



**EUROPEAN UNION**  
DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
KIGALI – RWANDA

Kigali, 26<sup>th</sup> January 2009

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **The EU Electoral Observation Mission releases its final report on the September 2008 legislative elections: good elections but improvement recommended for the future**

***Honourable Michael Cashman, the Member of the European Parliament who headed the EU Observation Mission of the September 2008 legislative elections<sup>1</sup>, presented today the Mission's final report at a press conference. Mr Cashman is also having a series of meetings with Rwandan authorities, including key Ministers, the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, the Chairman of the National Electoral Commission, and various other stakeholders during his mission in Kigali.***

Despite a number of important shortcomings observed during the September elections that are detailed in the EU EOM's 48-pages final report, the general assessment of the elections is positive. The report provides a total of 22 recommendations addressed to the authorities, the political parties, civil society organisations and Rwanda's international partners.

The Chief Observer stressed in his opening remarks at the press conference that: *"The process of democratisation in Rwanda since the end of the genocide is remarkable. Elections took place in a peaceful environment, a fact that deserves to be commended. Also, the massive election of women to the Chamber of Deputies is a worldwide record that Rwanda can rightly be proud of".*

Honourable Michael Cashman explained the objectives of his mission in the following terms: *"I am back in Rwanda to inform Rwandan authorities, civil society and the population at large of the EU Observation Mission's findings and to present recommendations on the way forward. Our report is a constructive one and should be considered as such. Considerable progress has already been made since the 2003 elections. The recommendations we are issuing now are meant to help Rwanda further improve the conduct of elections. I am confident that all elements required to meet international election standards and best practices can be put in place in view of the 2010 elections".*

The European Union will monitor the following up of these recommendations. The European Commission, through its Delegation in Rwanda, will continue providing support to the National Electoral Commission to reinforce its capacities, as well as to civil society organisations, including the media, to help them actively play their role in the democratic process.

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<sup>1</sup>The EU EOM, composed of 8 international experts and 101 independent observers, covered the whole election period. All equipment procured for the EU EOM was graciously donated in October to 12 Rwandan NGOs active in promoting democracy and human rights.