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Financing instrument for the promotion of democracy and human rights worldwide

Mr President, the European instrument for democracy and human rights is crucial for an EU foreign policy seriously committed to the promotion of democracy, the rule of law and human rights worldwide. It is the only instrument that we can now mobilise to help those who stand up for democracy and human rights in countries where basic freedoms are restricted. We can do it without the consent of their respective governments. Obviously, such a valuable instrument must be under proper European Parliament scrutiny, and this is why we demand the delegated acts procedure.

However, we should realise that this instrument is rather limited in terms of the funding available, and a sizeable part of it actually pays for the EU election observation missions: 22% for the period 2011-2013. This means that the budget allocated to the European instrument for democracy and human rights must be significantly increased.

I would like to use this opportunity to point out a new tool which the European Parliament should help create, and which this instrument could fund in order to assist even more efficiently and with more flexibility the people who often risk their lives in fighting for democracy, rule of law and human rights in countries with dictatorships or oppressive regimes, and in countries seeking a transition towards democracy, but where they meet violent anti-democratic forces and where they need much more assistance in terms of building capacities to defeat these anti-democratic forces.

What we need is a cross-party non-governmental European foundation similar to the National Endowment for Democracy established by the US Congress.