

Brussels, 13 February 2006

European Union deploys Election Observation Mission to Uganda for Presidential and Parliamentary Elections

The European Commission has deployed an EU Election Observation Mission (EOM) for the parliamentary and presidential elections, scheduled to take place on 23 February, following an invitation from the Electoral Commission of Uganda. The EU EOM is led by Mr. Max van den Berg, Member of the European Parliament and Vice-Chairman of the Committee on Development.

Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, said: *“As the first multi-party elections for more than a quarter of a century, these elections are critical for the future of Uganda. A whole range of democratic institutions are being tested, and depending on their performance the country could make significant steps forward or backwards in the development and consolidation of democracy. In view of this, I have decided to deploy an EU EOM to support and undertake a comprehensive assessment of the entire election process.”*

The EOM Core Team consists of the Chief Observer and seven election experts. Eight Long Term Observers (LTOs) have also been deployed since 1 February to assess the campaign period and pre-election preparations around the country. Over 60 Short Term Observers (STOs) will be deployed over the election period to observe voting, counting and the compilation of results. They will be joined by a delegation of Members of the European Parliament, as well as locally recruited STOs from EU Member States.

EU Election Observation Missions are an important instrument for building confidence in the democratic processes of a country and are deployed in line with the EU's commitment to promote democracy, human rights and the respect for the rule of law. The EU has made available €2 million, from the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), for this mission.

The European Commission is one of Uganda's most important partners and is providing funds to assist the country in implementing its development policy reform agenda. Assistance is being provided to a number of important sectors, including road infrastructure, rural development, governance, democracy and public finance management

For additional information, see also:

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/eidhr/index_en.htm

EU Election Assistance & Observation:

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/human_rights/eu_election_ass_observ/index.htm