

# 9<sup>th</sup> MAY 2014 EUROPE DAY EUROPE IN THE WORLD



Head of delegation:  
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**The Republic of the Maldives**

## Priorities

Democratic transition began in 2008 with the adoption of a new Constitution and the first multi-party democratic Presidential elections in 2008.

The EU played a key role in this reform process. However, Maldives is a new democracy and still faces substantial political, economic and institutional challenges, including in its judiciary. The 'transition of power' in 2012 opened a period of political uncertainty which continued until the controversial presidential elections, concluded in November 2013.

The EU is committed to strengthening the country's democratic institutions and assisting the country in confronting the challenges Maldives is facing.

Maldives is also one of the pilot countries for the EU democracy support; a specific democracy profile and an action plan were prepared in 2013.

## Top 3 Facts

**The final round of the Maldives' Presidential elections** was held on 16 November 2013. Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom – half brother of former President Maumoon Gayoom, who ruled Maldives for 30 years - was elected as the new President of Maldives. The EU deployed an Election Expert Mission to report on the technical aspects of the elections process. The EU Diplomatic Watch also monitored the elections process.

**Local Council Elections were held on 18 January 2014.**

**Parliamentary elections are scheduled for 22 March 2014.** An EU Elections Observation Mission (EU EOM) is being deployed to assess whether the electoral process is conducted in accordance with the national legal framework and with the international standards for elections. There are concerns on the role of the judiciary in the process.

## Did you know?

Maldives is an archipelago of **1,192 coral** islands located in the Indian Ocean; it stretches over an area of 100,000 sq km; its Exclusive Economic Zone is just over 900,000 sq km in size.

Maldives' population is about **338,400**, only 1/6 of these islands are inhabited. The highest point of land is just over 2 meters.

Maldives was turned into a Sultanate in 1153 when the Buddhist King Dhovemi converted to Islam. Prior to that the Maldives was a Buddhist Kingdom, a Hindu Kingdom and before that a matriarchal society with each atoll ruled by a chief queen.

Maldives remained a British crown protectorate until **1953** when the sultanate was suspended and the First Republic was declared under the short-lived presidency of Muhammad Amin Didi.

**In 2014**, the first woman was elected as the chair of a Local Council.

Maldives has the highest ratios of female-led households in the world at **47 percent**, largely due to migration of the spouse for work.

**More than 1 in 3 women** (34.6%) aged 15-49 reported experiencing at least one form of physical or sexual violence, or both, during their lifetime.





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## Main links:

Delegation of the European Union to Sri Lanka and the Maldives & Press corner:

[http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/sri\\_lanka/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/sri_lanka/index_en.htm)

[http://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/sri\\_lanka/documents/press\\_corner/20120919\\_en.pdf](http://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/sri_lanka/documents/press_corner/20120919_en.pdf)

Maldivian Government:

<http://www.presidentymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=4>

New EU Ambassador presents credentials to the President 13 February 2014, Ref: 2014-108:

<http://www.presidentymaldives.gov.mv/Index.aspx?lid=11&dcid=14005>