

# The European Instrument of Democracy and Human Rights

A Case Study of the Instrument's Conceptualisation of De-  
mocracy and Democratisation

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# Abstract

In recent years the idea and practice of democracy promotion has gained considerable attention and exists on every international organisation's agenda. Due to the contestability of the concept of democracy, promoters are in front of a variety of instruments. The European Union is not an exception and in 2006 the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights was established as the concrete expression of promoting democracy and human rights in developing countries. However, where one can categorise democracy promotion efforts according to the two main approaches to the field – the political and the developmental approach, building on a division of the conceptualisation of democracy – the EIDHR is sometimes criticised for being indirect in its methods. So in order to categorise the instrument, the paper applies an analytical framework consisting of three dimensions generated from the two approaches. Moreover, the paper applies an ideational analysis, aiming to scrutinise the rhetoric of the instrument. The findings suggest the instrument to rather be developmental than political.

*Key words:* Democracy Promotion, The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, The Political Approach, The Developmental Approach, Democratisation

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# 1 Introduction

In recent years many countries have moved towards more open societies, fairer electoral processes, and greater commitment on a range of human rights issues. However, multiple challenges remain: many countries are still autocracies where basic freedoms are systematically repressed, and elsewhere, political elites too often remain unaccountable and unresponsive to citizens' expectations (EC 2006 §8). Consequently, over the past two decades, the idea and practice of democracy promotion has gained considerable attention (Burnell 2006 p. 1) and few topics have captivated scholars and policy makers like that of democracy promoting (Jamal 2012 p. 4). Democracy is becoming the world's new universal religion, the best form of government, and a variety of (western) states and organisations have taken on key roles in defining it and, moreover; how to include it in their assistance agendas (Carothers 1997 p. 109; Kurki 2010 p. 362; Diamond 1999 p. 2).

The strategy for democracy promotion includes a model of democracy as well as one of democratisation, and as such, democracy promotion addresses the fundamental questions of what political outcomes democracy promoters want recipient countries to achieve, and what processes of political change they believe will produce such outcomes (Carothers 1999 p. 85). Therefore, the growth in terms of the number and variety of organisations providing democracy assistance, the range of programmes, the target countries, and not at least, the purpose of the programmes have been dramatic (Burnell 2000 p. 34).

However, as the lessons from the past decade become clearer, it is increasingly obvious that the challenge of democratisation and the promotion of democracy are far from easy (Burnell 2004 p. 100). So, as the field of democracy promotion institutes and matures, it is undergoing a diversification in its definitions as well as in its strategies, and thus it may not always be clear what neither democracy nor democratisation actually means (Carothers 2009 p. 5; Kortmann 2007 p. 17). The profile of a successful strategy for supporting democratisation is not straightforward, where similar bodies of evidence can generate contrasting but equally plausible interpretations (Burnell 2005 p. 370). Successively, when donors decide to promote democracy they typically reach for wide-ranging instruments and tools, where the most common is democracy aid specifically designed to foster a democratic opening. Donors typically direct such aid at one or more institutions or political processes as elections, political parties, constitutions, judiciaries, police, legislatures, local governments, militaries, nongovernmental civic advocacy groups, civic education organisations, trade unions and media organisations (Burnell 2008 p. 420; Carothers 1999 p. 6), where no method should be viewed as above another.

Whereas both the European Union (EU) and the United States (US) share the idea to serve democracy promotion, human rights and the rule of law, both actors

each came to with different interpretations on how this should be done. So whilst there have been a variety of attempts to theorise and categorise efforts to democracy promotion, this paper will apply the two main strands to democracy promotion: the political and the developmental approach. The two approaches constitutes for a simplistic division between efforts to promote democracy, however, in my opinion: the strongest and most effective one as it captures the relevant literature on democracy promotion as well as the more prominent literature on democracy and democratisation. Within this framework, the European democracy promotion is alleged to be more soft-edged and wide-ranging than the American democracy promotion as it includes a number of developmental aspects (Kopstein 2006 p. 85), making it a quite unique case. Furthermore, the funding of civil society and the lack of attention towards political institutions sets the EU apart from other donors and the European democracy assistance is as such often articulated to add value to the overall democracy promotion (Smith 2007 p. 129, 137). Human rights assistance has indisputable established itself as an important component of the EU's development aid (Youngs 2003 p. 127) and according to the EU's own rhetoric, the mix of democracy, human rights and rule of law, is seen as a universal value and its promotion should be the objective of all EU activities (Kotzian – Knodt – Urze 2011 p. 996). This in fact since the establishment of the EU, the Maastricht Treaty (1992), where the development and consolidation of democracy were legalised as an objective of both the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Community's development policy (Smith 2007 p. 130).

So in accordance to what has been stated above, this paper will focus on one of the EU's democracy promotion instruments – the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR).

## 1.1 Purpose and research question

As has been articulated democracy promotion is a wide-ranged research area (see for example Carothers 1997, 2003, 2009 and Burnell 2006, 2008) and whilst there are many international actors active in democracy assistance, the EU might be one of the best known within the field, and moreover; for its special programme (van Wersch – de Zeeuw 2007 p. 110). So whilst the EU has an extensive array of foreign instruments at its disposal which attempts to encourage democracy in developing countries, the Regulation (EC) No. 1889/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council established the financing instrument for the promotion of democracy and human rights worldwide – the EIDHR (Kurki 2011 p. 351; Smith 2007 p. 129). The instrument is the succeder of the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights, in place between 2000 and 2006, and is articulated to be the EU's concrete expression to promote democracy and human rights in developing countries (EU Aid 2011a p. 1, 8). As such, this study seeks to explore this instrument, called “the jewel of the crown” of the EU's democracy promotion instruments, in-depth, and to analyse its approach to democracy promotion.

