

# BEYOND ELECTION DAY

BEST PRACTICES FOR FOLLOW-UP TO  
EU ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSIONS





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FOLLOW-UP TO EU ELECTION  
OBSERVATION MISSIONS



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# FOREWORD

Democracy is a daily exercise, well beyond election day. It is about equal rights for all voters, and a level playing field for parties; it is about freedom of speech, a diverse and independent media; it is about a lively civil society, and the daily participation of citizens from all backgrounds to a country's public life.

This is something we Europeans understand very well. We know it from our history, and we are putting it into practice in our foreign policy, every day. We believe that only democracy, the rule of law and human rights can make a State or a society "resilient": only when institutions are credible and accountable, they are strong and stable against external shocks. Resilience is an essential component of our foreign policy, and it has become a core concept both in the European Union's Global Strategy for foreign and security policy and in the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. This is the European way - to foreign policy, to democracy, to a more peaceful region in a more cooperative global order. And the European way includes our commitment to democracy "beyond election day."

The European Union has an unparalleled set of foreign policy instruments, particularly when we look at our support to democracy worldwide. This brochure shows the impressive variety of tools at our disposal, to help our partners strengthen their democratic systems and improve the quality of their elections.

Electoral Observation Missions are the most obvious example. No election is perfect and improvements are always necessary: as the world changes, our democracies need to adapt - for instance taking into account the role of social media, new forms of campaign financing, new election technologies, just to name a few. The presence of international observers can help all countries improve their election framework: let us not forget that all the European Union's Member States systematically invite the OSCE/ODIHR to observe their elections.

Since the adoption of a standard election observation methodology in 2000, the European Union has deployed 138 Electoral Observation Missions and Election Assessment Teams, in 64 countries around the globe. In addition, from 2008 onwards, we have deployed 81 smaller *Electoral Expert Missions* and, from 2011, eleven Election Follow-up Missions - an important step forward in our commitment beyond election day.

The EU deploys election observers and experts not only to contribute to the transparency of elections, but also to provide all relevant actors with an informed assessment of the process. Our standard methodology is characterised by neutrality, independence, long-term presence and non-interference, strictly in line with the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation.

Democracy can never be imported from the outside: it has to be nurtured everyday and it will only grow strong if deeply owned by a country's citizens. This is why it is so important to engage with local voters, associations and institutions. The recommendations submitted by election observers can contribute to domestic reforms agendas and to national debates: our engagement with local authorities goes well beyond the moment when the ballots are counted.

This brochure describes the crucial role of political dialogues with governments, of continuous contacts at all institutional levels – including through our Special Representative for human rights,

- of our parliamentary diplomacy, carried out by European and national Members of Parliament. We cooperate with all regional and international organisations, from the United Nations to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe, the African Union, the Organisation of American States, ASEAN and sub-regional organisations. And beyond institutions, we have strong channels for dialogue with citizen observer groups and civil society organisations: they are powerful drivers of positive change, a great resource for any democracy.

The European Union can engage effectively at all these different levels - the local, the national, the regional and the global. Not only our diplomatic network is unparalleled: we are the largest humanitarian donor worldwide; the professionalism of our civilian experts is recognised at all corners of the globe; we are considered a credible and reliable power by all our partners. We have so many strings in our bow, to promote electoral reforms and capacity building in support of democracy. We can always accompany our political initiatives with technical assistance and financial support. The combined strength of our Member States - in terms of resources, expertise and diplomatic clout - is immense, when we all work towards the same goals. This list of best practices can offer concrete ideas for greater coherence and cooperation in all our external actions to strengthen democratic elections across the world.

This brochure is the result of our current work to create better synergies among European institutions as we support democracy worldwide. It can help improve institutional cooperation inside the European Union, with our international partners and with partner countries. With its focus on best practices and successful follow-up initiatives, it can serve as a tool for our EU staff, especially in Delegations, as well as for any practitioner in electoral matters.

A large part of our societies - both inside and outside Europe - feels that "the system" is not working for them. Many people have the impression that they are not listened to, that they do not have a say, nor a role in the system. They believe the institutions are not working for them and, as a consequence, they are losing trust in the institutions themselves. This feeling of exclusion is one of the great enemies of our democracies. Credible, competitive and inclusive elections are an essential first step to improve our democracies, and save our democracies.

**Federica Mogherini**

High Representative of the Union  
for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Vice-President of the European Commission





# INTRODUCTION

Election Observation Missions (EOMs) are a highly visible demonstration of the European Union (EU)'s commitment to supporting democratisation and promoting respect for human rights across the world. EU EOMs' immediate goals are to strengthen confidence in the elections, deter fraud, and provide an informed and factual assessment of an election process. Their longer-term objectives aim at improving the overall election framework and the context in which elections are held, strengthening the independence and accountability of state institutions and enhancing the resilience of partner countries through supporting good governance. The recommendations issued by EOMs can be instrumental in improving future elections and, more broadly, can be a crucial element in the deepening of democracy.

The EU is committed to following up EU and OSCE/ODIHR EOM recommendations systematically and has for several years undertaken a wide range of actions to advance and promote these recommendations as well as those made by EOMs organised by our partners. *The second Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2015-2019)*<sup>1</sup> requires consolidating best practices for leveraging EU and OSCE/ODHIR EOM recommendations in EU and EU Member States political dialogues and democracy support activities.

The main purposes of this brochure are to raise awareness of the broad range of EU tools to follow up on the recommendations of EU and OSCE/ODIHR EOMs and Election Expert Missions (EEMs)<sup>2</sup>, to enable staff in EU institutions, both at headquarters and in Delegations, to apply the good practices and consider how successful examples highlighted in the brochure can be replicated elsewhere. The brochure can also be useful to EU Member States and contribute to further enhance effective cooperation on EOM follow-up and strengthen the EU's partnerships with other organisations working in elections, human rights, civil society, development, democratisation and peace-building. It is hoped that it will also be useful to other stakeholders including state authorities in partner countries, political parties and civil society organisations (CSOs).

This brochure presents the political and operational tools used by the EU at headquarters and in the field, where EU Delegations have been actively engaging with the authorities to support the implementation of EOM recommendations. The tools include: political and other formal dialogues, operational tools including programming instruments, the deployment of purpose-designed visits and missions, public diplomacy and work in international fora. In addition, the brochure highlights the important contribution that the European Parliament (EP) makes in promoting the implementation of EOM recommendations.

The brochure also showcases a series of case studies that share Delegations' experience of how political dialogues and operational tools have been used effectively and how the



EU institutions have worked together to support meaningful electoral reforms. It is hoped that these case studies will be particularly helpful to those working on electoral reform, democracy support and human rights to think broadly about how follow-up to EOM recommendations can be incorporated in advocacy and programming work.

The EU's international governmental and non-governmental partners are also actively engaged in following up on electoral recommendations and other activities aimed at improving electoral processes. This brochure also examines initiatives by these partner organisations that can inform and inspire the EU's approach to EOM follow-up where appropriate.

Nevertheless, despite the implementation of various good practices, challenges to the implementation of recommendations remain. These are partly related to the specific political contexts in partner countries but also relate to the need to further improve the utilisation of the tools available for the implementation of recommendations. This brochure explores how systematic follow-up by EU actors can help to overcome these challenges.



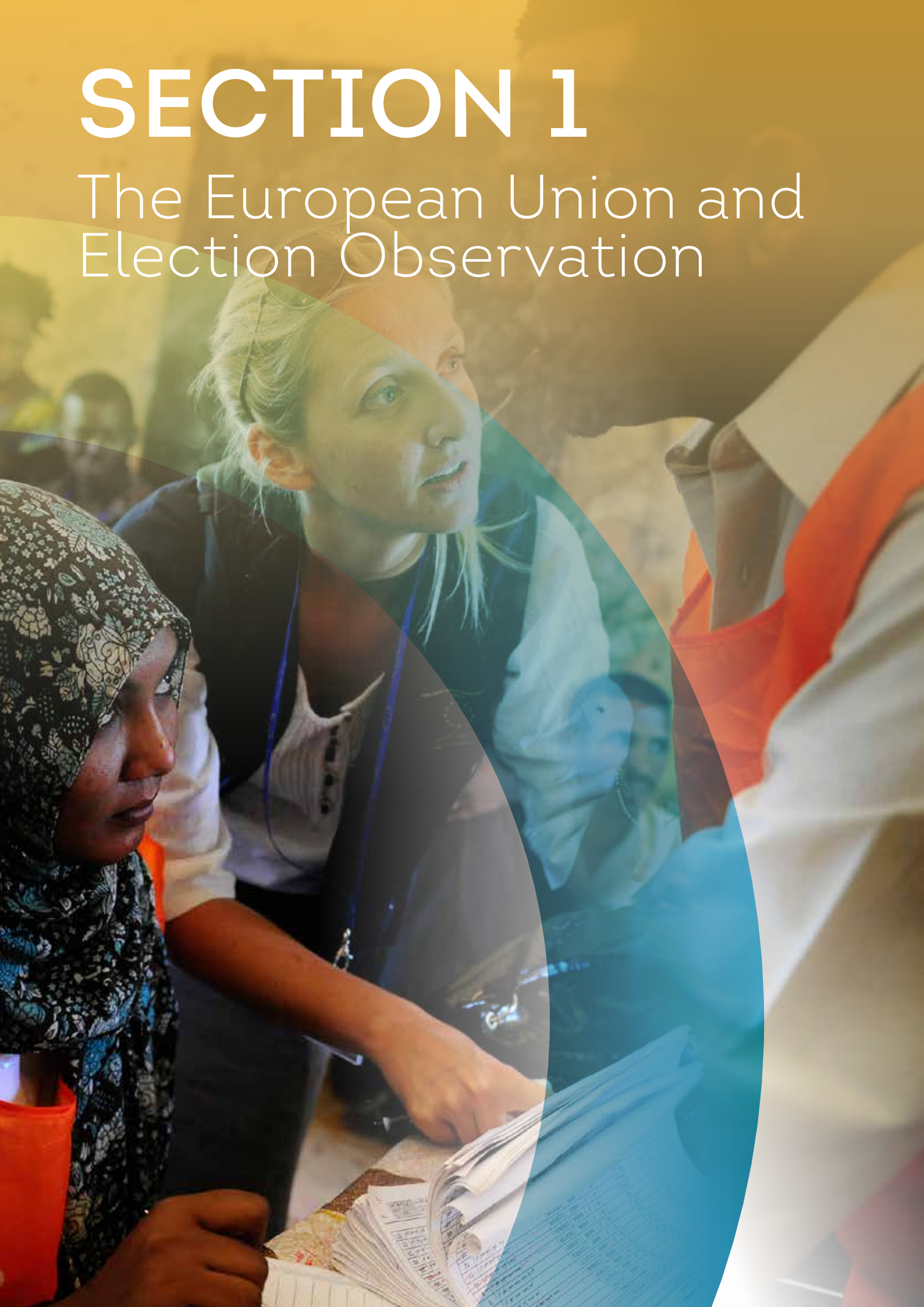
Polling Station in Mali, 2013. Photo by Ezequiel Scagnetti

1. Annex to the Council conclusions on the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2015 – 2019, adopted by the Council on 20 July 2015.
2. In cases when conditions for deploying a fully-fledged EU EOM cannot be met, but it is nevertheless deemed useful to closely follow an election process, the EU may decide to deploy an Election Expert Mission (EEM) or an Election Assessment Team (EAT).



# SECTION 1

## The European Union and Election Observation



# SECTION 1

## 1.1 WHY OBSERVE ELECTIONS?

Election observation is an important part of the EU's wider policy of support for democracy, the rule of law and human rights. Elections provide the means for the people's will to be freely expressed when choosing their government. Governing institutions enjoy democratic legitimacy when they have been granted the authority by the people to govern in the name of the people, and be accountable for the exercise of that authority, through genuine and periodic elections. However, genuine can only take place when all citizens, without discrimination, are able to enjoy their fundamental freedoms and political rights, including freedom of expression, association, assembly and movement.



“An effective democratic system needs regular, inclusive, transparent and credible elections. This is why the European Union's election observation missions and the election assistance programmes are a fundamental part of our action to promote democracies, human rights and civil society participation worldwide.”

Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the  
Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,  
Vice-President of the Commission<sup>3</sup>

Election observation provides a comprehensive, independent and impartial assessment of an electoral process and can enhance transparency and accountability. This helps to promote public confidence in the electoral process and may serve to promote electoral participation and mitigate the potential for election-related conflicts, thus contributing to maintaining sustainable peace and stability. In this regard, election observation by the EU can complement and enhance EU crisis management and peace-building initiatives in partner countries.

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3. Preface to the Handbook for European Union Election Observation, 3rd Edition (2016).

While the EU believes in the value of international election observation, ultimately it is only the people of the host country who can determine the credibility and legitimacy of an election process.

## 1.2 THE EU AND ELECTION OBSERVATION

The EU deployed its first EOM in 1993. This was followed by several other missions throughout the 1990s, always organised in an ad hoc manner. In 2000, in recognition of its growing role and increasing support for election observation activities, the European Commission adopted the Communication on EU Election Assistance and Observation.<sup>4</sup>

The Communication, which was subsequently endorsed by the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament (EP), establishes a methodology for EU observation that is based on an impartial, independent and long-term assessment of an electoral process, in accordance with international standards for democratic elections. This Communication remains a key document, and enables the EU to take a strategic and consistent approach in its election observation activities including a policy on deploying missions where observation is complementary to the EU's efforts in supporting democracy and human rights, or where the EU is engaged in post-conflict stabilisation.



EU EOM to Paraguay, Core Team 2013

The deployment of an EOM should take place only if EU observers have the potential to bring added value and make a constructive contribution to the electoral process. EU EOMs are only deployed to countries where an invitation to observe has been received from the State and/or its electoral authorities. At the same time, the decision whether to send a mission should not be seen as a pre-emptive judgment as to whether an election will be in line with international standards.

4. [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/communication-eu-election-assistance-and-observation-com2000191-20000411\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/communication-eu-election-assistance-and-observation-com2000191-20000411_en.pdf)



The EU is committed to increasing cooperation and links with other international bodies involved in election observation. Hence it was among the first endorsers of the *Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation* (DoP). Commemorated in 2005 in New York under the auspices of the United Nations (UN), the DoP has established a universal code of practice and has become the ‘gold standard’ for international election observation.<sup>5</sup>

## 1.3 THE EU: A COMPREHENSIVE AND LONG-TERM APPROACH

### 1.3.1 EU ELECTION OBSERVATION

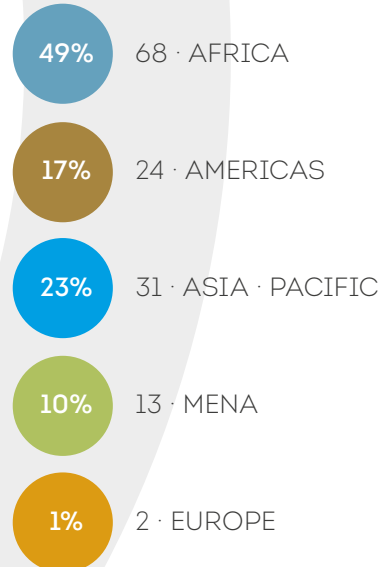
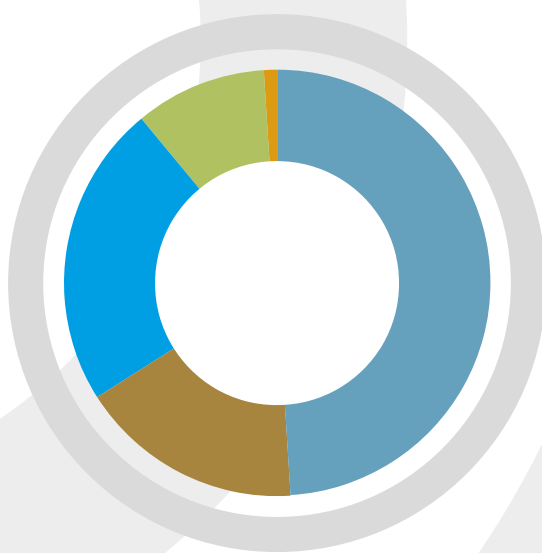
Since the development of a consistent approach for EU support to electoral processes and a methodology for election observation in 2000, the EU has deployed 138 EU EOMs and *Election Assessment Teams* (EATs) in 64 countries around the globe. In addition, from 2008 onwards, the EU has deployed 81 smaller *Electoral Expert Missions* (EEM) and from 2011, 11 *Election Follow-up Missions* (EFM).<sup>6</sup> In some countries, several missions were deployed to assess successive electoral processes.

