

WEEKLY REPORTS

Template

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Each EU EOM will produce regular Weekly Reports (sometimes called Interim Reports).

As their name suggest, Weekly Reports are produced on a regular basis by the Core Team to provide a weekly overview of all relevant electoral developments during the reporting period. They are crucial to the work of the Mission and should be a key focus of the work of the Core Team throughout the course of the Mission.

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A: Purpose of Weekly Reports

Weekly Reports have the following purpose:

- to give an overview of the political context and technical framework of the election(s) being observed and the role of the EU EOM;
- to provide updated information and preliminary analysis on all issues relevant to the electoral process, including
 - political developments,
 - administrative preparations for the elections,
 - voter registration,
 - candidate registration,
 - campaigning,
 - media environment,
 - election-related complaints, and
 - human rights issues (including participation of women and minorities);
- to provide key information that may be useful for an understanding of the elections being observed (e.g. a map of the country, tables of data on candidates, number of voters, election results etc);
- to highlight areas of concern that may require political action by EU structures;
- to provide a basis for the findings and conclusions the EU EOM will make in its Preliminary Statement and Final Report, which are public documents;

- to raise the profile and awareness of the Mission within EU structures.

B: Target Audience for Weekly Reports

Weekly Reports are **internal EU documents**. They are not to be distributed publicly or to any persons or organisation outside the EU structures. They are exclusively aimed at the following readership:

- European Commission Directorate for External Relations (RELEX), specifically:
 - Elections Unit (BI)
 - the relevant RELEX Country/Regional Desk
 - Cabinet of the Commissioner for External Relations
 - Delegation of the European Commission to the country being observed
- European Commission Directorate for Development, specifically
 - Europe Aid (AIDCO)
- European Union Member States (EU MS), specifically:
 - EU Presidency
 - All Ministries of Foreign Affairs of EU MS, including: election focal points and country/regional desks
 - Embassies and diplomatic representations of EU MS present in the country being observed
- European Parliament (EP) specifically
 - EP Coordination Unit for Elections Observation
 - EP Foreign Affairs Committee
 - EP Development Committee
 - Members of the EP with an interest in the country being observed
- EU Election Observation Mission Chief Observer and Core Team

As internal reports, and with these audiences in mind, Weekly Reports should be considered as confidential documents whose contents have political and diplomatic implications. A Weekly Report may be 'leaked' and could cause immense harm to the credibility of the Mission if it contains assessments that are premature or appear to be based on partisan or unverified sources.

Weekly Reports should therefore be drafted carefully to ensure that all information provided is accurate, objective and, so far as possible, verifiable. The Weekly Reports should avoid making premature conclusions. The Weekly Reports should simply report on facts and stress that its analysis of those facts is preliminary. Where factual information is unverified or from a partisan source, the report should clearly indicate it as such. The EU EOM should also have concrete examples to substantiate all that it reports on.

Diplomatic Briefings

After the Weekly Report has been formally distributed within the EU institutions and to the focal points of the EU Member States by RELEX, it is common that the EU EOM should provide a briefing on its contents to the Heads of Mission of the local diplomatic representation of EU MS and the EC Delegation.

Sharing with LTOs and STOs

As official EU documents, copies of the Weekly Reports are not formally provided to LTOs and STOs. However, it is good practice for the Observer Coordinator to provide LTOs with edited versions of the contents of the Weekly Reports, which can also be used as the basis for STO briefings on electoral developments.

C: Preparation of the Weekly Reports

Each Weekly Report should go through a three stage preparation process.

Drafting Phase

The Weekly Reports are drafted by the Deputy Chief Observer based on contributions from Core Team members. The Weekly Report should aim to incorporate a summary of key regional/thematic information identified in the weekly reports of LTOs.

The drafting process of the Weekly Report should go through a consultative process within the Core Team led by the DCO. However, ultimate responsibility for the content of the draft Weekly Reports rests with the CO.

Comments Phase

Following CO approval of the draft, the DCO should send a copy of the Weekly Report to the RELEX Elections Desk Officer (EDO) for comments on content or structure. The EDO comments provide a positive contribution based on extensive experience from other missions and knowledge of the electoral and diplomatic environment.

The EDO may consult within the European Commission (including the local EC Delegation) for their comments. On many occasions, the comments from the EDO may ask for clarification on the issues raised in the Weekly Report, which may require re-drafting. Generally, this stage is a consensual process and the CO and DCO should usually consider adopting the comments received from the EDO into the final draft of the Weekly Report.

Final Versions

After the inclusion of comments or any immediate updates, the final version of the Weekly Report is sent by the DCO to the EDO.

The final version of the Weekly Report will be distributed to all EC structures by RELEX and to the EU Member States etc. through the EU Presidency. Officially, the local EC Delegation will receive the Weekly Report through RELEX and local EU Member States will receive the Weekly Report through their capitals. However, the EU EOM may distribute the final version at a Diplomatic Briefing but should not do so without first consulting with the EDO.