As the instrument is relatively new in place, it has yet not received much attention within the academic literature whereas there is an extensive range of literature focusing on the European democracy promotion on a general level. In addition, only a minority of the existing literature has researched *which* democracy promotion that characterises the EU and even less – the EIDHR. The EU has become an important democracy promotion actor; yet, its approach to democracy promotion is criticised of being uniquely complex and vague (Kurki 2011 p. 351). The purpose of this paper is thus to examine the EIDHR through the lens of the developmental and political approach of democracy promotion, and as such, to provide a critical discussion of the EIDHR’s rhetoric around democracy promotion. Due to the centrality of the idea of democracy in democracy promotion it is of interest to ask what kind of democracy promotion the EIDHR uses in its policy documents and the paper will apply a number of dimensions generated from the approaches: the actor’s conception of democracy and democratisation and the methods they apply to promote it in order to answer the stated research question:

*What kind of democracy promotion can be deduced in the EIDHR rhetoric?*

## 1.2 Method

This paper seeks to understand the EIDHR, and thus, the thesis will conduct a case study of the EIDHR within the field of democracy promotion. However, whereas political ideas and rhetoric cannot be discussed outside a wider context, the paper will attempt to relate the specific case to the wider field of democracy promotion and this is done through the theoretical framework where it will relate the specific case’s conceptions to the main approaches. However, one should be aware of the difficulty of deciding *what* constitutes for the relevant context (Beckman 2007 p. 15) and also that this paper does not seek to generalise findings. As such, the reason for choosing this specific case is influenced by the various theories of democracy promotion pointing towards the EU, and the EIDHR, constituting for a unique case, and furthermore; by the lack of academic literature on the case. Where most of the existing literature dealing with the EIDHR is either from the EU themselves or in form of evaluations by more or less dependent non-governmental organisations (NGOs), it is of importance to not only discern the promoter’s methods and effects of the programmes, but also to in-depth analyse the actual conceptions and values behind it – the rhetoric. Subsequently, this paper will apply an ideational analysis. The ideational analysis is appropriate to use as it systematically analyses the political rhetoric and is much alike that of discourse and argumentation analysis (Beckman 2007 p. 9). I will apply the ideational analysis in order to analyse the rhetoric of the instrument, and as such, be able to entail how the concept of democracy appears in the rhetoric of the official institutional documents of the EIDHR.

Moreover, where a methodology should be done in relation to a theoretical position, relating to the existing material and deciding which arguments and ideas that should be under examination (Beckman 2007 p. 10, 15), a theoretical framework has been developed. The framework proceeds from the two main approaches of democracy promotion, the political and the developmental approach, and a number of dimensions have been distinguished. The dimensions have been chosen in relation to the existing material on the EIDHR and guides the research throughout the paper where it states what should be under analysis in beforehand and assists in characterise the two approaches arguments concerning democracy promotion (Beckman 2007 p. 20). This way of proceeding is often under criticism where some scholars contend that it rather is the material that should guide the assumptions in order for the researcher to notice details and deviate findings. Yet, this paper chose to look at the specific case through the lens of the twofold approach where observations of reality inevitably are affected by theoretical positions. And it is as such that I expect to be able to say something about what kind of democracy promotion that is reflected in the EIDHR's official documents.

### 1.3 Material

The research of this thesis is based on secondary sources and the data that has been used derives from a variety of material and is thus various in its character and content. Several authors have dealt with the area of democratisation and democracy promotion, although mainly political scientists or scholars within international relations. Moreover, since the thesis aims to scrutinise the EIDHR and the instrument's rhetoric, I had to primarily gather data from the EU itself. Subsequently, the main documents under analysis are the EIDHR Strategy Papers of 2007-2010 and 2011-2013, designed to complement geographical and thematic democracy programmes, and in which the distinct objectives for the instruments are identified and further; the response strategy for those. Whereas the concrete implementation of the majority of the EIDHR activities begun in the second half of 2008, it is too early to draw definite conclusions about the way EIDHR has fulfilled its objectives and therefore, the Strategy paper 2011-2013 is in strong continuity with the previous one (C 2010).

The Strategy Papers pave the way for the concrete implementation of the instrument and have been developed by the European Commission (EC) through consultations with civil society organisations (CSOs) and member states. Various seminars provided an opportunity for discussion on the possible directions of the papers where many aspects of the papers have been refined in the light of the consultations (EC 2006b §5-6). In addition, the regulation (EC No 1889/2006) establishing the instrument will be one of the main documents under analysis as it entails the EU's official position towards democracy, democratisation and how this ought to be done. The establishing document was developed by the European Parliament and the Council in order to develop a new framework for planning and delivering assistance in order to make the Community's external assistance more ef-

fective and transparent (EC 2006a §1). Moreover, a range of other institutional documents, as the EIDHR establishment and the Annual Action Programmes, has been collected, hence: documents that have been produced within the context of their institutional role and constitutes for additional material. These documents will however not be used in the ideational analysis as they first and foremost provide the financial information of the objectives and will thus only work as foundation for the paper.

The term documents covers a wide range of sources and is any material that provides information on a given social phenomenon and which exists independently of the researcher's actions. In addition, the independence of the documents improves the internal validity of the thorough research (Bryman 2008 p. 369; Corbetta 2003 p. 3; Sapsford – Jupp 2006 p. 3). It is, however, important to articulate that the institutional documents should not be treated as objective, accurate statements of fact, and will require examination and challenge in terms of what they define as problematic, the way in which such problems are operationalized, the forms of explanation put forward and the policy implications which flow from them. A critical stance is particularly important in instances where such reports have a high profile or hold an influential position in the public domain (Sapsford – Jupp 2006 p. 8). It is also important to declare that the sampling as well as the analysis of the collected data is based on my interpretations. However, through a balanced collection and sampling of the material, this thesis aims to provide an unbiased picture of the EIDHR, as far as this is possible.

For the theoretical underpinnings of this paper, material has also been collected from the broad field of academic literature concerning democracy, democratisation and democracy promotion. The material has been collected in a deliberate way with the specific purpose and research question in mind (Punch 2005 p. 187-188). Yet, a critical stance is indeed important here as well where all texts might be misleading or have typographical errors, biases, or outright deceptions (Mathison 2004 p. 119-20). In order to avoid such problems, questions about the authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning have been the starting point when collecting the data and material not directly relevant to the research question has been omitted.

## 1.5 Limitations

Although it indeed would be interesting to look at the EIDHR over time and in relation to its preceeder, the European initiative for democracy and human rights, such a discussion will not be provided in this paper due to the limitations of the characters and scope of the paper. Moreover, this paper will not provide a separate discussion on the definition of democracy and democratisation but rather include it in the theoretical chapter of the paper, where the two approaches involves such a discussion.