GENUINE CONSISTENCY  
ELECTIONS OBSERVATION  
ADDED INTERNATIONAL  
VALUE LONG-TERM STANDARDS  
TRANSPARENCY  
ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION

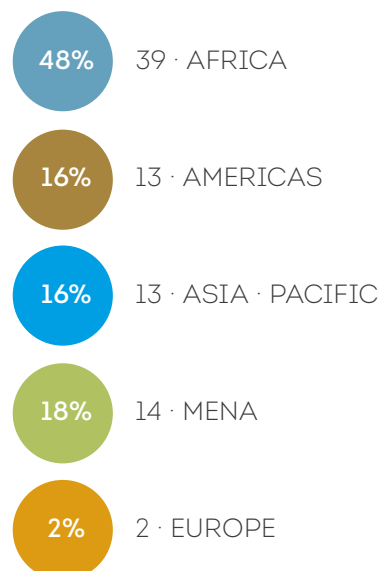
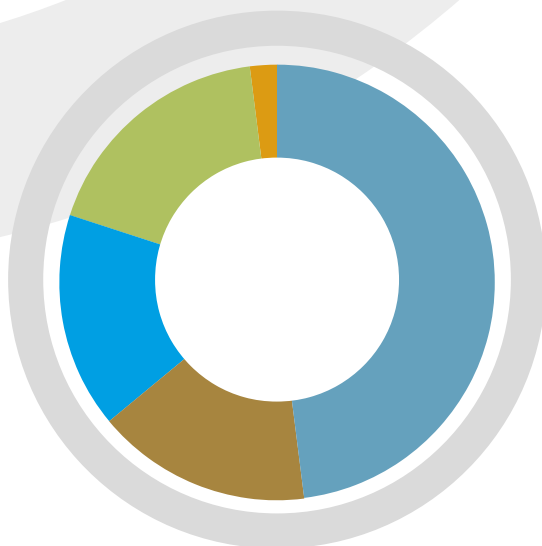
5. The DoP has been endorsed by 52 intergovernmental and non-governmental election observer organisations including the EU, the CoE, the UN Secretariat, the OSCE/ODIHR, the OAS, the AU, the PACE, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Carter Center, the NDI, EISA, International IDEA, IFES, and various NGO networks from Asia, Latin America and Europe. See further: [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/6699/declaration-principles-international-election-observation\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/6699/declaration-principles-international-election-observation_en)

6. Up to April 2017.

## 138 EU EOMS and EATS IN 2000-2017



## 81 EU EEMS IN 2008-2017



The EU deploys the following types of electoral missions, all of which are funded by the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR).<sup>7</sup>

## EOMs

ELECTION  
OBSERVATION  
MISSIONS

EU EOMs are generally deployed for 6–10 weeks to assess all aspects of an electoral process. They are composed of a Chief Observer (CO) and a Core Team of experts based in the capital, and long-term observers (LTOs) deployed to regional centres. Short-term observers (STOs) are then deployed to assess the polling and counting procedures.

## EATs

ELECTION  
ASSESSMENT  
TEAMS

The EU has deployed a small number of EATs where it is not possible to deploy an EOM. EATs are composed of a core team of experts, and may have a regional-level component, but no STOs are deployed.

## EEMs

ELECTION  
EXPERT  
MISSIONS

EU EEMs are usually composed of two or three election experts tasked to assess specific aspects of an election process. On average, they are deployed for up to two months over a period before, during and after an election.

## EFMs

ELECTION  
FOLLOW-UP  
MISSIONS

EU EFMs are deployed during an election cycle to assess the degree of implementation of EOM recommendations. EFMs are led by the CO from the previous EOM or a senior EU official, and are composed of officials and election experts.

Long term election observation in the 57 participating States of the *Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe* (OSCE) is undertaken by the *Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights* (ODIHR).<sup>8</sup> Because the EU and the OSCE/ODIHR use a comparable methodology, the EU does not usually observe elections in the OSCE region. Nevertheless, the EP often deploys election observation delegations which cooperate closely with the OSCE/ODIHR and observer groups from the Parliamentary Assemblies of the OSCE and the *Council of Europe* (CoE). Each EU Member State is also a participating State of the OSCE and the CoE, and nationals of EU Member States almost always serve as election observers on OSCE/ODIHR EOMs.

The OSCE/ODIHR is systematically invited to observe elections in EU Member States, thus holding themselves to the same standards that they encourage others to adhere.

7. See: <http://www.eidhr.eu/>

8. See: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/193741>



### 1.3.2 EU ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE

In addition to being a leading actor in the field of election observation, the EU is also one of the main providers of electoral assistance through technical and material support to electoral processes in many partner countries.

Election observation and electoral assistance are complementary in the support of democracy. In the last three years, the EU has implemented election assistance projects for more than EUR 180 million in 39 countries. This assistance - which is tailored towards implementing long-term support strategies over the electoral cycle - aims to improve electoral processes and strengthen implementing capacities of national stakeholders. Additional support is provided for the development of representative and transparent democratic institutions at the service of the citizens.

INSTRUMENT	FINANCIAL SUPPORT (EUR)	PERIOD	PROJECTS SUPPORTED
EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT FUND	180 million	2010 · 2017	Over 125
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION INSTRUMENT	34 million	2010 · 2017	49
EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD INSTRUMENT & EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP INSTRUMENT	17 million	2010 · 2017	32
INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION	1.2 million	2010 · 2014	4
EUROPEAN INSTRUMENT FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS	15 million	2010 · 2017	60
THE INSTRUMENT CONTRIBUTING TO STABILITY AND PEACE	65 million	2010 · 2017	50

### 1.3.3 EOM REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An EU EOM final report details the mission's overall findings and conclusions on the election process, and its assessment of the degree to which the election was conducted in accordance with international standards.

The recommendations offered by EU EOMs in their final reports aim to improve future elections, to strengthen democratic institutions, and to enhance the wider process of democratisation.

Typically, recommendations cover a wide range of issues including respect for fundamental freedoms and the electoral environment; the legal framework and its implementation; election management; the freedom of media; access to balanced media coverage and transparency of media ownership; the participation of women and other politically under-represented groups, such as minorities, people with disabilities, and internally displaced persons (IDPs); as well as polling processes and the use of informational technologies. Increasingly, political party and campaign financing, misuse of administrative resources, candidate selection, internal party democracy and social media play an important role in election campaigns. EOM recommendations are now also addressing these issues.

## FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS ELECTORAL ENVIRONMENT LEGAL FRAMEWORK ELECTION MANAGEMENT FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA

EU EOMs are independent and therefore well-placed to provide insight on where electoral reforms and assistance are necessary, feasible, and useful. Hence recommendations from EU and OSCE/ODIHR EOMs, as well as those of EU EEMs, are considered in the design of EU's electoral assistance, human rights programmes, support to civil society organisations, democracy and good governance programmes.<sup>9</sup>

The European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Commission services work closely with partner countries to follow up on the recommendations of EU EOMs, especially in relation to i) strengthening the institutional capacity of election management bodies, ii) developing the long term capacity of the local civil society and media to report on elections and electoral reform as well as iii) supporting country-led actions conducive to raising citizens' trust in the electoral process and in the functioning of democratic institutions.

9. A comprehensive overview of the role of the European Commission in election assistance is provided by the *European Commission Methodological Guide on Election Assistance*. [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/election-assistance-methodological-guide\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/election-assistance-methodological-guide_en.pdf)

## 1.4 THE EU ELECTORAL SUPPORT ACTORS

Various EU actors play complementary roles in promoting the follow up to EOM recommendations, while ensuring that their approach is coherent and coordinated

### 1.4.1 THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNION FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY POLICY / VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION

The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission (HR/VP) has the overall political responsibility for setting the annual EU election priorities, i.e. the countries where the EU might deploy election observers if invited. After consulting EU Member States and the EP, the HR/VP, decides on the deployment and oversees the overall functioning of EU EOMs. The EU EOM CO is appointed by the HR/VP after consulting the EP.

### 1.4.2 THE EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE

The HR/VP is assisted by the EEAS, which leads the programming of election observation activities and the implementation of election observation policy. It closely follows the political, methodological and technical aspects of EOMs and coordinates with Commission services to ensure coherence between electoral observation and electoral assistance. Jointly with the relevant Commission services and Member States, the EEAS is also responsible for the follow-up to EOM recommendations. Moreover, the EEAS and the Commission services are in charge of EU policies to support democracy, the rule of law and good governance, as well as to promote human rights in EU external actions in coordination with Member States and the EP.



Federica Mogherini

### 1.4.3 THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The Commission services and the EEAS actively promote greater synergies between the EU political action and cooperation. In this spirit, EU EOM recommendations are key factors for the European Commission when designing electoral assistance and democracy support projects.

The Commission's *Foreign Policy Instrument's* service (FPI) ensures the effective operational and financial implementation of electoral missions, which comprise fully-fledged EOMs, EATs, EEMs and EFMs. Having the duty of care for all mission members, FPI oversees the security aspects of missions in cooperation with externally-recruited experts deployed on the ground. FPI also leads the recruitment process for the members of electoral missions (Service Provider, Experts, Deputy Chief Observer, Core Team and observers) in collaboration with the EEAS and Member State Focal Points (every focal point is responsible for submitting candidates to become election observers in EOM). FPI supports the follow-up process to EOMs by utilising the appropriate instruments in the electoral mission toolbox, for instance via financing studies and/or small-scale missions, and via mobilising externally-recruited experts.

The EEAS supports the HR/VP in fulfilling his/her mandate to conduct the *Common Foreign and Security Policy* (CFSP) of the Union and to ensure the consistency of the Union's external action<sup>10</sup>, including in the areas of development policy, democracy support, the rule of law, good governance and the respect of human rights. As part of the EU external action, the Commission's *Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development* (DG DEVCO) is responsible for international cooperation and development policy, and for delivering aid globally, including in the policy areas indicated above.

In its responsibilities on Enlargement negotiations, the Commission's *DG for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations* monitors progress and provides guidance to candidate countries and potential candidates in complying with the political criteria for EU membership. This implies bringing the conduct of elections closer in line with European commitments and other international obligations and standards for democratic elections. Through pre-accession assistance the EU furthermore assists these partners to build their capacity to adopt and implement EU law, as well as European and international standards, including those on the conduct of democratic and genuine elections. EOM recommendations offer an important frame of reference to monitor compliance and provide assistance.

In the context of the EU's relations with its neighbours in the East and the South, the EU works to promote stability at Europe's borders and assist neighbouring countries to develop stable democratic institutions under the *European Neighbourhood Policy* (ENP). Under the ENP the EU supports country-led democratic reforms, notably those addressing recommendations of the EU and OSCE/ODIHR EOMs.

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10. Council Decision of 26 July 2010 (2010/427/EU).

#### 1.4.4 THE EU DELEGATIONS

EU Delegations are responsible for the day-to-day work in countries to follow up on EU and OSCE/ODIHR EOM and EU EEM recommendations, operating in close cooperation with the Commission and the EEAS geographical desks. They act as the main interlocutors between EU and local actors involved in the electoral process, such as the government, parliament, political parties, the *Election Management Body* (EMB), CSOs, and citizen observers. EU Delegations, in cooperation with EU Member States at the level of Heads of Missions (HoMs), have a lead role in pursuing political dialogue with the governing authorities in third countries and prepare HoMs Reports on EOM follow-up.

#### 1.4.5 THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The European Parliament plays a prominent role in election observation, through the identification of priorities, the conduct of the election observation, and the follow-up to elections. The Parliament's *Democracy Support and Elections Group* (DEG), a 15-member body co-chaired by the chairs of the *Foreign Affairs and Development Committees*, gives the EP political guidance and supervision on election observation related matters, capacity building activities and support of parliamentary democracy. It is therefore the main counterpart in the EP on all election and democracy support issues.

On identifying priorities for sending observation missions (either fully fledged ones or only expert ones), the Parliament is consulted by the HR/VP on a regular basis, and gives its opinion on the relevance and appropriateness of the proposals.

When it comes to the conduct of missions, EU EOMs are led by a Member of the European Parliament (MEP), appointed directly by the HR/VP and serving as the Chief Observer (CO). Furthermore, the EP sends a delegation of



MEP Louis Michel, Chief Observer, Mali 2013.  
Photo by Ezequiel Scagnetti



approximately seven parliamentarians as STOs, which are fully integrated into the framework of the EU EOMs.

Finally, the EP is actively engaged in the follow-up of elections. This is achieved through focused capacity building activities, mainly directed at the third country's parliament and in line with the relevant recommendations drawn in the EOM final report. It can also be done through regular contacts between the EP and its counterpart in the framework of inter-parliamentary meetings, and through visits from EP committees or EP political groups. Resolutions adopted in plenary can also shed light on elections-related matters and call on other EU institutions to take appropriate action.

#### 1.4.6 THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

In view of the political nature of election observation and to ensure EU policy coherence, the Council's *Political and Security Committee* (PSC) is consulted on the election priorities. The EEAS also regularly informs the relevant Council Working Groups on the implementation of EOMs. In addition, Member States' Focal Points propose long-term and short-term election observers, who are selected by the Commission services in collaboration with the EEAS.



European Council, Brussels, March 2017

# SECTION 2

## The European Union EOM Follow-up Policy and Practice





# SECTION 2

## 2.1 AN EVOLVING POLICY CONTEXT

The importance of the EU action in supporting democracy and human rights, including in elections, is enshrined in the Treaty on European Union (TEU), Art. 21: *“The Union’s action on the international scene shall be guided by the principles which have inspired its own creation [...] democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, [...]”*.

The EU has developed a comprehensive and evolving policy framework for election observation as set out in the following table:

DATE	POLICY DOCUMENT
APRIL 2000	The Commission Communication on EU Election Assistance and Observation
NOVEMBER 2009	The Council conclusions and the Agenda for Action on Democracy Support in the EU’s External Relations
JUNE 2012	The EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2012-2015)
APRIL 2015	The EU Action Plan on Democracy and Human Rights 2015-2019

The 2000 Communication on Election Assistance and Observation sets out the overall EU objectives and methodology to observe elections and to provide election assistance. Since its adoption, it has ensured the coherence and consistency of EU election observation activities that are firmly placed within the context of the EU democracy support policy.<sup>11</sup>

The 2009 Council conclusions on *Democracy Support in the EU’s External Relations* and the *Agenda for Action on Democracy Support* are an important milestone in the development of the EU’s policy framework on democracy support, particularly regarding EU and Member States working together more closely to achieve greater impact.<sup>12</sup>

11. [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/communication-eu-election-assistance-and-observation-com2000191-20000411\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/communication-eu-election-assistance-and-observation-com2000191-20000411_en.pdf)

12. Council conclusions on Enhancing democracy support in the EU’s external relations, 17 November 2009. See: [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/gena/111250.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/gena/111250.pdf)

The 2012 Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy established the objective to “systematise follow-up use of EU EOMs and their reports in support of the whole electoral cycle, and ensure effective implementation of their recommendations, as well as the reports of other election observation bodies (e.g. OSCE/ODIHR)”.<sup>13</sup>

“The EU’s New Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2015-2019) further emphasises the need to consolidate best practices to ensure effective follow-up to Observation Missions. Our challenge in the coming years will be to strengthen the link with the wider democracy support.”<sup>14</sup>

The Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2015-2019) calls for intensifying actions to leverage the implementation of EU EOM’s recommendations.<sup>15</sup> Its Objective 2 emphasises the importance of supporting the integrity of electoral processes through dialogue with and support to EMBs; while Objective 32 aims at maximising the impact of election observation, among other things through consolidating best practices for leveraging EU EOM and OSCE/ODIHR EOM recommendations in EU and EU Member State political dialogues and democracy support activities

The promotion of the implementation of EOM recommendations is also fully consistent with the broader policy framework in which the EU operates including the *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs), which are a cross-cutting dimension of the EU’s internal and external actions. Through its electoral support, the EU contributes to the establishment of peaceful and inclusive societies as called for by SDG 16. Moreover, consolidated democracies in which human rights are respected and the rule of law is applied, are usually also stable and secure countries.

As part of the *Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy for the European Union* (EUGS),<sup>16</sup> the EU is working to strengthen the resilience of states and societies by supporting good governance, accountable institutions, and working closely with civil society.

Improving electoral frameworks through implementing EU EOM recommendations can enhance institutions’ capacity to withstand political shocks which may occur during disputed elections.

13. [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/131181.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/131181.pdf)

14. HR/VP Federica Mogherini, Preface to the Handbook for European Union Election Observation, 3rd Edition (2016).

15. [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu\\_action\\_plan\\_on\\_human\\_rights\\_and\\_democracy\\_en\\_2.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu_action_plan_on_human_rights_and_democracy_en_2.pdf)

16. Council conclusions on the Global Strategy on the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy of 17 October 2016. The EUGS has five key priority areas: strengthening security and defence; investing in state and societal resilience; developing an integrated approach to conflicts and crises; promoting and supporting regional orders; and reinforcing global governance.

