Afghanistan: EU to observe the upcoming elections

The European Commission is deploying an EU Election Observation Mission (EOM) for the Presidential and Provincial Council elections in Afghanistan scheduled to take place on 20 August 2009. The EOM Core Team (17 experts) arrived in the country at the beginning of July and will co-ordinate the assessment of the entire election process. They will be joined in due course by other observers to assess the campaign period and pre-election preparations around the country, and the voting, counting and the tabulation of results. Altogether some 100 EU observers will be in place on election day. The EU EOM is led by Philippe Morillon, French Member of the European Parliament. The EU EOM is the largest international observer group in Afghanistan for these elections.

Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, said: "*The upcoming elections are an important milestone for the very young democratic structures in Afghanistan since they will be the first led by the Afghan themselves. At the same time they are a great challenge because of the current political and security situation in the country. The EOM that the Commission is deploying will operate in one of the most difficult electoral, security and logistical context ever. I am convinced that with the lead of Mr. Morillon this EOM will successfully achieve its mandate".*

And she added: *"This EOM is yet another clear signal of support to Afghanistan in its path towards stability and democracy."*

The EU also supported the Afghan 2005 elections for which it provided €17.5 million to support the electoral process and deployed an EOM. The European Commission is one of Afghanistan's major donors with a total assistance since 2002 of €1.6 billion including €247 million in humanitarian assistance.

For additional information, see also:

http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/human_rights/election_observation/index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/worldwide/electoral-support/index_en.htm