



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ ПАРЛАМЕНТ PARLAMENTO EUROPEO EVROPSKÝ PARLAMENT EUROPA-PARLAMENTET
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PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN JORDAN

ELECTION OBSERVATION DELEGATION

21-25 January 2013

**Report by
Mr Christian Dan PREDA, Chair of the Delegation**

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INTRODUCTION

Following an invitation from the Independent Election Commission of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan dated 9 August 2012 and the decision of the High Representative and Vice-President of the European Commission Ms Catherine Ashton on the deployment of an EU Election Observation Mission (EU EOM), the Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament authorised on 15 November 2012 the sending of a delegation to observe the legislative elections in Jordan.

The parliamentary elections of 23 January 2013 marked the first time that an EU Election Observation Mission was deployed in Jordan, allowing an opportunity for the European Parliament to be fully integrated into this long-term framework. Against the backdrop of profound political changes taking place in the region, the 2013 parliamentary elections were seen as an important step in the process of introducing gradual political reforms in Jordan, as initiated by the King Abdullah II.

The EU Election Observation Mission (EU EOM), present in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan since 13 December 2012, was led by the Chief Observer M David MARTIN, Member of the European Parliament. Altogether the EU EOM deployed 96 observers (from all 27 EU member states, as well as from Switzerland and Norway) in all 12 governorates of the country.

A delegation of the European Parliament joined the EU EOM on 21 January. The delegation was chaired by Mr Christian Dan PREDA and was also composed of Mr Philippe BOULLAND, Mr Andrzej GRZYB, Ms Tanja FAJON, Mr Ivo VAJGL, Mr Paweł KOWAL and Mr Bastiaan BELDER.

The Delegation wishes to highlight its excellent cooperation with and express its gratitude to the Chief Observer Mr David MARTIN, the EU Election Observation Mission, and the EU Delegation in Jordan.

POLITICAL CONTEXT

Since the end of 2010, Jordan has been facing a continued socio-economic deterioration leading to popular demonstrations, which were given a further impetus following the political uprisings in the Arab world since the beginning of 2011. The public protests were relatively measured and peaceful in comparison with the uprisings in other Arab countries, but the protesters challenged the status quo of the political system which has been relatively untouched since Jordan's independence. The demonstrators - representing a wide spectrum of Jordanian citizens of Palestinian origin, East-Bankers and Islamists as well as youth - called for a political reform, limitation of the power of the King and the executive branch and tangible measures to tackle the high unemployment, rising cost of living and corruption. The protesters also demanded the revision of the electoral law and free and fair elections.

The King has tried to respond to street protests by appointing successive governments, nominating a National Dialogue Committee and then a Royal Committee for the Revision of the Constitution. Amongst the constitutional amendments adopted were the establishments of an Independent Election Commission and of a Constitutional Court. Moreover, in the course of 2012, new legal provisions have been introduced in the form of Parliamentary Election Law, Political Parties Law and Press and Publication Law.

Despite of the changes, considerable powers remain vested with the King who retains the power to appoint the Prime Minister and the cabinet. **However, in the aftermath of the election, the King has conceded his prerogative, calling on the newly elected parliament to propose the new Prime Minister who will then be authorised to form the cabinet.**

In terms of constitutional prerogatives, the Parliament remains weak and highly dependent on the will of the King to proceed with reforms. Its weakness also draws on the fact that political parties lack solid structure, with the exception of the Islamic Action Front, the political branch of the Muslim Brotherhood.

In the run up to the elections, the Islamic Action Front supported by Democratic Popular Union Party and the Communist Party, called for the boycott of the election arguing that political reforms were merely cosmetic in nature; the election system based in majority on the single non-transferable vote puts political parties at a disadvantage; and that the integrity of the election process would not be ensured.

ORGANISATION OF THE ELECTIONS

The new legal framework represented an improvement compared to that of previous elections, and the newly established Independent Election Commission, in charge of administering the elections has made significant efforts to perform its mission in a transparent and impartial manner, managing to reverse the general negative perception on the integrity of the previous electoral processes.

Nevertheless, the legal framework left a number of important issues unresolved. Most notably, the fundamental principles of the electoral process, such as equal suffrage and periodicity of elections were not incorporated in the Constitution. Constituency delimitation provisions including criteria (e.g. size and population) were not included in the legal framework. As a result, for the purpose of this election, the constituency delimitation applied in the 2010 election has been attached to the new Election Law and re-applied, against international commitments and practices.

The newly adopted Election Law foresaw an increase in the number of MPs represented in the House of Representatives to 150 and introduced a national constituency of 27 seats to be elected by proportional representation with closed lists. However, with most MPs elected through the single non-transferable vote electoral system (SNTV), majority of the candidates running in the local constituencies were independents with no affiliation to any political party.