## 2.2 THE EU'S PRACTICAL APPROACH TO EOM FOLLOW-UP

The implementation of EOM recommendations often necessitates legislative changes. Some other EOM recommendations go beyond the management of elections and seek to improve the broader democratic context in which the elections are conducted, e.g. through addressing the fundamental freedoms necessary for the holding of genuine elections.

The implementation of recommendations is not merely a technical issue, but can have highly political implications which require a good understanding of the context of an election, effective diplomacy, and robust public advocacy.

### 2.2.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The *EU Agenda for Action on Democracy Support*<sup>17</sup> identifies central principles for democracy support. In recent years, democracy support programmes have been designed accordingly. Many of the guiding principles for EOM follow-up and implementation of recommendations derive from this agenda, including the need to:

- TAKE A COUNTRY-SPECIFIC APPROACH;
- ENSURE NATIONAL OWNERSHIP;
- WORK THROUGHOUT THE ELECTORAL CYCLE;
- ENSURE COHERENCE OF ACTIONS AND COORDINATION;
- ENGAGE IN INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION;
- CONDUCT MEANINGFUL DIALOGUES;
- BUILD DURABLE PARTNERSHIPS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY;
- MAINSTREAM EOM FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES USING THE FULL RANGE OF EU INSTRUMENTS;
- GIVE VISIBILITY TO EOM FOLLOW-UP WORK.

17. Annex to Council conclusions on Democracy Support in the EU's External Relations, adopted on 17 November 2009.

## COUNTRY SPECIFIC APPROACH

While the EU's engagement with a country may be specific, its commitment to the principles set out in Art. 21 TEU applies to its relations with all countries:

EU principles are global, but the strategy to advance them is tailor-made to the conditions in each country

Democracy building processes take place in a variety of contexts, and EU action on EOM follow-up is based on a deep understanding of a country's specific context and needs. A country-specific approach includes analysing a country's general political, economic, social and cultural environment, as well as its human and economic resources. The analysis draws on tools developed by various EU actors. These tools include the governance profiles for African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, Enlargement reports, HoM reports, EOM reports, reports by EU Special Representatives (EUSRs), as well as existing national analysis carried out by external actors and instruments developed in international fora such as the UN *Universal Periodic Review* (UPR).

Applying a country-specific approach to EOM follow-up also involves calibrating the type and level of EU engagement, identifying the most relevant national and local institutions and organisations with whom to engage on EOM follow-up activities, and deciding on the best mix of instruments to be utilised. The reason for the varying past success in implementation of EOM recommendations across countries may lie partly in their different political contexts. The willingness of a country's authorities to seriously consider and to implement EOM recommendations is probably the most important country-specific variable.



Timor-Leste, 2012.  
Photo by Ezequiel Scagnetti

## ● NATIONAL OWNERSHIP

“International election observation is conducted for the benefit of the people of the country holding the elections and for the benefit of the international community”

**Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation (2005)**

The EU remains committed to the principles of ownership of development strategies and programmes by partner countries. Recommendations made by the EU and other international election observer groups are often important elements of domestic reform agendas. This means that in many countries there is strong national ‘ownership’ of the recommendations.

Regardless of whether there is a willingness by a country’s government or its legislature to engage with international actors on electoral reform, many country-specific strategies focus on engaging with and supporting civil society. It is important to highlight that in almost all contexts local CSOs are engaged and visible actors in advocating for democratic reforms, including for the implementation of EOM recommendations.

**ENGAGING WITH A WIDE RANGE OF DOMESTIC ACTORS · STEP IN MYANMAR**

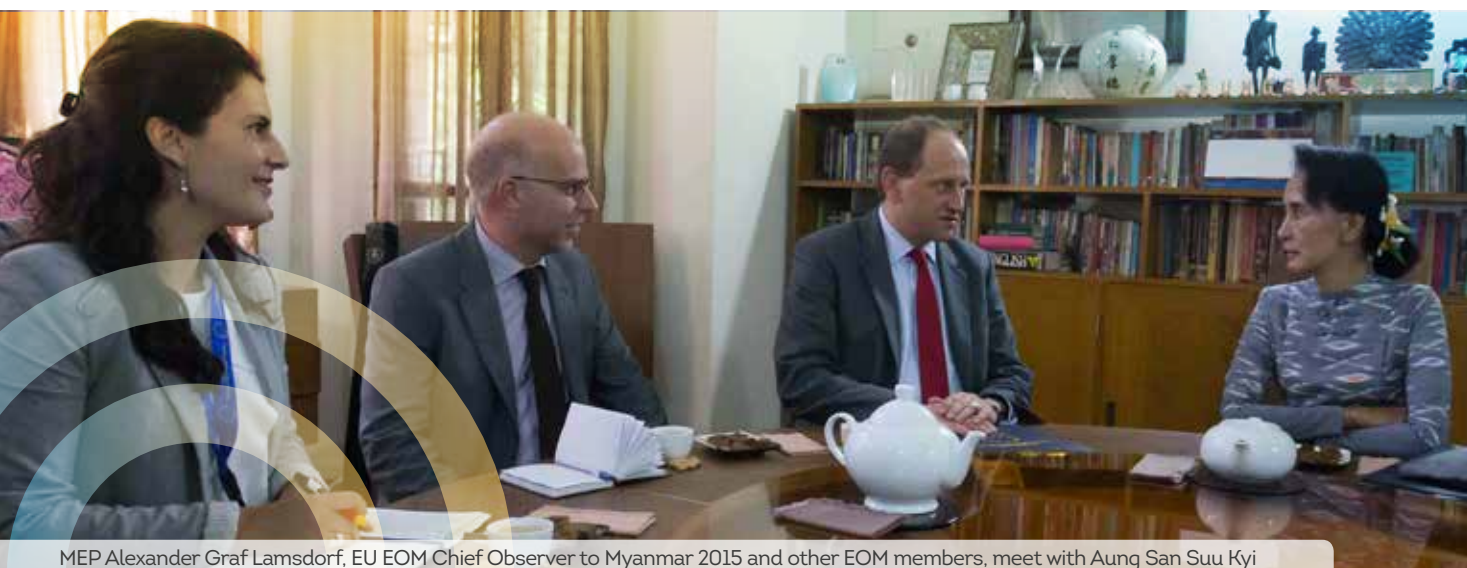
*Support to Electoral Processes and Democracy* (STEP Democracy), implemented by four international organisations and four local organisations, supports inclusive, peaceful and credible electoral processes, and enhances the capacity of stakeholders to strengthen the democratic transition in Myanmar. It is an integrated programme closely coordinated with all key national stakeholders – with the *Union Election Commission* (UEC), parliament, political parties, media organisations, and CSOs involved in domestic election observation, voter and civic education and advocacy for reform.

STEP Democracy is a unique way to bring together national and international expertise, and strongly embraces local ownership throughout all phases of the electoral cycle. It is founded on solid cooperation between international and local organisations, and with democratic stakeholders in Myanmar. Its methodologies are proved to make knowledge transfer sustainable through comprehensive technical advice, capacity development, voter education, and dialogue promotion.

First it concentrated on activities in the run up to elections of November 2015, but since its extension in 2017 it is now working to improve the electoral process *inter alia* through the implementation of EU EOM recommendations, and to further sustainable democratisation beyond the focus on electoral assistance.<sup>18</sup>

This project is financed from the *Development Cooperation Instrument* (DCI).

18. International IDEA leads a consortium including three other international organizations - the Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD), Democracy Reporting International (DRI), the Friedrich Neumann Foundation (FNF) - and four national civil society actors (Scholar Institute, Myanmar Egress, Naushawng Education Network and Hornbill).



MEP Alexander Graf Lambsdorf, EU EOM Chief Observer to Myanmar 2015 and other EOM members, meet with Aung San Suu Kyi

Engaging in EU EOM recommendations through a consultative process with national stakeholders, including Election Management Bodies, political parties and civil society organisations, in particular with citizen observer groups, fosters greater national ownership of the recommendations.

## ● WORKING THROUGHOUT THE ELECTORAL CYCLE

The *Commission Communication on EU Election Assistance and Observation* represented a decisive move away from a short-term, event-focussed approach to election observation and assistance. Since then, the EEAS, the Commission services and the EP have continued to develop a longer-term approach and provided support throughout the electoral cycle.

The Electoral Cycle approach sees elections as a succession of inter-related and correlated components that influence each other in a continuum.

In practice, this means that the EU's engagement on elections is continuous, although there is a focus on early political engagement. From an operational point of view, the focus lies on the sustainability of support, through an emphasis on capacity development. Sustainability requires that electoral policies and practices are cost-effective, realistic and meet the present and future needs of national stakeholders.

Many EOM recommendations relate not to technical mechanics of the electoral process, but rather to the environment in which elections are held. Therefore, the timeframe for some recommendations may be rather different than for others.



# CONTEXT

RULE OF LAW  
INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS  
MEDIA FREEDOM  
WILL TO REFORM  
INCLUSION  
TRANSPARENCY  
SEPARATION OF POWERS  
OPTIMIZATION  
PEACEFUL  
INTEGRITY  
UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE  
MOVEMENT  
INFORMATION  
ASSOCIATION  
MOVEMENT  
INFORMATION  
ASSOCIATION  
MOVEMENT  
INFORMATION

POST - ELECTORAL PERIOD  
REVIEW · STRATEGY · REFORM

- audits
- performance evaluation
- legal reform proposals
- archiving & research
- boundary review
- EMB reform
- voter register update
- institutional development
- professional and systems strengthening

PRE - ELECTORAL PERIOD  
PLANNING · TRAINING · INFORMATION · REGISTRATION

- funding elections
- operational planning
- staff recruitment
- electoral security
- procurement
- develop procedures
- training of officials
- voter & civic education
- stakeholder liaison
- observer accreditation
- party registration
- voter registration
- campaign finance

ELECTORAL PERIOD  
NOMINATION · CAMPAIGN · VOTING · RESULTS

- candidate nomination
- campaigning
- media access
- codes of conduct
- dispute resolution
- print ballots
- special voting
- voting
- counting
- results tabulation
- official results
- complaints & appeals



While some recommendations have a specific timeframe within an election cycle, there is never a bad time to remove unreasonable legal restrictions on fundamental freedoms.



Voting in Timor-Leste 2012. Photo by Ezequiel Scagnetti

While follow-up activity takes place over the whole of the inter-election period, the timing and scope of specific follow-up actions should be carefully considered and adjusted to specific circumstances. Potentially, the period just after the publication of the EOM final report is the most opportune moment to begin a discussion on how to address identified shortcomings, to reform priorities and to implement recommendations. However, there may not be willingness in all countries to properly consider EU EOM recommendations in the immediate post-election period – or even within one electoral cycle. Nevertheless, their relevance and usefulness is not time-limited. In some countries, EOM recommendations formed the basis for discussions on electoral reform between political parties several years after they were made.

**THE NATIONAL OWNERSHIP  
ELECTORAL CYCLE  
COUNTRY SPECIFIC APPROACH**

**DURABLE PARTNERSHIPS  
COOPERATION  
COHERENCE AND COORDINATION**

**MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE ENSURE VISIBILITY  
MAINSTREAM EOM FOLLOW-UP**

## LONG-TERM ENGAGEMENT IN CAMBODIA

Between 1998 and 2008, the EU deployed four EOMs to Cambodia. For the 2013 National Assembly Elections, the EU deployed a two-person EEM rather than a fully-fledged EOM due to insufficient progress in addressing the 2008 EU EOM recommendations.

The 2013 elections resulted in significant gains for the opposition *Cambodian National Rescue Party* (CNRP). The CNRP claimed there had been irregularities, particularly in the voter registration and voter identification process, as well as a lack of independence and impartiality of the *National Electoral Committee* (NEC).

The disputed elections caused a political crisis which was resolved through the political settlement of 22 July 2014, agreed by the governing *Cambodian People's Party* (CPP) and the CNRP. The subsequent reform process included the adoption of a revised *Law of Election for Members of the National Assembly* (LEMNA), a revised law on the NEC and a constitutional amendment to provide for the new status of the NEC.

The new legislation addressed some important EU EOM recommendations, and the 2015 EFM reported that “the creation of the new NEC as a constitutional body, with an independent budget and bipartisan political membership recruited through an open recruitment process is a very important step in increasing political and public confidence. The LEMNA provides for open recruitment for NEC structures at the Provincial and Commune levels, which is important to maintain levels of political confidence.”<sup>19</sup> However, some EOM recommendations were only partly addressed and others were not implemented.

In line with EOM and EEM recommendations, the EU Delegation identified three areas for electoral support: i) capacity building for the NEC; ii) support to the voter registration process; and iii) support for voter and civic education, including a role for civil society. Work in these areas has been furthered through the EUR 10 million project implemented since 2016 by the *UN Office for Project Services* (UNOPS) in support of the voters' roll, the placing of advisors at the NEC and support for CSOs, including in the area of domestic observation ahead of the commune elections on 4 June 2017, and parliamentary elections on 22 July 2018. UNOPS conducted an analysis on the incorporation of EOM recommendations during the formulation phase. This project was funded through the DCI.

While significant technical improvements of the electoral framework have been achieved, other issues remain to be addressed, such as a restrictive legislation on political parties, the detention of opposition leaders and civil society members, and the perception that fundamental freedoms are being curtailed. The EU has encouraged the Government of Cambodia to ensure an environment conducive to credible and democratic elections.

19. See: [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/efm\\_cambodia\\_2015\\_final\\_report\\_publ.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/efm_cambodia_2015_final_report_publ.pdf)

Introducing wide-ranging reforms on the electoral legal framework close to an upcoming election is not considered a good practice, although experience shows that often it is in the run-up to elections that such reforms are introduced. While there are political risks in accepting a request for EU support which arrives very late in the electoral cycle, there are also risks associated with not supporting genuine democratic reform efforts. However, each specific recommendation may have a timeframe after which its implementation may be unfeasible, counter-productive, and in some cases even damage the credibility and public trust in the electoral process.

## ● COHERENCE AND COORDINATION

Coherence and coordination on follow-up to EU EOM recommendations are a joint responsibility of the HR/VP, assisted by the EEAS, the Commission, the Council, and Member States. Although the EP undertakes independent actions, there are significant opportunities to cooperate and coordinate. The June 2012 EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan foresees, *inter alia*, that EU Member States report on follow-up to EU EOM recommendations and ensure effective implementation. At country level, reporting by EU HOMs is coordinated by EU Delegations. These reports are discussed in various Council Working Groups and are an important tool in the coordination on EOM follow-up between the EU and Member States.

### COHERENCE IN THE USE OF POLITICAL AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS-UGANDA

The EU Delegation and EU Member States have shown a long-standing and multi-faceted involvement in democracy support with Uganda and made an important contribution to the consolidation of multiparty system in Uganda. For many years, development partners have been working through joint programmes and pooled funds, e.g. through the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF). This has allowed a coordination of positions which greatly facilitated political dialogues. Relationships built up over many years have provided excellent sources of information and other contacts, as well as a high degree of credibility, leverage and access with both government and non-state actors.

The EU has observed three general elections in Uganda (2006, 2011 and 2016). Prior to the 2016 election, the EU Delegation and Member States had actively advocated for the adoption of needed reforms identified by the 2011 EOM. A high degree of consensus among HoMs allowed for the development of a detailed list of prioritised actions, to facilitate coordinated advocacy with government throughout the electoral cycle. This allowed raising election-related issues at high level and in a systematic fashion.

After the 2016 election, HoMs have continued to focus on leveraging EOM

recommendations; many of which were re-iterations of previous EOMs. First and foremost, long-standing relationships with all relevant actors, including local civil society, are used to ensure a balanced and comprehensive approach. The EU EOMs' overall assessment of the elections and the missions' recommendations are repeatedly communicated in political dialogues and have been strengthened by a joint letter from the European Council and Commission Presidents.

Election reforms remain to be implemented in Uganda, but the EU has emerged as a credible and coherent partner through systematic promotion of EOM recommendations.

Due consideration is given to the recommendations of other election observer organisations. Co-ordination with other international EOMs and local CSOs is necessary for ensuring effectiveness, reducing the risk of duplication, and increasing coherence – in particular, for avoiding passing contradictory messages or advice.

Undertaking activities aiming at harmonising priority recommendations among observer organisations and the different actors who participate in the follow-up are particularly useful.

The development of a set of priority recommendations brings coherence to the reform agenda and lessens the risk that the national authorities will highlight differences between the various recommendations of the different observer organisations.

## ● INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

A wide range of international organisations are involved in improving electoral processes including the UN, the OSCE, the Council of Europe (CoE), the Organisation of American States (OAS) the African Union (AU) and sub-regional organisations. The EU cooperates closely with these organisations as well as with those that have endorsed the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation (DoP), especially during periods of EU EOM deployment.

The EU is committed to increasing cooperation with international partners to promote the consideration of EOM recommendations and is an active participant in the annual DoP meeting.

Strategy for follow-up on EOM recommendations, including inter-DoP coordination and cooperation, is a regular item on the meeting agenda.

