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REPORT

on the EU's new approach to human rights and democracy – evaluating the activities of the European Endowment for Democracy (EED) since its establishment
(2014/2231(INI))

Committee on Foreign Affairs

Rapporteur: Andrzej Grzyb

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on the EU's new approach to human rights and democracy – evaluating the activities of the European Endowment for Democracy (EED) since its establishment (2014/2231(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 2, 6, 8 and 21 of the Treaty on European Union,
- having regard to its recommendation of 29 March 2012 to the Council on the modalities for the possible establishment of a European Endowment for Democracy (hereinafter ‘EED’)¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 7 July 2011 on EU external policies in favour of democratisation²,
- having regard to its resolution of 11 December 2012 on a digital freedom strategy in EU foreign policy³,
- having regard to the EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World in 2013, adopted by the Council on 23 June 2014,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 March 2015 on the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2013 and the European Union’s policy on the matter⁴,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 laying down common rules and procedures for the implementation of the Union’s instruments for financing external action⁵,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 235/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing a financing instrument for democracy and human rights worldwide⁶,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 18 May 2009 on ‘Support to Democratic Governance – Towards an enhanced EU framework’⁷,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 17 November 2009 on Democracy Support

¹ OJ C 257 E, 6.9.2013, p. 13.

² OJ C 33 E, 5.2.2013, p. 165.

³ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0470.

⁴ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0076.

⁵ OJ L 77, 15.3.2014, p. 95.

⁶ OJ L 77, 15.3.2014, p. 85.

⁷ <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%209908%202009%20INIT>

in the EU's External Relations¹,

- having regard to the Council conclusions of 13 December 2010 containing the 2010 progress report and a list of proposed pilot countries²,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 20 June 2011 on the European Neighbourhood Policy³,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 1 December 2011 on the European Endowment for Democracy⁴,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 25 June 2012 on Human Rights and Democracy⁵ and to the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, also adopted by the Council on 25 June 2012⁶,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 31 January 2013 on EU Support for Sustainable Change in Transition Societies⁷,
- having regard to the joint consultation paper by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commission of 4 March 2015 entitled 'Towards a new European Neighbourhood Policy' (JOIN(2015)0006),
- having regard to the 2013 European External Action Service Review⁸,
- having regard to the joint communication by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commission of 25 May 2011 entitled 'A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood: A review of European Neighbourhood Policy' (COM(2011)0303),
- having regard to the letter of support for the establishment of the EED, addressed to the then President of the European Parliament, Jerzy Buzek, and the then Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, and dated 25 November 2011,
- having regard to the decision of the EED Board of Governors of 3 December 2014 to lift the initial geographical limitations of the EED,
- having regard to Rules 52 and 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A8-0177/2015),

¹ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/gena/111250.pdf

² https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/118433.pdf

³ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/122917.pdf

⁴ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/126505.pdf

⁵ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/131171.pdf

⁶ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/131181.pdf

⁷ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/135130.pdf

⁸ http://eeas.europa.eu/library/publications/2013/3/2013_eeas_review_en.pdf

- A. whereas the promotion of and support for democracy, the rule of law and respect for the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms are among the core objectives of the EU's foreign policy, as enshrined in Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union and in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights;
- B. whereas the EU considers that the principle of ownership of democracy-building processes is paramount for fostering a genuine democratic culture;
- C. whereas a large number of Member States have successfully completed a process of democratic transformation of society over recent decades, and have accumulated extensive experience in this field that could be relevant to the activities of the EED and which can and should be used at expert and political level for the EED's work;
- D. whereas the events of the Arab Spring and in the Eastern Neighbourhood have triggered a reshaping of the EU's policy instruments for promoting human rights and democracy support;
- E. whereas in a number of countries where the EED operates, the space for legitimate civil society action and external funding of civil society organisations is shrinking on account of authoritarian regimes using increasingly sophisticated means, including legislation, to restrict the work of NGOs and pro-democratic actors, including EED beneficiaries;
- F. whereas in recent years countries in the EU's neighbourhood have faced a significant number of political, security and economic challenges that have put democratisation efforts and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms under serious pressure;
- G. whereas there is a need to promote the provision of objective and independent information and to strengthen the media environment, including the internet and social media, in countries in which the EED operates, by protecting media freedom and freedom of expression and combating all forms of social and political censorship; whereas there is also a need to support democratisation efforts in those countries, including the consolidation of the rule of law and the fight against corruption;
- H. whereas the establishment of the EED, alongside other EU programmes such as the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) Civil Society Facility, complements the traditional state-centred approach with a much-needed, more balanced, long-term and society-centred perspective focused on direct engagement with local and regional grassroots movements and democratic political actors;
- I. whereas assessing the impact of democracy assistance activities, such as those carried out by the EED, remains an inherently difficult task, in particular owing to the non-linear and long-term nature of political transformation in the countries concerned and to the often confidential nature of the activities involved;
- J. whereas new information technologies and social media have become important instruments in the struggle for democracy and should therefore have a prominent place within the European democracy assistance agenda;

