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

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OBJECTIVE: to lay down a legal basis for the Community's actions in the field of human rights. CONTENT: The proposal for a regulation clarifies the type of support offered by the Community in this field: - promoting economic, social and cultural rights, - supporting the process of democratisation (including free and regular elections), - promoting the rule of law (independence of the judiciary, institutional reforms), - support for local, national, regional and international institutions defending human rights and the establishment of an international criminal court, - promoting civil society, - promoting the freedom of the press, - supporting education on human rights, - promoting equal rights, - promoting sound public management and the fight against corruption, - supporting the prevention of conflicts and respect for humanitarian law, - supporting the reintegration of demobilised troops, - promoting the rights of children, migrants, displaced persons, etcetera and combating the trafficking of human beings, - protecting ethnic, religious and other minorities, - protecting native populations (their rights and cultures). The actions would be implemented by the Commission at the request of the partners or on its own initiative, consistent with and complementary to the measures taken by the Member States and international organisations in this field. The Commission would be responsible for the management and implementation of the actions undertaken. When taking certain financial decisions, it would be assisted by an advisory committee. Finally, provision was made for the Commission to take emergency measures in cases of urgent and unforeseeable need arising from the sudden suspension of the democratic process or the emergence of a state of crisis. In this case, it would take its decision alone and inform the Member States of it immediately. A regular assessment of the actions carried out was also provided for as well as the presentation of an annual report on the operations financed. This report should be submitted to the European Parliament and the Council.