## 1.4 Disposition

The first chapter of this paper has briefly introduced the contextual background of the area, which places the research of the EIDHR within the broader debate on democracy promotion and democratisation. The purpose and research question have been articulated and the methodological aspects have been discussed. Further, the second chapter constitutes for the theoretical underpinnings of the paper and takes form in an analytical framework that aims to encompass an examination of the EIDHR as a tool for democracy promotion. Following, the EIDHR will briefly, albeit detailed, be discussed in chapter three. In turn, the fourth chapter will consist of a discussion of the rhetoric of the EIDHR and primarily, how the instrument envisages democracy in relation to the analytical framework. This chapter provides the main basis for the examination of the research question. Finally, the conclusions and the suggestions for future research will be presented in chapter five.

## 2 Analytical Framework

As was stated in the previous chapter, democracy promotion is now more visible and systematic than ever. The Western donors' commitment to support democratic reform has been highly notable in the post-cold war international environment and donors have significantly increased funding for democracy assistance with implications for developmental-related fields (Youngs 2003 p. 127; Lovell 2007 p. 324). The rationale for democracy promotion would appear to be self-evident: to support democratisation and to consolidate democracy. However, in reality, the case may not be as easy and there are several indispensable universal dimensions of democracy promotion (Hartmann 2007 p. 33), where every effort differs from the other. So whilst there has been extended debates on the definition of democracy, an extensive theoretical debate on a classification of democracy promotion attempts does indeed add significant value to the field (Kausch 2007 p. 37), where such a categorisation would contribute to a deeper understanding. However, this is not to be dealt with in this paper, as this paper only constitutes for a theoretical debate around the EIDHR.

Although the case for promoting democracy has much been rehearsed, there is no universally accepted definition, and the field has much been diversified and widespread during the past decade. Thus, many promoters define democracy by listing the policy areas, measures and instruments that contribute to democratisation and are, consequently, in front of a variety of instruments and tool. Further, where democratisation itself is a heavily contested and value-laden idea, there are competing and wide-ranging alternatives and views differ over whether democratisation should be defined in purely political terms or instead must refer to equalising social and economic processes too. Questions as if there is a specific order in which the process of political change must occur if developments are to work out are raised and subsequently, the academic literature on democracy promotion has made replicated attempts to theorise and categorise the various efforts of democracy promotion. Where democratisation can be supported in many ways, both directly and indirectly, political strategies can also be interpreted more narrowly, to exclude ways of pursuing democratisation via either economic or social development generally or through applying neoliberal economic solutions to development problems more specifically. However, in a quite simplistic way, yet useful and easily applied, the field and its different strategies to promote democracy can be divided into two main approaches: the political approach and the developmental approach (Burnell 2008 p. 414-5, 420; Carothers 1999 p. 6; Kausch 2007 p. 37; Burnell 2005 p. 362-3; Burnell 2004 p. 108). One can clearly see a pattern for such a division within the academic literature, and successively, this paper will apply such a framework in order to systematically discern the EIDHR as a tool for democracy promotion.

The division between the two approaches starts from contrasting ideas about democracy and democratisation and can be compared along a number of interspersed dimensions: the type of value that they place on democracy; their concepts of democracy and democratisation; and their preferred method of supporting democracy and democratisation. If phrased differently: the quality of democracy promotion policy starts with the clarity of its objective: what is the aim of the democracy promotion programme? And what strategies are applied to reach such an aim? These questions can be answered through the two main strands where the first one perceives democracy as a political system and the other views democracy and democratisation to primarily require the development of necessary democratic cultural elements. The most effective way of distinguish the approaches is in terms of their views on democracy where one can articulate the political approach to see democracy as a product where the developmental approach rather sees it as a process. As such, the two approaches indeed have different features and both have multiple advantages and disadvantages over the other one, depending on their application. Their efficacy rather depends on whether the approach conforms to the basic best practices of democracy aid and thus, the understanding of their differences is useful in grasping the evolving state of democracy assistance in general. However, in practice, such a division may not be easily done where democracy aid providers might have characteristics from both approaches (Carothers 2009 p. 5-6, 12, 18; Burnell 2000 p. 57; Youngs 2007 p. 67; Kausch 2007 p. 38; Kurki 2010 p. 366).

In relation to what just has been stated, this paper will apply an analytical framework consisting of three out of the four dimensions that was stated above (see table 2.1 for further details): their concept of democracy and democratisation and how such objectives are operated into practice, i.e. their methods. The reason for such a limitation, where the value the actors place on democracy is left out, is due the close connection of value and concept. The value the EIDHR place on democracy can in fact be identified in the light of how they conceptualises democracy and the democratisation process. As such, the applied framework allows for an analysis of the EIDHR and how the instrument is best understood in terms of their rhetoric around democracy, democratisation and the methods applied. Following, the next sections will discuss the political respectively the developmental approach in terms of the chosen dimensions and in relation to the prominent literature on democracy and democratisation.

## 2.1 The Political Approach

The political approach proceeds from a relatively narrow and politicised conception of democracy with close links to the Dahlian conceptions of procedural democracy and polyarchy (see for example 2000). It rests on the idea that democracy should be promoted for its own sake as political good will enable freedom, political representation and governmental accountability, and thus, eventually will improve the lives of the citizens. Stated differently: they hold to the belief that all

good things go together and that democracy tends to unfold development (Carothers 1997 p. 110; Carothers 2009 p. 5, 7; Carothers 2002 p. 7). Likewise, the procedural definition of democracy refers to a set of ideal requirements, “the democratic process” (Dahl 2000), where it views democratisation as a process of political struggle in which democrats strives to gain the upper hand over non-democrats. Thus, democracy here is understood to be best achieved through regular elections and a constitution guaranteeing basic political and civil rights, and therefore, promoters tend to direct aid to core political processes and institutions (Carothers 1997 p. 115; Carothers 2009 p. 5-6). It is in relation to the focus on free and fair elections where one can relate to polyarchy where it equally assumes *opposition* (organised contestation through regular, free and fair elections) and *participation* (the right of virtually all adults to vote and contest for office) to be central in the process of democratisation - the political process (Dahl 2000; Diamond 1999 p. 8). However, it is important to note that in these two embedded dimensions of the concept of polyarchy there is a third dimensions – civil liberty. In other words, freedom to speak and publish dissenting views, freedom to form and join organisations and access to alternative sources of information (Diamond 1999 p. 8), which means that articulating the political approach to deal solely with elections would be wrong. It is within such a discussion it may be difficult to distinguish one approach from another within democracy promotion

