



## EUROPEAN UNION ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION NEPAL Constituent Assembly Election 2008

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### European Union Mission Begins Observation of Constituent Assembly Election

**Kathmandu, 18 March 2008** – Following an invitation from the Government of Nepal, the European Union has established a mission to observe the Constituent Assembly election scheduled for 10 April. The head of the EU Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) is Jan Mulder, a member of the European Parliament. The mission will comprise of 120 observers from 22 different EU countries, as well as Norway and Switzerland.

Mr Mulder visited Nepal in February when he met many people involved in the election. He will now continue to meet government and election officials, candidates and representatives of political parties, civil society, other observer groups, international organizations and the media. On his arrival he said,

*“I feel privileged to be back in Nepal as the Chief Observer for the EU observation mission. This election is an essential part of the peace process. It represents an historic opportunity for everyone in the country to work together to set the stage for an inclusive democracy. Now it is the responsibility of all those involved in the election, notably the political parties and their leaders, to ensure that candidates are able to campaign in a peaceful environment that is free from intimidation or violence, and that the people of Nepal can exercise their democratic right to vote freely.”*

The mission is made up of a core team of ten election experts, including the Chief Observer, who coordinate the mission from their office in Kathmandu. 40 long-term observers will arrive on 22 March and will be deployed in teams of two around the country to assess the campaign period and pre-election preparations. Before election day, around 70 short-term observers, including a delegation of Members of the European Parliament, will join the mission to observe voting and counting. The mission will remain in the country for several weeks after the election to assess the final stages of the electoral process.

Election observation is an important part of the EU’s policy of promoting human rights and democracy throughout the world. The mandate of the EU EOM is to observe all aspects of the electoral process and to assess the extent to which the elections comply with international standards for democratic elections, as well as with the laws of Nepal. The EU EOM will work independently to offer an impartial, balanced and informed analysis of the elections. All observers will remain neutral and will work under an internationally accepted code of conduct and in accordance with the Nepali code of conduct for election observation.

The EU EOM operates in accordance with the “Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation” adopted by a number of international bodies involved in election observation in 2005 at the United Nations in New York. After election day, the mission will issue a preliminary statement of its initial findings at a press conference in Kathmandu. A more comprehensive, final report, including recommendations for future elections, will be published within two months of the end of the electoral process.

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