



## EU Election Observation Mission to Sri Lanka - 2005

For the 17 November Presidential Elections

Colombo, 20 November 2005

**EU CHIEF OBSERVER STRONGLY CRITICISES LTTE. HE HAS ACCUSED THEM OF USING ANTI DEMOCRATIC TACTICS WHICH DEPRIVED TAMIL VOTERS OF THE RIGHT TO EXERCISE THEIR FRANCHISE RESULTING IN AN EXTREMELY LOW POLL IN TAMIL AREAS OF THE NORTH AND EAST.**

Announcing the interim conclusions of the 83 strong European Election Observation Mission, Mr. Cushnahan said:

"Although the election process proceeded satisfactorily in the South of the country, polling day in the North and East was marred by violence and intimidation in the North and East. The LTTE enforced a boycott which had a devastating effect on voting in Tamil areas.

This had been preceded by joint LTTE/TNA statement on the 10<sup>th</sup> November in which they stated:

**"...it is a futile exercise to show any interest in the elections."**

This created an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty for voters in these areas. In order to ensure that no ambiguity existed as to what the LTTE wanted to happen in reality, they enforced this boycott by creating an environment which was rife with violence and intimidation. Several days before polling, LTTE front organisations had made explicit calls for a boycott and for election staff to cease work on polling day, and for there to be a day of "mourning".

Their actions should be roundly condemned by all who cherish democratic principles."

Mr. Cushnahan also paid a personal tribute to Election Commissioner, Mr Dayananda Dissanayake,

"Sri Lanka is a country that has had a proud history of democracy since 1931. Unfortunately, it has been under stress and strain for a number of years. I have led four EU Election Observation Missions during a significant part of this period.

Despite the pressures and the intimidation he faced, Mr Dissanayake has acted with courage, displaying absolute integrity, impartiality and professionalism leading and inspiring his equally professional and impartial staff.

The people of Sri Lanka owe him a huge debt of gratitude for the contribution he has made to protecting democracy in this country."

The full EUEOM report is appended.

*for further information: EU EOM Media Advisor, Mr. Andrea Malnati, mobile 077.3597.347 - [www.eueomsrilanka.org](http://www.eueomsrilanka.org)  
EU Election Observation Mission - Hotel TransAsia - Colombo - tel. (+94-11) 24.91.000*