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Libya

Successful elections a step in the right direction

The results from the first elections since the overthrow of Col Gaddafi and Libya's first free elections in fifty years have been announced. While the outcome of the elections for the 200-member national assembly - which includes 80 seats reserved for political parties and 120 seats for independents - is not yet clear, the elections represent an important step for democracy in Libya.

Commenting on the election, Greens/EFA foreign affairs spokesperson **Franziska Brantner** stated:

"In their first elections in 50 years, Libyans have proven wrong any sceptics saying there was no basis for democracy in their country."

The high turnout and variety of parties elected demonstrates the clear desire for real change and the determination to reject any return to tyranny. However, ensuring the democratic transition continues will require vigilance, according to **Franziska Brantner**:

"To lead the country through its process of transition, the new government will need to reconcile people who recently met in battle and to overcome many roadblocks such as in reforming the justice and police sectors."

The EU must now lay the ground for productive cooperation with Libya. The first democratically elected government of Libya will have to be a government of reconciliation, unity and inclusion, irrespective of tribal or regional affiliations. At the same time it will have to ensure human rights are respected and the justice sector is equipped to investigate past crimes as well as those committed by both sides during the revolution.

Female candidates were included on many party lists and there was a strong turnout of women voters, but few were elected. The newly elected politicians will have to make sure women can continue to play an active role in shaping Libya's future and that their rights are guaranteed. Expanding on this, **Franziska Brantner** adds:

"We must do our best to secure this process. With a European fund for women giving out small sums fast and effectively, much good can be done with little money. The elections were important and reassuring, but much remains to do."

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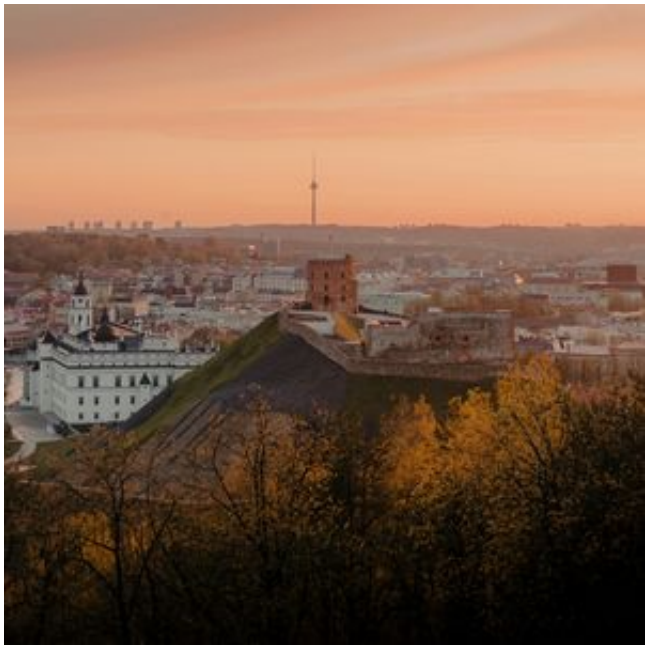
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