

FEEDBACK NOTE:
ELECTION OBSERVATION DELEGATION TO LEBANON - 7 June 2009

A European Parliament Delegation of five Members was in Lebanon on 7 June to observe the legislative elections. The Delegation, led by José Javier POMES RUIZ (EPP, ES), was composed of Marie- Arlette CARLOTTI (PSE, FR), Baroness Emma NICHOLSON OF WINTERBOURNE (ALDE, UK), Sylwester CHRUSZCZ (UEN, PL) and Paul Marie COÛTEAUX (IND-DEM), and was fully integrated in the EU Election Observation Mission (EUEOM) led by José Ignacio SALAFRANCA SANCHEZ NEYRA.

The activities of the EP Delegation started on Friday 5 with an intense and particularly rewarding programme in terms of the high level of interlocutors. The programme covered institutional and political aspects as well as meetings with other international observers and representatives of Lebanese civil society. The programme also included several meetings, prior and post E-Day, with the European Commission Delegation in Lebanon, the current EU Presidency and the EU Ambassadors. At an institutional level, the EP Delegation had the opportunity to meet most of the highest authorities of the country: the President of the Republic - General Michel Sleimane; the Prime Minister - Mr Fouad Siniora; the Minister of Foreign Affairs - Mr Fawzi Salloukh; and the Minister of Interior and Municipalities - Mr Ziad Baroud - who is responsible for running these elections. At a broader political level, the EP Delegation met some of the main political party leaders: Mr Saad Hariri (Leader of Future Movement - 14 March), Mr Ammar Al Musawi (External Relations Officer of Hezbollah), General Aoun (Leader of the Free Patriotic Movement - 8 March) and Mr Amin Gemayel (Leader of Kataeb Party - 14 March). On Friday 5 June, Mr SALAFRANCA SANCHEZ NEYRA, Chief Observer of the EUEOM, together with the EP Delegation held a meeting with President Jimmy Carter along with representatives of the Carter Center and of the National Democratic Institute (NDI). The purpose of this joint meeting of international observers was to have an exchange of views on the situation prior E Day. For E-Day the EP Delegation was split into four teams in order to cover the country and its diversity to a maximum: Tripoli, Saida, Beirut and Chouf districts.

The EP Delegation programme ended on 8 June with the joint press conference of the EUEOM and the EP Delegation. The Chairman of the EP Delegation, José Javier POMES RUIZ, gave a political contribution (representing the views of all the members of the Delegation) to the EUEOM preliminary statement. He started by complimenting the Lebanese population for having widely and calmly participated to this democratic process. He stressed the importance for the newly elected Parliament to follow the electoral reforms needed to solve remaining problems such as the lack of pre-printed ballot paper. He also appealed to all Lebanese political parties to extend a hand o each other and to pursue dialogue. And he finished his speech by ensuring that the newly elected European Parliament will be ready in the coming months to reinforce the existing links with the Lebanese institutions and that it will continue to support the promotion of Lebanese parliamentary democracy.