The women quota in the newly adopted Election Law has remained the same, 10 per cent. The EU EOM Preliminary Statement considers that women remain discouraged from entering into politics, primarily for cultural reasons. In addition to that, the fact that the Jordanian society, as reaffirmed by the newly amended Article 6 of the Constitution, is based on family and domestic values with women being its pillar, seems to create an additional barrier towards an effective affirmation of women in life and in the political arena. Women's representation in the election administration was low, particularly in decision-making positions.

The freedom of the media remained an issue of concern. The newly amended Press and Publication Law requires news websites to register and get a licence from the Press Public

Department. Furthermore site owners and Editors-in-chief are responsible for news content published and posted comments. Although the provisions have so far not been implemented, they are seen as an attempt to limit the freedom of expression and opinion guaranteed by the Constitution.

The final voter list, compiled on the basis of a completely new voter registration exercise, saw some 71 per cent of the eligible voters register. Most political stakeholders challenged and questioned the accuracy of the final voter list largely due to the extensive use of proxy registration which in many cases was even conducted without the consent or knowledge of the respective eligible citizen.

To a positive note, the issuance for the first time of single-use voter cards and printed ballot papers with safety features of high quality was introduced as an additional preventive measure against electoral fraud. Equally, the training programme for the staff of the polling stations was done efficiently and bore good results.

CANDIDATES

The 2013 parliamentary elections for the 150 seats in the House of Representatives were marked by the highest number of competing candidates in the history of parliamentary elections in Jordan. That primarily derived from the introduction of a national constituency of 27 seats to be elected by proportional representation with closed lists. Of the total 1,425 candidates, 606 (incl. 105 women) run for the local constituencies and 819 (incl. 86 women), enlisted on 61 national lists, competed for the national constituency seats. Less than 70 candidates were running as incumbents of the previous parliament. A total of 191 women contested for these elections, representing 13.4 per cent of the total number of candidates, while women represent 51.8 per cent of the registered voters. Out of 61 national lists, only two national lists were headed by women candidates. In the other lists, female candidates were usually listed on the fifth position or below, and had thus relatively few chances to get elected.

The political parties and movements which run their candidates in the elections were more or less divided into three camps: the loyalists; the secular forces (which include the Pan-Arab and Leftists trends); and the Islamists. With the exception of 4 national lists which were supported by political parties, most of the 61 national lists did not have an electoral platform and for most part their members were usually unknown on the political arena.

Most of the candidates running for the local constituencies were independents, with no affiliation to any political party, and the majority of them have been selected within a clan/tribe; several lists were formed by independent businessmen.

ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN

Generally, the pre-election period has been marked by a relative apathy of the Jordanian population, with the reform process, including the parliamentary elections themselves, seen as a welcome, yet an insufficient step in meeting the demands of the citizens.

The EU EOM Preliminary Statement finds that the constitutional rights of freedom of assembly, freedom of expression and movement were enjoyed by all contestants during the campaign period. Generally, campaign was not very competitive despite the high number of candidates and national lists contesting - largely due to tribal affiliations, uneven financial resources amongst the contestants and the non-participation of some opposition forces in the process.

The EU EOM Preliminary Statement also mentions that rigid regulatory framework and self-censorship limited a lively public debate in the print and broadcast media. Whereas public media were legally obliged to provide balanced and neutral reporting, the private media remained in this respect unregulated. Broadcasting, print and online news media campaign coverage was highly commercialized.

Cases of use of political money such as vote buying and other fraud attempts were reported during the campaign. Candidates and others were detained allegedly involved in forging or withholding voter cards and offering money. Domestic observers complained about belated actions taken by the Independent Election Commission and inconsistent application of the law.

ELECTION OBSERVATION

Some 250 civil society organisations engaged in the electoral process by forming three domestic observation coalitions (RASED, Nazaha, the NCHR-led coalition). Together they deployed 522 long-term observers to assess all stages of the elections, including voter registration, candidate nomination and campaigning. On Election Day, they accredited 6,990 observers to all 4,069 polling stations throughout the country to observe polling, counting and tabulation of results.

With regard to the international election observation, the International Republican Institute (IRI) and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) deployed three long-term observers' teams each. Moreover, IEC accredited observers from the League of Arab States, the Middle East Political and Economic Institute, the Global Network for Rights and Development, the Election Network in the Arab World and the International Institute for Middle East and Balkan Studies as well as from a number of foreign embassies, among them of Australia, France, Japan, Oman, Palestine and the USA. The Carter Center deployed an election expert team which was based only in Amman.

