

## **Factsheet - EU Election Observation Missions (EOMs)**

**Election observation** is an important part and a highly visible demonstration of the **EU's policy and commitment to supporting democracy, peacebuilding, the rule of law and human rights around the world**. It contributes to strengthening democratic institutions, building public confidence in the electoral processes, and helping to deter fraud, intimidation and violence.

The EU carries out **Election Observation Missions (EOMs)** in close **collaboration with partner countries** in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

The EU is a worldwide recognised credible actor in international election observation. Since 2000, 147 EU EOMs have been deployed in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

An EU Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) provides a **comprehensive, independent and impartial assessment of an electoral process, according to international standards** for democratic elections.

The EU EOM observation is a **long-term operation** and its assessment not only covers the Election Day (E-day) but also all other key stages and aspects of the electoral process, including:

- The legal framework.
- The delimitation of constituencies.
- Voter registration.
- Political party and candidate registration.
- The electoral campaign, including campaign finance.
- The preparations for the vote.
- Training of election staff.
- The work of the election management body.
- The media environment and coverage / digital communications and social media.

- On election day observers visit polling stations in order to assess the opening, voting, counting and aggregation of results. This is done according to the principles of independence, full coverage, impartiality, transparency, professionalism and non-interference in the process.
- The complaints and appeals process.

This assessment carried out by the EU EOM helps to **promote public confidence in the electoral process** and may serve to **promote electoral participation** and **mitigate the potential for election-related conflict**. EU EOMs follow a very precise **methodology** that is a warrant of the implementation of these principles.

Based on its findings during the observation period, the EU EOM, in its final report, offers a number of **recommendations** for improving the integrity and effectiveness of future electoral processes and strengthening democratic institutions.

An EOM does not judge on the electoral outcome, and does not in any way validate results, but assesses whether the electoral process was conducted in line with the international, regional and national obligations and commitments on the conduct of democratic elections that the country has signed up to.

EU EOM recommendations have a **wide scope** and address issues such as the respect for **human rights and fundamental freedoms**, in particular freedom of expression and assembly and free media, the **participation of women**, the situation of **vulnerable groups** (e. g. persons with disabilities), active and engaged **civil society organizations** and an **independent judiciary**.

EU EOM recommendations can be used as the basis for informing electoral assistance projects supporting democratisation processes in partner countries.

**The EU EOM is independent in its findings and conclusions from the EU institutions** and adheres to the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation signed at the United Nations in October 2005.

### ***EU EOM: composition, deployment and election-day observation***

To achieve its long-term observation objectives, **EU EOMs are generally deployed 5-6 weeks before the E-day and remain until the end of the electoral process.**

EU EOMs are headed by a **Chief Observer** (a Member of the European Parliament) and are composed of a **Core Team** of electoral experts based in the capital, **Long-Term Observers** (LTOs) deployed to the regions and **Short-Term Observers** (STOs) deployed to assess the polling and counting procedures.

Within 48 hours of the closing of polling stations, the EU EOM issues a Preliminary Statement outlining the EU EOM's preliminary findings and conclusions about the pre-electoral phase and Election Day. The Preliminary Statement is presented at a press conference held by the Chief Observer.

### ***Final report and follow-up on recommendations***

Approximately two months after Election Day, the Chief Observer returns to the country to present the **EU EOM final report**. This report details the mission's overall **findings and conclusions** on the election process. A key feature of the report is a list of **detailed and targeted recommendations** on how to improve the electoral framework and the conduct of future elections.

In principle, an **Election Follow-up Mission (EFM)** is deployed at a later stage (in the middle of the electoral cycle) to assess the degree EU EOMs recommendations have been implemented and encourage further progress. EFMs play an important role in strengthening the long-term impact of EU EOMs on the electoral frameworks of countries observed.