- K. whereas, as at 19 May 2015, the EED has funded 158 initiatives totalling over EUR 4.5 million in the Southern Neighbourhood and over EUR 4.4 million in the Eastern Neighbourhood;
- L. whereas the EED benefits from a unique form of co-financing under which its administrative budget is provided by the Commission, while activities on the ground are financed by contributions from Member States and third countries;

General evaluation

1. Welcomes the EED's track record to date given the current challenging international environment, and considers that it is fulfilling its main objective of 'fostering and encouraging democratisation and deep and sustainable democracy in countries in political transition and in societies struggling for democratisation'¹, including through 'supporting the unsupported' by fighting corruption, promoting dialogue in diversity and non-violence, encouraging social and political participation and protecting activists and journalists who, locally, do their utmost to ensure and expedite the launch of a democratic process, making justice more accessible;
2. Acknowledges with satisfaction that despite its short period of activity and limited funds, and the challenges inherent in assessing the impact of democracy support actions, the EED is fulfilling Parliament's recommendations and delivering added value to existing EU democracy support through fast, flexible, bottom-up and demand-driven funding provided directly to beneficiaries in a financially efficient manner that complements other EU means, thanks to the low administrative burden and simple procedures established for the EED by its Board;
3. Takes the view that, as a democracy support modality, the EED has been helping to diminish both political and personal risk;
4. Stresses its full and continued support for the EU's multipronged efforts to support civil society organisations, social movements and activists around the world; reiterates the importance of avoiding duplication and continuing to ensure the complementarity of EED activities with existing EU external financing instruments, especially the EIDHR and the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), as they all aim to promote democratic principles and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the proximity of the EU;
5. Welcomes the EED's consistent engagement in favour of freedom of expression and association, media freedom, the building and strengthening of the rule of law, the fight against corruption, and social and political pluralism, an engagement which is intended to support the development of democratic regimes in both the Eastern and Southern Neighbourhoods;
6. Is of the opinion that the initiatives taken by the EED have demonstrated its unique

¹ Article 2 of the EED Statutes – available at: <https://www.democracyendowment.eu/about-eed/>

capacity to bridge or fill gaps in cases where it has been impossible to obtain financing from EU Member States or non-EU countries;

7. Calls for the EU and its Member States to develop a holistic approach to supporting political transition and democratisation in third countries, which comprises respect for human rights, the promotion of justice, transparency, accountability, reconciliation, the rule of law and the strengthening of democratic institutions, including legislative bodies;

Funding

8. Calls on the EED founding parties, and especially on all the Member States and the Commission, to contribute, or increase their contributions, to the EED in line with the commitments they have made;
9. Recalls that, as at 26 April 2015, the following countries have pledged and contributed to the EED: Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland, while the remaining 12 Member States have not yet done so;
10. Stresses that, in order to sustain and further develop the effectiveness of the EED, it is vital to ensure long-term, sufficient, stable, transparent and predictable funding;
11. Calls on the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and on the Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations to consider the added value of the EED in the course of the newly launched review of the ENP and to reflect on ways of providing the EED with sustainable funding;
12. Calls on Belgium to at least assess the possibility of returning some or all of the tax revenues received from the EED and its employees, in the form of funding for EED projects; recalls that the EED functions as a private foundation under Belgian law;
13. Welcomes the financial contributions from northern, central European and some southern Member States; calls on the remaining southern Member States, some of which have particularly close historical, economic or cultural ties with the Southern Neighbourhood, to make a particular effort to contribute to the EED through either funding or secondment;
14. Welcomes the financial contributions received by the EED from EU partners such as Switzerland and Canada; encourages other states, especially European Free Trade Association countries, to support the EED;
15. Calls on all EED donors to ensure the full autonomy of the EED Executive Committee in selecting beneficiaries on the basis of the work plan endorsed by the Board of Governors, and calls for an end to earmarking of funds by donors for particular countries or projects;