PROGRAMME OF THE DELEGATION

Following a briefing with the Core Team of the EU Election Observation Mission, which provided a full overview of the situation, the EP Delegation held meetings with the representatives and candidates of the Jordan National Union Party, whose Secretary General and head of the national list, Mr Khashman, had been detained upon charges of vote-buying; with a representative of the bureau of the Islamic Action Front, Jordan's strongest political party and the leading political force calling for the boycott of the elections; representatives of the moderate Islamic Centrist Party, which took part in the elections; Mrs Abla Olbeh, Secretary General of the leftist Hashed Party and the spokeswoman for the Council of National Opposition Parties; the Chairman of the Independent Election Commission, Mr Abdullah Al Khatib; as well as with the representatives of the Jordan National Commission for Women's Affairs. The EP Delegation had also an opportunity of discussing the current situation with the EU Heads of Missions and EU Ambassador to Jordan.

ELECTION DAY

On Election Day, the EP Delegation split into four teams to observe in districts of Amman (both capital and rural - 2 teams) as well as in Irbid (2 teams). All four teams observed the election from the opening of the polling stations (7 a.m.) until closing (which, upon the decision of the IEC was prolonged throughout the entire country by one hour until 8 p.m.) and counting. All the EP teams deployed reached similar conclusions:

- Although active campaigning (mainly by minors distributing campaign cards on behalf of candidates) took place in the immediate vicinity of the polling centres, generally voting proceeded in a peaceful and calm atmosphere, free from intimidation or major disturbances;
- Polling staff - among whom women constituted a minority, and in no instance, in those stations observed, headed the staff of the polling station - was well-trained, competent and efficient, which contributed to the smooth running of the elections;
- In most of the polling stations observed, procedures were executed in a highly transparent manner, with representatives of individual candidates, some party agents and domestic observers following the voting and counting. However, in one instance, an EP team deployed to Irbid observed an attempt by one voter to photograph her voting card. In the presence of EP observers, the polling station staff prevented the act, but a domestic observer present in the polling station indicated that this was not the first instance of such an attempt, and that previous attempts were not met with such decisive reaction by the polling staff.

JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE

After the Election Day, the EP delegation held a meeting to discuss its observations in the presence of the Chief Observer and members of the EU EOM core team.

On Friday, 25 January, the Chief Observer, Mr David MARTIN, presented the preliminary statement of the EU EOM and Mr Christian Dan PREDA spoke on behalf of the EP delegation, in his capacity as its Chairman.

Mr PREDA praised the work of the Independent Election Commission and especially the efforts of its Chairman, Mr Abdullah Al Khatib in striving to ensure credibility of the elections, in particular vis-à-vis Jordanian citizens. Mr PREDA highlighted that the election process was generally well organised, noting active campaigning in front of polling stations and lack of respect for electoral silence on election day as the most immediately apparent problem. On a more political note, the Chairman of the EP Election Observation Delegation pointed out:

- The need for a better representation of citizens and their different political sensibilities in the political life of the country;
- The necessity of political parties to become strong political actors, inter alia through programs which represent and respond to real needs and expectations of Jordanians;
- The need to better engage women in the political, economic and social life of the country.

Finally, giving strong encouragement to continue with the reform process, Mr PREDA conveyed EP's will and interest to support and cooperate with the new Parliament and the Jordanian authorities to that end.

FINAL RESULTS

On Friday, 24 January, the Independent Election Commission announced preliminary results which, following a partial recount in a number of contested districts, were endorsed as final by the IEC on Monday, 27 January. The voter turnout, as announced by the IEC on 24 January was measured at 1,288,043 or around 56.69% of the 2,272,182 registered voters.

Of the 61 political lists competing for 27 seats at national constituency level, 22 lists managed to obtain a seat for their candidate(s), although only 4 will have more than one representative elected through the national constituency (the moderates Islamic Centrist Party - 3 MPs; Stronger Jordan - 2 MPs, incl. 1 woman; the Homeland - 2 MPs; National Union Party - 2 MPs).

It is worth noting that out of the 819 candidates enlisted on the national list for the general constituency election, 86 of them being women, only one, Ms Rule El Hroub, who led the "Stronger Jordan" list, managed to obtain the seat. Furthermore, out of the 606 registered candidates running in the 45 electoral districts, 105 of whom were women candidates, only 3 managed to obtain a seat outside of the women quota foreseen - one of them obtaining the highest amount of votes in the district, and the remaining two obtaining the seat with the lowest amount of votes in the district. Thus the new House of Representatives will have 19 women MPs - 4 directly elected and 15 from the women quota, which amounts to less than 13% of the total number of MPs.

The Election Law foresees a period for contesting the election results, and one legal appeal as regards election results in district 1 of Amman has been filed in early February. The IEC is also preparing to conduct by-election for one seat, given that a winning candidate has died of heart attack following the elections.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Election Observation Mission of the European Union will remain in Jordan until the end of the post-election process and, upon its completion, will present the final report on the elections. This report will contain specific recommendations to the Jordanian authorities, aiming to improve certain aspects of the electoral process for future elections.

