COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES
Intergovernmental Organization

URM
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

Lithuania's Presidency of the Community of Democracies: TOGETHER FOR DEMOCRACY

NEW PARTNERSHIPS IN DEMOCRACY BUILDING: EUROPEAN UNION AND THE COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES

Informal Round Table Meeting
November16, 2009, Brussels

Provisional agenda

9:30-9:55 registration (refreshments served)

10.00 official opening
Address by Mr. Jerzy Buzek, President of the European Parliament

10:10 – 10:40 panel statements
Keynote speakers:
- Mr. Vygaudas **Ušackas**, Foreign Minister of Lithuania
- Ms. Maria **Leissner**, Ambassador for Democracy, Foreign Ministry, Sweden
- Ms. Helga **Schmid**, Director of the Policy Unit, General Secretariat of the Council of the EU
- Mr. Michael **Posner**, US Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor

10.40 – 12.30 Interactive debate
- Foreign Ministers and high ranking officials from the EU member states (featured interventions by Mr. Yves **Leterme** Foreign Minister of Belgium, Mr. Tonio **Borg**, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Malta, Mr. Witold **Sobkow**, Political Director, MFA of Poland, Mr. Edward **McMillan-Scot**, EP vice-president, Mr. Bogdan **Mazuru**, State Secretary for European Affairs of Romanian and others)
- Mr. Karel **Kovanda**, Political Director, European Commission;
- Members of the European Parliament and of national parliaments (featured interventions by Prof. Vytautas **Landsbergis**)
-NGOs representatives (featured intervention by Dr. Marcin **Walecki**, EPD Executive Director; Prof. Dr. István **Gyarmatti**, President, CEO of the International Centre for Democratic Transition, Mr. Robert R. **LaGamma**, President, Council for a Community of Democracies; Mr. Jeremy **Kinsman**, CCD's Diplomat's Handbook project; Mr. Josef **Janning**, Bertlesmann Foundation,)

12.30 – 13.00 Concluding remarks
-Prof. Bronisław **Misztal**, Executive Director, Permanent Secretariat of the Community of Democracies
-Mr. Žygimantas **Pavilionis**, Chief Coordinator, Lithuania's Presidency for the Community of Democracies
Moderated by Ms. Urszula **Gacek**, Special Advisor for Government Relations, Permanent Secretariat of the Community of Democracies)

Participants:

Foreign Ministers and high ranking officials from the EU member states, the United States of America, Members of the European Parliament, European Commission, the Council Secretariat, Permanent Secretariat of the CD in Warsaw, International Steering Committee of the CD, Council for a Community of Democracies, European Partnership for Democracy, Members of Lithuania's Parliament, representatives of NGO and think tank involved in the democracy building activities.

Venue: The Permanent Representation of Lithuania to the European Union (Rue Belliard 41-43, 1040 Brussels)

Organizer The Presidency of the Community of Democracies; Permanent Secretariat of the Community of Democracy in Warsaw; European Partnership for Democracy

Aims of the meeting:

Czech and Swedish EU Presidencies have initiated the discussion on how to increase the coherence, effectiveness and credibility of EU support to democracy building. In this regard, Commission's and Council General Secretariat's joint paper *"Building democracy in EU external relations"*, issued in July this year, as well as European Parliament resolution on democracy building in the EU's external relations (22 October 2009), were the big steps forward.

Lithuania, as the Presidency of the Community of Democracies in 2009-2011, wishes to promote this idea further and to assist EU in its democracy building efforts. Therefore we organize this first wide-ranging meeting of the representatives of the Community and Democracies, the EU institutions and member states in Brussels.

During the forthcoming General Affairs and External Relations Council (16-17 November), the EU Foreign and Development ministers will have a debate on the ways how to achieve increased coherence and effectiveness in the support of democracy building processes in EU's external relations. We foresee that our Informal Round Table meeting in Brussels will reflect upon possibilities of EU and its Member States intensifying cooperation within the Community of Democracies.

Discussion topics:

- Thematic areas of cooperation and joint flagship projects helping to advance democracy across the Globe,
- Magnification of democracy outreach by maximizing the synergy and coherence between CoD and relevant international organizations, initiatives and stakeholders, including the EU; Streamlining the cooperation at the international or regional fore between EU and the CoD,
- Community of Democracies to be more instrumental for building and consolidating democracy in a substantial manner, more representative, transparent and inclusive, possibilities to involve more countries and more democracy stakeholders, such as the EU, as well as broaden geographical areas of cooperation.

The Community of Democracies. History and Structure

In July 2009, Lithuania assumed the Presidency of the Community of Democracies, comprising over 100 countries worldwide, for a two-year period ending in 2011. The goal of CoD is to strengthen and deepen democratic norms and practices worldwide. The Community of Democracies is based on the Charter of the UN and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Community itself was inaugurated at the first biennial ministerial conference on 25-27 June 2000 in Warsaw. The initiative of establishing the Community was spearheaded by the then Polish Foreign Minister B.Geremek and U.S. Secretary of State M.Albright along with ten conveners (the so-called Convening Group, CG): Chile, Czech Republic, India, Mali, Mexico, Poland, Portugal, South Africa, South Korea, the U.S.A. In 2006, the Convening Group was expanded by adding Cape Verde, El Salvador, Italy, Mongolia, Morocco and the Philippines. In July 2009, Lithuania assumed the presidency of the Community of Democracies and de facto became its 17-th convening member.

Goals of Lithuania's Presidency of the Community of Democracies:

- Revitalizing the Community of Democracies (CoD), adjusting it to new realities, **w**elcoming new partners;
- Discussing the implications of global financial and economic crisis for democratic governance and ways of sustaining, expanding and improving it at local, national and global level, thus contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;
- Seeking maximum synergy and coherence between CoD and relevant international organizations, initiatives and stakeholders for strengthening democracy;
- Contributing to the dialogue of civilizations, cultures, religions;
- Creating a youth and parliamentary segment of the Community.

More information:

http://www.mfa.lt/cod
http://www.community-democracies.org/

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