Sierra Leone: the European Union to observe the elections of 17 November

Brussels, 03 October 2012 – Invited by the authorities of Sierra Leone, the European Union will observe the Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Council Elections of 17 November. The Chief Observer of the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM), Mr Richard Howitt, arrived in Freetown today (3 October) and will introduce the EU EOM at a press conference taking place in Freetown on 5 October.

Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and the Security Policy, declared on this occasion:

“The forthcoming elections in Sierra Leone, the third since the end of the civil war, will be very significant for the stability and the democratic development of the country. I hope that all state institutions will prove that they have the capacity to organize credible and transparent elections, and that all stakeholders will engage in the process in a peaceful and democratic way.

The EU is a longstanding partner of Sierra Leone and has also been providing electoral support to the state authorities that carry the responsibility for organizing these elections. In order to strengthen citizens’ confidence, the independent EU Election Observation Mission led by Richard Howitt, Member of the European Parliament, is now being deployed to follow the electoral process. I wish to Mr Howitt and his team all success in their assessment of these elections.”

A core team of six EU election analysts arrived in Freetown on 27 September. In the coming days and weeks they will be joined by 28 long-term observers and 50 short-term observers from 27 EU member states, as well as from Norway. The EU EOM will also be joined, shortly before election-day, by a delegation from the European Parliament. Altogether, about a hundred EU observers will be in the country for the forthcoming elections.
Shortly after Election Day, the mission will issue a preliminary statement of its initial findings at a press conference in Freetown. A more comprehensive final report, including recommendations for future elections, will be presented by Mr Howitt during a return visit.

For more information:

Election Observation mission website:
http://www.eueom.eu/rdc2011

EEAS website on election observation: