



Policy Brief, 16 August 2021

Principles and proposals for an Alliance of Democracies

Democracy Without Borders (DWB) with great concern recognizes that democracy is under threat internally and externally. The trend of autocratization and democratic backsliding undermines the goal of a democratic global order that is based on peace, justice, freedom and sustainability for all.

DWB is convinced that closer collaboration of democracies can help counter this trend. In principle we support a Summit for Democracy (Summit) and the creation of an Alliance of Democracies (AoD). We advocate the following principles and proposals:

1. A key purpose of the Summit should be to pave the way for the **establishment of an AoD**.
2. While set up and operated by governments, the Summit and AoD should **not be exclusively intergovernmental**. Parliamentarians and representatives of civil society organizations need to be part of the deliberation and decision-making procedures. Their involvement must be more than mere tokenism.
3. We recommend that an AoD includes and operates two separate networks, a **parliamentary network** and a **civil society network** which have substantial ways to participate, going beyond a merely observing or consulting role.
4. The AoD should be inclusive and **open to all states that are rated free or at least partly free** according to established research. Expanding the G-7 to a D-10 might be a first step but not sufficient in the long run.
5. **Democratic opposition leaders and civil society groups** from all countries should be allowed and encouraged to participate.
6. The purpose of an AoD should be twofold: (a) to look into common root causes of democratic backsliding internally, **at the level of member states**, and identify ways of how to strengthen democracy at home and (b) to develop joint policy and action on how to promote and defend democracy **externally**.
7. Consideration should be given for an AoD to establish a **transnational citizens' assembly** that would help develop recommendations on (a) and (b), complementing the intergovernmental, parliamentary and civil society dimensions of the process.
8. The AoD can be a forum to decide on **joint smart sanctions**, if considered useful and appropriate, vis-à-vis governments that are responsible for gross human rights abuses and for gross interference into the democratic process of AoD member states.
9. The AoD should not be misused as an instrument for pursuing geopolitical objectives and to target specific states only. Its action should be informed by **value-based considerations only**.

10. The AoD should not be seen or used as an alternative forum that replaces existing multi-lateral organizations and their mandates. However, the AoD should put a priority on facilitating more coordinated value-based action and policy of member states **within such organizations**, in particular the United Nations. For this purpose, the AoD should revive and re-establish a **UN Democracy Caucus**.
11. In the external field, DWB believes that the AoD, in addition to other things, should push for **democratic reforms of existing institutions of global governance**, in particular a UN Parliamentary Assembly and a UN World Citizens' Initiative.
12. The AoD needs to have a **permanent secretariat** and a formal governance structure.
13. It needs to be explored whether and under what conditions the **existing Community of Democracies** may be able to play the role of the AoD as outlined before. In principle, DWB believes that duplicate and parallel structures and activities should be avoided.