EOM final reports are distributed to a broad variety of organisations, including the UN. These and other EOM reports serve as important reference documents when deploying *UN Needs Assessment Missions* and in the design of election assistance programmes.

The CoE is working to assist countries hold genuine elections and build inclusive and democratic societies. In areas of joint interest the EU and the CoE are closely working together: in early 2014, they signed a Statement of Intent (Sol), which envisages increased cooperation between the European Commission and the CoE in the EU's Neighbourhood and Enlargement regions with a view to develop democratic stability. The EEAS participates on an ad hoc basis in the Council for Democratic Elections, a forum organised by the CoE Commission on Democracy through Law (commonly referred to as the Venice Commission).

#### THE EU'S PARTNERSHIP WITH THE OSCE/ODIHR

The EU does not deploy EU EOMs to the OSCE participating States. Nevertheless, the EU and the OSCE/ODIHR have a long history of close cooperation in the field of election observation. For instance, the *Second Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy* (2015-2019) requires consolidating best practices for leveraging both EU and OSCE/ODIHR EOM recommendations in EU and Member States' political dialogues and democracy support activities.

The EP regularly sends observer delegations to countries where the OSCE/ODIHR has deployed a long-term mission. Together with the Parliamentary Assemblies of the CoE and the OSCE, the EP and the OSCE/ODIHR issue joint statements of preliminary findings and conclusions. Heads of OSCE/ODIHR EOMs are regularly invited to the EP for an exchange of information and a presentation of the OSCE/ODIHR's main recommendations.

The High Representative or the Commission frequently issue statements on elections observed by the OSCE/ODIHR after the international election observation mission has issued its joint preliminary statement in country. These EU statements are often followed up by the EU Delegation to the International Organisations in Vienna and are presented to the OSCE Permanent Council. EP Resolutions occasionally refer to OSCE/ODIHR reports and the joint statements, such as the resolution on the situation in Belarus.<sup>20</sup>

The Commission also maintains a close relationship with the OSCE/ODIHR and has recently agreed to work together on a pilot project to monitor and support the implementation of OSCE/ODIHR EOM recommendations in the Western Balkans, focusing on issues related to electoral administration, voter registration and the media during campaign.

20. European Parliament Resolution (2016/2934(RSP)) on the situation in Belarus of 24 November 2016.

With the AU, the EU works through the implementation of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and its *Partnership on Democratic Governance and Human Rights*. It provides technical assistance to the AU Commission's *Department of Political Affairs* and to the *Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit* (DEAU) on election observation methodology, including follow-up, and the training of election observers.



Heads of African Union, OSCE/ODIHR, OAS and Carter Centre EOMs and officials from the European Union, United Nations, the Commonwealth, ECCAS, ECOWAS EAC, EISA and NDI, Johannesburg, October 2016

## ● DIALOGUE

It is important that EOM recommendations inform national debates on electoral and democratic reform and receive proper consideration by the partner country authorities.

Engaging in effective dialogues can contribute to reinforcing - or even creating - the conditions for democratic reform

Dialogues are important in all contexts; particularly where opportunities for reform exist or where political pluralism is threatened.



The EU conducts a variety of structured dialogues with partner countries to follow up on EU and OSCE/ODIHR EOM recommendations, including political dialogues, human rights dialogues, human rights subcommittees, *Generalised Scheme of Preferences* (GSP+) dialogues, programming dialogues, and other policy dialogues in the framework of relations with accession countries and EU neighbour countries.

#### DIALOGUE TAKES PLACE WITH A VARIETY OF NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS:

- The governing authorities are the key actors in deciding if EOM recommendations are to be considered and implemented and dialogue takes place with a variety of ministries including Foreign Affairs, Justice and Interior.
- Parliaments play a crucial role in holding the government to account, ensuring legitimacy and approving the laws that are required to adopt meaningful reforms, including in the field of elections.
- Political parties are fundamental to democracy. Dialogue with the full spectrum of parties on issues related to elections and political reform is necessary.
- Dialogue with EMBs is important because of their central role in administering electoral processes providing them with a unique perspective on electoral reform priorities.
- CSOs are key advocates for human rights and democracy. They often are also engaged in non-partisan citizen election observation and have elaborated their own electoral recommendations and reform priorities, which are often highly relevant in broad-based dialogues.



EU EOM to Timor-Leste, 2012



## DEEPENING DIALOGUE IN PARAGUAY

After the impeachment of President Fernando Lugo in June 2012, the period leading to the 2013 elections was characterised by an unstable internal situation and difficult regional relations. Paraguay was suspended by both MERCOSUR and UNASUR, which considered the impeachment as a breach of democratic order. Following a request by the Paraguayan authorities, the EU deployed an EOM.

There is general consensus that this EOM contributed to reducing internal tensions by creating the conditions for a relatively smooth electoral campaign and a peaceful election day. The EOM's statement paved the way for the normalisation of regional relations. While Paraguayans generally trust their electoral system and administration, the final report included 33 recommendations which indicated how, even in a well-functioning electoral system, there is room for improvement. Moreover, the deployment of an EOM strengthened relations between Paraguay and the EU, enabling a deeper political dialogue to take place.

The recommendations of the EOM concerned a wide range of issues including the roles of the three branches of government, the electoral legislation, the electoral administration, voter registration, candidate registration, campaign and party financing, the role of the media, human rights, gender, electoral observation, suffrage rights and the compilation and publication of elections results. The Government welcomed the final report and the recommendations.

The newly elected Government and the EU agreed that within the EUR 168 million *Multiannual Indicative Programme for cooperation to development for 2014-2020*, an amount of EUR 10 million be earmarked for the implementation of the EOM recommendations and governance.

In 2014 and 2015, the *Supreme Court for Electoral Justice* (TSJE in its Spanish acronym), the local body in charge of election management, implemented most of the recommendations not requiring legislative reform, such as cleaning and improving the voter register, expanding opportunities to vote for Paraguayans abroad, introducing assisted voting, regulating the participation of independent candidates, enhancing security at polling stations, rationalising the location of polling stations, improving training for the staff of polling stations, and improving the expeditious resolution of election disputes.

## ● PARTNERSHIP WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

The EU's approach emphasises the need to build genuine partnerships with civil society at the local level. In order to develop the capacities of citizen observer groups, the EU provides considerable support with a special focus on their long-term and comprehensive methodology and the use of international standards in assessment and reporting.

### EU AND CSO PARTNERSHIP: THE EU FORUM FOR CITIZEN OBSERVERS

The *Second Forum of Citizens Observers*, organized on 15 - 16 September 2016 by the European Commission in Brussels, brought together around 250 leaders of citizen observer organisations from some 90 countries. Taking the opportunity to reflect on progress and to address the key challenges facing citizen observation, participants emphasised the importance of effectively coordinating recommendations between international and citizen observers and of cooperating on follow-up to recommendations. In line with this, the EU reiterated its commitment to the DoP and its support for the endorsing organisations. The Forum was financed through the EIDHR.



Voting in Tanzania, 2010. Photo by Ezequiel Scagnetti

Similar to the DoP, which covers international observer organisations, many citizen observer organisations are signatories to the *Declaration of Global Principles for Non-partisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations*.<sup>21</sup> The endorsing organisations together form the *Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors* (GNDEM), and play a crucial role in electoral reform and advocacy for effective follow-up to EOM recommendations.

21. As of January 2016, Declaration of Global Principles for Non-partisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations has been endorsed by over 250 citizen observer groups worldwide.

## ● MAINSTREAMING EOM FOLLOW-UP USING VARIOUS INSTRUMENTS

The EU mainstreams human rights in all external actions, thereby placing human rights at the centre of a wide-range of EU external policies. Many EU EOM recommendations relate to the human rights and democracy context in which elections take place. They are therefore not solely affecting to the technical aspects of elections, but rather to the political environment. Therefore, EOM reports are part of human rights and democracy advocacy. Implementation of OSCE/ODIHR EOM recommendations also feature in discussions with EU's accession and neighbourhood countries.

### ADVOCATING FOR ELECTORAL REFORM IN LEBANON

The EU deployed EOMs to Lebanon in 2005 and 2009. Following the 2005 elections, the government appointed the National Commission on Electoral Law, colloquially known as the Boutros Commission. In June 2006, the Commission presented a draft Election Law to then Prime Minister Fouad Siniora. In 2008, the Parliament adopted a new election law which incorporated some of the reforms proposed by the Boutros Commission, including: detailed provisions on campaign financing, media coverage, the establishment of a Supervisory Commission on the Election Campaign (SCEC), the holding of elections on a single day, and a deferred provision on voting abroad by Lebanese diaspora. However, the new law did not include other proposals of the Boutros Commission, such as the introduction of a standard pre-printed ballot paper and the fact that election management remained with the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities rather than to be placed within an independent commission.

The 2009 EOM made further recommendations to improve election processes; many of which were closely related to those advocated by the Lebanese CSO grouping Civic Campaign for Electoral Reform (CCER). In 2013, the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE), one of the lead organisations in the CCER, received funding from the EU through the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) for its project Support to Electoral Reform in Lebanon, to enable it to intensify its engagement with Lebanese citizens in the electoral reform process and to provide LADE with platforms to express support and lobby for electoral reform.

The project operated in a political context characterised by the impact of the Syrian war on Lebanese domestic politics, a two-year long presidential vacuum and the postponement of parliamentary elections since 2013. Despite this setting,

the project contributed to raising awareness on electoral issues, and encouraged citizens to engage with the authorities to implement electoral reforms that will ensure citizens can exercise their right to vote and elect their representatives in a fair, timely, transparent and accountable manner. Although the extensive advocacy efforts have not translated into concrete legislative reforms, the project has helped to keep electoral reform issues firmly on the agenda during a period of political uncertainty stemming from instability in the region. It is still hoped that the work done by the project between 2013 and 2016 will bear fruit in the shape of meaningful electoral reform before the long overdue elections scheduled to be held in 2017.

The EU is also funding the UN Development Programme (UNDP)'s Lebanese Elections Assistance Project (LEAP), which from 2013 onwards has aimed to build sustainable capacity for the management of elections, to increase the capacity for the supervision of election campaign, to strengthen voters' education and public participation initiatives, and to improve the resolution of electoral disputes. The LEAP2 project, titled Building Sustainability for Implementation of Electoral Reforms (2014-2017), aims at building capacity in preparing and implementing electoral framework reforms; raising public awareness and understanding, and improving women's participation in elections. In October 2016, LEAP2 organised the conference Parliamentary Electoral Legal Framework with 350 attendees including MPs, government officials, CSOs and NGOs to take stock of proposals for electoral reform.



Citizen observers prepare their activities, Lebanon, 2009

## ● VISIBILITY OF ACTIONS

Notwithstanding awareness-raising efforts on EU EOM recommendations in countries where missions are deployed, sometimes key actors are not sufficiently aware of them. Thus, while ensuring the visibility of actions on EOM follow-up is not in itself an end, it can better ensure citizens are aware of key EU and OSCE/ODIHR EOM recommendations. Conducting an outreach programme in the country is an important advocacy tool.

## RAISING AWARENESS OF EOM RECOMMENDATIONS IN PAKISTAN



DRI event "Unpacking of election observation recommendations", Pakistan, 2015

*Democracy Reporting International* (DRI) opened its Pakistan office in 2010 with funding from the EU's *Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace* (IcSP), to conduct a project aimed at more systematically addressing recommendations by the 2008 EU EOM. DRI's constant messaging on electoral reforms over seven years, as well as high-level EU diplomacy, has successfully moved the issue from a general agenda point onto the decision agenda of parliament.

As part of its work, DRI launched the outreach programme *Unpacking of election observation recommendations*. The final report and recommendations of the 2013 EU EOM were disseminated and discussed across the country in a series of large-scale workshops, which reached more than 1,000 stakeholders. These full day events have been held in multiple locations for all four provinces to spread awareness and engagement on electoral reform issues, promote dialogue and to gather stakeholder opinions on priorities. Unpacking was also undertaken across the country after the assessment of the subsequent local government elections.

In 2017, Pakistan's Parliament is considering the adoption of new electoral legislation. Passing the bill as it currently stands would result in partial or full implementation of 32 of the 36 EU EOM recommendations from 2013 that relate to election law reform (from a total of 50 recommendations on all issues).





MEXICO

HONDURAS

GUATEMALA

EL SALVADOR

NICARAGUA

VENEZUELA

GUYANA

ECUADOR

PERU

BOLIVIA

PARAGUAY

HAITI

KOSOVO\*

LIBYA

TUNISIA

NIGER

MALI

ALGERIA

BURKINA FASO

MOROCCO

MAURITANIA

SENEGAL

THE GAMBIA

GUINEA-BISSAU

GUINEA

SIERRA LEONE

LIBERIA

IVORY COAST

GHANA

TOGO

BENIN

NIGERIA

GABON

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

ANGOLA

CONGO

SOUTH AFRICA

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

ZAMBIA

ZIMBABWE

MALAWI

ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSIONS (EUEOMS) · EEAS · EUROPEAN COMMISSION:

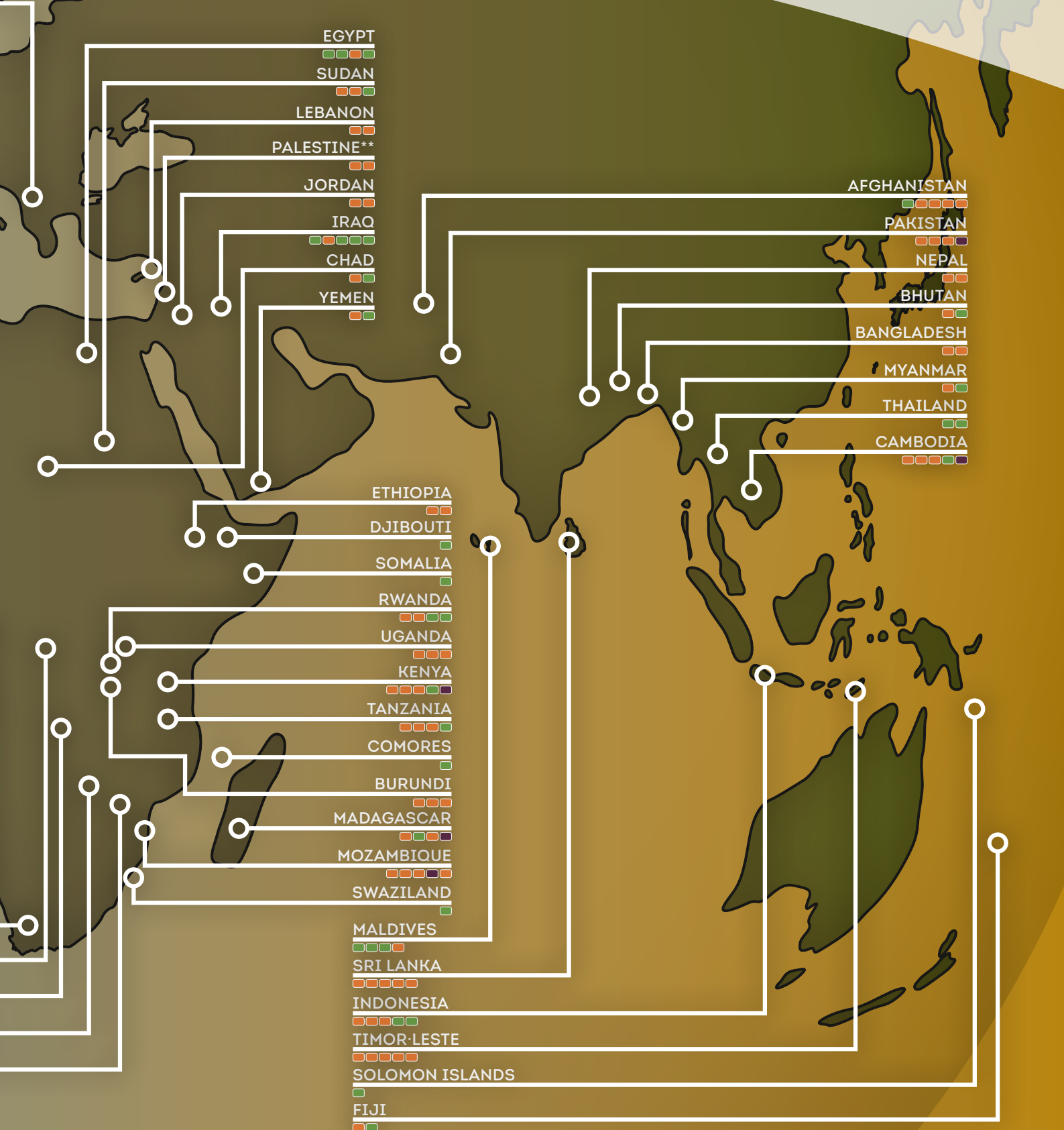
[WWW.EUEOM.EU](http://WWW.EUEOM.EU)

\* KOSOVO: THIS DESIGNATION IS WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO POSITIONS ON STATUS, AND IS IN LINE WITH UNSCR 1244/1999 AND THE ICJ OPINION ON THE KOSOVO DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

\*\* PALESTINE: THIS DESIGNATION SHALL NOT BE CONSTRUED AS RECOGNITION OF A STATE OF PALESTINE AND IS WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO THE INDIVIDUAL POSITIONS OF THE MEMBER STATES ON THIS ISSUE.