Proceeding, the political approach is claimed to a number of principal strengths where it leads promoters to give direct attention to the domain of political competition, which is the key to democratic progress in many settings and from which power holders may seek to deflect outside attention by offering up reforms in other arenas. The main argument is that a system that chooses the government through free and fair electoral competition and the rule of the people will offer the best prospect for an accountable and responsive government, and thus; the best form of democracy (Carothers 2009 p. 9-10; Diamond 1999 p. 3). As Robert Dahl articulates it: elections promote freedom as no feasible alternative can (1989). Further, by encouraging promoters to look for, as well as respond to, key political junctures, the political approach tend to help democracy-aid providers to find a catalytic role, and the aid tend to be direct rather than indirect. In summary, the claim is the political approach applies more direct tools of democracy promotion (Kausch 2007 p. 39; Carothers 2007 p. 24) and that promotion under the approach attempts to focus on facilitating the functioning the democratic state, its rule of law structures, and its institutional bases (Kurki 2011 p. 249). Under the political approach, democracy is not regarded as a means to improve socioeconomic conditions of poor people but as a good thing in and of itself for all people (Carothers 2010 p. 12). In addition, challenging the host government may be a main focus within the political approach where the outside actors may support political dissidents or exiled opposition groups (Carothers 2009 p. 7), and cooperation is often, if not always, precluded.

On the other hand, however, are the converses of the approach’s strengths. In some contexts, a focus on political competition may demonstrate to be insufficient and limited, where a narrow focus may not help providers to arrive at ways of broadening inclusion, representation, nor participation (Carothers 2009 p. 10).

Burnell (2006) articulates criticism towards this as “promoting democracy backwards” where promoters under the political approach seem to install competitive elections without first ensuring that necessary basic institutions are in place, equivalent to “low intensity democracy” (p. 1-2; Burnell 2000 p. 44). Comparably, when follow key junctures reflexively the result may be short-term episodic interventions that neglect the need for long-term support and a sustainable process of political change (Carothers 2009 p. 10). Moreover, adherents tend to ignore the underlying power structures and relations that in many ways determine a country’s political life. In turn, the programmes are often constructed with little reference to the social, political and economic features that actually shape the institutional sectors allowing for power structures (Carothers 1997 p. 122). Although more developmental related issues are considered, the socioeconomic reasons for promoting democracy is secondary to the political ones (Carothers 2009 p. 7). This in contrast to the more wide-ranging definition of democracy and democratisation, which is embraced by the developmental approach.

## 2.2 The Developmental Approach

Contrasting to the political approach, the developmental approach rests on a broader notion of democracy, one that takes deeper concern about equality and justice into account. Moreover, this substantive definition of democracy conceptualises democratisation as a slow, iterative process of change, which involves an interrelated set of socioeconomic developments as well as political. Traditional developmentalists are largely influenced by the modernisation theory where it likewise articulates that a set of prerequisites, crosscutting politically relevant affiliations, is double-bounded with democratisation and democratic consolidation. In other words: the concept of democratisation is conceptualised as such that development must precede democratisation (Lipset 1959 p. 69, 97; Carothers 2007 p. 13). However in terms of democracy promotion, the modernisation theory has been interpreted in a somewhat softer meaning and democracy is less an end in itself than one component of an overall approach to attaining sustainable development. Here Lipset’s early (1950s), then to be developed by Inkeles and Diamond (1980), thoughts of political culture has been incorporated and attitudes and values are perceived as important variables, particularly beliefs about democratic legitimacy as a central factor in the consolidation process (Carothers 1997 p. 110; Diamond 1999 p. 161-2). It is as such the adherents to the developmental approach tend to favour methods of democracy promotion that pursues incremental, long-term change in a wide range of political and socioeconomic sectors and as such, elections are rarely the main priority. The adherents is sometimes also referred to as sequentialists or gradualists, where the former are sceptics towards democratisation in a too early stage of development whilst the latter believe in building it slow however not avoiding it. Moreover, there is a firm consensus that democracy promotion should aim to change the underlying process of change and not impose a particular form of, for example, liberal democracy (Carothers 2009

p. 5; Dahl 2000; Youngs 2007 p. 67; Carothers 2007 p.14). Thus the promoters frequently emphasise the importance of governance and the building of a well functioning state and maintains the conviction that transparency, accountability, and responsiveness will contribute to a more equitable socioeconomic development overall. Likewise, the programmes under the approach tend to fund less aid allocated to electoral assistance and has as such given way to more indirect methods of democracy promotion where the focus rather is on wide-ranging development issues. Subsequently, the developmental approach tends to be labelled as the bottom-up civil society-oriented approach (Carothers 2009 p. 5-6, 8-9; Youngs 2007 p. 68). In addition, the developmental advocates almost always stresses the importance of partnership with the host government and steers clear of activities that might be seen as politically confrontational or “too political” where they tend to criticise the political approach to produce unhelpful counteractions when turning confrontational vis-à-vis host governments (Carothers 2009 p. 5-6, 8-9).

The claim of the developmental approach being bottom-up rather than top-down is often justified through the fact that the developmental adherents’ frequently attempts to tie their work on democracy to human rights and where they sometimes cast their efforts to promote democracy as a subset of human rights work, development and good governance in a virtuous package. They also tend to see human rights as a useful gateway for integrating the political with the socio-economic through the parallel categories of political and civil rights on the one hand and social and economic rights on the other, thus their methods may be labelled as close to indirect where it may not be the political issues that are the main priority (Carothers 2009 p. 9; Smith 2007 p. 132). And certainly, evidence tells us that socioeconomic development does generate more modern attitudes and values towards democracy (Diamond 1999 p. 162), thus, allowing them to entry into restrictive political situations, or at least to open the door to identify and nurture useful links between socioeconomic reforms and political reforms. Nevertheless, the political adherents contend that the developmental approach on occasion tend to produce democracy programmes that are indirect to the point of being toothless in terms of a push for democratisation. The accusation is the promoters easily can claim to be supporters of democracy when all they may be doing is helping to burnish the specious reformist credentials of entrenched strongmen (Carothers 2009 p. 10). Moreover, the statement is there is no better way to develop democratic values and attitudes than through direct experience with democracy, no matter how imperfect it may be. Although, such cases are in fact the developmental approach in its weakest appearance and not the general norm, and a softer more justified criticism is that the approach allows adherents to justify a grab bag of programmes and as such rationalise them without really assessing whether the various, non-assertive, activities are producing larger political change or not (Carothers 2009 p. 10-1; Diamond 1999 p. 162).

