



## European Union Election Observation Mission

Republic of Kenya 6 General Elections 2013

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### PRESS RELEASE

#### Kenyans demonstrate strong commitment to democratic elections

**NAIROBI, 06 March 2013** – The 4 March General Elections were the first real test of Kenya's new Constitution, new electoral framework and reformed judiciary, and although the process is not yet over, Kenya can be credited with demonstrating a strong commitment to democratic elections. The election process has called for huge efforts on the part of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), as well as dedication on the part of Kenya's electorate. While several serious violent incidents occurred in some parts of the country, EU election observers have found that the overall atmosphere during the elections was calm, and the democratic spirit of Kenyans prevailed.

The elections were characterised by a huge society-wide push for peace, transparency and credibility. *"I was pleased to see that Kenyan voters' determination to exercise their democratic rights was strong enough to defeat even the longest queues,"* Chief Observer Alojz Peterle said while presenting the EU EOM's preliminary findings in Nairobi. *"Kenyans stood up for peace and for their rights on Monday. Their commitment to exercising their rights sets a positive example not only to the region, but to the world."*

It was an ambitious undertaking to elect the president, the national assembly, the senate, governors and county assemblies in one day. The IEBC retained the electorate's trust, however inconsistent decision making mechanisms drew it into a series of delays. Despite this, the IEBC succeeded in overcoming the technical and operational difficulties on Election Day to ensure that the integrity of the vote was protected.

There were some elements of the electoral process which will require more attention from Kenya in the future. Despite an existing quota system, women's participation as candidates was disappointingly low, while some Kenyan communities and marginalised groups remain disenfranchised as a result of not having national ID cards. More than 3 million eligible voters were not registered during the biometric voter registration process and were therefore unable to vote in these elections, and some candidates who won their High Court bid to be on the ballot were still excluded.

With the voting process over and the counting and tallying continuing, the EU EOM will observe the rest of the election process closely. *"The phases ahead of the IEBC and Kenya are as much defining parts of the process as Election Day,"* Mr Peterle said. *"The overall credibility and transparency of the General Elections can be assessed after the tallying, the announcement of the results and any possible petitions are also dealt with."* To observe these phases, the EU EOM will remain in Kenya until the end of the process, and present its final findings approximately two months later in a comprehensive Final Report.

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