



European Union Election Observation Mission Pakistan 2008



Press release

The European Union Election Observation Mission to Pakistan presents its final report on the 2008 National and Provincial Assembly elections

Michael Gahler, Chief Observer and Member of the European Parliament, is back in Pakistan to present the final report of the EU Election Observation Mission in Pakistan. This is the last event of the Election Observation Mission that was in-country from 9 December 2007 until 10 March 2008, by invitation of the Pakistani State authorities. The EU EOM's final report is based on long term observation across the country and 131 observers on election day.

Mr Gahler comments that *“although the February 2008 elections were competitive and the results were accepted, there are enduring problems with the framework and conditions for elections in Pakistan. If these are not addressed, there is a serious risk of electoral problems in the future. I therefore call on the Pakistani authorities, political parties and civil society to swiftly undertake electoral reform. I will be returning in a year's time and hope to see some significant advances.”*

In addition to the findings of the EOM, the final report contains over 80 recommendations to improve future elections. Key recommendations include:

1. Steps should be taken to ensure there is an independent judiciary in which there is stakeholder confidence, so that effective oversight of the election process can be undertaken.
2. Election legislation should be reviewed in a consultative manner. Specific issues to be addressed include the independence and transparency of the election administration, complaints and appeals procedures, and overly-restrictive candidacy requirements.
3. The appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and ECP members should be subject to stakeholder consultation and should provide for independence. The ECP should be restructured, should operate transparently and consultatively, and should take full responsibility for its mandated tasks.
4. Election appeals to courts and tribunals should be dealt with in a timely manner by judges who are independently appointed.
5. All polling station results should be swiftly displayed at the constituency and on the internet.
6. The ECP should produce an accurate and complete electoral roll.
7. If only C/NICs are permissible for registration and/or voting, acquisition of a CNIC should be facilitated so that there is no barrier to participation.
8. Reform of the legal framework regulating media activities should be undertaken and should include reduced restrictions and clear-cut definitions.
9. State media should ensure impartiality in its news and public affairs broadcasts during an election campaign.
10. Efforts should be made to reduce women's severe under-representation in the electoral process.

The EU EOM wishes to express its warmest appreciation to the people of Pakistan for their cooperation, assistance and welcome during the course of the election observation mission.

The final report is available on the mission's website: www.eueompakistan.org