



Press Release

for immediate release

EU Election Observation Mission following a challenging electoral process

ABUJA 27 January 2015 – “The general elections scheduled for February 2015 are a crucial and challenging test for democracy in Nigeria. These are important not just for Nigeria and its neighboring countries, but also for the European Union. We will be looking at the entire process over an extended period with over 90 observers out on election day” said Chief Observer Santiago Fisas on Tuesday in a press conference in Abuja.

The EU Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) is observing at the invitation of the Nigerian authorities. The mission will assess the Presidential, National Assembly, Governor and State House elections against national law and international principles for elections contained in regional and universal law and standards.

“We already had advance analysts here for the primaries who noted that they passed relatively peacefully, but the system is problematic with restrictions on the right to stand and therefore reduced choice for voters on election day” said Chief Observer Fisas. He added: “we will also stay longer as the petitions process is critical.”

“We observe and analyse each component of the process, carefully considering how those competing and voting in the elections are served. We will give our preliminary assessment two days after each election day. A final report, including recommendations for future elections, will be published at a later stage. The EU EOM will always be impartial and objective and will not interfere” said the Chief Observer.

“We all know there are technical challenges with this election, with the collection of voter cards, the use of new technology with the card readers, and delays in the petitions process. Clearly there are concerns about voters being included, the fairness of the process, and the ability of tribunals and courts to provide remedy in cases of grievances” noted Chief Observer Fisas.

The Chief Observer also said “In my meetings with senior representatives they talked of honouring the Abuja Accord, for the elections to be peaceful. Violence does not change results. It is also of course critical that the elections are fair, transparent and credible, and there is electoral justice. It is up to the institutions, the political parties, and the people of Nigeria to make this happen.”

Note to Editors:

The European Union was invited to deploy an observation mission by the Nigerian authorities and has signed Memorandums of Understanding with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The EU EOM is independent from any EU institutions or Member States and is committed to remain neutral and abide by the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and the Code of Conduct, as well as the laws of Nigeria.

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