



HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE

THE FUTURE OF INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION

Organised by the European Parliament's Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group (DEG)
and the European External Action Service

Brussels, 10-11 October 2018

***Meeting room:
European Parliament, JAN 6 Q 2***

PROGRAMME

Background

Election observation is a highly visible demonstration of international commitment to supporting democracy and promoting respect for human rights around the world. It can contribute to strengthening democratic institutions, build public confidence in electoral processes and help deter fraud, intimidation and violence. Observers work closely in the framework of the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation (DoP), launched in 2005 under the auspices of the UN.

The European Union, since the adoption of a standard election observation methodology in 2000, has deployed more than 140 Election Observation Missions in more than 60 countries around the globe. EU EOMs are the result of a very effective and successful inter-institutional cooperation between the European External Action Service, the European Parliament, European Commission and Member States.

There is a growing demand from partner countries for the EU, and other international and regional organisations, to deploy EOMs but these missions are also increasingly exposed to public scrutiny. There are new challenges that need to be addressed jointly by DoP partners, such as the impact of the use of ICT and social media. The EU and the UN is also starting to develop operational tools to address specific problems related to the prevention of election related violence.

The European Parliament and the European External Action Service are therefore inviting DoP endorsers, partner countries (government and parliamentarians), EU national Parliaments, civil society and media to discuss the challenges ahead.

A focus on Africa

A particular focus of the conference will be the EU-AU partnership and existing cooperation in election observation and the impact of EOMs on the democratisation process in a number of African countries. In line with the overarching objectives of Agenda 2063¹, the conference could be seen as part of the implementation of the EU Global Strategy through strengthening multilateral partnership on peace and security. In this context, synergies should be sought between the European Union, the African Union and the UN, notably within the framework of the Joint UN-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security (signed in April 2017). The conference would also contribute to the 2030 Agenda, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 16 related commitments and follow on from the AU-UN Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (signed in January 2018).

A focus on parliamentary observation

Parliamentarians (and former political leaders) are increasingly involved in election observation. Elected politicians have particular expertise in political campaigns and electoral processes, bringing added credibility and visibility to the conclusions of long-term technical observation missions. While taking into account parliamentarians' freedom of speech and right to carry out their political activity throughout their mandates, parliamentarian-observers have to maintain strict political impartiality and neutrality in their assessment of election processes. An exchange of best practices between parliamentarian observers, including on a Parliamentary Code of Conduct for election observation, will be another focus of the conference.

A focus on Conflict Prevention

Both the EU's Global Strategy and the UN's Sustaining Peace Agenda reflect conflict prevention as a policy priority. Elections constitute a critical stress-test for the peaceful management of political, economic and social divisions. These issues and practical ways to address them will be considered in a dedicated session of the conference. In addition, the conference is preceded (8-10/10) by an EU-UNDP Joint Task Force on Electoral Assistance event on "Sustaining Peace through Elections".

¹ AU strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the African continent over the next 50 years, adopted in January 2015

Wednesday 10 October

14:15-14:45 *Arrival and registration of participants*

15:00 -16:15 Opening of the High-Level Conference

Opening remarks : Mr. Antonio Tajani, President of the European Parliament

In the Chair: Mr. David McAllister, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament, Co-Chair of the Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group

Mr. Pier Antonio Panzeri, Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights of the European Parliament, Member of the Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group

Ms. Mariya Gabriel, European Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society

Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde, UN Under-Secretary-General, Special Representative to the African Union and Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union

Ms. Cessouma Minata Samate, Commissioner for Political Affairs of the African Union

16:15 - 16:30 *Break*

16:30 – 18:30 “Challenges and opportunities of election observation: ICT, tackling disinformation and the use of social media”

Moderator: Mr. Christian Leffler, Deputy Secretary-General for Economic and Global Issues, European External Action Service

Ms. Mariya Gabriel, European Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, former EU Chief Observer

Ms. Tana de Zulueta, Head of several ODIHR Election Observation Missions

Ms. Marietje Schaake, Member of the European Parliament, former EU Chief Observer

Mr. Yves Leterme, Secretary General of International IDEA, former Prime Minister of Belgium

Mr. Pat Merloe, Director of electoral programs, National Democratic Institute

Questions and debate

18:30 – 19:30 Welcome cocktail hosted by Ms. Mairead McGuinness, First Vice-President of the European Parliament

JAN building, 2nd floor *(by invitation)*

Thursday 11 October

08:30-09:00 *Arrival and registration of participants*

09:00 - 11:00 **“Organisation of elections, conflict prevention, security and peaceful transition”**

Moderator: Ms. Elena Valenciano, Member of the European Parliament, former EU Chief Observer

Mr. Mohamed Chambas, UN Special Representative of the Secretary General for West Africa and the Sahel

Mr. Pekka Haavisto, President of the European Institute of Peace

Mr. Jason Carter, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Carter Center

Mr. Jean Marie Guéhenno, Member of the UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation

Ms. Yvette Chesson-Wureh, Angie Brooks International Centre, Women’s Situation Room

Questions and debate

11:00 - 11:15 *Break*

11:15 – 12:45 **“Role and best practices of parliamentary observation, including a Code of Conduct”**

Running in parallel

Moderator: Ms. Heidi Hautala, Vice-President of the European Parliament, Head of the EP delegation to Armenia 2017, former Co-Chair of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly

Ms. Isabel Santos, Vice-President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Mr Mario Galea, Member of the Parliament of Malta, Former Head of Elections Observation Missions

Room: JAN 6Q2

Mr. Oliver Kask, Judge, Member of the Venice Commission

Ms. Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, former Foreign Minister of Iceland

With the participation of **Members of EU National Parliaments**

Questions and debate

*Running in
parallel*

“Enhancing EU-AU-UN cooperation on Electoral Processes and Electoral Observation, including methodology of Election Observation Missions”

Moderator: Mrs. Lotte Knudsen, Managing Director Human Rights, Global and Multilateral Issues, European External Action Service

Room: JAN 4Q1

Mr. Roger Nkodo Dang, Speaker of the Pan African Parliament

Ms. Cessouma Minata Samate, Commissioner for Political Affairs of the African Union

Mr. Michael Gahler, Member of the European Parliament, former EU Chief Observer

Mr. Craig Jenness, Director Electoral Assistance Division, UN Directorate for Political Affairs

Head of African Union electoral mission (TBC)

Questions and debate

13:00 - 13:30

Closing of the High Level Conference

Ms. Mairead McGuinness, First Vice-President of the European Parliament

Mr. Roger Nkodo Dang, Speaker of the Pan African Parliament

Closing remarks : Ms. Federica Mogherini, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/ Vice-President of the European Commission

13:30-15:00

Buffet lunch hosted by the Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group

JAN building, 2nd floor *(by invitation)*