D: Frequency of Weekly Reports

As their name suggests, Weekly Reports are usually produced on a weekly basis. The reports should cover a fixed seven-day period (e.g. Saturday to Friday) and are normally prepared on a regular day of the week (e.g. Saturday). Core Team submissions will need to be submitted accordingly. Reports will then be ready for submission to the EDO for the start of the week.

The timing of the Weekly Reports should be incorporated into the [Mission calendar](#) and should reflect the reporting schedule for LTOs. Weekly Reports should try to include LTOs' regional observations and field reports on a regular basis. It has been occasional practice for one mid-Mission Weekly Report to provide a specific focus on the regional reports from LTOs.

The timing and production of Weekly Reports can also be affected by seasonal events or observance of religious holidays or even the 'weekends' of different cultures. The DCO and RELEX Desk Officer should discuss in advance the timings of when draft Weekly Reports will be sent to Brussels and the timeframe for comments from the different EC structures.

Weekly Reports will be required as a priority activity even during periods of high-intensity activity in a Mission (e.g. the arrival of LTOs and STOs).

Interim Reports

During longer-term missions, there may be periods when weekly reporting is not always necessary. In these circumstances, the EU EOM may produce 'Interim Reports' which are prepared e.g. every ten days or two weeks. The regularity of this less-frequent reporting must be agreed between the CO/DCO with the RELEX EDO.

Spot Reports and Mission Updates

Where appropriate, the EU EOM may produce Spot Reports that cover important developments that should be brought to the urgent attention of the EU Structures. These reports supplement but – should not replace – Weekly Reports.

The DCO can also produce regular Mission Updates for the EDO that cover electoral developments during the periods between Interim Reports. Mission Updates are also useful for occasions when Chief Observers are out of country. Mission Updates can be produced whenever is appropriate.

Mission Operational Reports

The Mission may be asked by AIDCO to produce Mission Operational Reports (MOR) that cover logistical issues during the course of the Mission, especially the work of the Implementing Partner or Service Provider. MORs are usually produced by the Mission's Operations and Security Experts in consultation with the DCO. The MORs are EC-internal document which are sent directly to AIDCO, copied to RELEX, only.

The Preliminary Statement

The Preliminary Statement the initial post-election assessment of the EU EOM and is issued shortly after Election Day at a press conference. It is a public document and often attracts significant political and media attention. See [Guidelines on Preliminary Statement](#). After the publication of the Preliminary Statement, the Mission will also produce post-election Weekly Reports.

The Final Report

The Final Report provides the overall assessment of the EU EOM on the electoral process, addressing all relevant findings and conclusions on the pre-election, Election Day and post-election phases. It is usually drafted as the Mission closes and then goes through a consultative review process. Usually, the CO and the DCO will return to the country to present the Final Report.

E: Weekly Reports: a 'How-To' Guide

The aim of this section is to provide guidelines on common practice for the format, structure and content of Weekly Reports.

[Model Template](#)

[Examples of Weekly Reports](#)

[Note: as Weekly Reports are internal documents, the examples refer to fictional election missions.]

General Guidelines

As with all reports that expect to be read and appreciated by their target audiences, Weekly Reports should be:

- clear
- concise
- comprehensive
- consistent.

Weekly Reports should not exceed seven pages, including one page for an Executive Summary. Annexes of tables, maps or diagrams should not exceed an extra three pages.

Weekly Reports should follow a standard format that includes:

- Standard EU EOM logos
- Times New Roman, font size 12
- Consistent use of headings, footnotes etc, using Times New Roman font size 10

Drafts versions of the Weekly Reports should be prepared in Word. Final Versions of the Weekly Reports should only be distributed in PDF format.

Language of Reports

The Weekly Report is produced in the official language of the Mission and also in English if another language is being used.

The Weekly Report is aimed at an audience that are not necessarily technical election experts or specific experts on the country being observed. As such, the Weekly Report should avoid using technical jargon. Acronyms or abbreviations should initially be written in full e.g. the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM).

Executive Summary

The Executive Summary highlights the key information provided by the Interim Report and should be drafted so that it can 'stand-alone' as a comprehensive briefing on the work of the EU EOM.

The Executive Summary should follow a bullet point format, where each 'bullet' is a complete paragraph. A separate paragraph should be developed for each of the areas being reporting upon by the Mission.

