Summary
The creation of a common agenda on support for democracy and democratisation on which interested actors in Europe could unite and push for policy changes was the focus of the conference. Options were proposed for a common agenda to encourage greater political engagement on democracy support both at the European Union (EU) level, and within EU Member States (MS), in 2009, the year of the Czech and Swedish EU Presidencies. The ideas included; an initial jargon-free working paper defining the main principles and key features of a European approach to supporting democracy and democratisation; agreement on terms, improved sharing of information on better practice and evaluation through a knowledge network. This network could be either a formal structure or an informal mechanism of co-operation and coalition building. To build a coalition requires great sensitivity to the variety of different European perspectives. Diversity is one of the strengths of the European approach; achieving co-operation while maintaining the positive aspects of diversity is a delicate balance.
The European approach – what makes it different?
The conference focussed on democracy support, as an element of European foreign policy. It has a rather low profile in the EU, unlike the United States’ democracy promotion agenda. Compared to the US approach, many European actors working on support for democracy emphasize the need for a long-term perspective, and for an approach that grows from within, and is linked with development goals such as the Millennium Development Goals. Development co-operation ministries in MS, and at European level, the European Commission - DG Development (DG DEV) and Europe Aid - are most often engaged in democracy support in an indirect, but long term way, primarily through the ‘good governance’ agenda. One of the most obvious features of the European approach that makes it different from the approaches of US, and Canada, and Japan, is the combination of MS and EU policies and strategies. This duality of MS and EU as actors has both positive and negative consequences for the European approach. The positive features include its variety and plurality. The drawbacks are that it is less coherent, less consistent, rather bureaucratic, and it is sometimes difficult to for recipients to understand.

Towards a shared agenda
There are already a number of areas of shared understanding between many European democracy support actors and EU Member States, as already summarised in the ‘Food for Thought’ paper prepared for the EU Council’s Political and Security Committee (PSC) debate in 2006.

Converging agendas on development and democracy
The democracy and development agendas are converging, especially over fragile states and post-conflict countries. In the past, some have seen democracy as an end in itself and have downplayed the importance of the state to manage its affairs and deliver services. Others have played up the building up of capacity and have downplayed the politics. Both approaches are necessary, as the UK Department for International Development (DFID) has argued. State building is

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increasingly being brought into the democracy agenda and politics is being introduced to the development agenda.

However, in the opinion of some, there is also a risk of diverging agendas. In fragile and post conflict states, the key issues are democracy and state institution building, which is not the necessarily the same as ‘development’. In these countries, three issues need to be distinguished: state and nation building, democratisation, and socio-economic development. The democracy dimension can only be strengthened in these countries when democracy is put in a wider context of ‘stateness’, development, and human rights.

The role of democracy in development has long been recognised in the German approach. The German Stiftungen, by far the largest of the European political foundations, are working with an explicitly long-term approach. The Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) has advocated that EU develops a country-specific “tailored differentiated, multifaceted and coherent co-operation strategy on assistance in democracy development” in each country. Such a “Democracy Promotion Strategy Plan” (DPSP), would work, it is argued, with a similar mechanism as Poverty Reduction Strategy Plans (PRSP). This idea, as KAS acknowledges in its recent rationale paper, requires more discussion. The underlying principle that “the right to development cannot in any case be achieved without the democratic rule of law,” was spelled out in 2005 in the position paper of the Federal Ministry of Economic Co-operation and Development (BMZ), “Promoting democracy in German development policy”. The paper concluded: “This is why promoting democracy is a goal in its own right for German development policy.”

Policy coherence is the cornerstone of Sweden’s policy for global development. There is a growing understanding that democracy is a central component of and contributes to sustainable human development. However, development and poverty reduction cannot be limited to development cooperation alone. All policy

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2 Rationale paper for workshop by the European Office of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, June 5/6, 2007, Brussels
areas must join hands to achieve it. Two further fundamental principles guide the policy, namely: the rights perspective and the perspective of poor people on development. This means, first, that all decisions and measures must be taken with respect for universally accepted human rights and democratic principles, including equality between women and men, girls and boys – and second, that the interests and priorities of poor individuals themselves should be the point of departure for these decisions and measures. The political dimension of international development cooperation should be guided by this notion, which doubles as a moral obligation. Sweden’s approach to democracy building is in this sense more principled than ideological. The Swedish government has committed itself to continue, and even intensify, her efforts in the area of democracy promotion and has appointed a special Ambassador for Democracy Promotion to that end. The Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) has been developing its rights-based approach for a decade, while also addressing democratic governance.

