

Vice President Josep Borrell
European Commission
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

Brussels, 21 April 2020

DEMOCRACY IN THE NEXT BUDGET OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Dear Vice President Borrell,
Dear Commissioner Urpilainen,

The current global pandemic will alter the course of European history indefinitely. The European Commission's decisions and actions today will set the course for the decades to come. So far, the European Commission has made important steps towards solidarity and coordination between EU Member States. As part of the Commission's response, the European Commission is redrafting a new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) to empower the Commission with the financial tools and means to mitigate the harms to global health, economic recession and the larger political fallout. This draft is set to be published on 28 April 2020.

We urge you to ensure democracy is placed higher on the external agenda in the framework of the new MFF proposal. Many different regimes have engaged in soft coups, taking advantage of the pandemic to quell dissent and concentrate power in ways they are unlikely to give up afterwards. Likewise, the crisis has given rise to the increasing tension between democracies and more assertive authoritarian states on the global stage, particularly China. Crises tend to accelerate and deepen existing trends, and this will most certainly be the case for the growing trend of authoritarianism if the EU does not act decisively.

Both the legitimacy of democratic governance and the future of multilateralism are at risk. With international cooperation as the best way to deal with this crisis, it is upon the EU to invest in international cooperation with likeminded partners. More than ever, democracy will need to be a top priority of the EU's internal and external affairs. This should be reflected in the new MFF proposal, particularly in Heading 6 on Neighbourhood and the World. Democracy will need to be

the main principles guiding funding allocations in all external funding instruments, including the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI).

We urge you to take the necessary steps to ensure the Commission draft will reflect the need to prioritise democratic governance in the new MFF proposal.

Yours sincerely,



Ken Godfrey
Executive Director

CC: Secretary General Helga Schmid (EEAS)
Director General Koen Doens (DG DEVCO)