

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1399/04  
by Marie-Arlette Carlotti (PSE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Political situation in the Dominican Republic

In the run-up to presidential elections, scheduled for 16 May 2004, there has been a serious deterioration in the economic and political situation in the Dominican Republic.

The government, led by President Hipolito Mejia, has become increasingly authoritarian, undermining the democratic process in the Dominican Republic and thereby jeopardising the smooth conduct of the forthcoming elections. This deterioration has included:

- an amendment to the Constitution to enable the President to stand for re-election,
- an attempt to reform the electoral code to suit the current President,
- violent suppression of demonstrations protesting against the government's economic policy (eight dead and several dozen injured),
- the arrest of political opponents, in particular Ramon Almanzar, candidate for the People's United Left coalition.

The Dominican Republic is in serious danger of being plunged into a spiral of violence and repression, along the same lines as its neighbour, Haiti.

The European Union must provide assistance in safeguarding and consolidating democracy in the Dominican Republic.

- Does the Commission intend to send an observer mission to the country for the 16 May elections?
- What measures has the Commission decided to take or already taken as part of cooperation with the Dominican Republic under the Cotonou Agreement?