



European Union  
Election Observation Mission to Malawi  
2014 Tripartite Elections

– PRESS RELEASE –

## MALAWIANS SUCCEEDED TO VOTE DESPITE CONSIDERABLE ORGANISATIONAL SHORTCOMINGS

**Blantyre, 22 May 2014.** –The European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) considered that notwithstanding considerable organisational shortcomings and a few isolated incidents of unrest, in particular in Blantyre, calm prevailed on 20 May tripartite elections. Lack of essential material resulted in delays in the opening of polling stations. However, the commitment of polling station staff facilitated the voting process, along with the implementation of *ad hoc* solutions, made in agreement with political party representatives, to address problems caused by the lack of material. “Despite some logistical deficiencies, we observed a general improvement of the voting process as election day proceeded. I have to congratulate the polling staff members for their dedication amidst a challenging environment and the Malawian voters, who waited patiently on the queues for the voting to start”, Véronique De Keyser Chief Observer of the European Union Election Observation Mission said.

Despite the weaknesses in the election administration’s structural capacity and the resulting organisational shortcomings, the EU EOM considered that MEC acted impartially throughout the election period and MEC sought inclusive solutions in an effort to enfranchise all voters. In the lead up to the elections, MEC initiated a communication strategy aimed at keeping the public and political parties informed about the situation.

After observing 144 election campaigns, the EU EOM assessed the election campaign as largely calm and peaceful. Only the four main political parties – the PP, DPP, UDF and MCP – succeeded in holding large rallies and country-wide whistle-stop tours. During campaign, some media provided unbalanced coverage of political activities. The PP dominated the airtime on both state-owned radio and television. Galaxy radio allocated more airtime to DPP and Joy radio provided more coverage to UDF. Times TV afforded more airtime to the MCP. *The Daily Times*, *The Nation* and radio stations Zodiak and Capital FM provided adequately balanced coverage of political actors.

The EU EOM will remain in country until 15 June to observe the tabulation of results and the complaints and appeals mechanisms related to elections. A final report including a comprehensive assessment of all aspects of the electoral process and recommendations for future elections will be released several weeks later.

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