

Report
« The Community of Democracies and the United Nations Democracy Caucus – a roundtable discussion on international efforts for democracy and human rights promotion »
Brussels, Wednesday, 20 April 2005 13H00-15H30
European Parliament, Room A1H-1



Summary:

A panel of experts from governments leading the Community of Democracies process, civil society organizations and the European Parliament addressed the question of how democratic states and civil society can better work together to strengthen collaboration for democracy and human rights promotion through the Community of Democracies (CD) and the United Nations Democracy Caucus (UNDC). The meeting was held the week before the III Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies (CD) chaired by Chile to provide an opportunity to discuss, from a European perspective, the strategy and the challenges faced by the CD and the UNDC and what actions could be taken. The discussion was centered around the latest developments within the CD and the UNDC, in particular the role that European Members of the CD and UNDC can play in these initiatives.

Among the speakers featured were Alberto van Klaveren, Ambassador of Chile to the European Union; David French, Chief Executive of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy; Prof. Bronislaw Geremek, Member of the European Parliament (MEP) from the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats; and Ted Piccone, Executive Director of the Democracy Coalition Project. Respondents to speakers were: Mr. Michel Rocard, MEP from the

Socialist Party; Mr. Charles Tannock, MEP from the European People's Party; Mr. Rolf Timans, Head of Human Rights and Democratisation Unit of the External Relations Commission; Mr. Andre Wilkens, Director of the Brussels Office of the Open Society Institute; and Antoine Madelin, Representative of the International Federation for Human Rights.

Report:

Claudia Caldeirinha, Director of the Democracy Coalition Project's Brussels office, welcomed participants emphasizing the collaboration of the Embassy of Chile and of the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe of the European Parliament for this meeting.

David French opened the roundtable discussion by pointing to the Santiago Ministerial meeting as a "defining moment" for the Community of Democracies. He proposed to participants that Europe should play a critical role in the Community of Democracies, particularly in the enforcement of membership criteria. The European Union has made democracy and human rights central to their own criteria for membership and have rewarded those countries which have demonstrated respect for democracy and human rights. The experience of the European countries in this regard can contribute greatly to the maturation of the Community of Democracies as a membership club that behaves like a club. He recommended that the European Union, given its own character as a coherent regional community of democracies, use its political voice within the CD for this purpose. He also suggested the EU consider a financial contribution, perhaps to the creation of a secretariat, to demonstrate its support.

Ambassador van Klaveren recalled that the Community of Democracies was established as a flexible coalition of democratic governments. Under the leadership of Professor Geremek and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, a Convening Group of now ten states was formed and convened its first ministerial meeting in Warsaw in 2000. At that time, the Warsaw Declaration was approved by over 100 governments as a statement of democratic principles and a commitment to cooperate for democracy promotion activities around the world. Under Korea's leadership, a second meeting was held in 2002 in Seoul, where governments adopted a Plan of Action. Citing Secretary General Kofi Annan's proposal for a United Nations democracy fund and for the reform of UN human rights institutions, van Klaveren feels that it is evident there is currently a clear interest for democracy promotion world-wide.

Ambassador van Klaveren highlighted the **likely outcomes of the III Ministerial Meeting:**

- 1) greater dialogue between the ministerial process and civil society;
- 2) reaffirmation of the inseparable relationship between democratic governance and development;
- 3) support for greater regional and inter-regional co-operation for democracy consolidation and advancement, by, inter alia, strengthening democracy promotion through regional organisations;
- 4) a stronger consensus to work as a Democracy Caucus within the United Nations.



Ambassador Alberto van Klaveren, Prof. Bronislaw Geremek, David French, Ted Piccone

Professor Geremek commended Chile's lead in consolidating the work of the Community of Democracies in the last few years. He recalled the achievement of the Warsaw Declaration, which for the first time set out criteria defining democracy – in principle and in practice. The Warsaw Declaration also led to the creation of the United Nation Democracy Caucus in October 2000 – a forum in which democratic countries can come together to collaborate on UN resolutions and actions related to democracy and human rights. He also pointed out that the effects of the Warsaw Declaration are visible in the latest report of Secretary General Kofi Annan, entitled *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All*.

Stating that “democracy is above all a constant challenge”, Professor Geremek stressed that the timing was perfect for the European Union to discuss the future of democracy since it was in the middle of the process of the ratification of the European Constitution. In the EU, democracy has the particular meaning of respect of minorities, of human beings, of the economically and politically weak. The new challenge faced by the European Union is to define which role it has to play in the promotion of democracy worldwide.

Ted Piccone laid out the work of the Non Governmental Process of the Community of Democracies. Starting in early 2004, democracy and human rights organizations have sought to achieve effective participation of civil society in the III Ministerial Meeting and to promote the creation of a non-governmental counterpart of the Community of Democracies.

