Development cooperation: democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms

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The Committee adopted a draft recommendation for second reading (cooperation procedure), which lays down the requirements for consolidating democracy and the rule of law in the implementation of development cooperation. The recommendation, which was prepared by José Manuel TORRES COUTO (PES, P), was approved without amendments. The Committee stresses the need for defending pluralism both at political level and in the civil society by strengthening NGOs, promoting independent and responsible media, as well as endorsing respect of freedom of association and assembly. The EU should support these aims by financing regional and international organisations, NGOs and other authorities working in the development field that are committed to promoting human rights and democratic principles in a non-discriminatory manner. The Committee suggests that 260 million euros should be reserved for this purpose during the period 1999-2004.