PRESS RELEASE
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European Union launches Election Assessment Team in Afghanistan

Kabul, 20 March 2014 – Upon invitation by the Independent Election Commission (IEC) and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, the European Union Election Assessment Team (EU EAT) for the Presidential and Provincial Councils elections scheduled on 5 April has started its activities in the country. The EU EAT is led by Chief Observer Thijs Berman, Dutch member of the European Parliament, and consists of 16 international experts from 13 European countries deployed in Afghanistan since March 15. On Election Day and during the tallying of the votes, several dozens of locally based European diplomats will complete the Team for observation purposes.

Thijs Berman introduced the Mission at a press conference held today in Kabul: “I express my deepest respect to Afghanistan. So many Afghan citizens are more than ready to see the international community leave, after more than 12 years, and so many are eager to take responsibility for the future of this country. For this to succeed, the choice of Afghanistan on its future political leadership will have to be credible and acceptable”.

“Only a good electoral process, where voters, winners and losers are proud of their engagement, and confident about the reality of the results, will offer the best perspective for the years to come. That is the challenge of these elections”, added Thijs Berman.

“We will focus on the key stages of the electoral process, such as the legal and electoral framework, the election campaign, the media environment, the voting, counting, aggregation, tallying of results and the handling of eventual election complaints”, detailed Chief Observer Thijs Berman. “The EU EAT will take into consideration all main aspects of the electoral process and will evaluate their compliance with Afghan law and with regional and international standards for democratic elections”, stated Mr. Berman. “The EU EAT seeks to offer an impartial, balanced and informed analysis of the Afghan elections. Thereby, the Mission aims to contribute to the democratic process in Afghanistan”, concluded Thijs Berman.

The EU EAT is based in Kabul and its members will visit the provinces, including Herat, Nangarhar, Kandahar and Balkh. The Team will stay in the country until completion of the electoral process. The EU EAT will issue a Preliminary Statement two days after the elections of April 5 and a second Preliminary Statement will follow in case of a runoff in the presidential election. Some two months after the completion of the election process, a comprehensive Final Report will be issued including recommendations for future elections.

EU observers adhere to a Code of Conduct imposing strict neutrality, impartiality and independence in the course of their work. The EU EAT operates in accordance with the UN Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation adopted in 2005.

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