



European Union  
Election Observation Mission Maldives 2014



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**EU Election Observation Mission: *“Well-administered and competitive elections despite difficult electoral environment”***

**MALE’, 24 March 2014** – The parliamentary elections on 22 March in the Maldives were well administered despite interference by the Supreme Court, and its action against Elections Commission members, which overshadowed the electoral period, according to the European Union Election Observation Mission.

Presenting the mission’s preliminary statement today, EU EOM Chief Observer Eduard Kukan MEP said voting was calm and orderly, and the process was administered in a professional, impartial and transparent manner. However, he said the Supreme Court ruling to remove two members of the Elections Commission less than two weeks before election day “violated the principles of the separation of powers and raised serious concerns about safeguarding the independence of the Elections Commission.”

Mr Kukan also highlighted the issues of vote-buying and excessive campaign expenditure. “The area of campaign finance is insufficiently regulated,” he said. “There were many worrying reports about significant overspending – and a reportedly prevalent practice of vote-buying.” This, he said, was “a very dangerous practice that has the potential to destroy the foundation of democratic elections.”

The mission concludes, too, that the secrecy of voting was not always protected. This was due, said Mr Kukan, “to insufficient procedures for voters to vote outside their constituency, the absence of tactile ballot guides for the visually impaired, and the way voting booths were placed in some polling stations.”

The EU EOM fielded some 30 observers on election day. They were deployed in four out of the seven provinces: Upper North, North Central, South Central, and South.

The mission assessed the entire electoral process and the extent to which it complied with international and regional commitments for elections, as well as with Maldivian law.

The EU EOM will continue to observe the post-electoral period and Mr Kukan will return to the Maldives in the coming months to present a detailed final report including recommendations for future elections.

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