The election observation Delegation of the European Parliament, as part of long-term EU EOM, was an important tool in the evaluation of the electoral situation in Jordan. The delegation recommends that the Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group, the competent EP Committees as well the relevant EP delegations monitor the findings and recommendations of the final report of the EU EOM and use it as a basis for their political dialogue with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

**EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN JORDAN
ELECTION OBSERVATION DELEGATION
21-25 January 2013**

Members

Mr Christian Dan PREDA, EPP, Romania (Head of the delegation)
Mr Andrzej GRZYB, EPP, Poland
Mr Philippe BOULLAND, EPP, France
Ms Tanja FAJON, S&D, Slovenia
Mr Ivo VAJGL, ALDE, Slovenia
Mr Pawel Robert KOWAL, ECR, Poland
Mr Bastiaan BELDER, EFD, Netherlands

Secretariat

Ms Emilia GALLEGO PERONA, Administrator
Mr Dariusz SEROWKA, Administrator
Mrs Claudine STAUB, Assistant

Political Groups

Mr Jan-Willem VLASMAN, EPP Advisor
Mr Walter van LUIK, EFD Advisor

Interpreters

Ms Serene HULEILEH S (Team Leader)
Ms Lina DOKHGAN L
Ms Ghada DALLAL-MUBARAK

PROGRAMME

**EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN JORDAN
ELECTION OBSERVATION DELEGATION
21-25 January 2013**

Sunday, 20 January

Afternoon Arrival of Members in Amman and transfer to the hotel :
Crowne Plaza Amman
King Faisal Bin Abdul Aziz Street – 6th Circle
P.O.Box: 950555, Amman, 11195, Jordan.
20:30-22:30 EU EOM Cocktail – Crowne Plaza Hotel, V-Lounge

Monday, 21 January

11:00- 13:00 **Briefing by the Core Team of the EU Election Observation Mission**
- Analysis of the political situation with reference to general elections
- Analysis of the electoral and legal situation
- Media
- Reporting on election day
Venue: Crowne Plaza Hotel, room Al Hareth

Lunch break free

15:00- 16:00 **Jordan National Union Party**
Venue: At Party HQ's: Um Uthaina opposite Ministry of Environment

16:30-17:30 **Islamic Action Front**
Venue: IAF HQ's behind Ministry of Trade

18:30-19:15 **Islamic Centrist Party**
Venue: At Party's HQ,

20:30 **Dinner offered by the Head of EU Delegation**

Tuesday, 22 January

10:00-11:00 **Mrs. Abla Abu Olbeh HASHD MP**, spokeswoman of the National Opposition Parties Council and Secretary General of the leftist Hashed Party
Venue: Crowne Plaza, room Al Hareth

Lunch break free

12:30-13:30 **Independent Election Commission** (Board of Commissioners and Secretariat)

Venue: IEC premises

13:45-14:45 **Mrs. Asma Khader, Secretary General of the Jordan National Commission for Women's Affairs**

Venue: at the Hashemite Fund for Human Development , Madina Mnawara Street

15:00- 16:30 **HoMs/ meeting Head of EU Delegation**

Venue: EU Delegation

17:30 **Meeting with drivers and local guides**

Venue: Crowne Plaza, room Al Hareth

Wednesday, 23 January: Election Day

6:15: Departure time

all day **Election observation (polling from 07:00 to 20:00)**

evening **Return to Amman (for the teams deployed)**

Thursday, 24 January

10:00-12:00 **Exchange of views of the delegation with Mr David MARTIN and the EU-Election Observation Mission**

Venue: Crowne Plaza, room Al Hareth

19:30-21:30 **Chief Observer invites for dinner the MEPs Delegation**

Friday, 25 January

11:00 **Joint press conference, presentation of the preliminary statement**

Venue: Intercontinental Hotel



**European Union Election Observation Mission
To The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Parliamentary Elections – 23 January 2013**

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

**Technically well- administered elections despite serious inadequacies in the
legal framework**

Amman, 25 January 2013

Summary

- The 23 January parliamentary elections have been organised and conducted in a transparent and credible manner. Election day was calm and peaceful despite sporadic local violent incidences. Polling, counting and tabulation of results were well administered. The Independent Election Commission declared a voter turnout of 56.7 per cent.
- Despite some technical glitches, polling, counting and tabulation operations were assessed positively by EU EOM observers in the polling stations observed. Procedures were largely followed in the polling stations observed in the presence of agents and domestic observers contributing to the inclusiveness and transparency of the process. In violation to campaign regulations, widespread campaign activities and materials were observed by EU EOM observers in the vicinity of polling stations observed.
- The newly established Independent Election Commission has made significant efforts to master its tasks in a transparent and impartial manner. Technical preparations were effectively accomplished within the operational and legal deadlines. In an effort to overcome the deficiencies and loopholes in the Election Law, the Commission issued a large number of Executive Instructions regulating and interpreting aspects of the electoral process usually regulated in the law.
- The legal framework, generally, complies with international and regional obligations and commitments pledged by The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. However substantial gaps and deficiencies are affecting universally accepted principles such as the equality of votes and the universality of suffrage.
- The adoption of the new Election Law by the National Assembly safeguarding the certainty of law, and the establishment of an independent election management body signify an improvement and a start for further legal reforms.
- The legislative framework fell short of important provisions for constituency delimitation including competence and criteria. The previous constituency delimitation was re-applied without the due revision reflecting population movement and seriously undermined the equality of the vote between urban and rural voters and created an uneven playing field for candidates.

