



EUROPEAN UNION
ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION
THE GAMBIA 2017



Chief Observer Miroslav Poche sees off 14 short-term observers departing for the regions on Monday, 3 April

Banjul, 3 April

Chief Observer **Miroslav Poche**, a member of the European Parliament (MEP), bid farewell to 14 short-term observers (STOs) who departed today from the European Union Election Observation Mission's (EU EOM) headquarters in Banjul to their respective areas of observation across the country.

Prior to their deployment, EU EOM's STOs received comprehensive briefings on a wide range of issues, including on the electoral process, political environment and media landscape. This morning EU EOM's STOs also will take part in a briefing organised by the IEC.

"This team of short-term observers brings a wealth of diverse experience and reflects the interest of the European Union in the upcoming National Assembly elections," said the Chief Observer, Mr. Miroslav **Poche**. Furthermore, the Chief Observer stressed: *"The EU strongly stands by the understanding that election observation is not a one-day event and that an informed assessment of an election cannot be made if observation is limited to election-day monitoring. Therefore, the EU has deployed its observation mission three weeks prior to election day and will remain in The Gambia to observe the post-election environment, including the adjudication of complaints, if any."*

The EU has established an election observation mission for the National Assembly elections following an invitation from the Independent Electoral Commission of The Gambia. The mission is led by the Chief Observer Miroslav Poche, a Czech MEP and comprise seven international election experts who are based in Banjul. On 21 March, 14 long-term observers in multinational teams of two have been deployed to all of the seven regions. From today, the mission's scope of observation will be broadened as 14 STOs and a dozen of locally-recruited short-term observers from EU member states' embassies accredited to The Gambia have joined the mission. STOs will primarily observe the proceedings on election day as well as the tabulation of the results.

On 4 April, a ten-member delegation of the European Parliament (EP) will also be integrated into the mission. The EP delegation is headed by Ms. Jean Lambert, the MEP from the United Kingdom. Around election day the EU EOM The Gambia will comprise up to 50 observers drawn from 27 EU member states, as well as 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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