



# European Union Election Follow-up Mission

## Ghana March 2023

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### PRESS RELEASE

**EU Election Follow-Up Mission welcomes Electoral Commission plans to enhance transparency, encourages inclusivity but notes the lack of legislative progress by all relevant stakeholders in addressing remaining legal reforms**

**24 March 2023, Accra, Ghana**

The European Union deployed an Election Follow-Up Mission (EFM) on 20-24 March 2023, led by Chief of Mission Mr Javier Nart, Member of the European Parliament (MEP) and Chief Observer of the EU Election Observation Mission (EOM) to Ghana in 2020.

The Follow-up Mission is an independent technical mission which aims at promoting discussion – and action – by key national stakeholders working towards strengthening democracy in Ghana, to raise awareness of areas where electoral reform remains unaddressed and to assess the status of implementation of EU recommendations offered by the 2020 EU EOM.

During the visit, the Mission met numerous electoral stakeholders, including the Electoral Commission, Parliament, relevant state institutions, the judiciary, political parties, media institutions, civil society and development partners. Mr Nart noted that, *“At this stage, there appears to be some intent to, at least from the Electoral Commission, partially address six of the EU EOM’s 18 recommendations, but necessary legal reforms remain unaddressed”*.

The EFM was encouraged by the EC’s plans to introduce new measures, which, if implemented, go some way to further enhancing transparency in its procedures and results management, including timely publication of polling station results, as recommended by the EU EOM. Plans to provide more time for candidate nominations and enhance management of financial reporting by parties were also welcomed by the EFM.

In a press conference held today, Mr Nart MEP said: *“We continue to stress the importance of transparency and inclusivity in the management of the electoral process, which are critical to enhance public confidence. But a number of issues requiring legal change remain outstanding, which highlights a lack of political will in particular from the political parties to take forward the necessary legal reforms. The failure to address some of these issues, which also featured in the EOM report of 2016 and the Election Expert mission of 2012, is a missed opportunity for Ghana”*.

The Chief of Mission drew particular attention to the need for legal reforms on issues such as political finance, including the misuse of state resources; the increased participation of women in political life; a more inclusive process for nomination of electoral commissioners; and the management of petitions for parliamentary elections. He also highlighted the need to provide for appropriate oversight of media and digital communications during the campaigning period. These findings are part of the report based on the 2020 elections.

In terms of ensuring a conducive environment for future elections, Mr Nart emphasized that it is also imperative for the EC and political parties to have a collaborative and inclusive approach, to facilitate constructive discussions and help mitigate potential tensions already during the run-up to the polls. Mr Nart stressed, *“The recommendations offered by an EU Election Observation Mission are an integral part of its work. When recommendations go unnoticed and unaddressed for multiple electoral cycles it puts into question the value of the observation effort and the valuable work of citizen observers”*.

Mr Nart concluded by saying: *“The Follow-Up Mission could not help but notice that EU recommendations have received no attention from the main political parties, including within Parliament, although the report was shared extensively with their leaderships. The EU continues to support and work together with Ghanaian stakeholders striving to strengthen democracy and, as there is still time before the elections, believes that the implementation of recommendations can contribute to further enhance transparency, inclusiveness and credibility of elections in Ghana.”*

The Follow-Up Mission’s final report will be published within a couple of months. The full archive of EU election mission reports can be found at <http://database.euom.eu>.

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