



**MISSÃO DE OBSERVAÇÃO ELEITORAL
UNIÃO EUROPEIA
GUINÉ-BISSAU – ELEIÇÕES LEGISLATIVAS 2008**



**EUROPEAN UNION DEPLOYS A MISSION TO OBSERVE
THE UPCOMING LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS IN GUINEA-BISSAU**

Bissau, 17 October 2008

Following receipt of an invitation by the National Commission of Elections (CNE, in its Portuguese acronym), the European Union established an Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) to observe the legislative elections scheduled to take place on 16 November 2008. This is the second time the EU deploys an observation mission to Guinea-Bissau, after observing the presidential election of 2005. The Chief Observer of the EU EOM is Mr. Johan Van Hecke, Member of the European Parliament, who also headed the 2005 EU mission.

On his arrival in Bissau on 15 October, Mr. Van Hecke said: *“I’m very happy for having the opportunity to come back to Guinea-Bissau. We are here in the spirit of cooperation and deploying an Election Observation Mission clearly shows the importance the European Union gives to the upcoming legislative elections in Guinea-Bissau.”*

The mandate of the mission is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the entire electoral process and to offer an assessment on whether the election is conducted in accordance with Guinean laws and international democratic principles. Through its presence in the country the EU EOM also aims to strengthen the confidence of political contestants and voters to freely participate in the process, by deterring attempts of fraud, intimidation and violence.

In total, the EU EOM plans to deploy some 50 observers all over the country. The deployment started on 4 October, with the arrival of a core team of 4 experts who are coordinating the mission from its headquarters in Bissau. Tomorrow, 20 Long Term Observers (LTOs) will arrive in the country and, after 2 days of briefing, will be deployed to the 9 regions of Guinea-Bissau. They will observe all aspects of the electoral process involving pre-electoral preparations, voting and post-electoral activities in different constituencies. Closer to Election Day, the LTOs will be joined by 24 Short Term Observers (STOs) to observe voting, counting and tabulation activities.

The EU EOM works independently in order to offer an impartial, balanced and informed assessment of the election, including the legal and administrative framework, the political environment, the media conduct as well as an assessment of the voting, counting, and tabulation processes. All observers will operate under an internationally accepted code of conduct, and in accordance with Guinean laws.

Shortly after Election Day, the EU EOM will issue a preliminary statement of its initial findings. A more comprehensive final report, including, where appropriate, recommendations on the electoral process will be published approximately two months after the end of the elections.

Election observation missions are an important instrument for building confidence in the democratic process of a country and are deployed in line with the EU commitment to promote democracy, human rights and respect for the rule of law. The mission operates in accordance with the “Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation” commemorated in 2005 at the United Nations, New York, by a number of international bodies involved in election observation.

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For further information, please contact EU EOM Media Analyst & Press Officer, Javier Gutiérrez (mobile 580 46 14). E-mail: javier.gutierrez@eueombissau.org or visit mission website www.eueombissau.org