Increasingly (DFID is articulating its own democratic politics agenda in its paper on Governance, Development and Democratic Politics. While accepting that “democratic politics is not a prerequisite for economic growth and poverty reduction in the short term,” DFID’s Secretary of State, Hilary Benn states; “we believe that democratic politics is the only way to achieve lasting change”. The paper concludes; “It is not easy to promote good governance. Changes in governance can take decades to achieve, because different groups in society must first negotiate decisions on how things are done, and work out new compromises for the way in which power is shared and resources are allocated”.

Both DFID and Sida are agreed that power relationships have to be well understood. There is still an ongoing debate on how explicit democracy support should be. What is clear that in the case of Sida and DFID; both are making politics explicit in their work; but they are doing it in different ways. In the case of non-German political foundations in Europe; while some of their activities, for

4 DFID: “Governance, Development and Democratic Politics” 21 May 2007
example, in the Middle East are explicitly short-term, their work in Africa is longer-term in focus, and is also linked to the development agenda.

The areas of shared agreement in Europe also include; the need for long term commitment, the realisation of the primacy of local, rather than international actors in shaping democracies, with approaches tailored to each country, accompanied by visible improvements in the welfare of the people locally. It is also generally agreed that democratisation is an extremely complex process, and that external initiatives to support democracy require better co-ordinated policies, continuing analysis and rigorous evaluation to identify and demonstrate the policies that can be effective.

In addition to its development commitments, the EU is also much engaged in the promotion of human rights and in ‘crisis management’ and in peace building. These all have strong political dimensions, setting the scenes for more or less successful democratisation efforts, though these tend to be under-stated, or dealt with indirectly, or under other headings such as security sector reform.

Is there now the need for the explicit articulation of the commonalities in the approaches taken by European actors, which may be characterised by their long-term goals?

**Winning a higher-level political profile for democracy support**

The achievement of a higher-level profile for European democracy support would require greater political engagement at the EU level and within the MS. At the EU level, the necessary leadership can probably only come from the Presidency, ideally two successive EU Presidencies, for example the two EU Presidencies in 2009; the Czech Republic and Sweden. Sweden also hosts International IDEA, which was established as an intergovernmental organisation to better understand and support the political dimension of development. Both Sweden and the Czech Republic have cross-party backing for the democracy support issue. Strengthening the place of democracy on the EU development agenda will be a priority for Sweden in the years leading up to and beyond the Swedish
presidency of the EU in 2009\textsuperscript{5}. The two EU Presidencies could also use the opportunity of the 20-year anniversary in 2009 of the fall of the Berlin Wall, and also of the Velvet Revolution, to launch a new EU initiative. A lot of strategic and tactical pre-planning and work towards a shared agenda would be required to reach this objective.

**2009: Year of decision?**

2009 will be a busy year for both EU Presidencies, depending to a large extent on the ongoing deliberations on resolving the EU Constitution issue. There could be a window of opportunity for the democracy support agenda were the EU’s new “Common External Service” to be created by 2009. This would require EU leaders to agree on a “mini treaty” which would allow the EU’s internal reforms to be carried forward by 2009, without referenda. This is speculation, but it has become a more realistic with the election of President Sarkozy, but is by no means certain.

The opportunity for the democracy support agenda would arise, as a EU Foreign Minister, who would be also a Vice President of the Commission, would head the “Common External Service”. In the resulting major re-organisation of the external relations of the Commission and Council, there would be a real opportunity to rethink the historic divisions between foreign policy and development. 2009 will also see a newly elected European Parliament and a new European Commission, and also a new transatlantic context with the next US Administration will be in place. The democracy support constituency therefore needs to latch onto the intensified thinking and planning about the future EU foreign policy following the June 2007 European Council. However, in getting its act together, it is clear that the EU should not be too “euro centric”, but it should also recognize and build-on the diversity of democratic experiences throughout the world.