This preliminary statement is available in English and in Arabic but only the English version is official.

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- Freedom of assembly, freedom of expression and movement rights were generally enjoyed by the contestants during the campaign. However, campaign was not very competitive and remained low key in large parts of the country despite the high number of candidates and national lists contesting - largely due to tribal affiliations, uneven financial resources of contestants and the non-participation of some opposition forces.
 - Cases of use of political money such as vote buying and other fraud attempts were reported during the campaign. Candidates and others were detained allegedly involved in forging or withholding voter cards and offering money. Domestic observers complained about belated actions taken by the Independent Election Commission and inconsistent application of the law.
 - The registration process resulted in an increase in the percentage of registered voters up to 71 per cent of eligible voters. However, extensive proxy voter registration affected the credibility of the voter registration process and contributed to a general perception of distrust about the accuracy of the final voter list.
 - A rigid regulatory framework and self-censorship limited a lively public debate in the print and broadcast media. Whereas public media were legally obliged to provide balanced and neutral reporting, the private media remained in this respect unregulated. Broadcasting, print and online news media campaign coverage was highly commercialized.
 - The women quota in the newly adopted Election Law remained the same, 10 per cent. A total of 191 women contested, representing 13.4 per cent of the total number of candidates, while women represent 51.8 per cent of the registered voters. Women's representation in the election administration was low, particularly in decision-making positions.
 - Domestic observation coalitions played an important role contributing to the transparency of the process. A total of 6,990 observers were accredited to all 4,069 polling stations throughout the country to observe polling, counting and tabulation of results.

Preliminary Findings

Background

The 17th Parliamentary Elections for the House of Representatives on 23 January 2013 were governed by a new legislative framework and conducted under a mixed electoral system. The newly adopted Election Law had increased the number of seats for the House of Representatives to 150 and introduced a national constituency of 27 seats to be elected by proportional representation through closed lists. For the first time, an Independent Election Commission was established to supervise and administer all phases of the Parliamentary Elections. The total number of candidates contesting was of 1,425, of which 606 (105 women) were running for the local constituencies and 819 (86 women) for the national constituency enlisted on 61 national lists. These elections took place against the backdrop of some political forces boycotting or not participating in the election process (Islamic Action Front, Communist Party, the Jordanian Popular Democratic Unity Party, the National Front for Reform and segments of the Al Hirak popular movement).

Legal Framework

The legal framework, generally, complies with international and regional obligations and commitments pledged by The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. However, it contains substantial gaps and deficiencies which undermine the protection of universally accepted principles such as the equality of votes and the universality of suffrage. The adoption of the new Election Law by the National Assembly, upholding the certainty of law, and the establishment of an independent election management body signify an improvement and a start for further legal reforms.

The overall legislative framework fell short of important provisions for constituency delimitation including competence and criteria. For the purpose of these elections, the previous constituency delimitation was re-applied without the due revision reflecting population movement and therefore seriously undermined the equality of the vote between urban and rural voters. The universality of the right to vote was curtailed by the exclusion of large groups such as the members of the armed forces, general intelligence, public security, gendarmerie and civil defense while in active service. Furthermore, the right to vote was not extended to persons declared bankrupt, retarded insane or interdicted. Additionally, there were no provisions for proxy voting; voting abroad; voting of prisoners; and persons in pre-trial detention against international commitments and in contradiction with the principals of universal suffrage and the presumption of innocence. Candidacy procedures and relative timelines are clearly defined in the laws and along with a pragmatic approach of the Independent Election Commission which interpreted the provisions in a constructive and inclusive manner, enabled for a successful exercise and adequate possibility for aspirants to apply and to rectify missing information. The lack of detailed procedures for the campaign resulted in an inconsistent application of the monitoring and enforcement power of the Independent Election Commission during the campaign. Small infractions brought to the District Election Committees have often been dealt with by a simple reminder of the campaign rules and were usually followed by removal of campaign material. In some other cases they were transmitted directly to the IEC who has referred the most serious ones to the concerned authorities and enforcement bodies namely, police, municipality and in few cases to Courts.

Election Administration

The newly established Independent Election Commission has made significant efforts to perform its mission in a transparent and impartial manner. Technical preparations were effectively accomplished within the operational and legal deadlines. However, the lack of a publicly available consolidated electoral calendar did not allow stakeholders to assess the stage by stage status of preparations. Election materials were timely distributed at the District Election Committees and further to the polling stations. For the first time, printed ballot papers including the names of the contestants with high standard security features were produced. Domestic and international observers were invited to observe the printing of ballot papers, adding to the transparency of the process.