# EU ELECTION MISSIONS DEPLOYED SINCE 2000



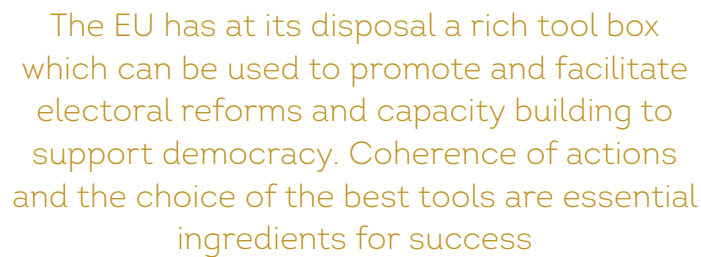
# SECTION 3

## The European Union Tools for EOM Follow-Up



# SECTION 3

The EU is extremely well placed to promote recommendations of EOMs, as it is at the same time a political actor, one of the main international donors and an actor in international fora.



The EU has at its disposal a rich tool box which can be used to promote and facilitate electoral reforms and capacity building to support democracy. Coherence of actions and the choice of the best tools are essential ingredients for success

This section provides an overview of the wide range of tools used by the EU and Member States, often working in close collaboration. These tools can be broadly categorised as political and operational tools. However, it should be emphasised that the EU's approach is multi-faceted, and political and operational tools should not be regarded as separate from each other, but rather complementary.

The main tools include dialogues, programming instruments, and deployment of purpose-designed visits and missions such as the EU EOM Chief Observer's Return Visit and Election Follow-up Missions (EFMs). However, the degree of leverage depends on the specific nature of the relationship with a given partner country. Relations are in part determined by the specific formal agreements between the EU and third countries such as through the *Cotonou Agreement* and bilateral EU Association Agreements.

## PUTTING ELECTION REFORM ON THE AGENDA IN HONDURAS

Recent experience in Honduras has demonstrated that electoral observation and follow-up missions can create significant impact in terms of introducing democratic reform on the political agenda, especially if they are part of a wider strategy through which all available tools are applied in a coordinated and coherent way.

Since the deployment of an EU EOM in 2013, the EU and its Member States emerged as key and highly visible partners in discussions on electoral and political reforms. After the EU EOM had completed its work, the EU Delegation was active in stressing the importance of following up on EU EOM recommendations within the context of its political dialogue with Honduran authorities, civil society and other actors.

The EU Delegation and Member States worked in close coordination to ensure a

consistent and coherent position on electoral reform was provided at all levels during structured political dialogues and high level-visits in Brussels and Tegucigalpa. Other dialogues occurred with the main stakeholders through the G16 donor group, where the EU Delegation, as Chair, organised electoral roundtables to give additional impetus to electoral reform.

The EU Delegation also undertook a range of other initiatives including: deploying a preparatory mission to identify the possibility to support democratic reform through bilateral development cooperation (as foreseen in the multiannual indicative programme) and inviting *EUROSociAL*<sup>22</sup> to provide technical expertise to enhance transparency in the financing of political parties and electoral campaigns. The Delegation was active in public diplomacy through interviews in the main newspapers and TV news, in debate programmes, on the radio and in social media, as well as through press conferences and declarations.

In December 2015, an EFM was deployed to Honduras. The mission received significant media attention and subsequently several electoral reform issues were reintroduced on the agenda. These included a legislative proposal on political party and electoral campaign financing transparency (which was approved by Congress in October 2016), better representation of political parties in electoral management bodies, equalising opportunities for men and women to stand for election and measures to enhance fairness in the election campaign.

An EEM was deployed for the primary elections in March 2017 and positioned the EU again as one of the main actors in the electoral field. The analysis of the EEM will help steering the engagement of the EU and Member States in view of the upcoming general elections of November 2017.



MEP Ulrike Lunacek, Chief of the Electoral Follow-Up Mission to Honduras, talks with the press about her visit, Tegucigalpa, December 2015

22. *EUROSociAL* is a programme of the European Commission for cooperation between Europe and Latin America. Its objective is to contribute to changes in public policies that improve social cohesion through peer-to-peer learning and experience exchanges between counterpart institutions in the two regions.



## 3.1 POLITICAL TOOLS

### 3.1.1 COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions adopted by the Council can contain a political position on a specific topic. Conclusions can be used to state, for example within the EU's *Common Foreign and Security Policy* (CFSP), the position of the EU regarding a specific event or situation in a particular country. They express a political position or appraise an international event in the name of the EU.<sup>23</sup> A number of Council conclusions refer to EOM recommendations, for example relating to Georgia,<sup>24</sup> Pakistan,<sup>25</sup> and Myanmar.<sup>26</sup> Through this, the Council sends clear messages to the governments on EU expectations about the need for credible, inclusive and transparent elections and call for the implementation of EOM recommendations.

### 3.1.2 EU HEADS OF MISSIONS REPORTS

At country level, reporting by EU Heads of Missions (HoMs) on EOM follow-up is coordinated by EU Delegations. HoMs' reports<sup>27</sup> can provide a clear picture of the status of implementation of the EU recommendations and suggest options to improve their implementation. Subsequently, HoMs reports can feed structured political dialogues.

### 3.1.3 COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS

Council Working Groups are one of the main fora for coordination on EOM follow-up between the EU and Member States. They are debriefed about the result of Election Observation, Expert and Follow-up Missions. EU HoMs' reports are also discussed in various Council Working Groups to take stock of the implementation of recommendations in the broader context of the EU's relationship with partner countries and to prepare political and human rights dialogues ensuring that implementation of recommendations is addressed in these dialogues.

23. Source: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/conclusions-resolutions/>

24. Council conclusions, 15 October 2012.

25. Council conclusions 18 July 2016.

26. Council conclusions on forthcoming elections in Myanmar/Burma on 22 June 2015 and FAC conclusions 20 June 2016.

27. Non-public documents.



### 3.1.4 POLITICAL DIALOGUES



MEP Eduard Kukan, Chief Observer EU EOM to Uganda, 2016, being interviewed by the media during the EOM Return Visit, Kampala

The EU engages with partner countries through a variety of structured political and human rights dialogues according to agreements with a specific country or regional grouping. Dialogues take place at high level, including those involving the HRVP and Commissioners, at senior official level and at HoMs level. Dialogues are also conducted by the EUSRs. Given that mainstreaming of democracy and human rights is a pillar of the EU approach to external relations, formal discussion on EU EOM recommendations can be an agenda item in these dialogues. The EU Member States in their bilateral dialogues can also raise the issue of the implementation of EOM recommendations.

#### DIALOGUE ARTICLE 8, COTONOU AGREEMENT

Under the *Cotonou Agreement* political dialogue is an integral part of the EU's relationship with the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP). Art. 8 of the Agreement establishes a specific framework for regular, comprehensive and balanced political dialogue covering a broad range of topics, including respect for human rights, democratic principles, the rule of law and good governance: the so-called "*essential elements*". The dialogue is conducted in a flexible manner according to the need, and conducted within and outside the institutional framework, in the most suitable format, and at the appropriate level including regional, sub-regional or national level.<sup>28</sup>

The EEAS is tasked to include the follow-up to EOM recommendations in political dialogues with national authorities. The follow-up can also be done through dialogues with relevant ministries (such as ministries of Interior and Justice) and other key stakeholders in electoral processes, including parliaments, political parties, Electoral Management Bodies, CSOs and other partners. Raising the issue regularly ensures that election reform and follow-up to EOM recommendations are kept '*on the agenda*'.

28. Cotonou Agreement, Art. 8.

### HUMAN RIGHTS DIALOGUES

EU priority actions in the field of democracy and human rights are agreed at country level by HoMs. These priorities are discussed with third countries within the framework of Human Rights dialogues.

As many EU EOM recommendations concern the human rights context in which elections take place, these dialogues offer an important opportunity to discuss specific EOM recommendations. In recent years, human rights dialogues have been established with an increasing number of countries; currently there are more than 40 active EU dialogues and consultations with third countries.<sup>29</sup> In 2016, 32 human rights dialogues and six consultations took place with 42 partners.<sup>30</sup> In addition to underpinning the bilateral engagement with third country authorities, the EU's human rights dialogues are the occasion to foster consultations with European and local civil society, including through dedicated civil society seminars. Human rights issues are also revised in other formal dialogue formats.

### POLITICAL DIALOGUES WITH CANDIDATE COUNTRIES AND POTENTIAL CANDIDATES FOR EU ACCESSION

The specific nature of relations with the accession countries means that tailor-made approaches can be applied. As part of the enlargement process, the European Commission monitors the candidate state's progress in applying EU legislation and meeting the accession criteria. In this context, the Commission monitors and holds regular dialogues on the candidate country's implementation of EOM recommendations in compliance with the political criteria to have stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities. The Commission gives the candidate guidance on the conditions for joining the EU, including those on the conduct of democratic elections.

### STRENGTHENING FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN MONTENEGRO

In the context of the Enlargement negotiations with Montenegro on Judiciary and Fundamental Rights (Chapter 23), the Commission provided pre-accession assistance to Montenegro to reform its law on freedom of peaceful assembly and association in compliance with European standards. Support was provided under the *Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument of the European Commission* (TAIEX).

<sup>29</sup> Human Rights Consultations take place between the EU and partner countries, including the United States of America, Canada, Switzerland, Norway, Australia and EU candidate countries, with a focus on multilateral rather than domestic human rights issues.

<sup>30</sup> These figures do not include dialogues held under art. 8 of the Cotonou Agreement.

The EU's relations with the Western Balkans take place within a special framework known as the *Stabilisation and Association process*. This process aims to secure stable, prosperous and well-functioning democratic societies in the Western Balkans and offers the prospect of membership to Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo\*.<sup>31</sup> It helps the countries concerned build their capacity to adopt and implement EU law, as well as European and international standards including those on elections. The Commission, as it does for candidate countries, monitors progress and provides guidance to potential candidates in their fulfilment of commitments in the stabilisation and association process. Often this includes issues related to recommendations made by OSCE/ODIHR EOMs.

### DIALOGUES WITH EU NEIGHBOURHOOD COUNTRIES

In the context of the *European Neighbourhood Policy* (ENP), reviewed in 2015, the EEAS and the Commission services work closely with neighbours in the East and in the South to assist them to conduct genuine elections build strong, stable and accountable democratic institutions and societies. One of the key elements of the ENP review is to ensure the partner's ownership and engagement in the democratic reforms. Applying the principle of differentiation, the focus of cooperation with each neighbour is based on a mutually-agreed set of priorities among which good governance, democracy and rule of law figure prominently.

EU dialogues with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine in the East, and Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, Jordan, Algeria, Egypt in the South, take place in the framework of Association Agreements. With other neighbouring countries EU dialogues take place the framework of partnership agreements. The follow-up to EU and OSCE/ODIHR EOM recommendations is given due consideration in these dialogues.



Civic education in Tunisia, 2011. Photo by Ezequiel Scagnetti

31. \* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

## WORKING ON THE MEDIA IN GEORGIA

OSCE/ODIHR EOMs deployed to Georgia have made recommendations to improve the media's coverage of electoral contests. The European Union has supported the development of professional media coverage of elections through a media monitoring project, funded under the *European Neighbourhood Instrument* (ENI). Monitoring was undertaken by civil society organisations that were trained and guided under the project, which contributed also to their capacity building as watchdog organisations. A number of positive changes were observed in how media covered various topics, including during the latest national elections in October 2016. According to monitoring reports, media became less polarised, more objective and balanced.

### 3.1.5 THE EU SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The EU Special Representative for Human Rights consistently engages with governments on issues related to respect for fundamental freedoms and rule of law covered by EOM recommendations. This includes the establishment of independent and effective judiciaries, strong *National Human Rights Institutions* (NHRIs) and strong parliaments as well as press freedom and the adoption of laws promoting and protecting freedom of association, assembly and expression. In 2016, the EUSR addressed the implementation of select OSCE/ODIHR and EU EOM recommendations with, among others, Belarus, Myanmar and Honduras during official visits to those countries.

### 3.1.6 PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Outside of structured dialogues, the EU has a great potential to advocate for electoral reform through the media and in public fora. Public diplomacy is an essential tool to give EU and OSCE/ODIHR EOM recommendations exposure, particularly when it takes place at the most appropriate time, such as when legal reform is under consideration.

Public Diplomacy can be carried out by the EU at all levels. In public statements the HR/VP and the spokesperson often refer to EOM recommendations and encourage their implementation. The speeches, media interviews, press releases, social media posts given by the HR/VP, Commissioners, MEPs, senior officials and Heads of EU Delegations all serve to raise awareness of EOM recommendations widely and to create interest and momentum for their implementation.

### 3.1.7 EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT TOOLS

The EP is one of the key actors in the EU's support to democracy. All democracy support activities are conducted within the framework of the *Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group* (DEG), which gives political guidance on and supervises election-related matters, support to parliamentary democracy, human rights-related actions and mediation, facilitation and dialogue initiatives. In 2014, the DEG decided to streamline its democracy support activities and adopted the *Comprehensive Democracy Support Approach* (CDSA), under which these activities are carried out in a coherent and complementary manner. In order to maximise efficiency and leverage, the CDSA foresees focused and tailor-made activities around the electoral cycle and targets a smaller number of countries / regions within a longer timeframe. An EP lead member is appointed for each priority country to increase political ownership and visibility on the ground. The list of countries in which democracy support activities are conducted is subject to review, the initial prerequisite being that the EP has observed elections in the country.

Some specific pre- and post- election activities can also be organised if an identified need arises in the running of elections or a request comes from a newly elected parliament.

**The range of activities covers the different stages of the electoral cycle:**

- 1** Election observation, with the sending of EP delegations fully integrated into the EU or OSCE/ODIHR frameworks;
- 2** Tailor-made parliamentary support activities to strengthen the primary functions of parliaments (legislative, oversight, representation), increase their capacities in a sustainable manner, and support the reform processes including the necessary steps to implement recommendations from EOMs;
- 3** Human rights actions, covering not only the Sakharov Prize and the Sakharov Prize network, but also tailored programmes for parliamentarians and human rights defenders; mediation / facilitation / dialogue activities, notably inter-party dialogue and consensus building; and
- 4** Pre-electoral activities to prevent election-related violence.

All EP democracy support activities are carried out in close cooperation with the High Representative and the Commission to ensure consistency in the assistance and complementarity of actions. EU Institutions are exploring ways to deepen information exchange and other cooperation to develop greater synergies between their actions and activities on EOM follow-up with the objective of achieving improved implementation of EOM recommendations. They are also identifying means to improve the flexibility of their activities to match the evolving needs and capacities of third countries. The EP conducts its activities on the ground in the closest possible cooperation and coordination with other institutional and non-institutional donors and partners.



Besides these activities, other tools are at the disposal of the EP and can contribute to the support for democracy in general and the follow-up to EOMs recommendations in particular. Regular political dialogue with the EP's counterparts and parliamentary diplomacy is but one, notably through high level visits of the President of the EP or incoming visits of speakers of parliaments, regular inter-parliamentary meetings, dialogue in the framework of Joint Parliamentary Assemblies, or contacts within political party families. The EP plenary, through resolutions and debates among Members and with the Commission, the High Representative or the (rotating) Presidency of the Council, can also echo and amplify points or concerns that need to be raised and highlighted.

### EP DEMOCRACY SUPPORT ACTIVITIES IN NIGERIA

The 2015 General elections in Nigeria represented an important stage in the democratic development of the country. The EP showed its highest level of support for the new political leadership when President Muhammadu Buhari addressed the Plenary of the EP in Strasbourg on 3 February 2016.

In order to continue its support to Nigeria's consolidation of democracy, the DEG decided in December 2016 to prioritise its democracy support for the *Nigerian National Assembly* (NASS), and appointed a lead member to oversee the activities. Under his political guidance, the EP is setting up a programme of capacity-building activities for the NASS, based on its needs and priorities. The programme will comprise trainings, study visits to the EP for exchange of best practices, mediation and dialogue activities where needed, as well as parliamentary seminars and conferences on specific topics. These activities will be implemented over a 2.5-year period (pending yearly review by the competent bodies) or until the end of the current mandate of both the EP and the NASS in 2019.