Human resources capacity

16. Calls for a strengthened capacity for the EED secretariat, to be reflected in adequate human resources enabling it to cope with its new tasks;
17. Encourages Member States to follow up on their expressed interest in seconding national experts to the EED secretariat;

Expansion of the EED's geographical mandate and East-South balance

18. Welcomes the lifting of the initial geographical limitation of the EED, as adopted at the Board of Governors meeting of 3 December 2014;
19. Commends the EED for maintaining geographical balance in its project funding between the Eastern and Southern Neighbourhoods;

Grants and beneficiaries

20. Considers it crucial to ensure sustainable funding for EED recipients in the long run by strengthening complementarity links with other bilateral donors and with European external financing instruments, in particular the EIDHR, which – where appropriate – could take over medium-term financial support for ‘mature’ EED beneficiaries, and to this end:
 - (a) invites the EED and the Commission to set up a contact group with the goal of identifying the best way for EED beneficiaries to transition to EIDHR financial support; and
 - (b) calls on the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) to come forward with specific proposals for mechanisms for programming interface and cooperation with the EED, so as to ensure coherence and sustainability in the longer term;
21. Calls on the EED to further actively engage in countries where the space for external support for civil society is severely hampered or where state funding is discriminatory and awarded solely to certain organisations or civil societies; supports the EED's efforts to explore innovative means for supporting agents for change in particularly difficult political environments;
22. Strongly urges the Board to further continue to support democratic political activists and to provide funding for inclusive political processes; takes the view that the EED should engage with and support the emergence and consolidation of political parties with a clear commitment to democratic principles, in partnership with existing political foundations whenever possible;
23. Welcomes the EED Guidelines for Monitoring and Evaluation; stresses, however, that these implementing guidelines should be proportionate to the EED's size and human resources capacity;
24. Encourages the EED to continue to respond to new technologies by integrating technology support into its grants;

25. Welcomes the EED grants offered to Ukrainian actors, which set a good example of swift support for political and civic activists who then become democratically elected representatives; welcomes the EED support offered to all pro-democracy activists engaged in the EU's neighbourhood, which is intended to sustain the development of consolidated democratic regimes;
26. Welcomes the EED grants offered to activists in some of the Southern Neighbourhood countries, since they demonstrate the added value of EED pro-democracy work in particularly hostile environments;
27. Strongly encourages the EED to place stronger emphasis on groups suffering from social exclusion or political marginalisation, by supporting, inter alia, women's movements aimed at furthering women's rights and increasing their participation in public life, ethnic and linguistic minorities, LGBTI human rights activists, persecuted religious minorities and civic activists linked to religious communities, together with grassroots movements, vulnerable or emerging political movements, trade unions, bloggers and new media activists;
28. Calls on the EED to develop, if and when relevant, cooperation with civic activist groups linked to religious communities, including persecuted religious minorities; recalls that the church has played a crucial role in opposing communist regimes and in the democratic transformation processes in central and eastern Europe;
29. Encourages the EED to step up its support for emerging young leaders and newly elected women, youth or minority representatives in countries in political transition;
30. Calls on the Member States to continue to provide financial assistance to Russian civil society and media through the EED; points out that recent developments such as the restrictions imposed on civil society organisations, the repression of the political opposition and aggressive targeted misinformation campaigns by state-controlled media seem to serve the purpose of deliberately building breeding grounds for an extremely nationalistic political climate marked by anti-democratic rhetoric, repression and hate speech;

