



EU EOM Press Release.

Timor-Leste holds well-organised and competitive polls

Dili, 21 March 2022 – “Timor-Leste held credible, transparent, and peaceful elections. The Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration (STAE) was well-organised for the polls in which a record number of 16 candidates participated, including four women. “At the time of this statement, the Mission continues to follow the ongoing tabulation process”, summarised this morning Domènec Ruiz Devesa, the Chief Observer of the EU EOM, in a press conference in the capital.

Ruiz Devesa explained: “The Mission has been present in the country since mid-February to observe in a comprehensive manner the electoral process. On election day, more than 40 EU observers reported from over 174 polling stations across the 12 municipalities and the Special Administrative Region of Oecusse-Ambeno.”

Ruiz Devesa noted that, “candidates were able to run without restrictions and the campaign was peaceful overall, with few incidents, and that this may have been attributable in part to a peace pact organized by the National Election Commission (CNE).” Ruiz Devesa further commented that, “although candidates were nominally independent, a handful of them were backed by political parties. This resulted in an uneven playing field whereby party-backed candidates had a financial and structural advantage over most other candidates.”

“A pluralist media landscape provided access to a wide range of political opinions. The Mission observed that Rádio-Televisão Timor-Leste (RTTL), provided free airtime and editorial coverage to all 16 candidates in a neutral tone, but its campaign news coverage was imbalanced. Half of the candidates had a significant Facebook campaign.”

“Our observers reported that procedures for voting and counting were followed in a transparent manner and with sufficient guarantees,” Ruiz Devesa underlined.

This preliminary statement of the EU Election Observation Mission is delivered before the completion of the entire electoral process. Critical stages remain, including results and the adjudication of eventual petitions. The EU EOM remains in the country to observe full cycle of the electoral process.

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