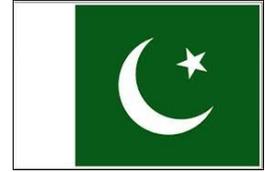




**European Union  
Election Observation Mission  
Islamic Republic of Pakistan  
General Elections 2013**



Press release: EU EOM/2013/04  
Date: Islamabad 03/05/2013

Immediate Release

**EU Chief Observer expresses serious concerns about levels of violence affecting the campaign during a visit to Peshawar**

Chief Observer of the EU Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) to Pakistan and Member of the European Parliament, Michael Gahler, raised his serious concerns about the increased levels of violence against certain political parties during a visit to Peshawar on 2 May. Mr. Gahler reiterated his call, when visiting Karachi last week, on state authorities to do their utmost to protect the lives of candidates and citizens and safeguard the democratic process.

*“The targeted attacks on certain political parties and their supporters in parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh and Balochistan are not only affecting these parties by distorting the playing field. In fact, every attack is an assault on the democratic process as a whole, and on the right of citizens to have an equal say in their governance. I welcome the efforts of Pakistan’s state authorities to provide security for the elections, and I urge all stakeholders to do everything within their means to stand up against the violence and provide for citizens to exercise their democratic rights without fear.”* Said Chief Observer Michael Gahler.

During his visit Mr. Gahler met with provincial government officials, the election administration, political candidates and representatives from civil society from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

The EU EOM’s long-term methodology looks at several stages in the electoral process. The mission observes the elections in Islamabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh. While the EU EOM has not deployed any observers in Balochistan and FATA, the Chief Observer’s recent visits show the EU EOM’s interest in actively following what is happening in those areas.

Note to Editors:

*The EU EOM is independent of EU Member States and other EU institutions. The EU EOM operates in accordance with the “Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation” endorsed under the auspices of the United Nations in 2005.*

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