\textsuperscript{5}This was spelled out in a speech by Gunilla Carlsson Swedish Minister for International Development at the Stockholm conference on “Cooperation on the Challenges to Democracy Building”, 28 May 2007.
How could the democracy support community in Europe to close ranks and push for much greater cross-fertilisation between the democracy, trade and security agendas?

**Addressing the challenges**

A number of challenges have to be addressed, not least the apparent loss of confidence among some democracy support actors. This loss may be inevitable given the great range of policy challenges. There are a number of clear contradictions between development policy, including democracy support, and the security and trade agendas. The underlying international challenges include the apparent failure of US-led Iraq/Greater Middle East democracy policies, and also the complex political dynamics of interventions, including Afghanistan, and the resolution of Kosovo’s status. At the same time, Russia’s growing assertiveness and the increasingly active role of the Chinese in trade and development assistance, present major new challenges. High oil prices also embolden authoritarian regimes. There are also serious ‘internal’ challenges too; security (in the wider Europe), energy, trade and agricultural interests. These have, or will have, an increasingly important effect on European democracy concerns, for example, the case of German and Russian trade relations. A second case is the EU and Central Asia dialogue, and the trade-off between energy and human rights. The serious internal challenges to the European democracy support, both organizationally and in terms of interests, have to be acknowledged. The “roll-back” of the democracy agenda, and the lack of a clear agreed conceptual framework for EU democracy support, has led to uncertainty within the EU and many Member States about how the democracy support agendas fit with the post 9/11 focus on security.

**Next Steps**

To address these challenges, one suggestion from the conference is the drafting of a short jargon-free working paper which could identify the features and principles of what was described as a unique European brand: ‘developmental democracy’. It would have to answer whether developmental democracy is principally or primarily socio-economic, or is it political too, and how does political development relate to democratisation and democracy? The paper could
address these issues, and outline the main principles and key features. The paper should also work though the inter-relationships between democracy, rule of law, human rights and governance – all are part of the picture and reinforce one another, at least in theory. Given the lack of clarity in key texts such as the 2005 European Consensus on Development, it could also suggest some common language and working definitions of the varied terms which include “democratisation”, “democracy”, “democratic governance”, “democracy assistance”, “democracy support” or “support to democracy,” and “democratic politics”.

Despite the attention which democracy support has acquired in recent years, there is no universally accepted definition of democracy, and no equivalent to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which can act as a benchmark for work in this field. There are some definitions already available to draw on. IDEA in its State of Democracy methodology proposals defines it as “political equality and popular control”\(^6\). The Hague Conference, convened by NIMD in July 2004, and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung workshop in June 2007, both had definitions, which can be drawn upon\(^7\). It could also draw heavily on the Council’s “Food for Thought” paper.

The proposed paper could aim to rally support among the democracy support constituency. It could be circulated to the Member States, and leading opinion makers, for comment and to mobilise interest and support. The key constituencies in MS Ministries and at EU level with which to engage include:

1. The development co-operation community, including DG DEV and Europe Aid. As noted, there is already ongoing work in development agencies, such as DFID, on integrating the democratic governance agenda. Questions such as the role of parliaments in development, especially in

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\(^6\) IDEA – It defines it as one person, one vote, and popular control over the exercise of power through regular elections where representatives exercising power can be voted both in and out of power. See also Todd Landman; IDEA Democracy Anniversary Publication.

budget support, and support for political parties still are live and unresolved issues. Other points to be addressed include; the correlation between democracy and development, risks and rewards, democratisation without a 'social contract', and sequencing and the prioritisation of initiatives.

2. Human rights units in foreign ministries, and in the Commission’s External Relations Directorate General (DG RELEX); the working paper would need to encompass and integrate the human rights dimension. This can be done by setting human rights in an institutional context, including the need for democratic processes and institutions to sustain and protect rights, as well as by highlighting the rights-based development approach of agencies, such as Sida, and linking this with political empowerment.