The Independent Election Commission had to face a number of challenges related largely to the deficiencies, loopholes and inconsistencies in the Election Law. In an effort to smoothly continue

and complete the electoral process, the Independent Election Commission issued a large number of Executive Instructions regulating and interpreting aspects of the electoral process such as the allocation of seats formula for the national constituency (the transfer of polling results into the allotment of reserved seat and seats resting on the proportional system), the aggregation of results process and the handle of challenges and complaints on the tallying and distribution of seats usually regulated in the Election Law. Some of those Executive Instructions were produced significantly late in the course of the process leaving little time for understanding and implementing important steps in the electoral process; and raising concerns and distrust among stakeholders. Furthermore, internal disagreements between “reformers” and senior Secretariat officials, engaged in previous elections conducted under the auspices of the Ministry of Interior, have contributed to delays in the decision-making policies. Such disagreements were replicated on the lower levels of election administration, particular in those electoral districts, where the Heads of the District Election Committees were senior officials of the Ministry of Interior.

The Election Law does not foresee an explicit mandate for the Independent Election Commission to take on responsibility for voter education. The introduction of a mixed electoral system that requires voters to cast two votes, the issuance of voter cards, and the new concept of ballot papers called however for systematic voter education programmes. EU EOM noticed diverse and sometimes inconsistent voter education activities by various electoral stakeholders. In the absence of a voter education plan the Independent Election Commission produced numerous print products and broadcasted TV and radio spots; whilst civil society organisations mainly focused on outreach activities on local level. All these efforts remained limited and scattered.

The greatest challenge for the Independent Election Commission was to reverse the general negative perception of stakeholders and of the society on the integrity of the previous electoral processes. Most political stakeholders and civil society representatives were largely satisfied with the performance of the Independent Election Commission and recognised its efforts to ensure transparency and impartiality in the process.

Voter Registration

The final voter list, compiled on the basis of a completely new voter registration exercise since 1989, included 2.272.182 voters (51.8 per cent are women and 48.2 per cent men). Some 71 per cent of the eligible voters were registered during this exercise. Most political stakeholders challenged and questioned the accuracy of the final voter list largely due to the extensive use of proxy registration which in many cases was even conducted without the consent or knowledge of the respective eligible citizen. Domestic observer groups had repeatedly stated their disapproval of the extensive proxy voter registration. EU EOM considers the effort made by the Independent Election Commission positive and going in the right direction; however, the Commission lacked ownership over the voter registration process as it was not involved in recruiting, training and direct supervision of voter registration officers. To a positive note, the issuance for the first time of single-use voter cards with safety features of high quality was introduced as an additional preventive measure for multiple voting and impersonation electoral offences.

Campaign Environment

The constitutional rights of freedom of assembly, freedom of expression and movement were enjoyed by all contestants during the campaign period. Generally, campaign was not very competitive despite the high number of candidates and national lists contesting - largely due to tribal affiliations, uneven financial resources amongst the contestants and the non-participation of some opposition forces in the process. Throughout the country, campaign was low key and overall calm, mainly concentrated in large urban areas and mostly visible through posters and banners, door-to-door activities, and gatherings in campaign tents. Few debates on the elections and programs for reforms amongst candidates and national lists were organized. Social media did not play a pertinent role during the campaign. The lack of intensity and substantive content in the messages reflected disconnection with the socio-economic situation in the country as well as a generation gap between the candidates and the voters, most of whom being in their twenties. The second week of the campaign was affected by harsh weather conditions. Over the campaign period, there were recurrent small-scale protests every Friday calling for reforms and boycott of the elections.

Several cases of extensive use of political money, vote buying and other fraud attempts marked the campaign period. Suspects including candidates had been detained and interrogated under order of Public Prosecutors in Amman, Mafrq, Balqa and Madaba allegedly involved in forging or withholding voter cards, offering money to voters and "donations" to clubs and associations. Few were released on bail while court decisions are still pending. Domestic observer coalitions accused Independent Election Commission of not taking immediate or even actions to cases reported to it and referral them to the Courts. Few isolated incidents including burning of campaign vehicles and tents and an alleged candidate assault in Irbid, Mafrq, Zarqa were reported. These incidents are still under investigation. The newly enacted Political Party Law lacks the limits for campaign expenditure creating an uneven playing field among different candidates with women being the most affected. In addition, the decision of municipalities to request a refundable compulsory deposit up to 4000 JD for campaign material removal after elections did not favor candidates and national lists with limited financial resources.

