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

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The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted an own-initiative report by Andrzej GRZYB (EPP, PL) on the EU's new approach to human rights and democracy – evaluating the activities of the European Endowment for Democracy (EED) since its establishment.

Recalling that 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, Members welcomed the EED's track record to date and considered that it is fulfilling its main objective of 'fostering and encouraging democratisation and deep and sustainable democracy in countries in political transition.

**General evaluation**: Members welcomed the EED's consistent engagement in favour of freedom of expression and association, the strengthening of the rule of law, the fight against corruption, and social and political pluralism to support the development of democratic regimes in both the Eastern and Southern Neighbourhoods. The initiatives taken by the EED have demonstrated its unique capacity to bridge or fill gaps in cases where it has been impossible to obtain financing from EU Member States or non-EU countries.

**Financing**: Members called 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. 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. They stressed 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.

Members welcomed the financial contributions received by the EED from EU partners such as Switzerland and Canada.

Members also called for **an end to earmarking of funds** by donors for particular countries or project

**Grants and beneficiaries**: whilst welcoming the lifting of the initial geographical limitation of the EED, Members considered 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.

To this end, Members invited 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;

- come forward with specific proposals for mechanisms for programming interface and cooperation with the EED (in cooperation with the European External Action Service (EEAS).

Further, they called on the EED to further actively engage in countries where the space for external support for civil society is severely hampered.

They welcomed the EED grants offered to Ukrainian actors and the support offered to all pro-democracy activists engaged in the EU's neighbourhood.

Members encouraged the EED to place stronger emphasis on groups suffering from social exclusion or political marginalisation (e.g. women's movements LGBTI human rights activists, persecuted religious minorities and civic activists).

**Cooperation with the European Parliament**: Members called for effective links between the EED, the Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group (DEG) and the relevant parliamentary committees. They called for the development of further cooperation between the EED, its beneficiaries and the Sakharov Prize Network.

Whilst calling for enhanced policy coherence of actions financed by the EED, Members called for EED to continue to develop new innovative means and instruments for democracy assistance, with particular regard to new media and grassroots initiatives in these countries.

Lastly, Members considered 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.