Weekly Report One – 'Start of Mission'

[Example WRI](#)

The first Weekly Report will be produced during the EU EOM's intensive 'start-up' period but there will be keen interest from EU structures in receiving important background information on the Mission and the electoral process. The content of the first Weekly Report can include:

- **Mission Background**
 - Give basic background to the elections being observed
 - State basis of EOM i.e. who issued invitation, mandate, etc.
 - State key information about EOM i.e. name of Chief Observer, location of HQ, size of team, date of deployments, number of EU MS represented.
- **Political Context**
 - Outline the political background to the elections and other issues of democratic relevance, including:

- major challenges to the elections
 - issues related to human rights/participation of women/minorities
 - the reasons why the elections are being observed by EU
- Summarise key issues from previous elections
- Give brief descriptions of the main candidates/political parties and other key actors in the electoral process, both incumbent and major opposition.
- Provide analysis on the initial meetings with political actors
- **Electoral Framework**
 - Outline the legislative framework for the elections, including an initial assessment of whether it is considered to meet international standards and the key strengths or problems of the legislation
 - Outline the electoral system used and, if relevant, the constitutional structure of the country
- **Registration of Candidates**
 - Outline the procedures used for registering candidates
 - Explain the current stage of candidate registration and whether it is on-going or complete
 - If complete, provide data on numbers of candidates etc. (including number of women candidates), and whether any complaints have been made.
- **Election Administration**
 - Outline the structure and composition of the election management bodies
 - Provide information on electoral preparations
 - Provide analysis on the initial meetings with election officials and the views of political actors
- **Voter Registration**
 - Outline the procedures used for registering voters
 - Provide data on numbers of voters etc.
 - Outline whether any complaints have been made about voter register
- **Media Environment**
 - Outline the legal framework for media coverage of the election
 - Outline relevant issues relating to the general media environment (e.g. State control, private ownership, restrictions on freedoms)
 - List the media to be monitored
- **Election Observation**
 - Outline the framework for election observation in country
 - Provide information on:
 - domestic non-partisan observer groups
 - political party agents
 - international observer groups
- **Security Situation**
 - Outline general security situation in the country and especially any election-related security issues
 - Identify any specific risks facing EU EOM and steps taken to address them
- **EOM Activities**
 - Provide relevant information on Mission (e.g. meetings held by the Chief Observer)
 - Provide contact information for Mission, including website.
- **Annexes**
 - Provide any relevant annexes (e.g. maps)

This information should be at hand to the Mission because it covers the key areas that will be provided as briefing materials to LTOs. Useful sources of information include the report of the Exploratory Mission.

This is not necessarily an exclusive list: specific sections can also be inserted to cover e.g. gender issues, or national minorities etc.

Mid-Mission Weekly Reports

[Example 2 \(Mid-Mission A\)](#)

[Example 3 \(Mid-Mission B\)](#)

Mid-Mission Weekly Reports should describe electoral developments during the reporting period. They should include findings from the LTOs that show e.g. regional-specific issues or national patterns. Mid-Mission Weekly Reports provide a real basis for highlighting issues that are likely to be included in the Preliminary Statement and/or the Final Report.

As content, a Mid-Mission Weekly Reports should include:

- **Election Administration**
 - Provide more details on the structure of the election administration (e.g. political membership on composition)
 - Update on electoral arrangements, preparations for election day and any other key developments (e.g. training of staff, printing of ballots)
 - Identify emerging issues especially identified strengths/problems (e.g. the administration's level of transparency)
- **Candidate Registration**
 - Update on any issue relating to candidate registration (e.g. has there been any legal challenges to refusal to register)
- **Voter Registration**
 - Update on any issue relating to voter registration (e.g. has the credibility of the voter register been challenged? Is the final number of registered voters available? This information can be provided in a table.)
- **Campaign**
 - Provide update on campaigning activities (e.g. whether the campaign is peaceful, use of state resources etc.)
 - Provide analysis on the political platforms being put forward by candidates/parties (e.g. does any platform have a major impact on future relations with the international community?)
 - Outline any issue that undermines fundamental freedoms and rights related to elections and the fairness of campaign (e.g. arrests etc.)
 - If available, provide regional information from LTOs on campaign etc. in order to identify whether there are any problematic regions.
- **Complaints**
 - Outline framework for the election-related complaints and appeals
 - Describe significant individual complaints or general themes/patterns of complaints (national and/or regional)
- **Media Environment**
 - Provide update on the media coverage of the campaign, possibly including preliminary data from the monitoring of media and information on the implementation of the regulatory framework.
- **Security Situation**
 - Provide update on emerging election-related security issues

- Specifically, refer to whether there may be any emerging security issues that may affect the deployment or safety of LTOs/STOs.
- **EOM Activities**
- Provide update on EOM activities (e.g. coverage by observers, impending deployment of STOs)

Weekly Reports during the Post-Election Period

[Example 4 \(Post-Election\)](#)

Weekly Reports are also required during the post-election period to ensure that information is provided to EU structures on the post-election environment, including the publication of results and the handling of complaints. At least two Weekly Reports are required during this period.

