

## Launch of the ENoP Policy Paper: Supporting political parties for democracy – food for thought for European actors

**Stakeholders from political foundations and the EU Institutions met in Brussels on 25 June 2013 in order to launch the first policy paper by the European Network of Political Foundations (ENoP). The event was organized by ENoP together with Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and other members of the working group "Democracy"<sup>1</sup> of ENoP.**

ENoP is an umbrella organisation for European political foundations which has been founded in 2006 with the aim to facilitate the dialogue between European political foundations of all party families on the one hand and the European Institutions on the other hand. The policy paper is the result of deliberations within the Working Group "Democracy" of the ENoP. After this first launch the five working groups<sup>2</sup> will publish a series of further policy papers over the coming months in order to contribute to the debate on democracy support at the European and international level and to provide

policy advice to stakeholders in the European Institutions.

Martin Ängeby, Secretary-General of the Swedish International Liberal Center (SILC) and Chair of the Working Group Democracy presented the main outline of the paper. Ängeby confirmed that the EU's commitment to support Democratization and Human Rights is significant and has been evolving and developing. While the first generation democracy support projects supported by the EU still focused largely on technical assistance and mainly provided institutional support or support to Civil Society Organizations, political parties were not part of the target group. Figuratively speaking, support went rather to build the stadiums and to set up the rules than to the teams competing. At the national level however, political parties have for much longer been subject of assistance. Roughly three approaches can be distinguished. Firstly all parties are convened in a common dialogue, which may touch upon issues such as the laws and regulations concerning parties or their financing. Secondly, in a multiparty approach, it may be possible to work with all parties at the same time but individually on issues such as campaign training. Thirdly, assistance can be given in a peer to peer approach, such as through political foundations affiliated to a specific political ideology. In the light of the increasingly difficult situation of cooperation with political parties in some countries, Ängeby emphasized that the OESCE Venice Commission has confirmed that political parties have the right to cooperate with other political parties on an international level.

<sup>1</sup> Members of the Working Group Democracy of ENoP are: SILC (Swedish International Liberal Centre), FNF (Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung für die Freiheit), FJJ (Fondation Jean-Jaurès), Liberales, D 66, KKID (Konstatinos Karamanlis Institute for Democracy), CEVRO (Liberálně-konzervativní akademie), Fondazzjoni IDEAT, KIC (Christian Democratic International Center), KAS (Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung), Institut Novum, HSS (Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung) and hbs (Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung)

<sup>2</sup> The five working groups are: 1. Democracy Promotion, 2. Joint Africa-EU Strategy-JAES, 3. Enlargement/Neighbourhood, 4. Citizenship and 5. Financial Instruments

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

**MULTINATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT POLICY  
DIALOGUE**

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George Dura, Programme Manager for Democracy, Unit Governance, Democracy, Gender and Human Rights, DG DEVCO, European Commission commented on the Policy Paper saying that the EUs approach towards supporting Democracy has been further consolidated since the Arab Spring. The EU is also strengthening its support to political parties. This is an ongoing process and while the general notion of an increased support towards building a democratic system of political parties is increasingly being applied in EU support, the EU is now also looking into ways to strengthen the outreach of political parties towards citizens, CSOs and media, and more generally how to include political parties in broader democracy support programmes. DG DEVCO is planning to commission a study that will include a mapping of EU support to political parties and of donor practices and approaches in this area. The study will also look into ways to help design more effective political party support programmes through the use of performance indicators that measure output and impact of such programmes. It will complement similar EU studies in the areas of electoral assistance, parliamentary development and media support in an effort towards adopting a results-based approach to democracy support. Already now, support to political parties takes place in the framework of electoral assistance or parliamentary support and can also be financed by the European Instrument for Human Rights and Democracy (EIDHR) via political foundations or CSOs in a multi-partisan fashion. Since 2010 the EU is also implementing a more comprehensive approach to democracy support in nine pilot countries. The results of the activities taking place in the current pilot countries may be developed further in the months to come in additional pilot countries in order to establish a robust methodology. Also, the use of broader democracy indicators such as through the "v-dem, varieties of democracy" study are increasingly taken into account.

Nicolas Rougy, Executive Director of the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD) reflected on the three approaches of support to political parties by saying that it

should not be a question of bi-partisan vs. multiparty approaches but that both are complementary. He further emphasized that for EPDs partner organizations rather provide impartial support (i.e. non-discriminatory and proportional) than neutral support (i.e. not taking sides) to political parties and that this distinction is very relevant. EPD furthermore recommends focusing democracy support primarily on middle income countries before countries with significant instability issues.

The discussion focused on questions such as the nature of democracy and how to deal with different interpretations of democracy in a specific country but also the necessity for the European Union to give a long-term commitment to its partners in third countries. Furthermore, it was discussed how the newly set up European Endowment for Democracy will interplay with the political foundations.

In conclusion, the stakeholders agreed that political foundations will continue to play a crucial role in democracy promotion by implementing EU projects on democracy support and in the area of political party support, considering the increased focus and the increase of funding in these areas

For more information on ENoP, its working groups and ongoing activities, please also visit

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/ENoP/177705779243?fref=ts>