

Thursday, March 27, 2008



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EU welcomes Bhutan election

BRUSSELS: The EU Commission Wednesday hailed Bhutan's first parliamentary elections, saying the polls in the tiny Himalayan kingdom met international standards despite falling short "in certain areas".

"I am pleased to hear that the first-ever national assembly elections in Bhutan have demonstrated a clear commitment of the Bhutanese people and state institutions to support democratic change," said EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner in a statement. The world's newest democracy gave a landslide election win on Monday to the Druk Phuensum Tshogpa (DPT) or Bhutan United Party, led by ex-premier Jigmi Thinley.

The party won 44 of 47 seats in the lower house in a landmark vote proposed by Bhutan's royals in a move to peacefully transform the tiny Buddhist nation, wedged between massive neighbours India and China, into a constitutional monarchy. The near 80-percent voter turnout "gives an unquestionable support, but responsibility as well, to the next government in its job to continue the democratic process by enacting the new constitution and other fundamental legislation in favour of the people of Bhutan," said Ferrero-Waldner. afp

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