**Table 2.1 The Political versus the Developmental Approach**

<b>Democracy Promotion</b>	<b>The Political Approach</b>	<b>The Developmental Approach</b>
<i>Concept of democracy</i>	A product – democracy entails a set of sequence stages where free and fair elections is the starting point.	A process – developmental issues is a part of the political process
<i>Concept of democratisation</i>	Process of political struggle	Double helix of causality with socioeconomic development
<i>Method of supporting democracy</i>	Direct methods - political actors or key institutions	Indirect methods – development oriented, governance, human rights
<i>Recipients</i>	Election Observation groups, political parties, militaries, local government	NGOs, CSOs, judiciaries, police, legislatures
<i>Relation to host governments</i>	Independent	Cooperation

### 3 The EIDHR

Where the previous chapter discussed the theoretical underpinnings of the thesis, this section will provide the sufficient background information of the instrument in focus – the EIDHR. As has been stated, the EIDHR was established in 2006 under the EU body of Development and Cooperation, EuropeAid, as the EU's concrete expression of the promotion of democracy and human rights. The mandate of the instrument encompasses the funding to democratising civil society organisations where the general objectives are to contribute to the development and consolidation of democracy and to develop and to support civil society groups in order for democracy to grow from within, and thus the facilitation of democracy from below (Kurki 2011 p. 349).

The Strategy Papers (2007-2010 and 2011-2013) sets out a response strategy to fulfil the objectives of the instruments (see table 3.1) and are to be implemented primarily by CSOs. Moreover, the instrument is independent from consent of third country governments and other public authorities and offers a comprehensive package of local action and is thus supposedly enabled to focus on sensitive political issues, innovative approaches, and to encompass the facilitation of democratisation from a bottom-up perspective (EU Aid 2012; Herrero 2009 p. 8; EU Aid 2011a p. 7; EU Aid 2011b p. 6). The fundamental freedoms are the preconditions for political pluralism and democratic transition, whereas democracy is essential to sustain the rule of law, which in turn are required for effective protection of human rights (Herrero 2009 p. 8, 12; EC 2006a §8; Kurki 2011 p. 351; C 2011 p. 7; Kotzian et al. 2011 p. 1003).

The assistance measures of the instrument are to be implemented in the territories of third countries or to be directly related to situations arising in third countries or to global or regional actions. In cases of activities in third countries, the Commission's Delegations<sup>1</sup> are in charge of the management of the projects. In result, the instrument offers greater flexibility and a capacity to respond to changing circumstances (EC 2006a art. 2 §3; Herrero 2009 p. 12).

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<sup>1</sup> The EU is represented through 140 EU Delegations and Offices around the world (EEAS 2012)

<sup>2</sup> Based on CSOs to independently contact the regional Delegation or apply directly to Brussels for a grant (EU



### 3.1 The EIDHR Objectives

The guiding objectives of the instruments are fivefold and cover a quite extensive range of issues. Moreover, within each objective are a number of thematic priorities, working as a more concrete guidance for the applied programmes and projects. The objectives will further be discussed in the analysis and will thus only be presented in a compromised way in this section. See the table below for further details.

**Table. 3.1 The EIDHR Objectives**

Objective	Mean	Where	How	Who
1	Enhance respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms	Where most at risk	Provide tangible support	CSOs (in the EU or in the country itself)
2	Strengthen the role of civil society	Where there is strong need and room to operate	Assisting civil society to develop greater cohesion	In-country CSOs
3	Support actions on human rights and democracy covered by EU guidelines	Countries engaged in human rights dialogues with the EU	Strengthening involvement of civil society at local level	Local CSOs
4	Contribute to overall development of partner organisations or the sustainability of particular programmes	Where there is a particular justification for EU support	Support and strengthening international and regional frameworks, rule of law, justice	International and regional judiciaries, Master degree programme
5	Enhancing reliability and transparency of democratic electoral processes	Where appropriate based on recommendations of EU EOM	Election observation	Election observation CSOs

### 3.2 The EIDHR Selection Procedures

The EIDHR defines international bodies and actors, operating on an independent and accountable basis, to be eligible for funding, including CSOs, which covers NGOs, independent political foundations and community-based organisations; public sector non-profit agencies; national, regional and international parliamentary bodies, however only when this is necessary to achieve the objectives and unless the proposed measure may be financed by other means; international

and regional inter-governmental organisations; and natural persons if necessary to achieve the objectives (EC 2006a art. 10). And moreover, in order to identify the projects to fund, the EIDHR uses three principal procedures: i) the projects can be identified through what are called *Calls for Proposals*<sup>2</sup> (macro-projects), which are implemented by civil society operators; ii) through *Country-based support schemes*<sup>3</sup> (micro-projects), which are small grants made available to and administered directed by selected delegations via local Calls for Proposals and iii) *targeted projects*, which are projects for joint programmes with partners, including international governmental organisations. This modality is however primarily used to finance Objective 5 (Herrero 2009 p. 14).

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<sup>2</sup> Based on CSOs to independently contact the regional Delegation or apply directly to Brussels for a grant (EU Aid 2011b p. 19).

<sup>3</sup> Small schemes in one country organised and managed by local delegations with local partners (EU Aid 2011b p. 18).

## 4 Analysis

The EIDHR is often acclaimed to be the tool through which the EU can encourage democracy promotion from a bottom-up perspective and, moreover, often perceived as the tool ensuring a uniquely soft edge to the European democracy promotion, one that takes cultural and local sensitivities into account (Kurki 2011 p. 351). At the same time, the EU constitutes for a unique model, with a legal commitment to human rights and the rule of law (Brok 2007 p. 13), but one could question this alleged character of the instrument and discern and what characteristics that in fact can be identified in the rhetoric of the EIDHR.

