

**EU EOM
Parliamentary and Provincial Elections
Afghanistan 2005**

Press Release: EUEOM/AFGHANISTAN/2005/01

**EUROPEAN UNION ESTABLISHES AN ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION TO
AFGHANISTAN**

Kabul, 26th July 2005

Upon the invitation of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the European Union has established an Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) to Afghanistan to observe the parliamentary and provincial elections taking place on September 18th, 2005.

The EU EOM is led by a Chief Observer, Emma Bonino, an Italian Member of the European Parliament and former European Commissioner.

“The European Union”, stated Emma Bonino, “considers these elections as a crucial passage in view of establishing a functioning institutional system based on the rule of law in Afghanistan. The EOM, with its observation activity, aims to increase confidence in the electoral process and contribute to a sustainable transition towards a democratic and pluralist society in Afghanistan.”

Duration, Composition and Deployment of the Election Observation Mission

In addition to the Chief Observer, the EU EOM has a Core Team of 12 people who will be based in Kabul. They are: a Deputy Chief Observer, Plamen Tonchev; an Election Expert, Maria Espinosa; a Legal Expert, Andrew Caldwell; a Country Expert, Lucy Morgan Edwards; a Democratisation Expert, Katarina Ammitzboell; an Operations Expert, Martim Freire; an Observer Coordinator, Lars Tollemark; a Deputy Observer Coordinator, Roberto Lora; a Media Expert, David Ward; a Press Officer, Filippo di Robilant; a Security Expert, Arild Nodland and a Deputy Security Expert, Peter McMahon.

The EU EOM to Afghanistan will remain in the country until a late stage in the electoral process. The Core Team will soon be joined by 60 Long-Term Observers (LTOs) from EU Member States, who will be deployed in the capital and in the provinces. In addition, 20 Short-Term Observers (STOs) will join at a later stage in September. Other Observers, mostly recruited among the local Embassies' officials, as well as a delegation from the European Parliament, will be integrated into the Mission a few days before election date in order to observe polling and counting.

The EU EOM will be the largest single international observer group operating in the country.

The purpose of the EU EOM to Afghanistan, similar to those in other parts of the world, is to provide support for the development of democratic institutions and procedures and the rule of law in the country.

The EU sent a Democracy and Election Support Mission (DESM) during the Presidential Elections last October, a fact that illustrates EU commitment to the reconstruction and institutional stability of Afghanistan.

The key objectives of the Election Observation Mission are:

- to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the electoral process and to offer an impartial and informed assessment of the elections;
- through the presence of the EU EOM, to seek to strengthen the confidence of voters to participate freely.

After the elections, the EU EOM will issue a preliminary statement on its findings. A more comprehensive report will be issued at a later stage, as well as a set of recommendations on steps to be taken towards wider democratisation and sustainability of the process.

The Mission will assess the elections against international obligations that the State of Afghanistan has entered into, in particular the UN International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966, ratified by the State of Afghanistan in 1983, where fundamental democratic principles are established: periodic elections, universal and equal suffrage, right to stand for public office, right to vote, secret ballot, genuine elections allowing for the free expression of the will of the people, as well as other applicable international standards.

For any further information please contact Filippo di Robilant, EU EOM Press Officer:
Phone 079-877222 and email filippo.dirobilant@eueomafg.org
Visit our website: www.eueomafg.org