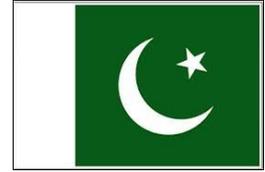




**European Union
Election Observation Mission
Islamic Republic of Pakistan
General Elections 2013**



Press release: EU EOM/2013/06
Date: Islamabad 13/05/2013

Immediate Release

**A Competitive and Improved Election Process
Despite Militant Violence and Procedural Shortcomings**

Strong commitment was shown to the democratic process by parties, candidates and voters, who continued to participate in the electoral process despite high levels of militant attacks in parts of the country that escalated and ultimately affected the process as a whole. Violence by non-state actors unbalanced the playing field and distorted the election process considerably in the concerned locations.

“Election day showed the commitment of the people of Pakistan to democratic governance by overcoming militant violence. We saw a competitive process, with twice as many candidates as there were in 2008. While various aspects of the election process have improved, there were still shortcomings. It is important that the framework for elections is further developed, so that democracy is strengthened.” Michael Gahler Chief Observer of the EU Election Observation Mission said.

There were 62 reported election related security incidents on election day resulting in 64 deaths. Of the stations where the EU EOM was able to observe, polling was generally rated as satisfactory or good, but was however rated as poor or inadequate in 9% of stations visited. The ECP’s late decision to extend voting by one hour, to allow more opportunity to voters, caused confusion and was not officially announced on the ECP website. Counting was more negatively assessed by EU EOM observers.

The European Union EOM was joined by a delegation of three Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) acting as short-term observers and chaired by MEP Richard Howitt.

“The violence in the campaign and on election day was terrible, but must not overshadow the achievements of the process. The turnout in defiance of the threats against the process was an extraordinary vote of confidence in democracy itself. This election was a step forward, but one from which we call on all those elected to sustain their commitment to reforms, in the interests of good government for the people and good governance for the state.” Richard Howitt MEP.

The EU EOM will remain in country till 5 June to observe the tabulation of results and electoral dispute resolution mechanisms. The EU EOM will publish a final report, containing detailed recommendations, within two months of the conclusion of the electoral process.

Note to Editors:

The EU EOM is independent of the EU institutions and EU Member States. 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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