



**Press Release: For Immediate Release**

## **EU Mission Begins Observation of Parliamentary Elections**

**Beirut, 26 April 2009** - The European Union Election Observation Mission for Lebanon's forthcoming parliamentary elections has started its work in Beirut.

An advance team of nine election experts has established the mission's headquarters and will be joined by up to 90 observers ahead of the elections scheduled for 7<sup>th</sup> June 2009.

The mission is led by a Chief Observer, Mr José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, a Spanish Member of the European Parliament (MEP) and a member of the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee. He is due to arrive in Lebanon in early May.

Mr Salafranca is familiar with the Lebanese electoral landscape, having also been Chief Observer of the European Union's Election Observation Mission for Lebanon's 2005 parliamentary elections.

"I am looking forward to returning to Lebanon to lead a European Union observer mission to Lebanon's parliamentary elections," said Mr Salafranca.

"These elections are taking place in a challenging and sensitive environment and we hope that the presence of European observers will contribute to a constructive atmosphere both in the country and region-wide. The European Union has deployed many election observation missions over the years, and in doing so it has established a strong reputation for independent and impartial election observation."

The EU Election Observation Mission's nine member core team arrived in Beirut on 18<sup>th</sup> April and will be joined by 30 long-term observers on 2<sup>nd</sup> May. Approximately 50 short-term observers will be deployed closer to election day, along with a delegation of Members of the European Parliament. This will bring the total number of election observers to almost 100, making the EU mission the largest of the international teams observing the 2009 elections. The observers will be deployed in teams of two and will cover all 26 electoral districts.

The mandate of the EU Election Observation Mission is to observe all aspects of the electoral process and to assess the extent to which the elections comply with international and regional standards for elections, as well as with domestic law.



**EUROPEAN UNION ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION  
Republic Of Lebanon Parliamentary Elections 2009**

بعثة الاتحاد الاوروبي لمراقبة الانتخابات النيابية اللبنانية 2009



Observers will observe the entire election process including the legal framework and its implementation, the work of the election administration, campaign activities, the conduct of the media, voting, ballot counting and the tabulation of results, as well as the handling of possible complaints and appeals.

Election observation is an important part of the EU's policy of promoting human rights and democracy throughout the world. The EU Election Observation Mission will work independently to offer an impartial, balanced and informed analysis of the elections. All observers will remain neutral and will work under an internationally accepted code of conduct and in accordance with the Lebanese code of conduct for international election observers.

The mission looks forward to meeting with government officials, election administrators, political parties, candidates, civil society representatives and the media.

A preliminary assessment of the mission's findings will be issued by Mr Salafranca immediately after the elections at a press conference in Beirut. A more comprehensive final report, including recommendations for future elections, will be published within two months of the end of the electoral process.

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For further information, please contact:

Ms Nuala Haughey, EU EOM Press Officer

Telephone: +961 (01) 808802 ext 35

Fax: +961 (01) 808803

Mobile: +961 71 265749

Email: [nuala.haughey@eueomlebanon.org](mailto:nuala.haughey@eueomlebanon.org)

Website: [www.eueom-lebanon.org](http://www.eueom-lebanon.org)