strengthening and safeguarding of democratic political institutions and processes at all levels. Our vision is a world in which democratic processes, actors and institutions are inclusive and accountable and deliver sustainable development to all.

What do we do?

In our work we focus on three main impact areas: electoral processes; constitution-building processes; and political participation and representation. The themes of gender and inclusion, conflict sensitivity and sustainable development are mainstreamed across all our areas of work. International IDEA provides analysis of global and regional democratic trends; produces comparative knowledge of good international democratic practices; offers technical assistance and capacity-building on democratic reform to actors engaged in democratic processes; and convenes dialogue on issues relevant to the public debate on democracy and democracy building.

Where do we work?

Our headquarters are located in Stockholm, with regional and country offices in Africa, the Asia-Pacific, Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean. International IDEA is a Permanent Observer to the United Nations and is accredited to European Union institutions.

<http://idea.int>

European Partnership for Democracy (EPD)

The European Partnership for Democracy (EPD) is a non-profit organisation supporting democracy and good governance worldwide. The EPD network brings together 13 organisations from around the European Union (EU) that specialise on different sectors of democracy support, including support for political parties, parliaments, elections, media development, local democracy, human rights, executive leadership and ICT.

The EPD network collaborates on programmes and shares experiences and lessons learned, in order to contribute more effectively to democratisation around the world. In addition, EPD contributes to improving democracy support policies through its advocacy efforts in Brussels.

Our members are: Agence Française de Coopération médias (CFI), Club de Madrid, Eastern European Studies Centre (EESC), Elbarlament, European Association of Local Democracy (ALDA), European Centre for Electoral Support (ECES), Netherlands Helsinki Committee (NHC), Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), One World, Oslo Center, People in Need, Political Parties of Finland for Democracy (Demo Finland), Universidade Catolica Portuguesa, and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD).

www.epd.eu

European Network of Political Foundations (ENoP)

The European Network of Political Foundations (ENoP) consists of 51 member foundations and three affiliated entities, coming from 22 countries within the EU. The members are ideologically close to six party families - ALDE, ECR, EPP, Greens/EFA, GUE/NGL, and S&D - represented in the European Parliament and belonging to the democratic spectrum.

The Network also serves as a platform for political foundations in Europe to exchange with the EU institutions, civil society organisations (CSOs) and research institutes about democracy support, development cooperation and political dialogue.

The activities of political foundations in the fields of democracy support and development cooperation, include civic education, public campaigning and awareness building, advocacy directed towards institutions as well as decision-makers in their respective home countries. ENoP members work actively in over 100 countries across the world, where they implement projects, aimed at enhancing democratic grassroots structures, strengthening civic participation, consolidating political institutions, and bridge existing gaps between civil society and political actors.

In 2016, ENoP has signed a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) with the European Commission, aimed at enhancing the cooperation between the two actors in: 1) promoting enabling environment for political foundations, CSOs and political parties; 2) encouraging participation in policy-making through political foundations, their partner-organisations and political parties; and 3) strengthening the capabilities of political foundations in supporting democracy and developing pluralistic societies.

www.enop.eu