



MISSÃO DE OBSERVAÇÃO ELEITORAL DA UNIÃO EUROPEIA



SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE

Eleições legislativas, autárquicas e regional, 25 de setembro 2022

The EU Election Observation Mission presents its Final Report, including recommendations, on the 2022 elections in São Tomé e Príncipe

São Tomé, 24 January 2023 – The European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) to São Tomé e Príncipe presented its Final Report, including a range of recommendations, on the legislative, local and regional elections of 25 September 2022.

“The elections took place in a context of general respect for fundamental freedoms and nominally independent democratic institutions” said Chief Observer Maria Manuel Leitão Marques, Member of the European Parliament. *“At the same time, the process was characterised by some politicised interpretations of the legal-electoral framework and a limited role for the civil society. We also noted a weak capacity from the state institutions to make information accessible to the public and a reduced participation of women candidates in the highest political positions.”*

The EU EOM Final Report is the result of a comprehensive analysis of the September 2022 elections, which takes into consideration all aspects of the electoral process: the political environment, the performance of the National Election Commission and the Technical Electoral Cabinet, the role of the media and social media in the campaign, as well as the compliance with national and international law.

The Final Report contains 22 recommendations aimed at improving future elections in São Tomé e Príncipe. The priority recommendations suggest eliminating inconsistencies and ambiguities in the electoral laws, turning the National Election Commission into a permanent body and establishing a reliable mechanism to update the voter register. It also calls for introducing and enforcing clear campaign expenditure limits through an independent oversight mechanism, enforcing the existing campaign funding prohibitions, and ensuring the independence of state media from political influence.

Mrs. Leitão Marques expressed her appreciation for the cooperation of all national stakeholders with the EOM and noted: *“These recommendations are offered to the consideration of the people of São Tomé e Príncipe. They are suggestions aimed at improving future electoral processes and strengthening the Santomean democracy. It is up to the authorities and wider civil society to act on their implementation”* she added.

A roundtable with representatives of civil society, political parties, national institutions, international organisations and electoral experts to discuss in detail all the recommendations is scheduled in the next days. The EU EOM Final Report can be found on the mission’s website (saotomeeprincipe2022.eueom.eu), Facebook ([@moeueSTP](https://www.facebook.com/moeueSTP)) and Twitter accounts ([@moeueSTP](https://twitter.com/moeueSTP)).

Following an invitation by the São Tomé e Príncipe authorities, the European Union deployed an EOM to São Tomé e Príncipe between 25 August and 19 October 2022. The mission comprised a total of 40 observers from EU member states and Norway. The mission’s mandate was to assess the electoral process against international obligations and commitments for democratic elections as well as the laws of São Tomé e Príncipe.

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