



EUROPEAN UNION ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION

General Elections – Sierra Leone
24 June 2023



The European Union Election Observation Mission presents its final report with 21 recommendations; the EU stands ready to support Sierra Leone in their implementation

Freetown, 10 October 2023

Press Release - For Immediate Release

Today the European Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) to Sierra Leone published its Final Report on the 24 June General Elections. The report is based on a two-month long, nation-wide election observation and contains detailed analysis of the entire process. Chief Observer Evin Incir, Member of the European Parliament, noted: *“The 2023 general elections underscored a clear commitment among Sierra Leoneans to the democratic processes, while also highlighting the urgent need for reforms to enhance transparency and inclusion, and build overall trust in future electoral processes.”*

As a part of its Final Report, the mission is offering 21 recommendations for future electoral processes. In particular, the mission considers that it is important to promote transparency as to help democracy thrive. With this purpose, the Final Report recommends reforms to ensure that detailed information on the voter register, the electoral results processing system, including the tabulation, and the final electoral results per polling station, are made available to the public, including online. Other priority recommendations offered by the EU EOM concern issues related to, amongst others, protecting candidates and promptly holding perpetrators of election-related violence accountable, enforcing restrictions on the use of state resources for political gains, ensuring transparency and accountability in campaign financing, and protecting freedom of expression by removing ambiguous definitions related to cybercrimes.

The EU EOM took notice of positive reforms conducted to promote women participation in political life. Following these elections, 30 per cent of elected members of Parliament were women. *“The reforms undertaken ahead of these elections were important. Nevertheless, I encourage political parties to take this work forward, to make a reinforced commitment for greater gender parity, which will further enhance women participation in public and political life,”* said Chief Observer Evin Incir.

The decision to establish a National Election Systems Review Committee may constitute a first step towards a comprehensive review of legal and operations aspects of elections. The Committee’s success will hinge on its ability to cater for an inclusive process bringing together stakeholders from the complete spectrum of political parties and civil society organizations.

“It remains crucial to further foster democratic processes with a strong political will of all stakeholders. To promote inclusion and transparency. And most importantly to build public confidence. As a friend and ally, the EU stands ready to support Sierra Leonean stakeholders in those efforts and in the implementation of these recommendations,” Chief Observer Evin Incir stated.

The EU EOM was deployed in response to an invitation by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone and by the Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone. The mission was present in the country from 11 May to 13 July 2023 and at full strength comprised 104 observers from 26 EU Member States, as well as from partner countries Canada and Norway. Observers were deployed to all 16 districts of Sierra Leone.

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