The programme is being developed in close coordination and cooperation with the EEAS, including with the EU Delegation in Nigeria. For instance, during his first visit to the NASS in February 2017, the EP lead member also held meetings with the *Independent National Electoral Commission* (INEC) on the follow-up to the 2015 EOM recommendations, with a view to deploying an EOM follow-up mission to Nigeria. This mission is also to be combined with a number of parliament-to-parliament capacity-building activities.



President Buhari addressing the European Parliament, Strasbourg, February 2016

### 3.1.8 FIELD MISSIONS AND VISITS

#### EOM RETURN VISITS

Following an EU EOM, the Chief Observer (CO), the Deputy Chief Observer (DCO) and other members of the Core Team return to the country to deliver the final report. During the Return Visit, they present the report to the State and electoral authorities, political parties and CSOs. At these meetings, the CO explains the basis of the assessment contained in the report, the nature of the recommendations and discusses practical steps for the implementation of the recommendations. After sharing the final report with key interlocutors, the CO holds a press conference to mark the official release of the final report to the media and the wider public. A press release including quotes by the CO is issued to accompany the release of the final report.

The Return Visit also includes a briefing for the EU Delegation and Member States and a roundtable for election stakeholders where the findings, conclusions and recommendations can be discussed. The diplomatic briefing is important to establish a shared understanding on the recommendations, whereas the stakeholder roundtable fosters local ownership of the recommendations.

Return Visits can serve to unite or harmonise, early in the cycle, the views of national and international stakeholders on how to improve the election process, and help build a consensus around main items for future reference.



Organising polling in Afghanistan. Photo by: Jason Toy - UNDP, reproduced by permission of OSCE/ODIHR

### ELECTION FOLLOW-UP MISSIONS

The EU may deploy an *Election Follow-up Mission* (EFM) in certain cases. The purpose of EFMs is to assess the degree to which EU EOM recommendations have been implemented and electoral reform initiatives undertaken since the EOM Return Visit. It also suggests how further progress can be achieved.

Since the first EU EFM in 2012, 14 missions have been deployed. While follow-up activity may take place over the whole electoral cycle, the timing and scope of the deployment of an EFM should be carefully considered and adjusted to specific circumstances and needs of the country. In general, EFMs are deployed at a mid-point in the electoral cycle.

EFMs are composed of externally recruited electoral experts who are familiar with the country, EEAS officials and sometimes other Commission officials. EFMs are led by the CO from the previous EOM or a senior EU official. The EFM's methodology is tailor made to the country context, but includes a review of recommendations to assess their continued relevance and prioritisation. Usually it comprises a roundtable event for governmental and non-governmental stakeholders and a public event to ensure the mission gains visibility. EFMs produce a Final Report containing additional recommendations on electoral reforms.



Young voters find their names on the electoral register, Mali, 2013. Photo by Ezequiel Scagnetti

## EXPLORATORY MISSIONS

The main purpose of an *Exploratory Mission* (ExM) is to assess the usefulness, advisability and feasibility of deploying an EU EOM. It is deployed approximately six months before an election. ExMs will review the degree to which a previous EU EOM's recommendations have been implemented. While time may be short to effect major changes, ExMs can highlight those recommendations which can still be addressed without disrupting the election process. The analysis of implementation of recommendations is also an important element in the decision by the HR/VP on whether to send a new EOM/EEM to a country where past elections have already been observed.

## EXPERT ACTIVITIES ORGANISED BY EU DELEGATIONS

Some EU Delegations have engaged independent election experts to assist them in planning a strategy to implement EU EOM recommendations, assist in consultation and coordination with stakeholders and assess if legislative amendments address the recommendations.

### UTILISING EXPERTISE IN SENEGAL AND NIGER

In Senegal, the EU Delegation engaged an independent election expert to assess the implementation of 2012 EU EOM recommendations. The expert's report was discussed with the authorities and well-covered in the media. The process resulted in a strong dialogue leading to agreement between the EU Delegation and the government to act on two key priorities related to the identification and registration of voters, initially recommended by the EOM. Senegal's new electoral law reflects some of the 2012 EU EOM recommendations including: simplification of the candidates' nomination and registration process; the possibility to register as an independent candidate; establishing the right to vote for Senegalese living abroad; and the establishment of local electoral committees.

In Niger, a technical mission was deployed in July 2013 within the framework of the *Financial Convention for the Support to the Electoral Process 2010-2011* (10th *European Development Fund*) to assess the implementation of 2011 EU EOM recommendations. The report highlighted the key election reform priorities, including: the need for a permanent *Election Management Body Secretariat*, removing unconstitutional provisions in the electoral law and harmonising laws and regulations, revising the system for voter registration in a strategic and integrated manner, clarifying the arrangements to finance elections and implementing the law establishing a quota for women MPs. The report enabled the EU Delegation to have even greater focus in its dialogue and operational support.



## 3.2 OPERATIONAL TOOLS

The Commission Communication of 2000 states that “*election observation is the political complement to election assistance*”. In line with this complimentary approach, where feasible, the EU is committed to mainstreaming EOM’s recommendations and the systematic consideration of recommendations of previous EOMs/EEMs in cooperation programmes and projects, countries strategy papers and National/Regional indicative programs. The Commission services and EU Delegations hold dialogues on programming with the authorities and non-governmental bodies in partner countries.

The degree of consideration of EU EOM recommendations by the host authorities can influence EU decisions on whether to financially support elections.

Because EOM recommendations are wide-ranging, EU support to their implementation is not confined to electoral support programmes. Support to free media, active and engaged CSOs, independent judiciary, human rights defenders and representative and transparent democratic institutions at the service of the citizen are all also highly relevant. Support to these programmes is continual and it is not always logical to align it with the electoral cycle. Although some of the more comprehensive actions might not be visibly linked to specific EU EOM recommendations, in general, they aim to tackle shortcomings signalled in the EU EOM reports. EU electoral assistance projects can be funded either through financial instruments, projects and programmes, or direct budget support to third countries.

Sorting the votes, Tunisia, 2011. Photo by Ezequiel Scagnetti





### 3.2.1 CO-OPERATION PROGRAMMING: EU FUNDING MODALITIES

#### FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

More than 320 electoral assistance projects were financed by the EU since 2010, in some 70 countries, totalling more than EUR 310 million. The Commission can draw on several different instruments and budget lines to fund multi-annual electoral, democracy, human rights cooperation programmes and projects which directly or indirectly target the implementation of EU and OSCE/ODIHR EOM recommendations, including the geographic instruments:

**The European Development Fund (EDF)<sup>32</sup>** is the main source of EU development aid for the ACP countries and the overseas territories. More than 60 per cent (EUR 180 million) of the electoral assistance projects were financed from EDF in the last seven years. Ongoing projects in 2017 were supporting preparing elections in Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Zambia, Ghana, Central African Republic and others. EDF projects mainly focus on support to governmental institutions, such as the Electoral Commission or institutions with a role in the electoral process. However, this support can be accompanied by actions supporting non-governmental actors, such as in Guinea Conakry and Democratic Republic of Congo.

**The Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI)<sup>33</sup>** provides funding for actions in some 47 countries in Latin America, South Asia, and North and South East Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East and South Africa and includes the Pan Africa Programme. Some 49 contracts for a total of EUR 34 million were financed through DCI in the last seven years. Ongoing projects in 2017 were supporting the organisation of elections in Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan and other countries through technical assistance to electoral commissions. DCI also includes the thematic *Civil Society Organisations and Local Authority* (CSO-LA) programme, through which were financed several projects supporting the involvement of civil society in monitoring elections and electoral legislation. These amounted to about EUR 3.5 million between 2010 and 2017. DCI also finances the Pan African thematic programme, supporting a technical assistance project to increase the AU's capacity in Election Observation.

32. [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/funding-instruments-programming/funding-instruments/european-development-fund\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/funding-instruments-programming/funding-instruments/european-development-fund_en)

33. [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/funding-instruments-programming/funding-instruments/development-cooperation-instrument-dci\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/funding-instruments-programming/funding-instruments/development-cooperation-instrument-dci_en)

**The European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI),<sup>34</sup>** targeting 16 countries in the eastern and southern neighbourhoods, aims at contributing to an area of shared prosperity and good neighbourliness. Some 32 electoral assistance projects were financed from ENI or the *European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument* (ENPI)<sup>35</sup> between 2010 and 2017, of a total amount of EUR 17 million.

**The Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA)<sup>36</sup>** and its successor, the *Instrument for Pre-Accession II* (IPA II), provides assistance to candidate and potential candidate countries, to support those making political and economic reforms that prepare them for the rights and obligations that come with EU membership. Four electoral assistance projects were financed through IPA from 2010 to 2014 of a total value of EUR 1.2 million.

## THEMATIC INSTRUMENTS

**European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)<sup>37</sup>,** through which, from 2010 to 2017, 60 projects were financed for an amount of EUR 15 million. The EIDHR works through a combination of centralised global programmes and localised *Country Based Support Schemes* (CBSS), and is the only financial instrument that contains specific provisions on EU EOMs. The *EIDHR Multi-Annual Indicative programme* emphasises the need to ensure the effective implementation of EU EOM recommendations, as well as the reports of other organisations engaged in election observation (e.g. OSCE/ODIHR).

**The Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP)<sup>38</sup>** and its precursor, the *Instrument for Stability* (IfS), have provided funds for electoral projects aimed at mitigating electoral violence, some of which relate directly to the implementation of EU EOM recommendations. More than 50 projects amounting to EUR 65 million were funded in the last seven years. Recent support includes: *Mitigation of Violence in Elections* (MOVE) project in Nigeria, the *Force de Sécurisation des Elections Législatives ou Présidentielles* (FOSEP) project in Benin and the *Collectives des Associations Contre l'Impunité au Togo* (CACIT) project in Togo.

34. <http://www.euneighbours.eu/en/policy>.

35. The ENPI was the precursor to the ENI, with the latter established in March 2014.

36. [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/instruments/overview\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/instruments/overview_en).

37. <http://www.eidhr.eu/>

38. [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/human-rights-and-governance/peace-and-security/instrument-contributing-stability-and-peace\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/human-rights-and-governance/peace-and-security/instrument-contributing-stability-and-peace_en).

## BUDGET SUPPORT

In addition to the instruments, Budget Support may have relevance for EU EOM follow-up. Since 2014, budget support has included elements to support elections in five countries for a total amount of EUR 72 million. As spelt out in the EU Guidelines on Budget Support, *“the appropriate form of budget support contract should be determined by the specific objectives and expected results of the programme. The use of conditions, dialogue and performance indicators should be tailored to address those specific objectives and expected results.”*<sup>39</sup> EU EOM recommendations can be used in Budget Support programmes to formulate objectives and indicators. Reports of EU EOMs can be used to verify the results of the programmes, which include activities in the field of electoral assistance.

This approach has been tested in *Sector Reform Contracts* (SRCs), and *State Building Contracts* (SBC) through the introduction of a limited number of election-specific indicators in line with the broader objectives of the support contracts. This was done in Tunisia, Burkina Faso, Togo and Niger. In the case of Togo and Niger, in line with the latest EU EOM recommendations, the objective was to promote transparency of the electoral process through the introduction of a condition on the publication of results of every polling station without delay. In the case of Niger, a second indicator was introduced to provide the *Conseil Supérieur de la Communication* with the financial means to ensure proper control of the media throughout the electoral campaign.

Additionally, in the framework of country Budget Support programmes, EU EOM recommendations feed into the *Risk Management Framework tool* (RMF).<sup>40</sup> Information regarding the implementation of EU EOM recommendations is included in the yearly review of the country RMF profile.

### BUDGET SUPPORT AND EOM RECOMMENDATIONS IN KYRGYZSTAN

In 2015, the European Commission launched the first Sector Reform Contract (SRC), a Budget Support modality, to Kyrgyzstan, financing of supplies linked to the introduction of *New Voting Technologies* (NVT) as a way of improving voters' trust in the process and more generally in the credibility of elections. This approach focused on supporting reform in the electoral sector, measuring it on achieved results and facilitated the follow-up on OSCE/ODIHR EOM's recommendations. Among other areas, the financial support tackled specific recommendations of the 2011 OSCE/ODIHR EOM on improving the unified voter registration system. The OSCE/ODIHR EOM for the 2015 parliamentary elections noted some shortcomings in the implementation of the biometric voter registration and identification, and thus recommended improvements, in particular regarding data protection. This indicates that progress in implementing recommendations sometimes requires refinement that future EOMs can suggest.

<sup>39</sup>. Contract forms include GGDC, SRC and SBC.

<sup>40</sup>. The RMF tool is adapted to the specific risk profile of budget support, covering political governance, macroeconomic stability, development risk, public financial management, corruption and fraud. This framework is an important complementary tool in programming, designing and implementing programmes and to inform policy dialogue. It identifies, assesses and manages risks in line with levels judged acceptable by the Commission.

### 3.2.2 CO-OPERATION PROGRAMMING: IMPLEMENTATION

It is hard to find electoral assistance programmes that do not take into consideration or are directly related to implementing EOM recommendations targeting the management of elections. EU electoral assistance is provided to EMBs, Parliaments, CSOs, media, political parties, and to prevent and mediate electoral disputes. EOM Recommendations which concern the management of elections are usually addressed through the provision of in-country technical assistance. These recommendations are, in general, easier to address than those requiring changes to the legal framework. In implementing electoral assistance projects the European Commission works with a variety of actors: international organisations, national governments, national organisations, CSOs and private actors.

The EEAS and the Commission services cooperate closely with the UN Development Programme (UNDP), notably through the EC-UNDP *Joint Task Force* (JTF)<sup>41</sup> and with the UN Electoral Assistance Division (UNEAD). More than 65 per cent of EU's electoral assistance projects are implemented by UNDP. Since the creation of the *Joint Task Force on Electoral Assistance* in 2006, UNDP implemented EU-funded projects in more than 50 countries for a total value of more than EUR 643 million.

#### THE EU AND THE UNDP: GLOBAL PARTNERS IN ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE

The EU and UNDP recognise the value of electoral assistance in supporting the long-term, sustainable establishment and development of democratic institutions world-wide. As such, the EU and UNDP are natural partners in the field of electoral assistance. In 2006, the EU and UNDP strengthened and formalised their de facto partnership in the field of international electoral assistance with the signature of the Electoral Assistance Guidelines, which were renewed in 2008, and most recently in April 2016. These Guidelines established the Joint Task Force on Electoral Assistance and outline practical measures to facilitate cooperation between the two organisations on issues such as project formulation, recruitment, visibility and operational support to the ongoing projects and troubleshooting. In addition to UNDP representatives, the JTF consists of both Commission services and EEAS staff in order to ensure coordination and coherence of the EU approach to electoral assistance.

The programmatic cooperation between the EU and the UN is also facilitated by the *Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement*<sup>42</sup> that was agreed in 2003 and updated most recently in 2014.

UNDP-managed basket funds help leverage different donors' contributions, particularly those of the EU and EU Member States, and are adapted to difficult

41. <http://www.ec-undp-electoralassistance.org/>

42. For consolidated version see: <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/node/45445>

contexts. While most of the EU-funded UNDP projects are focused on increasing the capacity of EMBs, many projects have a larger and longer-term focus. In Georgia, UNDP is implementing a project to enhance media coverage of elections. In other cases, actions supporting the electoral process are combined with support to the national Parliaments or the judiciary, as was the case with a recent EU-funded UNDP project in Jordan.

The 2016 review of the EC-UNDP Electoral Assistance Guidelines introduced a more result-oriented mechanism for the implementation of the basket funds, which can include follow-up of EU EOM recommendations as indicators of progress on projects.

Moreover, the Guidelines also call for joint EC-UNDP formulation missions whenever the EU intends to fund UNDP electoral assistance projects. These joint missions, consisting of the European Commission and UNDP staff members (most often JTF members), are deployed from Brussels to design the project together with the input from both the UNDP Country Office and the EU Delegation, ensuring that the EOM recommendations are considered by the project at the very beginning. When joint missions are not feasible logistically, the UNDP staff will liaise with the EU Delegation on the ground and closely coordinate the design of the project with the JTF Commission services and EEAS counterparts in Brussels. In either scenario, the Guidelines indicate that the EU EOM recommendations are to be considered in all joint projects.<sup>43</sup> Recent examples of this can be found in project documents from, inter alia, Zambia, Guinea and Kenya.

Additional implementing partners for electoral assistance include the *International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance* (International IDEA), the *European Centre for Electoral Support* (ECES), the *Electoral Institute of South Africa* (EISA), the *International Foundation for Electoral Systems* (IFES), *Interpeace*, as well as many others.

#### DEMOCRACY PROJECTS, SUPPORT TO CSOS AND LOCAL OBSERVERS

Besides supporting governmental partners, the EU is committed to supporting non-governmental actors to foster electoral reform. EIDHR finances projects supporting local observer organisations and networks – more than 15 in the last three years. These include support for women groups, minorities or people with disabilities, as was the case in Ghana in (2010), Indonesia (2012-2013) and Myanmar (2013). Other projects focus on supporting women's participation in politics, such as a project in Cameroon aiming at increasing women's participation in the 2018 elections. CSOs which promoted electoral reform and democracy reform advocacy were supported through EIDHR in Myanmar (2014) and Mozambique (2010).

