

**Question for written answer E-008030/2015  
to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
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Subject: The European Union and the promotion of democracy in the days following the Arab Spring: export of the neoliberal model

Following the Arab Spring, the European Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations declared: 'Europe was not vocal enough in defending human rights and local democratic forces in the region.'

European initiatives that followed the uprisings should therefore have concentrated on promoting democracy in the region. However, the Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity initiative launched in 2012 seems to promote the liberal principles of competition and the free market rather than democracy and human rights.

Support from the EU has in effect mainly concentrated on neoliberal economic reforms and on the creation of a liberal civil society. These two elements create an environment where a specific democratic model is encouraged: one where the role of the State is reduced to a minimum and where society and the economy are self-regulated.

1. Why do the Commission and the European External Action Service believe that promoting neoliberal principles will be capable of strengthening democracy in countries of the Middle East and North Africa?
2. Why link neoliberalism with democracy when neoliberal policies and the mounting inequality that follows on played a major part in triggering the Arab Spring?