

**Question for written answer P-005031/2011
to the Commission
Rule 117
Harlem Désir (S&D)**

Subject: Failure to comply with democratic principles during the 2011 general election in the Central African Republic

In the general election of 23 January 2011, when the citizens of the Central African Republic were called upon to elect their president and their representatives in the National Assembly, the European Union's election expert mission found a number of serious violations of the international principles of transparency, fairness and regularity which govern democratic elections.

The President of the Republic was also elected as a member of the National Assembly, thereby overstepping the line between executive and legislative power. There were also many alleged instances of fraud and manipulation, a lack of proper verification of voters' identity which seriously called into question the independence of the electoral commission, a lack of electoral lists at many voting stations and many other problems. Such were the doubts over the viability of the results that opposition parties decided to withdraw from the legislative elections rather than go along with the electoral farce.

Given that the Commission provided 80% of the financing needed to organise the general election, it is difficult to believe that it has nothing to say on how it was conducted – especially as silence implies support for the government in power.

Does the Commission intend to ask the authorities in the Central African Republic to hold fresh elections in the near future which this time will adhere to international democratic standards?

If not – and given that the Central African Republic is a signatory to the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement (the Cotonou Agreement), which commits signatories to comply with the principles of democracy and the rule of law – does the Commission intend to ask the Council to implement Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement, which provides for sanctions against a signatory state in the event of non-compliance with democratic principles?