In order to make the chapter continuous and systematic, it will be divided into sections in terms of the fivefold objectives, and as such each objective will be under analysis in terms of what kind of characteristics of democracy promotion that can or cannot be identified. This due the fact that it is not possible to make a simplistic division of the EIDHR being either purely political or purely developmental, as no single democracy promotion agency operates in a vacuum (Burnell 2005 p. 363). Further, this due the fact that the Strategy Papers are divided in terms of the objectives, making it a logical division. Successively, the following sections will, in addition to table 3.1, discuss the objectives, their rhetorical conceptions and definitions and the methods applied to fulfil them. Finally, this chapter will discuss the findings and generate a more general assumption of the EIDHR as a tool for democracy promotion and moreover, the possible implications that may exist.

### 4.1 Objective 1

“Enhancing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in countries and regions where they are most at risk”

The Strategy Papers articulates that the main priorities within the framework of the first objective are the right to freedom, opinion and expression, peaceful assembly and association of movement, and moreover, the focus will be “on situations where there is a serious lack of fundamental freedoms, where human security is most at risk, where human rights defenders are under most pressure, where civil society operates with difficulty and where there is little room for political pluralism [...]” (EC 2006b §23-4).

In the rhetoric of the first objective one can easily distinguish a straightforward focus on human rights related issues where the instrument ties their work on democracy promotion to human rights (Carothers 2009 p. 9). This is further to be verified where the Strategy Paper states that “all projects should [...] promote a holistic approach to human rights” (EC 2006b §25), where one can tie the instrument to the developmental approach. One can further tie the objective to the developmental side when the Strategy Papers articulate that “projects may use other ‘entry points’, such as social, economic and cultural rights, though the aim and the intended impact should relate to the fundamental freedoms identified above and keeping in mind the holistic approach to human rights” (EC 2006b §26), where one can claim the aim of democracy to be secondary to a development rationale (Carothers 2009 p. 8).

What more is interesting with the rhetoric behind Objective 1 is the statement that activities may be “out of country” and that “where possible, projects should be designed to produce specific results [...]” (C 2010 §41-2), where it is difficult to motivate how support not directed to the country in focus will produce specific results in terms of democracy, which in the second sentence we are told is not the *main* priority. Here one can assume a stance that democracy will come as a natural cause of social and economic development, hence the “when possible” factor. This in accordance with the modernisation theory, where a certain level of development needs to be achieved before specific result can be produced (Lipset 1959 p. 69).

## 4.2 Objective 2

”Strengthening the role of civil society in promoting human rights and democratic reform, in facilitating the peaceful conciliation of group interests and in consolidating political participation and representation”

Within the second objective, all human rights concern, political, civil, economic, social and cultural, and all aspects of democratisation may be considered where the focus will be on those countries where there is both a strong need for more effective action on the part of civil society organisations and sufficient freedom (EC 2006b §32). Emphasis will be on developing greater cohesion on the work on human rights, political pluralism and democratic political participation and representation (C 2010 §48). If judging by the Strategy Papers, it seems to be the second objective is mainly developmental-oriented where the EIDHR takes democracy promotion as a concept encompassing the full range of external relations and development cooperation activities (Smadja 2007 p. 77). The instrument adopts the view that democratisation cannot be dictated where the role of external actors must not be overestimated and democratisation must come from inside a society as the process needs time and must be regarded from a long-term perspec-

tive. Moreover, democratisation has to be carried by societal forces, i.e. the CSOs (Kortmann 2007 p. 21).

Increasingly, donors tend to give significantly more resources for social development and efforts to reduce inequalities than they channel to political aid aimed at creating liberal democracies (Youngs 2011 p. 104). And to judge by the second objective; the EU is not an exception. And although some political characteristics can be identified, as “enhancing political representation and participation” (C 2010 §49), it remains unclear how such goals will be reached, where no direct democratic aid can be identified within the Strategy Papers and it seems to be more about equality, and by means, of initiatives by civil society and not political institutions.

### 4.3 Objective 3

”Supporting actions on human rights and democracy issues in areas covered by EU Guidelines, including on human rights dialogues, on human rights defenders, on the death penalty, on torture, children and armed conflict, on the rights of the child, on violence against women and girls and combating all forms of discrimination against them, on international Humanitarian Law and possible future guidelines”

As one can tell, the third objective is quite wide-ranging and covers several areas, more or less directly related to democracy. Indubitably, all of the thematic areas are of democratic character, however, this from a developmental point of view where the developmental approach strongly points for an inextricably link between democracy and human rights, as well as emphasises governance and the building of a well-functioning state (Carothers 2009 p. 5). Moreover, what is interesting with these focus areas, as to what the strategy papers entail, is the strong focus of strengthening the role of human rights defenders where “assistance to human rights defenders under the EIDHR will aim at strengthening the status of human rights defenders and their fundamental rights [...]” and where it moreover aims to “[...] enhancing genuine transparency and legitimacy vis-à-vis civil society” (EC 2006b §42; C 2010 §58), yet the lack of any motivation how such programmes would result in a democratic development. Likewise, under the subsection of torture, the strategy paper articulates the “EIDHR will also support rehabilitation activities which aim at restoring the victim’s right to remedy and reparation [...]” (EC 2006b §49), an activity that seems to be peculiarly unrelated to direct democracy promotion activities. It is further stated that “these actions should seek to strengthen local professional capacity and networking and enhance the sustainability of local services’ capacity [...]” (EC 2006b §50), which clearly is in line with the developmental approach to democracy promotion where it typically favours local-level projects (Carothers 2009 p. 9).

In some senses this objective can be related to the political approach as the main goal is for the democratic CSOs and the people to gain the upper hand over the nondemocratic institutions, here represented in torture, armed conflict etc. Also it is the core institutions of the state that needs to be in focus in order to guarantee the political and civic right of peace and justice. Consequently, although one could claim the EIDHR to be too indirect in their methods, they do in fact include some institutional efforts. In addition the instrument highlights the need to pay more attention to the effects that a country's underlying economic, social, and political conditions, structures and historical legacies will have on the democratic transition (Carothers 2007 p. 23).

