Developing and consolidating democracy and the rule of law, respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms: requirements for the implementation of development cooperation operations

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PURPOSE : to promote respect for Human Rights and democracy in the Mediterranean. CONTENT : this Communication, to be presented to the EU Mediterranean partners at the Euro-Med Ministerial Conference of May 26-27 in Crete, sets out working guidelines to promote Human Rights and fundamental freedoms in co-operation with the Mediterranean partners. The Communication fits within the Action Plan agreed by all participants at the Valencia Euro-Med Ministerial meeting on 22-23 April 2002, in which the parties committed to reinforce efforts in this vital area. The Communication is also consistent with the recently laid out new EU neighbourhood policy ("Wider Europe" - refer to INI/2003 /2018). The Communication outlines ways to maximise the effectiveness of the instruments at the disposal of the EU and its Mediterranean partners with a view to the implementation of their common goal of promoting and protecting universal human rights and fundamental freedoms. It proposes ten concrete recommendations to improve the dialogue between the EU and its Mediterranean partners, as well as EU financial co-operation on Human Rights issues. - a deeper and more operational focus for political dialogue on Human Rights and democratisation at all levels with MEDA partners; - upgrading of shared knowledge and expertise on Human Rights and democratisation issues in the region; - better coordination between Commission Delegations and Member States' Embassies on Human Rights and democratisation issues and related cooperation; - regular contacts between Commission Delegations and civil society, in close coordination with EU Member States' Embassies; - the development of MEDA National Action Plans on Human Rights and democracy with those partners willing to engage in such an exercise; - the establishment of Regional Action Plans on Human Rights and democracy issues with MEDA partners willing to develop further cooperation on concrete issues; - Increased attention to Human Rights and democratisation issues in the Commission's Country Strategy Papers and greater account taken of progress made in these areas in the National Indicative Programmes, including through a special additional facility; - improved focus on Human Rights and democratisation issues in the Commission's Regional Strategy and Regional Indicative Programme; - enhanced complementarity between the MEDA programme and the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights; - enhanced efforts at all levels in the area of improvement of electoral frameworks. Their implementation will be enhanced by three levels of complementarity between: 1) the political dialogue and financial assistance; 2) the MEDA programme and assistance under the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDH); 3) the national and regional dimensions.