



EUROPEAN UNION ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION
REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA
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Press Release

Elections mark a crucial step towards democracy despite organizational weaknesses.

Angolans turned out in large numbers and voted freely.

Luanda, 8 September 2008 – Angola's first elections in 16 years were conducted in a calm and peaceful atmosphere nationwide. Freedoms of assembly and expression have been widely respected throughout the electoral campaign.

“The Angolan people turned out in large numbers and voted freely demonstrating their clear commitment to the country's democratic process”, said Luisa Morgantini, Chief Observer of the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM).

Certain procedures, such as the handling of the voters' list, were inconsistently applied and logistical problems with the distribution of election materials caused severe delays in the opening of polling stations in Luanda.

The National Election Commission (CNE) has made serious efforts to ensure maximum voter participation and fairness of the election process.

All contesting political parties were allocated equal free airtime according to the election regulations. Nevertheless, the MPLA dominated the State-run media coverage to a degree which was not consistent with international standards on free and equal access to the media.

“The 2008 Angolan elections represent a crucial step in the country's democratization process”, said Fiona Hall, the head of a seven member delegation from the European Parliament, which is part of the EU observation mission. *“We hope that the elections will lead to strengthening the role of the Parliament and of all its members.”*

The election process is still ongoing and the EU EOM will continue to follow the tabulation of results and the election complaints and appeals process. A more comprehensive, final report including recommendations for future elections will be published within two months.

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