## 4.4 Objective 4

”Supporting and strengthening the international and regional framework for the protection of human rights, justice, the rule of law and the promotion of democracy”

The EIDHR support under the fourth objective above all will be of a “strategic nature designed to contribute to the overall development of partner organisations or the sustainability of particular programmes, where there is a particular justification for EU financial support [...]” (EC 2006b §59). A criterion for a functioning democracy include the separation of powers, a system of checks and balances, the rule of law and protection of human rights, and a free media (Spengler 2007 p. 51), components which is pronounced by international and regional framework and is to be promoted by the EIDHR. Under objective 4, geographical priorities are not strictly relevant and the instrument will seek to maintain a general geographical balance in its operations under objective (EC 2006b §84). Also here can argue for a more developmental-focus where a judicial programme with a socio-economic underpinning might concentrate on commercial-law training, whereas one with democracy goals probably would aim to support greater judicial independence (Carothers 2010 p. 23).

Additionally, a sub-objective is the training of specialists in the application of international human rights instruments which includes “an annual grant to support the operating costs of the Venice-based European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation (EIUC) [...] the intention will be over time to increase the number of non-European students [...]” (EC 2006b §60). Here one can clearly separate the EIDHR from the political approach, as its main point of criticism towards the developmental approach is it to be indirect to the point of being toothless. Democracy education is indeed important, yet it is difficult to motivate how aid towards a EU-based university *directly* will produce specific results within the area of democracy and human rights. However, it has been contended by development adherents that health and education are more legitimate than free

elections in the process of democratic development (Youngs 2011 p. 5), further relating the objective to the developmental approach.

Furthermore, once again one can relate the EIDHR objectives to the modernisation theory where it projects a natural and universal developmental sequence through which all cultures must pass, and moreover, where the political life is no longer confined to the nation-state but rather to the global civil society (Blaney – Inayatullah 2002 p. 104, 116).

## 4.5 Objective 5

”Building confidence in and enhancing the reliability and transparency of democratic electoral processes, in particular through election observation”

The fifth objective is somewhat different from the previous ones as it is the only one focusing on an area *directly* producing democracy, i.e. direct democratic aid. The main aim “is to develop electoral observation with a view to encouraging professionalism and transparency in electoral management, discouraging irregularities and abuse, and inspiring confidence in the electoral process” (EC 2006b §61). Where the political approach tend to emphasise the role of genuine competitive elections and *sufficient*, i.e. enough for citizens to participate in democratic political processes, respect for political and civil rights in democracy promotion (Carothers 2009 p. 7), one can put the final objective on the more political side on the continuum of democracy promotion. The Strategy Papers do however entail that “though elections do not make a democracy, they represent a critical period in the democratic process, which puts to the test the quality of civil and political rights, the design of the political system [...], the functioning of public institutions [...], the pluralism in the media, as well as the more general resilience and depth of the democratic culture” (EC 2006b §61). Accordingly, one can relate the fifth objective to the assumption that free elections indeed are essential but not sufficient for the make up and well-functioning of democracy (Van Beuningen 2007 p. 29). Concerning the question of suffrage and elections, the developmental approach would claim that democracy promotion is not about supporting elections, but about changing the culture, the attitudes and the norms of a country and that such a change has to come from within and takes long time (Bossuyt 2007 p. 95). Yet the principle is to keep EU Election Observation Missions (EU EOM) expenditure within 25% of the total EIDHR budget over the seven-year period (EC 2006b §63). Thus, the EOMs constitute for quite a large part of the EIDHR financing and this paper will draw the conclusion of the objective rather being influenced by the political approach than the developmental.

## 4.6 A simplistic division in practice?

Where the previous sections have critically discussed each objective of the EIDHR framework, this section aims to tie the parts together and to be able to say something more monolithic about the EIDHR's democracy promotion. Democracy promotion policies are motivated not only by the value of democracy in its own right but also by its instrumental role in advancing a broad range of other policy goals. The objectives of the EIDHR speak in interesting ways to the developmental as well as the political approach of analysis where they equate democracy promotion with specific changes in the power relations and attitudes of target state publics (Kurki 2011 p. 356). Subsequently, the following section is divided into two subsections, summarising the instrument in terms of its conceptualisation of democracy and the applied methods.

### 4.6.1 Conceptualisation of Democracy

Whilst democracy indeed is seen as a goal in itself (Kausch 2007 p. 39), the EIDHR thoroughly articulates the strong link between democracy and human rights. This can further be argued for as the establishing document of the EIDHR states that “democracy and human rights are inextricably linked” and that “the fundamental freedoms of expression and association are the preconditions for political pluralism and democratic process [...]” where it further continues by articulating that “human rights are considered in the light of universally accepted international norms, but democracy has also to be seen as a process, developing from within, involving all sections of society and a range of institutions, in particular national democratic parliaments [...]” (EC 2006 §8, 9).

However, the two paragraphs presented are indeed contradictory in terms of the political respectively developmental division, where it first expresses the importance of relating democracy and human rights and where democracy should be entailed as a process, statements which closely can be connected to the developmental conception of democracy and democratisation. Yet, it is further articulated that national democratic parliaments is an important part of the process, where one could argue for a more political-oriented conceptualisation of democracy (see table 2.1). Overall it seems to be the EIDHR conceptualises democracy as a contributing factor in the larger process of national development and protection of human rights (Carothers 2009 p. 8). Their activities are in some cases indirectly related to democratisation and aid directed to education within democratisation and human rights demonstrates for a conceptualisation of democratisation as a slow, iterative process where socioeconomic developments are highly interrelated to the political ones (Carothers 2009 p. 8). Yet, the instrument articulates that “[...] Finally, the EIDHR will continue, through the further development of EU election observation missions, to contribute to building confidence in and enhancing the reliability and transparency of democratic electoral processes [...]” (EC 2006 §3), where the developmental approach claim promoters to look past politi-



cal procedures (Carothers 2009 p. 8). Without doubt democracy and human rights are inseparable and interdependent and democracy should thus be valued as a right for all and a goal in itself. In other words, democracy promotion must not impose ideas, but support the relevant actors in their efforts to steer change and the democratic reform process (Smadja 2007 p. 78).

