



European Parliament Delegation to observe first Arab Spring elections in Tunisia

General

A European Parliament delegation travels to Tunisia from 19 to 25 October to observe the elections to the constituent assembly in Tunisia, as part of the EU's overall Election Observation Mission for this, the first of the Arab Spring elections.

Gabriele Albertini (EPP, IT), head of the delegation, said: "Following an invitation from the Tunisian authorities, I am proud and pleased to be leading the European Parliament delegation to observe these historic elections in Tunisia, the country where the Arab Spring began and the first to hold democratic elections. The Tunisian people go to the polls on 23 October to elect the Constituent Assembly that will draw up the country's new constitution. 14 MEPs will be there as part of the long-term EU Election Observation Mission led by my fellow MEP Michael Gahler. We will be deployed all over the country, bringing our experience as elected parliamentarians to bear in observing how the process is conducted. We hope that these elections will set an important precedent in the region."

In the run-up to the election, delegation members will meet candidates, party leaders and representatives of the authorities and of Tunisian civil society, including bloggers and Facebook users who played a key role in the uprising that led to the fall of the old regime. On election day, they will be present at polling stations. Nine MEPs from the 15-member delegation will be based in Tunis and the surrounding area and six will be deployed between 22 and 24 October in the electoral zones of Sidi Bou Zid, Gafsa and Sfax.

The chief observer of the 130-member EU Election Observation Mission, Michael Gahler (EPP, DE) and Mr Albertini will present their preliminary findings on the election at a joint press conference at the Sheraton Hotel, Tunis, on 25 October (11.00h, Kairouan Hall).

Background

The European Parliament deploys election observation delegations, integrated in long-term Election Observation Missions, to about a dozen countries across the world each year. It is heavily involved in election observation globally, whether as part of the EU election observation missions, or as part of election observation missions in OSCE countries. The European Parliament has endorsed the Declaration of Principles for international election observation and the Code of conduct for international election observers.

EP Delegation - EU Election Observation Mission, Tunisia 19 to 25 October 2011

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