

Brussels, 18 December 2008

El Salvador: EU deploys Election Observation Mission for the Legislative and Presidential Elections of 2009

Following invitations from the Salvadorian electoral authorities, the European Commission has decided to deploy an EU Election Observation Mission (EOM) to El Salvador to observe the Legislative Elections of 18 January 2009 and the Presidential Elections of 15 March 2009. The EU EOM will be led by Luís Yáñez-Barnuevo García, Spanish Member of the European Parliament.

Benita Ferrero-Waldner, European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, said: *“This is the first time the EU will be present observing elections in El Salvador. Since the 1992 Chapultepec Agreements, El Salvador has advanced towards the consolidation of its democracy. These elections represent a further important step in that process and we are confident the presence of the EU EOM throughout the country covering the whole electoral process will contribute to enhance transparency and public confidence. At the same time, this initiative is a renewed sign of the EU commitment towards stability and development in Central America, as also showed by the negotiation process for a bi-regional Association Agreement and the significant contributions in development cooperation to the region and specifically to El Salvador”.*

The EU EOM Core team will consist of the Chief Observer and seven experts who will arrive during the third week of December. The EOM core team will accompany the whole process, till the official proclamation of results of the Presidential elections. The EU EOM will liaise with the country’s national electoral authority (the Tribunal Supremo Electoral), the MFA and all key players in the election process, including national and international observers.

The EU EOM will be completed, on the occasion of the legislative elections, by 22 long-term observers (LTOs), who will be deployed throughout the country to follow the campaign period and pre-election preparations, as well as Election Day and the post-election period. Some members of the European Parliament will join the EU EOM around election day.

For the Presidential elections, scheduled on 15 March, the EU EOM will have, in addition to the core team and the 22 long-term observers, 40 short-term observers, together with some members of the European Parliament, to observe voting, counting and the tabulation of results. If a second round of the Presidential election is required on 19 April, the EU EOM will remain in country until this has been completed.

Election Observation Missions are an important instrument for building confidence in the democratic processes of a country and are deployed in line with the EU’s commitment to promote democracy, human rights and the respect for the rule of law. EU election observation missions are independent and professional, and for this reason their findings are widely seen as credible and trustworthy.

This would be the first EU EOM in El Salvador. In the region, EU EOMs have been in recent years deployed to Guatemala and Nicaragua.

The EU is making available €3,7 million from the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), to meet the costs of deploying this mission.

EU Election Assistance & Observation

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/human_rights/eu_election_ass_observ/index.htm

European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights

http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/eidhr/index_en.htm

The EU's relations with El Salvador

http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/el_salvador/index_en.htm

The EU's relations with Central America

http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/ca/index.htm