Finally, there is a consensus that democracy promotion needs to be defined where the European definition tends to emphasise that democracy means much more than regime change and free elections. Where society has no confidence in the state's capabilities, the case for being free to choose between candidates for elected office looks less compelling. Democracy is indeed a demanding concept and democratic values should thus be placed at the centre of all activities, since democracy begins not at the institutional level, but in minds and behaviour (Grabow 2007 p. 74; Burnell 2004 p. 109). Subsequently to what has been stated: on a continuum where democracy promotion may be direct or indirect, the EIDHR definitely falls on the indirect side where it rather views democracy as a by-product of other activities where democracy is approached sideways, for example through socioeconomic projects (Burnell 2006 p. 3-4). The instrument, as well as the EU in general, use the shorthand label "democracy" for all of its activities, leaving the EIDHR language of rights and democracy quite vague (Kotzian et al. 2011 p. 996; Kurki 2011 p. 359). In addition, the EIDHR seems to go by the belief that as long as public opinion and/or influential societal groups, CSOs, sees the process of democratisation as an important goal, then democracy promotion will be an important goal (Wolff- Wurm 2011 p. 83).

#### 4.6.2 The EIDHR Methods

The EU tend to prefer to fund civil society initiatives as well as efforts to improve governance and respect for human rights over direct democracy-related issues. In general terms, political aid amounts within the EU has increased in the past years, however, they are rarely organised around democracy as a separate category but rather invoked within development-oriented projects (Youngs 2008 p. 160, 162). As Kurki (2011) conveys it: the EU has sought to depoliticise its democracy promotion where their present aim is specifically not to coerce the state through traditional diplomatic means to adopt democratic processes but rather to facilitate pressure of a democratic kind from below (p. 351, 356)

Furthermore, the EIDHR distances itself from the developmental approach where it articulates that "building on its key strength, which lies in the scope for providing assistance independently of the consent of third-country governments and other public authorities [...]" (EC 2006 §15), which is argued to be a critical feature of cooperation with CSOs at national level as it offers more flexibility and capacity to respond to changing circumstances (C 2010 §2). Contrary, adherents to the developmental approach stresses the importance of partnerships with the host government whilst adherents to the political approach tend to challenge the host government and the donors may support political dissidents, exiled opposi-

tion groups, or offshore political broadcasting that reaches into the country (Carothers 2009 p. 7, 9). Thus making it more difficult to theorise the EIDHR.

In an attempt to explain the choice of methods within the instrument, the indirect methods of democracy promotion could further be explained by Wolff and Wurm (2011) where they articulate the fundamental problem of promotion democracy is that it is promoting democratisation – a complex and long-term endeavour problem where potential rewards are both delayed and insecure (p. 80). Maybe it is as some critics contend that the EIDHR avoids genuine democratisation as it tend to spread its resources thin by funding many, more or less relevant, projects in many countries (Carothers 2009 p. 6; Youngs 2008 p. 163). As the objectives, the countries and the eligible recipients broadens, the promotion efforts fragmentises in the field of intervention and the resources are spread too thinly (Herrero 2009 p. 45), and moreover, enables the EIDHR to justify a grab bag of programmes of being “democratic.”

#### 4.6.1 What are the Implications?

To round up; with the benefit of hindsight, there is much still to learn both about democratisation and about the means to democratise; the how far and the how fast, in what circumstances, and under what conditions, and where it will all lead to (Burnell 2004 p. 100). Democracy promotion should indeed be placed in a broader context of promoting economic development, reducing poverty, and furthering good governance as these areas are interlinked in multiple ways. Good governance is widely accepted as a requisite for economic growth, widespread poverty undermines democratic legitimacy, growth reduces poverty, democratic accountability is often required to combat corruption and poor governance, and growth creates a favourable climate for democratic consolidation (Fukuyama – McFaul 2007-08 p. 41).

So it might be as critics contend: that although governance is considered a European strength, it is doubtful that the EIDHR governance projects can do much to directly assist democracy abroad. This may be because democracy itself is not the expressed goal of such projects (Youngs 2008 p. 167). The EU themselves claim to have developed an approach of democracy promotion based on patience, long-term perspectives and local sensitivity, and as long as it is improving a country’s geostrategic situation without having immediate negative effect on national security or the relative power position; democracy will be promoted. However, it might be the EIDHR should not only increase their *political* aid but also tighten their criteria to determine which political incentives in the recipient countries that should qualify for aid. Moreover, the instrument must make their assistance more coherent with developments at the broader political and geo-strategic levels if their aid is to retain relevance (Youngs 2008b p. 1-2; Wolff– Wurm 2011 p. 83, 85). Yet, one should bear in mind that democracy is not built, nor sustained, over a day and it is still too early to reach judgements about the results of the activities launched by the EIDHR and one can only draw conclusions of the rhetoric.

## 5 Conclusion

This paper have discussed one of the EU's instrument for democracy promotion – the EIDHR – in terms of what approach to democracy promotion that can be identified in the rhetoric of its policy documents. I applied an ideational analysis in order to discern where on the continuum of approaches to the field the instrument can be placed and with the aim to discern the instrument's conceptualisation of democracy and democratisation. It seems to be instrument is mainly developmental in its approach to democracy promotion, however, as no actor can work in a complete vacuum, one can see some contradictories and influences from the political approach. Although the instrument clearly highlight it's priority to be human rights, governance and equality related, the field of elections still represents for a significant part of its activities. Yet, I am willing to argue for the instrument to lean more towards the developmental side where it is not as direct as a political instrument would appear to be. The EIDHR sometimes tend to prioritise projects that are not clearly defined on how they will add something to the process of political change. Certainly I agree that socioeconomic development, as well as human development, are of great importance for a country's national development of democracy, although it seems to me that more aid needs to be allocated towards more politicised institutions. Maybe it is true as sceptics argue: the EIDHR has sought to depoliticise and it is too much of an indirect instrument to achieve any concrete steps in the process of democratisation. And as it is today, one can definitely claim the instrument to view democracy as a process rather than a product.

However, as this paper has only sought to discern the rhetoric of the instrument, and thus not included any data or statistic of the EIDHR nor analysed it over a long period of time, it is indeed difficult to provide a clear answer to the stated research question. It would be of interest to compare the EIDHR in place with its preceeder, the European *Initiative* for Democracy and Human Rights, in order to entail if any change in the rhetoric can be identified. As this paper has been limited in scope such an analysis have not been possible to do. Further, a more in-depth analysis of the current research question, taking practice into account, would be interesting in order to entail if the rhetoric match the activities and if such an analysis would demonstrate for a different answer.

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