



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Brussels, 20 June 2005
10307/05 (Presse 161)

**EU-U.S. DECLARATION ON WORKING TOGETHER TO
PROMOTE DEMOCRACY
AND SUPPORT FREEDOM, THE RULE OF LAW AND
HUMAN RIGHTS WORLDWIDE**

Washington, 20 June 2005

1. The European Union and the United States believe that the spread of accountable and representative government, the rule of law, and respect for human rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, are a strategic priority as well as a moral necessity. We will continue to work together to advance these priorities around the world.

P R E S S

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2. The work of the United Nations is central both to democracy and human rights. We welcome the proposals put forward by Kofi Annan to renew the UN's commitment and enhance its effectiveness in these areas. Specifically, we value the UN Secretary General's initiatives for reforming the UN human rights mechanisms and for creating a Peacebuilding Commission. We pledge to support the establishment of the UN Democracy Fund to assist countries in strengthening civil society and democratic institutions.
3. We express our admiration and pledge our support for all those engaged in the defence of freedom, democracy and human rights, in many cases at great personal risk.
4. We are encouraged by the efforts of many governments to open their societies and political systems. Recognizing that democratic reform is a process that deserves our support, we promise our solidarity and support to those promoting democracy around the world, be it in Ukraine, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan, or elsewhere. We will continue to support pluralism and the development of civil society, and will encourage the political participation of women and minorities.
5. Free and fair elections are central to democracy. We congratulate the many thousands of citizens who have participated in organizing and observing elections in their own countries and abroad. We pledge to support the work of the United Nations in assisting in the organization of elections and will work together in multilateral fora to further strengthen international election standards and to spread the implementation of objective and fair election assessment mechanisms. We support the principles of impartially-conducted and transparent election administration and observation and commend the efforts undertaken by various regional organizations such as the OSCE or civil society in this context. We will continue to support the holding of free and fair elections in countries undergoing or desiring democratic transitions, including in Afghanistan, Haiti, DRC, Iraq, and in the Palestinian territories.
6. Democracy is not just a matter of elections; it must be anchored in democratic institutions, separation of powers, human rights, the rule of law, tolerance, good governance, and justice. Our assistance to third countries increasingly takes into account the need to sustain democracy in all these dimensions.

7. We have worked closely to create a Europe whole, free, and at peace; both the EU and NATO have played an important part in this, and continue to do so. We are confident that the reform process in the Balkans will further the region's successful integration into Europe. The European Neighbourhood Policy and U.S. support for democratic and economic transitions will contribute further to stability, prosperity and partnership. We will in particular continue to coordinate our efforts to promote democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights in Belarus.
 8. We are witnessing a growing desire for reform in the Middle East and welcome recent democratic developments. Democratic elections in the Palestinian territories, Iraq, and Lebanon have successfully taken place. We recognize the importance of transparent and fair elections and the need to expand freedom and opportunity across the region. We reaffirm our commitments made at Dromoland and Sea Island, and our support for the Forum for the Future and other elements of the G-8 BMENA Initiative. Recognizing that the threat of conflict can undermine democratic reforms, we commit ourselves to support those who are working for the resolution of conflicts, in the Middle East and elsewhere.
 9. We have both encouraged the growth of democratic institutions in many countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. We acknowledge the important contributions by regional and multilateral organizations, as well as initiatives such as the Community of Democracies, to promote democracy and respect for fundamental human rights.
 10. We recognize that differences in history, culture and society mean that the paths taken towards democracy and the rule of law will be different and that the systems of government that result will be varied, reflecting local traditions and preferences. Democracy, while it is based on universal values, will not be uniform. However, the desire for justice, freedom, human rights, and accountable and representative government is universal. In the long term, only systems responsive to the wishes of the people they govern can achieve political stability.
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