Workshops organised in Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America and North America had the purpose of defining the major democratic deficits in each region and to prepare a series of recommendations to submit to governments. A final meeting of the Community of Democracies Santiago NGO Process was held 3-4 March 2005 during which the Executive Secretariat, co-ordinated by the Chilean NGO Participa, produced a final report that was presented to the members of the Convening Group. The document is composed of global proposals as well as specific recommendations related to the conclusions of the regional workshops and of the final NGO meeting.

Moreover, Piccone recalled the opportunity governments and civil society currently have to support the advancement of democracy. The Democracy Coalition Project has published a series of reports demonstrating the solidarity among non democratic countries to block country specific resolutions and to achieve no-action motions at the UN Commission of Human Rights and UN General Assembly. The CD represents an opportunity to counteract that tendency.

Stressing that the lack of resources has handicapped the non-governmental process, Piccone listed a series of actions the non-governmental process has undertaken to shape the CD:

monitoring the process, holding governments accountable to the invitation criteria agreed to in Seoul; lobbying the Community of Democracies members to support profound UN CHR reform; urging the Convening Group to reach agreements on country specific resolutions to promote in unison at UN bodies.

Mr. Rocard underlined that he believed in promoting democracy. However, Mr. Rocard identified the main problem as how to spread democracy where it has not taken root.. According to him, the Warsaw Declaration criteria could create a barrier between the democratic countries and the non democratic countries – the democratic countries seemingly forming an elite club and excluding the non-democratic countries. He considers the list of criteria as too divorced from economic and social criteria and local realities. Moreover, he stressed the importance of having criteria measurable in time. Mr. Rocard also expressed concerns about a certain emphasis on specific countries. He also raised the need to understand and respect the countries before helping them in their democratic efforts.

Mr Tannock stated that the process of enlargement of the European Union had been a positive process to promote democracy in the Eastern European countries. Regretting the lack of support from the European Council to the Community of Democracies, he proposed to send a letter to the European Council in order to stress the importance of endorsing the initiative. He also encouraged EU budgetary support for CD activities and welcomed the development of the UN Democracy Caucus. On the other hand, he raised questions about the link between poverty and democracy and the risk of minorities that do not tolerate democratic pluralism being elected to office.

Other respondents raised some suggestions and questions regarding the utility and the credibility of the Community of Democracies:

Recognising the inter-relatedness between democracy and human rights, **Mr. Timans** expressed some criticism concerning the criteria for membership to the CD. He considered that some countries should not be members judging by their non-democratic records. Moreover, since there are a certain number of institutions in Europe promoting democracy – such as the Council of Europe or the OSCE, he stated that there was no need for an additional regional institution in Europe. Mr. Timans also shared a list of democracy promotion activities undertaken by the European Union (support to local civil society, electoral observation, support to reform in Africa Caribbean and Pacific countries).



Ambassador Maria de Lourdes Dieck, Ambassador Jose Amorim Dias, Andre Wilkens, Rolf Timans

Mr Wilkens denounced the limited impact of the EU in the other regions of the world. He mentioned that the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) was bureaucratic and slow, and that there was no guarantee for its survival in the period 2007-2013. Without a horizontal instrument for the promotion of human rights, the European Commission policy is weak.

Mr. Madelin expressed concerns about the credibility of the CD as a group. In order to cope with this challenge, Mr. Madelin suggested that the CD should apply respect to human rights to itself, promote the role of human rights defenders in democracies, support a sustainable human rights system by fighting against impunity and be open to an independent monitoring mechanism. He also suggested the necessity to give the same juridical standing to both economic, social and cultural rights and civil and political rights.

For **Ambassaodor Dieck**, of Mexico (member of CD Convening Group), democracy and human rights are completely interrelated, “democracy is a human right”. In Mexico, democracy is not considered as an end in itself, but as a means to improving the wellbeing of the population. She stated that poverty is also an important issue to address in order to achieve a better democracy.

Following enriching remarks by Marco Perduca (Transnational Radical Party), Irune Aguirrezabal (CICC), Secretary Faro Ramos (Portuguese Mission to the EU), and Marieke van Doorn (NIMD), Ambassador van Klaveren made a few **concluding remarks**:

- 1) The Community of Democracy is a PROCESS, which is going in the right direction;
- 2) As far as the criteria are concerned, it is acknowledged that it is very difficult to make decisions and to define the credentials for participants to the process, bearing in mind that even the democratic countries do not fulfil all the credentials;
- 3) If there is a will to expand democracy, there is a need to be more inclusive;
- 4) There is no doubt about the interrelation between democracy and human rights. The Community of Democracies has simply chosen to put the emphasis on democracy.