3. Officials at national foreign ministry and EU level; in the Council of the EU and DG RELEX, who are responsible for diplomatic and political relations, crisis management, political dialogue and other non-financial tools, who tend to focus on the crisis management and countries in conflict and who therefore have yet to see the democracy dimension as integral to peacekeeping and stability. In essence, this is about bridging the time-frames of short-term and longer-term interventions.

4. The concerns of the security community also have to be addressed. The link between the democracy agenda and political Islam is already a live issue for foreign and interior ministries. Is there a role for democracy support actors in assisting policy-makers in a better understanding of the precise nature of these links? This needs more discussion. Political Islam is also a political issue, not just a religious issue. Non-government organisations could play a key role in starting dialogue at the European level, training a range of actors in political skills. Think tanks can also research relevant Islamic concepts e.g. Shura (consultative councils).8 The key would be to engage younger people, both economically and

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8 For more background see the paper by Amel Boubekeur « Islamist Parties in the Maghreb and their Connections with Europe: Growing Influences and the Dynamics of Democratization », Euromesco report, November 2006
politically, in order to empower them to resist either co-option into persistent authoritarian structures or capture by radical ideologies, which thrive on inequality of opportunity. This is a clear role for NGOs. Discussion is needed explicitly on whether this would fit into a shared agenda for the democracy support community? It is important to avoid creating the blanket impression that we regard Islamic regimes as such as undemocratic and authoritarian. Whether or not a country's structures are democratic, or not, can to be determined by a set of criteria, such as participation, and free elections. There is a risk that Islamic countries might feel stigmatised, which would not help to promote a dialogue on democracy with them, it was argued.

The process of discussion on the working paper should ultimately lead to a EU Presidential initiative, whether in the EU Council’s (PSC), or in an EU development context, but preferably in a way which would bridge the gap between the two. It could also contribute to opinion formation in the European Parliament, both in the Foreign Affairs and in the Development Committees. It also could be given to Member States with a view to presentation to Ministers at a General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) meeting.

**Opportunities for non-government democracy actors**

In achieving a higher profile for the democracy support agenda, there is an essential advocacy role for non-government actors. The political foundations have much to offer in building a dialogue with NGOs focussing on human rights promotion, conflict prevention and peace building, to enhance understanding about political processes and institutions, and the need to ensure an integrated long-term approach to achieve sustainable democratic processes. The political foundations, together - if possible - with human rights groups, can also engage with policy-makers to promote the democracy agenda within Member States, and at EU level, especially by lobbying for the Council and Parliament to link human rights and democracy more effectively. However, the institutional set-up, both at EU level and in the Member States, will make it difficult to link the developmental and strategic foreign policy aspects of democracy promotion.
Opportunities for governmental and inter-governmental actors

One suggestion would be to work for the mandating of a Council Working Group to address the policy development of democracy support in the context of CFSP (Common Foreign and Security Policy). The Annual Report on Human Rights could also incorporate democracy support into its remit. The European Parliament (EP) Sub-Committee on Human Rights, now to become a full Committee, could also take up the democracy agenda. This would have both symbolic value by emphasising the link between democracy and human rights, and encourage it to ensure that the EU gives due focus and prominence to democracy support in all its policies. The EP could have a formal role in promoting democracy, as this is part of the very essence of the Parliament. It has always taken the lead on such issues, and if it champions democracy, in time, the other EU institutions will have to take the issue more seriously.

Towards more effective evidence-based policy-making

To make this possible a more effective network might be necessary. The agencies already working on the democratic governance already includes Sida, International IDEA, DFID, and DG DEV. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) also has developed a similar agenda. Some relevant knowledge is already shared, for example, through the DAC Governance Network (Govnet) administered by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), or by IDEA, and through the web sites of bilateral donors, think tanks, and by services such as Development Gateway (which is hosted by the World Bank). However, what appears to be currently lacking is a unified means to exchange knowledge and specifically European experience related to democracy support especially, work on political processes and institutions. Is a democracy support knowledge network, or ‘hub’ the answer?

