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Bolivia: EU deploys Election Observation Mission for the General Elections and Autonomy Referendums

Following an invitation from the Government of Bolivia, the European Commission is deploying an European Union Election Observation Mission (EOM) to Bolivia to observe the presidential and legislative elections of 6 December as well as referendums on an autonomy status which will take place in five departments. These elections complete an intensive electoral and election observation process which started in 2006 when the Bolivians approved a Constituent Assembly mandated to draft a new Constitution, approved by referendum in January 2009. The EU EOM will be led by Ms Renate Weber, Romanian Member of the European Parliament, who also led the EOM that the EU deployed for the referendum earlier this year.

"With these elections Bolivia culminates a process of political reforms that has established a new political and socioeconomic basis in the country. The European Union has supported Bolivia in this process and I am pleased that we are now completing the cycle by sending an EOM to the elections and referendums of 6 December as well. I am also satisfied that Mrs Weber, who already in the last observation did an excellent job, accepted to lead this EOM again, contributing with her experience and ensuring continuity", said Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy.

The Chief Observer will launch the EOM in La Paz on 10 November. On election day, the EU EOM will be composed of over 100 observers, deployed throughout the country. Prior to election day, the EU EOM core team and long-term observers will follow the campaign period and the pre-election process. The EU EOM will remain in country after the elections to follow the main post-electoral aspects.

The EU EOM is funded under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). This action fits into a broader democracy and rule of law cooperation with Bolivia and complements a programme financed under the Instrument for Stability in support of the Bolivian Plurinational Electoral administration as well as domestic election observation.

EU EOMs are an important instrument for building confidence in the democratic process 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 autonomous and professional, and for this reason their findings are widely seen as credible and trustworthy.

For additional information, see also:

EU Election Assistance & Observation:

http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/human_rights/election_observation/index_en.htm

European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/finance/eidhr_en.htm

The EU's relations with Bolivia:

http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/bolivia/intro/index.htm