
Perspectives for Stability and Democracy in Pakistan

Project

Duration

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How can we foster democratic development in Pakistan? What role could the European Union play? These questions were addressed in a joint workshop of the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs and Delegation for Relations with South Asia on 30 March 2011 in Brussels that was organized by Ecologic Institute. The European Parliament has recently published the thoroughly reviewed report of the workshop, in which Ecologic Institute has compiled key insights and policy recommendations.

Pakistan continues to be a fledgling democracy in transition. Civil and democratic institutions need time to anchor in society, especially as actors from the security community and extremist groups try to destabilise civil institutions. The complexities of the Pakistani situation make it difficult to understand the different powers at play. The definite substantial challenge is to cope with continuing tensions between civil and military rule.

The European Parliament invited three distinguished experts, Ayesha Siddiqa (writer), Amir Khan Goraya (Democracy Reporting International) and Gareth Price (Chatham House) to address such issues as domestic socio-political aspects, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, regional relations and the potential contribution of the EU to stability, democracy and socio-economic development.

Their recommendations included:

- The EU should consolidate long-term support for strengthening democracy in Pakistan by formulating a strong electoral framework, strengthening of the Pakistani Parliament as an institution and supporting local self-governance and devolution of power.
- Support should be given in a way that fosters democratic developments from within and that gives Pakistani society the capability and scope to develop a national self-concept based on provincial autonomy and recognition of ethnic differences.
- Alternative discourses from within are needed to nurture the formation of a democratic identity and to allow for a more nuanced perception of the present conflicts and the parties involved. Training for journalists is needed to raise professional and ethical standards, including the support of investigative journalism and the promotion of balanced reporting on regional topics.

The [report](#) [pdf, 1.42 MB, English] is available for download.

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[European Parliament](#) (EP), International

Partner

[Ecologic Institute](#), Germany

Team

Dr. Ralph Piotrowski
Sandra Naumann
[Dr. Nils Meyer-Ohlendorf](#)

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