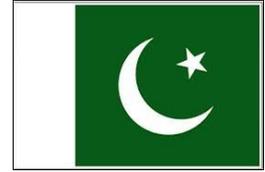




**European Union
Election Observation Mission
Islamic Republic of Pakistan
General Elections 2013**



Press release: EU EOM/2013/03
Date: Islamabad 23/04/2013

Immediate Release

**EU Election Chief Observer Visits Lahore and Karachi
and Meets With Balochistan Leaders**

Chief Observer Michael Gahler, Member of European Parliament, is completing a three day trip to Punjab and Sindh where he met with electoral authorities, caretaker government officials, political party leaders, civil society and media representatives. In Karachi the Chief Observer also met with the senior leaders of the Balochistan National Party-Mengal (BNP-M) and the Pakhtunkwa Milli Awami Party.

“During this trip I’ve met with a wide range of people playing an important role in this election. Given that we are not in a position to be present for long-term observation in Balochistan, I am particularly glad to have met with some of its political leaders. We will carry on following what is happening in Balochistan and other parts of Pakistan.” Says Chief Observer Michael Gahler.

The EU Election Observation Mission is observing in the provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh; and in Islamabad. Due to the security situation, the mission cannot implement its long term comprehensive methodology in Balochistan and FATA. However, the EU election observers are actively following what is happening in these areas.

“Electoral violence is unfortunately a feature of these elections. Each attack on political parties and others involved in the election is an attack on the democratic process itself. We therefore hope that all state authorities and stakeholders demonstrate their commitment to the greater democratic process by standing united and taking whatever measures possible to prevent such violence.” Chief Observer Gahler ends.

Chief Observer Michael Gahler and his team of 11 experts, 52 long term observers and 46 short term observers will continue to observe the electoral process and environment until after the elections. In addition the mission will be joined by some members of the resident diplomatic community and by a delegation from the European Parliament.

The mission will issue a preliminary statement shortly after election day. A final report - with recommendations for future elections - will be issued approximately two months later.

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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