43. Art. 3.1.1 of the Guidelines states: "When discussing possible cooperation, the JTF will take as a reference point the inputs and recommendations from EU [EOMs]."



The ongoing Citizen Organisations Programme, focuses on civil society involvement in the democratic cycle (EUR 4.6 million), including the critical role of domestic citizen observers. *Media4Democracy* EU programme (EUR 4.4 million) launched in 2017, will support freedom of expression, access to information and free media, including the public service media and digital media. EIDHR will also promote the participation of young women in political life including in political parties as well as the legal framework regulating political parties' participation.

#### THE INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE IPA II

In line with the "*fundamentals first*" principle of the EU Enlargement policy, IPA II assistance prioritises support to reforms in the areas of rule of law, fundamental rights, the strengthening of democratic institutions including public administration reform, and economic development and competitiveness.

#### THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD INSTRUMENT

Through the ENI, the European Commission supports partner countries in their democratic reform processes, notably those reforms addressing recommendations of the EU and OSCE/ODIHR EOMs. The ENI prioritises good governance, democracy and human rights. In particular, it aims at supporting an independent judiciary, an accountable public administration, the fight against corruption and the strengthening of democratic institutions.

Under the IPA II and ENI financial instruments, additional implementation modalities are used to provide electoral assistance such as the TAIEX and twinning with EU Member States.<sup>44</sup>



Election operations, Paraguay, 2013. Photo by Ezequiel Scagnetti

<sup>44</sup>. Twinning is an EU instrument for institutional cooperation between Public Administrations of EU Member States and of beneficiary or partner countries. Twinning projects bring together public sector expertise from EU Member States and beneficiary countries with the aim of achieving concrete mandatory operational results through peer to peer activities.

## THE EU AND THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE: REGIONAL PARTNERS

Within the Programmatic Cooperation Framework (PCF) agreement, funded under the ENI, the Council of Europe (CoE) undertakes projects to reinforce democratic governance in the Eastern Neighbourhood including those providing support to on-going electoral reforms in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. This support is mainly ensured through joint opinions of the Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR on (draft) electoral legislation.

Responding to a request from citizen observer groups, the CoE prepared a handbook of best practices on how to gather election-related information, how to report on election issues and how to assess to what degree the elections are held in compliance with domestic legislation and international standards.

The South Programme phase II “Strengthened Democratic Governance in Southern Mediterranean”, which is implemented jointly with the CoE, focuses on the EU’s Southern neighbours, notably on supporting democratic reforms in Tunisia, Morocco and Jordan.

The EU-CoE cooperation also includes the Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey (funded under IPA II) which runs from 2016-19. The facility builds on EU and CoE policy priorities, as well as on CoE expertise in monitoring and cooperation on methodologies, and aims to improve implementation of key recommendations made by advisory and monitoring bodies of the CoE. This serves as a good example of how international cooperation can bring concerted political messages to the highest levels.

## 3.2.3 EU MEMBER STATES’ BILATERAL PROGRAMMES

In their bilateral actions, EU Member States also target the implementation of EU and OSCE/ODIHR recommendations using their political and operational tools. In multilateral fora, the EU and Member States take the lead in raising issues addressed by EU EOM recommendations. Examples of EU Member States’ concrete cooperation projects include:

- The Czech Republic’s *TRANS* (transition) Programme has as one of its seven priority areas projects to promote the enjoyment of participation rights, including the implementation of OSCE/ODIHR and EU EOM recommendations;<sup>45</sup>

45. The programme targets countries in transition, seven countries in the EU Neighbourhood, Myanmar and Cuba.

- Electoral assistance projects currently financed by Belgium under the budget line “*Peace Building*”, i.e. in Tunisia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC); have a close linkage with EOM recommendations. In 2016, the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) through its Embassy in DRC has published a call for proposals which among other priorities targeted the implementation of EU EOM recommendations. In addition, USD 5 million were given to UNDP in Kinshasa (DRC) for different projects, including those related to EOM recommendations.

### 3.3 TRADE RELATIONS: GSP AND GSP+

The *Special Incentive Arrangement for Sustainable Development and Good Governance* (GSP+) is part of EU’s unilateral tariff preferences in favour of developing countries, the *Generalised Scheme of Preferences* (GSP) which was revamped as of 1 January 2014. GSP+ is an incentive-based preferences scheme for those countries that wish to make commitments on meeting their obligations under twenty-seven core international conventions on human and labour rights, environment and good governance. It incentivises beneficiary countries to better assume their own responsibilities under these conventions and to effectively implement these conventions in the domestic legal order.

In practice, it means a commitment of the beneficiary countries to continuously improve their human rights, labour, environmental and good governance record. The GSP+ scheme makes specific reference to seven core UN and International Covenants and Conventions on human right, including:

- The *International Convention on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR);
- The *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* (CERD);
- The *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW);
- The *Convention on the rights of the Child* (CRC).

In so doing it offers a useful complementary tool to pursue the implementation of EOM recommendations in these fields.

The EU constantly monitors whether beneficiary countries fulfil their commitments. GSP+ monitoring makes use of several tools:

- 1 | An ongoing *GSP+ dialogue* with the beneficiary authorities, targeting an annual list of issues ('scorecards');
- 2 | Dedicated *GSP+ monitoring missions* whenever needed, and
- 3 | Other bilateral contacts and fora in which GSP+ issues are addressed. This includes EU assistance to the beneficiary countries to help them overcome the challenges of implementing the 27 conventions.

## 3.4 ACTION IN MULTILATERAL FORA

### 3.4.1 THE UN SYSTEM

The UN system offers several opportunities to promote EOM recommendations, including:

#### UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY (UNGA) THIRD COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS AND DEBATES:

The country and thematic resolutions, the EU interventions under the various agenda items, as well as the interactive dialogues with special procedures may be opportune moments to engage constructively with partner countries to highlight the importance of advancing election reforms and addressing shortcomings identified by election observers. For example, in 2015, the UNGA in its Resolution on Myanmar "*[...] further welcomes the invitation and access given to domestic and international observer organizations to monitor the elections by the Government of Myanmar and the Union Election Commission, and encourages the authorities to implement the recommendations made by those organizations to further strengthen Myanmar's electoral process*".<sup>46</sup>

#### THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL (HRC):

Resolutions of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) also offer opportunities to issue calls for electoral reforms, for example in 2016, the HRC in its resolution on the *Situation of human rights in Myanmar* "*also welcomes the peaceful and competitive conduct of the elections on 8 November 2015 and the efforts made towards ensuring a credible electoral process, while expressing concern over a number of shortcomings and the need for continued reforms to ensure that all the people of Myanmar, inclusive of religious and ethnic minorities, including the Rohingya minority, can participate in electoral processes and have their votes fully reflected in the overall composition of the Parliament*".<sup>47</sup>

46. UNGA Res A/70/233 on Myanmar, of 23 December 2015.

47. UNHRC Resolution on the "Situation of human rights in Myanmar", Res A/HRC/31/L.30/Rev.1 of 23 March 2016, OP2.

#### THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW (UPR) MECHANISM:

The UPR mechanism offers another opportunity to highlight the importance of implementing EOM recommendations of election observers to advance the promotion and protection of suffrage rights. The mechanism is also an opportunity for the country under review to commit to the implementation of EOMs' recommendations as part of the pledges it might offer and the commitments it makes. For example, the *Published Draft Report of the Working Group on the UPR Uganda 2016* mentions the recommendations made by various election observers and the commitment of the Ugandan Government to implement those recommendations.

EU Member States participate actively to the UPR process and can contribute, as appropriate, to raise the issue of EOM recommendations either individually or in cooperation with partners.

#### UN SPECIAL PROCEDURES AND AS SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS:

UN Special Procedures, both country-specific and thematic, are often called to examine areas that are relevant to EOM reports and recommendations. For instance, the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association drafted a report on the enjoyment of peaceful assembly and association rights in the context of elections held in 2013.<sup>48</sup> Special procedures can usefully take up some of the recommendations submitted by the EOM, and conversely EOMs can use the reports of Special Procedures to deepen their election analysis and refine possible recommendations. Together with the *Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights* (OHCHR), the *Carter Center* has started a series of events to bring the election observation and human rights communities closer together to build stronger synergies and impact.

### 3.4.2 REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS

#### ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

All EU Member States are participating States of the OSCE. The EU has a special relationship with the OSCE and has developed close contacts both with OSCE Delegations and with all OSCE Institutions, notably the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). The EU Delegation to the International Organisations in Vienna participates in OSCE decision-making bodies where the EU is speaking '*with one voice*'.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, the OSCE/ODIHR drafts joint opinions with the Venice Commission on current and draft electoral legislation.

48. [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/FAssociation/A\\_68\\_299\\_en.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/FAssociation/A_68_299_en.pdf)

49. The Delegation of the EU is regarded as being part of the Delegation of the OSCE participating State holding the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU.



In the meetings of the OSCE Permanent Council, EU Member States are active in raising implementation of OSCE/ODIHR EOM recommendations made for elections in OSCE participating States, including in Eastern Partnership countries and the Western Balkans. Some EU Member States to which the OSCE/ODIHR deployed an electoral mission voluntarily report to the Permanent Council and the OSCE *Human Dimension Implementation Meeting* (HDIM) on their follow-up to OSCE/ODIHR EOM recommendations and at other OSCE events, such as the meetings of the OSCE *Human Dimension Committee*.

### THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

The CoE and the EU have a long tradition of cooperation based on their fundamental values: human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Each organisation benefits from the other's advantages, competences and expertise, while striving to avoid unnecessary overlap. The strategic partnership, which has developed in recent years, is based on three pillars: political dialogue, legal cooperation and cooperation projects. These pillars can include collaboration on electoral support and implementation of EOM recommendations. The EU is invited to the meetings of the Council for Democratic Elections, the body including representatives of the Venice Commission, the Parliamentary Assembly and the *Congress of Local and Regional Authorities* of the CoE in charge of opinions on (draft) electoral legislation.

Casting a vote. Photo by Michael Forster Rothbart, reproduced by permission of OSCE/ODIHR



# HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY COUNTRY STRATEGIES

EU SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE  
PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ACCESSION

HEADS OF DIALOGUES  
MISSION REPORTS

ARTICLE 8 FIELD MISSIONS  
DIALOGUES

COUNCIL  
WORKING GROUPS

NEIGHBOURHOOD  
DIALOGUES

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS

HUMAN RIGHTS  
DIALOGUES

EUROPEAN  
PARLIAMENT

# SECTION 4

## Lessons Learned





# SECTION 4

## 4.1 OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

While the EU has had success in EOM follow-up in many countries, a variety of obstacles and challenges can impede implementation of EOM recommendations. In its *Handbook on Election Observation Follow-up*, the OSCE/ODIHR identifies several reasons why countries may be unwilling or unable to follow up on electoral recommendations:<sup>50</sup>

- Lack of political will, particularly if incumbent governments and politicians are resistant to change that could undermine their political position and access to power;
- Lack of support in parliament, particularly where electoral reform is politically divisive or requiring change to fundamental aspects of the constitution;
- Lack of professional expertise to address recommendations;
- Lack of financial resources to implement reforms that require significant infrastructural changes;
- Lack of time before the next elections take place, or if early elections are called;
- Outbreak of war, instability or civil unrest;
- National counterparts consider recommendations unconvincing, insufficiently targeted or inappropriate to the national context; and
- The provision of international support may also be hindered when there is domestic political resistance, institutional inertia, weak civil society or a lack of independent media.

Many of these challenges are also relevant in countries where the EU deploys EOMs. During internal discussions and external consultations with partners a number of issues which would increase opportunities for effective EOM follow-up in specific countries were identified, including:

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50. <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/244941>

- Convergence of the content and priorities of EU EOM recommendations and those of other organisations observing elections;
- The need for a broad understanding of the rationale for specific recommendations and an increased awareness of the recommendations among political parties, CSOs and the citizens of a country;
- Need to generate debate and support for reforms outside electoral periods.
- A more systematic mainstreaming of EOM recommendations in political dialogues and cooperation programmes, as appropriate;
- Stronger capacity, through training and other tools, of EU Delegations to report on implementation of recommendations and engage with stakeholders on election reform, and
- Increased coherence in harnessing all various tools available in a timely fashion through early planning in conjunction with the election observation priorities setting.



## 4.2 APPLYING LESSONS

Based on the experience of the EU to follow-up on EOM recommendations, the subsequent good practices have been identified. These, together with respect for the guiding principles and the effective use of EU tools, can pave the way for overcoming the challenges mentioned above.

### 4.2.1 ENSURING QUALITY/RELEVANCE OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The EU has given considerable attention to ensuring the usefulness of recommendations and to ensuring their uniform quality. Care is taken when drafting recommendations to ensure that EU EOM recommendations:



- Are constructive;
- Are consistent with the EU EOM mandate and are not overly prescriptive;
- Identify the relevant international standard or principle related to the recommendation;
- Are based on concrete examples of problems identified in the body of the final report;
- Are written in clear and unambiguous language;
- Are realistically achievable based on the assumption that there is a willingness of all stakeholders to improve the electoral process ahead of future elections;
- Highlight where action is needed to address issues (e.g. inconsistency, lack of transparency, lack of resources, or lack of public confidence) that have led to problems during the election process, and
- Identify which recommendations are priorities for implementation.

After the issuance of Guidelines to EOMs on drafting recommendations, EU EOM Final Reports now identify priority recommendations. In addition, a matrix of the EOM recommendations has been developed which: that i) sets out the underlying problem and the purpose of the recommendation; ii) suggests activities and a timeline to address specific recommendations; iii) identifies the targeted institution or other stakeholders and, iv) sources the relevant electoral or human rights principle or international/regional commitment.

#### 4.2.2 PLANNING FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EOM RECOMMENDATIONS

Where there is momentum to implement electoral reforms, it is good practice to prepare an implementation plan for each EOM recommendation or set of related recommendations. The plan could encompass an assessment of the financial implications, timeframe, feasibility and stakeholder map as well as indicators which enable an assessment of the degree to which a recommendation has been implemented. Partners can also be involved in this process.



EU EOM Core Team discuss recommendations, The Gambia, April 2017

Because electoral reform priorities may change and new challenges emerge over time, the content of EOM recommendations may need to be periodically reviewed and refined. It is important to understand the rationale and objective of a recommendation as there may be more than one path to meeting the objective than the mechanical implementation of a specific recommendation. Therefore, the continued relevance of recommendations and the plan for their implementation can be reviewed by EU Delegations as part of the work on EOM follow-up, e.g. during mid-cycle reviews and whenever necessary, recommendations should be reformulated or reprioritised.

### PLANNING HOW TO ADDRESS EOM RECOMMENDATIONS IN JORDAN

The EU EOM to Jordan issued its final report on 5 December 2016, which included 33 recommendations. The EOM recommendations are categorised into 15 '*priority recommendations*', 7 '*additional short-term recommendations*' and 11 '*additional long-term recommendations*'.

UNDP is implementing the *Support to the Electoral Cycle* (SECJ) project in Jordan (2012-2017) with EU funding. The SECJ project prepared an analytical review to assist the *Independent Election Commission* (IEC) in responding to and addressing the recommendations and others that are provided by international and national election observation groups. This review also analyses whether the recommendations that may be relevant to the elections for governorate councils, municipal mayors and local councils that are expected in summer 2017. Among other things, the analysis identifies:

- 1 The required measures to adopt/implement the recommendation;
- 2 Steps that could be taken by the IEC;
- 3 Steps that could be taken by other actors, and
- 4 If the recommendation is relevant to the 2017 elections.

The analysis also identifies if a recommendation requires constitutional change, legislative change, an IEC policy decision (or change in its Executive Instructions) or requires a government policy decision. A new comprehensive democratic governance programme with an electoral assistance component, funded by the ENI will build upon the SECJ project outcomes and will follow up on the implementation of the EOM recommendations.

### 4.2.3 MONITORING RECOMMENDATIONS IMPLEMENTATION

The EEAS and the Commission services are taking steps to improve the situation analysis regarding the status of priority recommendations, as for example, in the Western Balkans.

#### WORKING WITH ODIHR ON IMPLEMENTING EOM RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

The Commission and OSCE/ODIHR have agreed to joint efforts to support Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia, as well as Kosovo<sup>\*,51</sup> in bringing the conduct of elections closer in line with OSCE commitments and other international obligations and standards for democratic elections. The joint action, to be co-funded under the *EU's Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA)*, will focus on providing support to the beneficiaries in their efforts to follow-up on recommendations in areas related to the election management, voter registration and the conduct of the media during the election campaign. In the context of the project, OSCE/ODIHR will also develop a system to collect recommendations in these areas and monitor their implementation by the IPA beneficiaries.

