Community of Democracies

Introduction

The Community of Democracies (CD) was founded in 2000 on the basis of a joint initiative by former U.S. Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, and former Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bronislaw Geremek. It is not based on a formal treaty under international law but serves as an international platform for governments and members of the civil society as well as the private sector in order to promote democracy. The first document reprinted in this section, the Warsaw Declaration entitled “Toward a Community of Democracies” (→ Doc. 18) is the founding document of the organization and was adopted at the end of the founding conference on 27 June 2000 by the 106 participating states. Since 2007 the Community of Democracies possesses a Permanent Secretariat, located in Warsaw, Poland. Until 2011, a Convening Group, composed primarily of governments that initiated the Warsaw Conference, governed the process. After 2011 this task was transferred to a newly created Governing Council. At the same time, separate fora for parliamentarians, young leaders, members of the civil society and corporations were established. The organization operates on the basis of Ministerial Declarations (→ Docs. 20–23), which are adopted by consensus. Furthermore, the separate fora adopt their own final documents including recommendations to the participants. Finally, the “Criteria for Participation and Procedures” are included (→ Doc. 19) in order to give an idea of the understanding of democracy as applied in the context of the Community of Democracies.

Warsaw Declaration

Toward a Community of Democracies

Adopted by the Ministerial Conference, Warsaw (Poland), 27 June 2000

We, the participants from [...] in the Community of Democracies Ministerial Meeting convened in Warsaw, 26–27 June 2000:

Expressing our common adherence to the purposes and principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Reaffirming our commitment to respect relevant instruments of international law,

Emphasizing the interdependence between peace, development, human rights and democracy,

Recognizing the universality of democratic values,

Hereby agree to respect and uphold the following core democratic principles and practices:

– The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government, as expressed by exercise of the right and civic duties of citizens to choose their representatives through regular, free and fair elections with universal and equal suffrage, open to multiple parties, conducted by secret ballot, monitored by independent electoral authorities, and free of fraud and intimidation.

– The right of every person to equal access to public service and to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

– The right of every person to equal protection of the law, without any discrimination as to race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

– The right of every person to freedom of opinion and of expression, including to exchange and receive ideas and information through any media, regardless of frontiers.

– The right of every person to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

– The right of every person to equal access to education.

– The right of the press to collect, report and disseminate information, news and opinions, subject only to restrictions necessary in a democratic society and prescribed by law, while bearing in mind evolving international practices in this field.