List of participants

<i>Alberto</i>	<i>van Klaveren</i>	Chilean Mission to the EU	Ambassador
<i>Andre</i>	<i>Wilkens</i>	Open Society Institute	Director
<i>André</i>	<i>Brie</i>	European Parliament	Member of the European Parliament
<i>Antoine</i>	<i>Madelin</i>	Fédération Internationale des Droits de l’Homme	Permanent Representative to the EU
<i>Artur</i>	<i>Harazim</i>	Polish Mission to EU	Senior Diplomat
<i>Aurélie</i>	<i>Royet-Gounin</i>	French Mission to the EU	Human Rights Adviser
<i>Bernd</i>	<i>Halling</i>	International IDEA	Senior Programme Officer
<i>Bronislaw</i>	<i>Geremek</i>	European Parliament	Member of the European Parliament
<i>Carlos</i>	<i>Buhigas Schubert</i>	European Policy Center	Policy Analyst

<i>Charles</i>	<i>Tannock</i>	European Parliament	Member of the European Parliament
<i>Claudia</i>	<i>Caldeirinha</i>	Democracy Coalition Project	Regional Director for Europe
<i>Corinna</i>	<i>Horst</i>	GMF Transatlantic Center	Program Officer
<i>David</i>	<i>French</i>	Westminster Foundation for Democracy	Chief Executive
<i>Emilie</i>	<i>Venner</i>	Fédération Internationale des Droits de l'Homme	
<i>Ernst</i>	<i>Stetter</i>	Friedrich Ebert Foundation	Director
<i>Gabriele</i>	<i>Juen</i>	Amnesty International	Executive Officer CFSP/External Relations
<i>Irune</i>	<i>Aguirrezabal</i>	CICC	Director of Brussels Office
<i>Jane</i>	<i>Backhurst</i>	World Vision EU liaison office	Director
<i>Javier</i>	<i>Fernández</i>	European Parliament	Committee on Foreign Affairs Secretariat
<i>Jennifer</i>	<i>Forrest</i>	European Parliament	Assistant to MEP Edward McMillan-Scott
<i>Jorge</i>	<i>Tagle</i>	Chilean Mission to the EU	Senior Diplomat
<i>Jose</i>	<i>Amorim</i>	East Timor Mission to the EU	Ambassador
<i>Kim</i>	<i>Wuyts</i>	Democracy Coalition Project	Policy Assistant
<i>Razvan Stefan</i>	<i>Rab</i>	Permanent Representation of the Romania to the EU	First Secretary
<i>Luís</i>	<i>Faro Ramos</i>	Permanent Representation of Portugal to the EU	Conseiller d'Ambassade
<i>Marc</i>	<i>Jurgens</i>	Permanent Representation of South Africa to the EU	First Secretary
<i>Marco</i>	<i>Perduca</i>	Transnational Radical Party	Representative to the United Nations
<i>Maria</i>	<i>Cavarretta</i>	Democracy Coalition Project	Policy Assistant
<i>Maria de Lourdes</i>	<i>Dieck</i>	Permanent Representation of Mexico to the EU	Ambassador
<i>Marie-Dominique</i>	<i>Hery Charleston</i>	Fédération Internationale des Droits de l'Homme	

<i>Marieke</i>	<i>van Doorn</i>	The Netherlands Institute of Multiparty Democracies	Policy Officer International Relations
<i>Martin</i>	<i>Hermges</i>	Permanent Representation of Austria to the EU	Conseiller
<i>Michel</i>	<i>Rocard</i>	European Parliament	Member of the European Parliament
<i>Natalie</i>	<i>Monteza</i>	Democracy Coalition Project	Policy Officer
<i>Olivier</i>	<i>Consolo</i>	CONCORD	Director
<i>Param</i>	<i>Jit Mann</i>	Indian Embassy	Counsellor (EP)
<i>Peter</i>	<i>Weilemann</i>	Konrad Adenauer Stiftung	Director
<i>Pfeiffer</i>	<i>Alexa</i>	Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung	
<i>Radomir</i>	<i>Jansky</i>	European Parliament	Assistant of MEP Jana Hybaskova
<i>Rolf</i>	<i>Timans</i>	Head of Unit - European Commission	Head Of Unit
<i>Ryan</i>	<i>Van Wijk</i>	German Marshall Found	Administrative Manager
<i>Stephan</i>	<i>Thalhofer</i>	Friedrich Ebert Foundation	Referent
<i>Tanya</i>	<i>Cox</i>	Human Rights Watch	Advocacy Officer
<i>Theodore</i>	<i>Piccone</i>	Democracy Coalition Project	Executive Director