

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2700/09
by Fiona Hall (ALDE)
to the Commission

Subject: Presidential elections in Somaliland

In 1991, northern clans in Somalia declared an independent Republic of Somaliland. Somaliland's stability has been widely acknowledged but it has not received formal recognition from the international community.

The presidential elections in Somaliland, scheduled for 29 March, have been postponed following technical difficulties with voter registration. The Upper Chamber of the Somaliland legislature was invited to vote on when the elections should now take place. The Electoral Commission argued that technical problems could be overcome and that voting could take place on 31 May 2009. The Upper Chamber, however, voted for October 2009. As a result, there is increasing unease that the Government of Somaliland may be attempting to block the elections.

An NGO called InterPeace is giving technical support to the elections in Somaliland. There have been certain acknowledged inadequacies in the accounting paper trail, given the challenges on the ground of distributing funds through local actors who may not always produce full invoices and accounts.

Can the Commission confirm that it has supported the election process in Somaliland through funding to InterPeace? Given the importance of the elections to the stability of Somaliland, will the Commission continue to support the electoral process notwithstanding certain accounting issues? Is the Commission planning to assist with overcoming the current technical obstacles, including the need to filter out double registrations and to correct problems with the computer server used for voter registration?