### 4.2.4 COORDINATION

Discussion of EU EOM recommendations with other international election observer groups and citizen observer groups prior to their finalisation can be beneficial and serve to improve coordination and identification of common priorities. However, differing mission timeframes mean that this is not always feasible. Nevertheless, this approach is encouraged.

It is also important to continue the practice of looking for innovative ways to involve election management bodies, parliaments, political parties, the media, civil society and other nongovernmental actors in dialogues and other actions aimed at implementation of EU and OSCE/ODIHR EOM recommendations.



MEP Miroslav Poche, EU EOM Chief Observer, meets delegations from the African Union and ECOWAS, The Gambia, 2017

51. \* The designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

## COORDINATING ADVOCACY –TUNISIA 2012 AND MOZAMBIQUE 2014

Tunisia held its first post-revolution democratic elections in October 2011. These were observed by a wide range of international and local organisations, many of which made recommendations to improve future elections. However, the recommendations highlighted by different observer groups focussed on a variety of issues, and were on occasion contradictory. With the aim of identifying a limited number of priority recommendations on which all groups could agree, in February 2012 the *Carter Center* (TCC) convened a meeting in Tunis of all international and local election observers and other stakeholder organisations. The event, which was very well covered by local media, supported participant organisations to identify lessons learned throughout the electoral cycle, and helped to bring the question of election legislation back on the agenda. It united the various international and national observer groups around identified issues, thereby bringing coherence to their advocacy activities.

In addition, *Democracy Reporting International* (DRI) facilitated co-operation and consensus-building among eight NGOs, thus helping them to develop a joint platform. Collectively and individually, the NGOs used the platform as the basis for their advocacy work that targeted the new Constituent Assembly (which also served as interim legislature). The new election law of 2014 reflected many of the NGOs' recommendations.

In the year following Mozambique's contested 2014 national elections, responding to calls from the authorities, TCC and the *Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa* (EISA) jointly convened a series of multi-stakeholder workshops and one-on-one technical assistance to identify electoral issues that were critical to preserving peaceful political coexistence and improvements in future election processes in Mozambique. In response to calls from local officials, TCC and the *Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa* (EISA) worked together to convene a series of multi-stakeholder workshops and one-on-one technical assistance. The workshops took place in close cooperation with a wide range of key stakeholders, including the EMB, government officials, legislators responsible for election reform, senior members of the judiciary, and civil society leaders.

The workshops produced concrete outputs, specifically White Papers summarising the main findings on key topics, referring to international best practices and setting out recommendations on core topics such as i) voter registration, ii) women's political participation, iii) campaign financing, iv) electoral dispute resolution, v) independent EMBs and their structure, vi) results management, and vii) accreditation procedures for political party and candidate agents.

### 4.2.5 TIMING

EOM Return Visits to present the Final Reports should be scheduled at the earliest possible juncture, to increase the likelihood that EU EOM recommendations are publicly known before EMBs submit their own report to the competent authority such as Parliament.

While there may be benefits in the early deployment of an EFM, to ensure that it has the largest possible impact, the timing of these Missions should be considered carefully, e.g. at an early stage of an ongoing electoral or constitutional reform process. Prior to deployment, the mandate and purpose of an EFM needs to be properly tailored to the specific situation and explained to stakeholders.



Voting in Mali, 2013. Photo by Ezequiel Scagnetti



## 4.3 EXPERIENCE OF PARTNERS

The EU's international governmental and non-governmental partners are also actively engaged in following up on electoral recommendations and other activities aimed at improving electoral processes. In November and December 2016, EEAS and Commission services held a series of consultations with partner organisations to i) understand their specific approaches and initiatives to electoral follow-up, ii) explore ways to deepen cooperation and iii) replicate their initiatives and good practices where appropriate.

### OSCE ODIHR

The **OSCE/ODIHR** has a well-developed methodology for follow-up which is set out in its *Handbook on the Follow-up to Electoral Recommendations*.<sup>52</sup> When delivered to authorities/government/EMBs, the OSCE/ODIHR EOM report is always accompanied by a letter reminding participating States of their commitment taken at the 1999 *Istanbul Summit* to follow up to the electoral assessment and recommendations, and that ODIHR stands ready to offer assistance if requested.

### CoE

The **CoE** is actively engaged in electoral follow-up. In the context of the project "*Reforming electoral legislation and practice, and developing regional co-operation in electoral matters*", in October 2016 the Division of Electoral Assistance and Census of the CoE organised a conference on the "*Follow-up to the recommendations of international Election Observation Missions in the countries of the Eastern Partnership*". In addition, PACE and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities regularly observe elections mainly in CoE Member States.

### VENICE COMMISSION

Since its creation, the **Venice Commission** of the CoE has been active in the electoral field, notably through the adoption of opinions on draft electoral legislation. Many OSCE/ODIHR EOM and CoE recommendations can only be addressed through legislative changes. Thus, the legal opinions are very important vehicles to assess if recommendations have been addressed. In the last two decades, the Venice Commission has adopted about 120 opinions and 60 texts of a general character on elections, referendums and political parties. The Venice Commission co-operates closely with the OSCE/ODIHR and most opinions related to electoral legislation are drafted jointly by these two organisations.



A session of the Venice Commission, Venice, Italy 2016

52. <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/244941?download=true>

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JAES · AUC · DEAU

Approximately half of all EU EOMs have been deployed in Africa. Based upon a strong political relationship and close cooperation in all areas, the EU partnership with Africa is based on shared values aiming at promoting common interests and achieving shared strategic objectives. The **Joint Europe-Africa Strategy** (JAES) focusses on eight areas of cooperation, including on Democratic Governance and Human Rights. The EU is providing technical assistance to the **African Union Commission** (AUC) **Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit** (DEAU) among other things to establish a coordination function between the AU and other African and International Organisations that could address the issue of the follow-up to EOM recommendations.

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OAS

The *Electoral Integrity Project* has recently published a report on “*Democratic Diffusion. How regional organizations strengthen electoral integrity*”<sup>53</sup> which examines the implementation of recommendations made in the election observation reports of the **Organization of American States** (OAS) for EOMs conducted from 1999-2015 in 25 countries and 71 national elections. These reports contained over 1,000 recommendations, each of which was analysed to trace the presence of an electoral reform which matched the content of such recommendation. The study found that:

- About half of their recommendations were either fully or partially implemented;
- Recommendations that needed some resources were significantly more likely (60 per cent) to be implemented than those requiring formal (legal) changes (47 per cent);
- Reforms were not immediate; on average, recommendations took four years to be implemented, or roughly the period of the standard electoral cycle between one contest and the next.
- Implementation rates vary substantially among countries;
- More aid-dependent countries had higher implementation rate than countries less dependent on aid.

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COMMONWEALTH

The **Commonwealth** mostly uses diplomatic advocacy to promote its EOM recommendations. In difficult political contexts, the Commonwealth has worked with local actors to promote reform, such as youth groups. The Commonwealth also offers technical assistance (TA) to EMBs upon request, and TA activity can include on issues related to EOM recommendations. Currently the Commonwealth is working with its member states' EMBs to develop a good practice guide on follow-up. The *Commonwealth Parliamentary Association* (CPA) works with newly installed parliaments and may raise how to address EOM recommendations.

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53. <https://www.electoralintegrityproject.com/democratic-diffusion/>

## INTERNATIONAL IDEA

The **International Institute for Democracy and Election Assistance** (International IDEA) is an intergovernmental organisation with the mission to support sustainable democracy worldwide as its sole mandate. Since 2008, IDEA has had four EU-funded contracts on electoral assistance and in 2017 was managing two projects in Myanmar (EUR 8 million) and Paraguay (EUR 1.2 million). EOM reports, including by the EU and OSCE/ODIHR, are widely referenced in International IDEA databases, knowledge resources and tools. These reports serve as valuable input to programme development in countries, and are used as a basis for discussions with stakeholders to identifying democracy support interventions. In its collaboration with and support to sub-regional, regional and continental organizations, International IDEA presents the EOM findings to national stakeholders for the determination of possible areas of cooperation and/or the provision of technical assistance. In addition, many requests forwarded to International IDEA by EMBs are believed to relate to EOM recommendations.

## EED

The **European Endowment for Democracy** (EED) provides flexible grants to support local actors of democratic change, mostly in the European Neighbourhood. EED has supported initiatives on raising awareness on voters' rights and media monitoring. Some EED-supported initiatives in Jordan, Egypt, Armenia and Azerbaijan specifically relate to EU and OSCE/ODIHR EOM recommendations on youth, voter information, tackling electoral fraud and participation.

In addition, the EU closely cooperates with a wide variety of NGOs active in election observation as well as in the promotion of election reforms and capacity building on the basis of EOMs recommendations. Below a non-exhaustive list of CSOs which have actively contributed to the reflection that led to this list of best practises:

## CARTER CENTER

The **Carter Center**, in addition to deploying long-term EOMs, submits shadow reports on electoral issues to the UN Treaty Bodies such as the *Human Rights Committee* (CCPR), as well as to the UPR process. This enables consideration of electoral rights in the periodic reporting process undertaken by the UN human rights mechanisms. This is an important activity because UN treaties are part of the corpus of international law and create obligations for the state parties. In addition, it helps to promote follow-up on election observation recommendations. The Carter Center is also engaged in training CSOs in a rights-based approach to election observation, how to use election observation recommendations as the basis for advocacy campaigns between elections, and how to draft shadow reports for the UN treaty bodies. In addition, the Center regularly conducts follow-up activities to its election observation missions that include visits to present recommendations, and a continued presence post-election to support electoral and constitutional reform.

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## DRI

**Democracy Reporting International** (DRI) supports a systematic advocacy approach to electoral reforms, including facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogues, engaging parliaments, the executive and media in reform debates, based on its in-depth analyses of electoral frameworks and political context. DRI emphasises effective outreach through targeted messaging and framing, social media campaigns and use of innovative formats like film clips or infographics to build momentum on electoral reforms

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## ECES

**The European Centre for Electoral Support** (ECES) is a non-profit private foundation headquartered in Brussels with a global remit established in 2011. ECES has been awarded 66 contracts (18 of those from the EU) and implemented activities in 39 countries (mainly in Africa and Middle East) for a total value of EUR 55 million. ECES holds the Vice Presidency of the EPD and it is part of the consortium presently implementing the *Election Observation and Democracy Support project* (EODS II). ECES and EPD partners have jointly elaborated “A European Response to Electoral Cycle Support” (EURECS). This strategy is an innovative delivery mechanism to implement electoral and democracy assistance activities that are consistent with European values and EU policies. EURECS builds on past experience from EPD and ECES, and focuses systematically on EU EOM recommendations. It adopts an inclusive approach towards a wide range of electoral stakeholders in order to ensure comprehensive and sustainable actions it is built to help prevent, mitigate and manage electoral related conflicts.

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## EISA

The **Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa** (EISA) has a policy of including follow-up to each of its EOMs, but has found that this worked best where it has a permanent presence which allows it to engage with CSOs and EMBs on a regular basis. EISA found that coordination on identifying priority recommendations among the various EOMs and holding joint events on follow-up were particularly effective. For EISA as an NGO, civil society support has been its main entry point because it believes reform processes should be internally driven. EISA implemented an EU financed project in DRC supporting domestic observers, and other projects supporting civil society involvement in electoral monitoring in the Central African Republic (CAR), Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique and Zambia.

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## EPD

Member organisations of the **European Partnership for Democracy** (EPD) such as Demo Finland and the *Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy* (NIMD), the Westminster Foundation, AWEPA, have projects directly or indirectly related to issues raised by EOM recommendations including women’s electoral participation and political representation in Zambia and Sri Lanka and transparency in electoral management in Myanmar.

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## IFES

Over the last 30 years, the **International Foundation for Electoral Systems** (IFES) has provided technical assistance to EMBs and other stakeholders in more than 140 countries. The core focus of this work is strengthening electoral processes in support of stable democracies, good governance, and an active citizenry. IFES' technical assistance is grounded in international standards, best practices, and obligations, and frequently informed by the recommendations made by EOMs following critical election processes. For example, several IFES assessment frameworks draw explicitly on EU, OSCE/ODIHR, and other EOM reports as sources of information and evidence for desk research. EOM recommendations also provide potentially valuable inputs into post-election reviews, and as such IFES has suggested that the EU deepen dialogues with EMBs on EOM recommendations during periods when they are preparing the multi-annual strategic plans and preparing end of election reports for submission to Parliament.

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## OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Networks such as the **Asian Network for Free Elections** (ANFREL), **Acuerdo de Lima**, **The European Network of Election Monitoring Organisations** (ENEMO) and the **Electoral Support Network - SADC** (ESN-SADC) often lack the resources to conduct EOM follow-up activities systematically. But examples of good initiatives include the biennial Asian Electoral Stakeholders Forum organised by ANFREL where CSOs and EMBs come together to discuss electoral reform in Asia.



## CLOSING COMMENTS

The EU is in a unique position to promote the implementation of EOM recommendations in the broader context of its policy of democracy support. Its toolbox provides a vast array of instruments to address specific issues in a coordinated manner. Political initiatives can create openings that are to be underpinned by technical assistance and financial support. EU institutions work together with Member States in a truly joined-up approach, seeking the collaboration of partner countries, regional organisations and civil society to increase the effectiveness of the collective action. This list of best practices should offer to all those involved concrete ideas for increased coherence and impact of EU action to strengthen democratic elections across the world. The EU will also continue to learn from and be inspired by the work of other election observation organisations and groups.

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# ANNEX · ACRONYMS

ACP	African, Asian and Pacific countries
ANFREL	Asian Network for Free Elections
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
CACIT	Collectives des Associations Contre l'Impunité au Togo
CAR	Central African Republic
CBSS	Country Based Support Schemes
CCER	Civic Campaign for Electoral Reform
CCPR	Human Rights Committee
CDSA	Comprehensive Democracy Support Approach
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CERD	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CNRP	Cambodian National Rescue Party
CO	Chief Observer
CoE	Council of Europe
CPA	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
CPP	Cambodian People's Party
CRC	Convention on the rights of the Child
CSO	civil society organisation
CSO-LA	Civil Society Organisations and Local Authority programme
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument
DCO	Deputy Chief Observer
DEAU	Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit
DEG	Democracy Support and Elections Group
DG	Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development
DGF	Democratic Governance Facility
DoP	Declaration of Principles for International Observation
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DRI	Democracy Reporting International
EAT	Election Assessment Teams
ECES	European Centre for Electoral Support
EDF	European Development Fund
EEAS	European External Action Service
EED	European Endowment for Democracy
EEM	Election Expert Missions
EFM	Election Follow-up Missions
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EISA	Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa ()
EMB	Election Management Body

ENEMO	The European Network of Election Monitoring Organisations
ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ENPI	European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument
EOS II	Election Observation and Democracy Support project
EOM	Election Observation Mission
EP	European Parliament
EPD	European Partnership for Democracy
ESN-SADC	Electoral Support Network
EUGS	Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy for the European Union
EURECS	A European Response to Electoral Cycle Support
EUSR	EU Special Representative
FAC	Foreign Affairs Council
FOSEP	Force de Sécurisation des Elections Législatives ou Présidentielles
FPI	Foreign Policy Instrument
GGDC	Good Governance and Development Contracts
GNDEM	Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors
GSP	General System of Preferences (
GSP+	Special Incentive Arrangement for Sustainable Development and Good Governance
HDIM	Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
HoM	Head of Mission
HR/VP	High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission
HRC	Human Rights Council
HRDCS	Human Rights and Democracy Country Strategy
ICCPR	International Convention on Civil and Political Rights
IcSP	Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace
IDPs	Internally displaced persons
IEC	Independent Election Commission
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IfS	Instrument for Stability
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
International IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession
JAES	Joint Europe-Africa Strategy
JTF	Joint Task Force
LADE	Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections
LEAP	Lebanese Elections Assistance Project
LEMNA	Law of Election for Members of the National Assembly

LTO	long-term observer
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOVE	Mitigation of Violence in Elections
NASS	Nigerian National Assembly
NEC	National Electoral Committee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
NIMD	Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy
NVT	New Voting Technologies
OAS	Organisation of American States
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
PCF	Programmatic Cooperation Framework
PSC	Political and Security Committee
RMF	Risk Management Framework tool
SAA	Stabilization and Association Agreement
SBC	State Building Contracts
SCEC	Supervisory Commission on the Election Campaign
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SECJ	Support to the Electoral Cycle
SoI	Statement of Intent
SRC	Sector Reform Contracts
STEP Democracy	Support to Electoral Processes and Democracy
STO	Short-Term Observers
TA	technical assistance
TAIEX	Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument
TCC	Carter Center
UEC	Union Election Commission
UN	United Nations
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNEAD	UN Electoral Assistance Division
UNGA	UN General Assembly
UNOPS	UN Office for Project Services
UPR	Universal Periodic Review

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