



Brussels, 04 October 2013
131004/01

P R E S S R E L E A S E

European Union to observe 24 November General Elections in the Republic of Honduras

The European Union, responding to an invitation by the Honduran authorities, is deploying an Election Observation Mission (EOM) for the General Elections of 24 November. Chief Observer of the EU EOM, Member of the European Parliament Ms Ulrike Lunacek, will arrive in Tegucigalpa on 14 October.

Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, made the following statement today:

"The forthcoming election in Honduras will be a key step forward in the democratic consolidation of the country. I am confident that all stakeholders will engage peacefully in the process.

The EU is a longstanding partner of Honduras, and, following an invitation by the authorities, I have decided to deploy a European Union Electoral Observation Mission. I am confident that, under the leadership of MEP Ulrike Lunacek, the EOM will strengthen the transparency of and reinforce the confidence in the election process. I wish Ms Lunacek and her team all success in their assignment".

A core team of eight EU election analysts arrived in Tegucigalpa on 3 October. They will gradually be joined by 22 long-term observers and 40 short-term observers from 27 EU member states, as well as from Norway. The EU EOM will also be joined by a delegation from the European Parliament. Altogether, about 80 EU observers will be in the country for the forthcoming elections.

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Shortly after election day, the mission will issue a preliminary statement of its initial findings at a press conference in Tegucigalpa. The mission will remain in Honduras to observe the final counting of votes and any complaint procedures, and to prepare a full report including recommendations to improve future electoral processes. Ms Lunacek will present the final report during a later visit to Honduras.