Options for a knowledge network

The focus of such a knowledge network, which could be a vehicle for creating a more united democracy support community in Europe, could contribute to the design and implementation of assistance policies. The aims could therefore be to help create a common working language, define basic principles and objectives in terms of the ingredients of functioning democracies, promote complementarity,
highlight what works, build on successes and avoid one others’ mistakes. Though it is very difficult to achieve a clear relationship between inputs and outcomes in democracy support activity, the network could also seek to provide additional evaluation materials and methodologies to help formulate evidence-based policies. This could be a key focus of both the knowledge network in particular, and the wider democracy support community coalescing around it. What is needed is a light structure, which enables the exchange of relevant information on specific democracy support issues. The problem is not a lack of institutions or information, but of a mechanism, which brings the scattered information together. A knowledge network should be open and accessible. Many international gatherings democracy support suffer from the fact that only advocates come together. There also needs to be engagement with country or area specialists, whether or not they believe in democracy support, and also with colleagues who are sceptical of the democracy agenda.

Another aim of the network could be to influence the debate in government departments to raise professional awareness on the need to develop democracy support considerations within EU policy. In this case, the content might need to be rethought, with a greater emphasis on issues for debate on the European agenda.

Alternatively, the network could be more of a ‘notice board’ and the focus of regular informal meetings for all those interested in democracy assistance in Europe. This might attract a lot of NGO inputs, but with less ‘official’ involvement. That could contribute to networking and some opinion formation. It could also seek to promote the kind of exchange of knowledge that could lead to more evidence-based policy-making. Ideally it would be set up by a consortium, which would agree to share the inputting and editing. The political foundations could be an integral part of this mechanism. Such a ‘notice board’ could provide a basis for any lobbying against the current focus on election observation of European Instrument on Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). There is also a shortage of experts experienced in assisting dialogue and development, and information on good practice, which a network could address.
Co-ordinating a knowledge network
There are a number of actors, existing and new, already considering the creation of real and virtual knowledge centres or hubs. One of the main aims of this paper is to encourage discussion among the current and new actors on the ways they can co-operate, and thus avoid fragmenting their potential collective influence. They would need to reach collectively a shared understanding on proposals that would make the generated knowledge and organisational resources accessible, and useful also to partners and practitioners in developing countries, so that this knowledge is truly universal in availability. One case in point is the ACE elections network; [http://www.aceproject.org/](http://www.aceproject.org/) Initiated by IDEA, it has been developed by seven partners, including UNDP and EuropeAid. The knowledge network/hub will not have credibility unless lodged with an impartial and respected centre, or a consortium of centres. Discussions engaging all the interested actors would now be necessary. Were such a network to be successfully established, NGOs and publics in Europe, and in the South, should be taken on board. Those in the South should be especially encouraged to contribute and to take part in monitoring and evaluation.

Conclusion - Preparing for 2009?
The core aim of a time-limited network of democracy support actors could be to complete a consensus-based dossier on EU democracy support to submit to the Czech and Swedish governments as soon as possible, ideally by the end of 2007, with a view to assisting their EU Presidency preparations in 2008. The network could then aim to work closely with the two EU Presidency teams on an agreed agenda that could be put to all Member States for decision during 2009. However, unless such an initiative is carefully and well prepared and makes sure that all partners are "on board", it risks to failure like previous approaches. The key role of a draft-paper would be solicit opinion and come up with a set of concrete proposals that can win wider support.

Postscript - Wilton Park follow-up:
This report is being published to continue the discussion among the participants and others engaged in the democracy support agenda on specific follow-up
steps that can be taken. Comments and proposals are welcomed for circulation to interested parties.

Wilton Park is also considering whether to convene a follow-up conference in 2007-8 further developing the discussion on the European democratic politics approach, also assisting the 2009 EU Presidencies.

Wilton Park is also due to run three conferences from 2007-9 on the democratic governance agenda, with the support of DFID, the World Bank Institute, and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. The first will be on 10 October 2007 on *Democratic development: How to take it forward?*

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