Media

A rigid regulatory framework and self-censorship limited print and broadcast media in contributing effectively to a lively public debate. Whereas public media were legally obliged to provide balanced and neutral reporting, the private media remained in this respect unregulated. The public broadcaster *Jordan TV* focused aside from reporting on the King and Government greatly on the Independent Election Commission. *Jordan TV* also offered contestants free airtime. This attempt to help citizens to make an informed decision was however only used by a limited number of local constituency candidates and national lists. Campaign coverage by privately owned broadcasters was often unbalanced. Four of them - *Josat*, *Nourmina TV*, *Al Jordan TV* and *Al Haqiqa Al Duwaliya TV* - are owned by national lists' leaders or candidates, granting them extensive airtime.

Broadcasting and online news media, with exceptions such as *Roya TV* and *Radio Al Balad*, campaign coverage was highly commercialized. Paid advertising by candidates and national lists

– explicitly permitted by the Independent Election Commission without definition of a financial ceiling - exceeded in many media the campaign coverage. Furthermore, most media did not clearly distinguish between independent editorial content and paid coverage, including interviews and talk shows hosting candidates. This misled citizens and raises concerns about professional ethics of media practitioners. Despite concrete efforts of some broadcasting media, very few electoral debates were organised. Media outlets encountered difficulties on finding candidates willing to participate. Although paid advertisement was also widely observed in print media, most newspapers reported extensively on the electoral process, some even introducing an “election section”. The private newspaper *Al Ghad* also offered to national lists a specific section to present their platforms. Also noteworthy is that the government owned newspaper *Al Rai* gave significant space to the Independent Election Commission. Online media, adding to the vibrancy of the media scene, used to enjoy a higher level of regulatory freedom. On 16 September 2012 adopted amendments to the Press and Publication Law to regulate also these media jeopardize this freedom but are not yet implemented and have not affected the online media’s coverage of the campaign significantly. Several interlocutors reported to the EU EOM that certain news websites would blackmail candidates to force them to advertise on their website. The legal framework lacks comprehensive regulations for media violations during campaign.

Participation of Women

The women quota in the newly adopted Election Law has remained the same, 10 per cent. A total of 191 women contested for these elections, representing 13.4 per cent of the total number of candidates, while women represent 51.8 per cent of the registered voters. Out of 61 national lists, only two national lists were headed by women candidates. In the other lists, female candidates were usually listed on the fifth position or below, and had thus relatively few chances to get elected. Women were not allowed to participate in the internal selection of candidates of the Bedouin tribes. The additional three Badia seats in the quota system are, therefore, not necessarily improving women representation. Women remain discouraged from entering into politics, primarily for cultural reasons. In addition to that, the fact that the Jordanian society, as reaffirmed by the newly amended Article 6 of the Constitution, is based on family and domestic values with women being its pillar, seems to create an additional barrier towards an effective affirmation of women in life and in the political arena. Women’s representation in the election administration was low, particular in decision-making positions.

Participation of Minorities and other groups

Chechen, Circassia and Christian minorities as well as the Bedouin tribes are benefiting from quotas guaranteeing parliamentary seats as a result of article 8 of the Election Law. Three seats were allocated to Chechens/Circassia; nine seats to Christians; nine seats to the three major Bedouin Tribes in the North, Central and South regions. Jordanians of Palestinian origin, in spite of representing an important part of the Jordanian population, are considered underrepresented in the political life.

Domestic Observers

Some 250 civil society organisations engaged in the electoral process by forming three domestic observation coalitions, namely, the Civil Coalition for Monitoring the Jordanian Parliamentary Elections (RASED), the Integrity Coalition for Election Observation and the National Team (the NCHR lead coalition). Civil society organisations carried out considerable efforts on voter education by disseminating information material, conducting panel discussions and arranging for interactive voter education activities. Domestic observation coalitions deployed 522 long-term observers to assess all stages of the elections, including voter registration, candidate nomination and campaigning. On election day, they accredited 6,990 observers to all 4,069 polling stations throughout the country to observe polling, counting and tabulation of results.

Complaints and Appeals

Complaints procedures for voter registration are well defined in both the Election Law and the Executive Instructions. 25,265 objections against the provisional voter list were submitted to the Independent Election Commission 7,473 were appealed to the Court of First Instance, while 6,208 were accepted. Complaints against local constituency candidates and national lists were low in number and produced minor changes in the preliminary list published by the Independent Election Commission. The Court of Appeal having jurisdiction for the first time in adjudicating candidacy complaints handled the very few cases within the given timeframe. Clear procedures for complaints during polling and counting remained under-regulated, establishing the possibility only for candidates and their representatives to complaint against implementation of polling and counting procedures without a defined timeframe.

