



EUROPEAN UNION
ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION
THE GAMBIA 2017



Chief Observer Miroslav Poche sees off 14 long-term observers departing for the regions on Wednesday, 22 March

Banjul, 22 March

Chief Observer **Miroslav Poche** bid farewell to 14 long-term observers (LTOs) who departed this morning from the European Union Election Observation Mission's (EU EOM) headquarters in Banjul to their respective areas of observation across the country.

In accordance with the EU standard observation methodology it is important for each EOM to have a long-term, country-wide approach enabling a full and substantive analysis of an election not only in the capital but also in the regions. Thus 14 long-term observers (LTOs) drawn from 13 EU member states and Norway have been deployed on 21 March in multinational teams of two throughout the country. LTOs role is decisive in helping the mission to form a balanced and comprehensive view of the elections across the country as LTOs assess at the regional level the same areas, which core team members analyze at the national level.

"You will personify the mission in the field and your consolidated findings will become an essential part of our overall assessment of these elections," said the Chief Observer, Mr. Miroslav Poche.

Prior to their deployment, EU EOM LTOs received comprehensive briefings on a wide range of issues, including on the electoral process, political environment and media landscape.

The EU has established an election observation mission for the parliamentary elections following an invitation from the Independent Electoral Commission of The Gambia. The mission is led by the Chief Observer Miroslav Poche, a Czech member of the European Parliament. A core team of six experts arrived in Banjul on 13 March to launch and coordinate the mission. Fourteen short-term observers will join the mission on 1 April, primarily to observe proceedings on election day. In the days leading up to the elections, a delegation of the European Parliament will also be integrated into the EU EOM, as will locally-recruited short-term observers from EU member states' embassies accredited to The Gambia. Around election day the mission will comprise up to 50 observers drawn from EU member states, as well as Canada, Norway and Switzerland.

The mission operates in accordance with the "Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation," adopted under the auspices of the United Nations in 2005. In addition, observers are bound by a Code of Conduct that assures strict neutrality and impartiality in the course of their duties.

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