



## EUROPEAN UNION

### PRESS RELEASE

#### On the International Day of Democracy

**Monday, 15 September 2014:** In marking the International Day of Democracy, the European Union (EU) Delegation in Tanzania has organized a dialogue with Tanzania media stakeholders at the Southern Sun Hotel in Dar es Salaam.

The dialogue has been attended by media managers, senior editors, renowned journalists and media scholars in Tanzania to share views on the European Union's vision of democracy and the challenges of democratisation.

Democracy is a fundamental component in the European Union's values and foreign policy.

In Tanzania the European Union has already committed € 9 million to electoral assistance in 2005, 2010 and currently through the Democratic Empowerment Programme (DEP). In 2010 an independent EU Election Observation Mission was invited to monitor the general and Presidential elections.

The DEP is a multi-donor initiative implemented by the UNDP to support the National and Zanzibar Election Commissions to ensure that the upcoming 2015 elections are sound, transparent, and well managed. This time the DEP "media" component will focus on the establishment and strengthening the community radio stations for effective voter and civic education campaigns, among others.

The European Union believes in the power of the media in promoting democracy beyond politics, to support the building of a democratic culture in the social and economic sphere. In Tanzania the role of the media is crucial to guarantee freedom of expression and citizens' participation. The EU already advocated for more modern media legislation and protection of the media profession.

The EU Head of Delegation, H.E. Ambassador Filiberto Ceriani Sebregondi said, *"As we celebrate the International Day of Democracy, the EU believes that free, diverse and independent media are essential in any society to promote and protect the freedom of opinion and expression and other human rights. By facilitating the free flow of information and ideas on matters of general interest, and by ensuring transparency and accountability, independent media constitute one of the cornerstones of a democratic society."*

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## More Information

In May 2014, the European Union adopted Human Rights Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline as its universal defence of freedom of expression. Freedom of opinion and expression are fundamental rights of every human being and they also constitute essential foundations for democracy. The EU has a duty to incorporate human rights and democracy throughout EU policy.

Why the EU stands for democracy:

- First - democracy is the only political system in which people may fulfil all rights, be they political, civil, economic, social or cultural so we link democracy to our human rights agenda;
- Second – there is a correlation between higher living standards and stronger democracies, democracy seems to be efficient in economic terms, democracy stimulates development, democratic participation releases the capacity of individuals, fuels changes also towards generating wealth;
- Third – democracy manages well different identities within societies (political, religious, ethnic) and therefore creates shared/integrated societies which are based on certain level of solidarity and which coexist due to proper division of power;
- Fourth – democracy guarantees long term stability – that is also why it is worth to invest more in democracy than just stability that usually means "freezing" a situation, while democracy allows conflicts to surface and be dealt with without resorting to major violence.

## Important links:

Human Rights Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline

[http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/documents/eu\\_human\\_rights\\_guidelines\\_on\\_freedom\\_of\\_expression\\_online\\_and\\_offline\\_en.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/documents/eu_human_rights_guidelines_on_freedom_of_expression_online_and_offline_en.pdf)

EU policy statement on democracy and human rights:

[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/human-rights-and-governance/democracy-and-human-rights/policy\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/human-rights-and-governance/democracy-and-human-rights/policy_en)

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