Polling and Counting

Election day was calm and peaceful despite sporadic local violent incidences. Polling stations observed opened on time or within an hour mainly due to technical glitches and slow preparations by the polling staff. All essential election materials were available. Voting conducted in an orderly and efficient manner in the polling stations observed. Polling procedures in the polling stations observed were largely followed with minor procedural irregularities that did not impact on the overall integrity of the process. The secrecy of vote in a number of polling stations observed was insufficiently protected, mainly due to inadequate polling station lay out, open voting practices and of voters' carelessness. Polling staff acted professionally and impartial in the polling stations observed. In violation to campaign regulations, widespread campaign activities and campaign material were observed by EU EOM observers in the vicinity of polling stations observed. Polling was extended by an hour by the Independent Election Commission, due to queues in a number of polling stations across the country. At 20:15, the Chairman of the Independent Election Commission declared a voter turnout of 56.7 per cent.

Counting was conducted in an efficient manner in the polling stations observed in the presence of candidates, representatives of national lists and agents contributing to the inclusiveness and transparency of the process. Counting was overall assessed as good to very good in the polling stations observed. Domestic observers were present in most of polling stations observed. Counting procedures were largely respected and a copy of the official results was displayed in

the vast majority of polling station observed. The tabulation of results in the District Election Committees was assessed positively by EU EOM observers in the tabulation centres observed.

Serious but locally erupted clashes were reported in Ajloun, Maan, Karak, Mafraq, Tafilah, Jerash and Balqa amongst candidates and amongst groups of youngsters in reaction to alleged malpractices and the anticipated results. In Karak and in Ajloun police had to intervene with tear gas. In Ma'an after the announcement of the results supporters of the losing local candidate attacked to polling centres and public buildings and allegedly one person died. In Balqa, district 1, alterations of results protocols in three polling stations were reported.

The European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) has been present in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan since 13 December 2012 following an invitation from the Independent Election Commission. The Mission is led by Chief Observer, Mr David Martin, Member of the European Parliament (United Kingdom). In total, the EU EOM deployed over 80 observers from all (27) EU Member States, Norway and Switzerland across the country to assess the whole electoral process in accordance with international and regional commitments for elections as well as the laws of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. A delegation of members of the European Parliament, headed by Mr Christian Dan Preda MEP, also joined the mission and fully endorses this Statement. The EU EOM is independent in its findings and conclusions and adheres to the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation signed at the United Nations in October 2005. On Election day, observers visited over 355 polling stations in all 45 electoral districts of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to observe voting and counting. The EU EOM will remain in country to observe post-election developments and the tabulation of results and will publish a final report, containing detailed recommendations, within two months of the conclusion of the electoral process. The EU EOM wishes to express its appreciation to the Independent Election Commission and other Jordanian authorities, political parties and civil society as well as the people of Jordan for their cooperation and assistance in the course of the observation. The EU EOM is also grateful to the Delegation of the European Union to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the European Union member states' diplomatic missions resident in Jordan for their support throughout.

An electronic version of this Preliminary Statement is available on the Mission website www.eueom.eu/jordan2013/. For further information, please contact:

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European Union Election Observation Mission
The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

الاتحاد الأوروبي بعثة مراقبة الانتخابات
المملكة الأردنية الهاشمية



Press Release

for immediate release

Technically well-administered elections despite serious deficiencies in the legal framework

AMMAN, 25 January 2013 - "Transparent and credible" assessed David Martin, Chief Observer of the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) today the Parliamentary Election in the presentation of the EU EOMs Preliminary Statement. The Chief Observer commended the Independent Election Commission for its successful implementation of the electoral process as a whole. The Chief Observer criticised however the legal framework as "deficient and not providing adequately for equality of votes".

"Polling, counting and tabulation of results in the 23 January Parliamentary Election were despite minor glitches well administered. Election day was calm and peaceful despite sporadic local violent incidences", said the Chief Observer during the EU EOM press conference. Adding: "Our 80 observers, deployed in all twelve governorates, reported that procedures were mostly followed. The process was however tainted by illegal campaigning outside polling centers which had no severe impact.

The Chief Observer highlighted "the significant efforts by the newly established Independent Election Commission to accomplish its tasks transparent and impartial. Technical preparations were effective and within the operational and legal deadlines". Martin added: "The Commission undertook major efforts to overcome the deficiencies and loopholes in the Election Law by issuing a large number of Executive Instructions regulating and interpreting aspects of the electoral process usually regulated in the law."

"Although the newly adopted Election Law is an improvement – especially with the introduction of an independent election management body – this law should be seen only as a start for further legal reform", said the Chief Observer. "The Law complies in general with international and regional obligations and commitments pledged by The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Substantial deficiencies in the election law affect however universality of voter participation and equality of votes", said the Chief Observer.

The Preliminary Statement will be followed by a Final Report; to be presented to the public at a later stage.

Note to Editors:

The European Union has signed Memoranda of Understanding with the Independent Election Commission and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, guaranteeing freedom of movement to all EU EOM members and access to all polling stations and related sites and bodies and to all relevant information. This Mission is independent from any EU institutions or Member States and is obliged to remain neutral and abide by the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and the Code of Conduct, as well as laws of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

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