Cooperation between Parliament and the EED

31. Welcomes the presentation of the EED's first annual report to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, in accordance with Article 8(4) of the EED Statutes; stresses the importance of this exercise taking place on an annual basis, and emphasises that it is a good opportunity to take stock and develop new synergies;
32. Calls for effective links between the EED, the Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group (DEG) and the relevant parliamentary committees and standing delegations; encourages its Members to support the EED and highlight its work in relevant interventions and during visits to third countries by European Parliament delegations, including meetings with beneficiaries;
33. Calls for the development of further cooperation between the EED, its beneficiaries and the Sakharov Prize Network;

34. Invites the EED to further develop its cooperation with Parliament's Young Leaders Forum;

Policy coherence and coordination

35. Encourages both the Member States and the EU institutions to ensure genuine internal and external coherence as regards democracy efforts and to recognise the EED's role in this respect;
36. Encourages EU Delegations and Member State diplomatic missions in the countries where the EED is active to bring potential beneficiaries to the EED's attention and to inform potential beneficiaries about the EED; encourages EED staff, in turn, to liaise closely with relevant EU and Member State diplomatic staff in relation to potential beneficiaries which cannot be supported by the EED, showing mutual respect for the sensitivity of information and the security of all parties;
37. Urges EU Delegations and Member State diplomatic representations to cooperate in a structured manner in order to facilitate the visa application process for EED grantees who are invited to the European Union;
38. Welcomes the efforts of the EEAS and the Commission to disseminate information regarding the EED among their staff, in particular in EU Delegations;
39. Calls for a triennial meeting of the EED Board of Governors at ministerial level in order to reflect on the EU's democracy support policy and on the EED's future strategic priorities;

Cooperation with other democracy support actors

40. Calls on the EED to continue to cooperate with European-based organisations such as the Council of Europe, IDEA (the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance) and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, in line with the EED's Statutes;
41. Calls on the EED to foster cooperation with key actors and international, regional and national organisations active in the field of democracy assistance which are either based in the EU or work in the countries where the EED operates;
42. Encourages the EED to identify possible avenues for cooperation with international civil society organisations, including the Eastern Partnership's Civil Society Forum and the Anna Lindh Foundation;

Further recommendations

43. Calls on the EED to continue to develop new innovative means and instruments for democracy assistance, including for political actors or activists, and to share best practices in order to adjust to the growing climate of restriction in a number of countries with authoritarian regimes, with particular regard to new media and grassroots initiatives in these countries; underlines the importance, in this context, of developing

country-specific strategies;

44. Calls, in the name of its democratic spirit, for it to be guaranteed that the composition of the EED Board of Governors fully represents all its political groups, on the basis of the D'Hondt system, ensuring at least one seat for each political group;
45. Welcomes the public outreach on the EED's achievements so far, and considers that further underlining the uniqueness and added value of the EED and communicating about the subject widely and on a regular basis would increase the EED's fundraising capacity;

46. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European External Action Service, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, and the European Endowment for Democracy.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	26.5.2015
Result of final vote	+: 53 -: 6 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Lars Adaktusson, Petras Auštrevičius, Amjad Bashir, Goffredo Maria Bettini, Mario Borghezio, Elmar Brok, Klaus Buchner, James Carver, Fabio Massimo Castaldo, Javier Couso Permuy, Mark Demesmaeker, Georgios Epitideios, Eugen Freund, Michael Gahler, Richard Howitt, Sandra Kalniete, Tunne Kelam, Afzal Khan, Janusz Korwin-Mikke, Andrey Kovatchev, Eduard Kukan, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Ryszard Antoni Legutko, Arne Lietz, Barbara Lochbihler, Sabine Lösing, David McAllister, Francisco José Millán Mon, Javier Nart, Pier Antonio Panzeri, Demetris Papadakis, Vincent Peillon, Alojz Peterle, Tonino Picula, Andrej Plenković, Cristian Dan Preda, Jozo Radoš, Sofia Sakorafa, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, Alyn Smith, Jaromír Štětina, Charles Tannock, Eleni Theoharous, László Tőkés, Ivo Vajgl, Boris Zala
Substitutes present for the final vote	Bodil Ceballos, Ignazio Corrao, Andrzej Grzyb, Marek Jurek, Javi López, Antonio López-Istúriz White, Fernando Maura Barandiarán, Norbert Neuser, Godelieve Quisthoudt-Rowohl, Marietje Schaake, György Schöpflin, István Ujhelyi
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Maria Grapini, Josef Weidenholzer