The First Post-Election Weekly Report: Results and Complaints

The first post-election Weekly Reports supplements the Preliminary Statement (which is published shortly after election day) and its contents should include:

- **Overview of the Post-Election Counting, Tabulation and Publication of Results**
 - *Counting of Votes*: Provide overview of observers' findings on the counting process (this information is usually not available for the Preliminary Statement) including possible statistical data
 - *Tabulation and Announcement of Results*: Provide overview of observers' findings on the procedures for the tabulation and announcement of results, including possible statistical data from observer reports
 - *Publication of Results*: Provide overview of the procedures for the publication of results
- **Preliminary/Final Results**
 - Give the preliminary/final results
- **Election-related Complaints**
 - Provide information on any complaints that have been made relating to election day or results etc
 - Provide information on any arrests and other related problems
- **Political Overview of the Election Results**
 - *Acceptance of the Results*: Describe reaction of political actors to the results
 - *Political impact of the Results*: Provide analysis of the political consequences of the results
- **Results of the EU EOM Media Monitoring**
 - Provide link to the media monitoring results on the EU EOM website
- **Reaction to the EU EOM's Preliminary Statement**
 - If relevant, describe any issues arising from the publication of the Preliminary Statement
- **Security Situation**
 - Provide update on election-related security issues during post-election period and any impact on EOM activities
- **EOM Activities**
 - Provide link to the EOM Preliminary Statement
 - Provide information on deployment and repatriation of STOs, LTOs etc.

Other Post-Election Mission Reports

If there are significant problems with the post-election period, the EU EOM may choose to release a **Second Preliminary Statement**. The release of final results may warrant a Spot Report if it comes outside of the cycle of Weekly Reports.

The Final Post-Election Weekly Report: Close of Mission

The final Weekly Report should have the following content:

- **Final Update on Post-Election Period**
 - Provide update on any results, any complaints that have been made relating to election day or results, arrests and other related problems etc.
 - Describe any political developments

- **Security Situation**
 - Provide update on election-related security issues during post-election period and any impact on EOM activities

- **EOM Activities**
 - Announce closure of EOM
 - Offer acknowledgements to local EC Delegation and EU MS embassies

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

Template

[Model Template for a Preliminary Statement](#)

Examples of Preliminary Statements

[Yemen 2006](#)

[West Bank & Gaza 2006](#)

Examples of post-election Press Releases

[Yemen 2006](#)

[West Bank & Gaza 2006](#)

The Preliminary Statement is the initial post-election assessment of the EU EOM and is issued shortly after Election Day at a press conference. It is arguably the most important document produced during the period of the Mission in-country and its publication usually attracts high levels of political, diplomatic and media interest. However, it should always be stressed that this is a preliminary statement of findings and conclusions and that the EU EOM will continue to observe the post-election period; the overall assessment of the Mission will only be made in its Final Report.

Working towards producing a credible Preliminary Statement will be a primary focus for all observers during their work on the Mission.

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- J: Second Preliminary Statements**

A: The Role of a Preliminary Statement

The Preliminary Statement should:

- provide a comprehensive, international and independent assessment of the three stages of the electoral process that have so far taken place, i.e.:
 - the overall pre-election period
 - the Election Day, and
 - the initial stages of vote counting and result tabulation;
- represent the current collective findings of the Mission which are based on a standard set of criteria for the assessment of elections and the use of a credible and proven methodology;
- contribute towards public confidence in an electoral process through providing a clear and structured assessment of the degree to which the election so far has met international standards relating to democratic elections;
- establish an important early indicator for political and diplomatic actors to determine the credibility of the election process;
- recognise that public and media interest in an assessment of an election process is often at its height in the immediate post-election period and, to that extent, that public interest is served by an early preliminary assessment rather than wait for a detailed final report produced upon the conclusion of the electoral process;
- play an important role in ensuring a high public profile for the Mission through its release at a well-attended press conference and its wide distribution;
- stress that its contents are preliminary and that the Mission's overall assessment of the electoral process will be published in its detailed Final Report that will also include observations on the conclusion of the counting of votes, the tabulation of results, the resolution of any complaints or appeals and the wider post-election environment.

B: Key Criteria for a Preliminary Statement

Assessment Criteria

The conclusions of the EU EOM contained in the Preliminary Statement are based on a standard set of criteria for the assessment of the election. These include:

- International obligations, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 21) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 25);
- Relevant regional obligations or commitments agreed upon with the context of regional inter-governmental structures of which the country observed is part;
- The country's Constitution and the electoral legislation governing the specific election process and its implementation, which should reflect international and regional obligations.

Further details on these Assessment Criteria can be found in the EU/NEEDS Network Publication [Benchmarks For Electoral Standards](#).

Methodology Criteria

The methodology for election observation is comprehensively addressed in the EU/NEEDS

Network Publication [Handbook for EU Election Observation Missions](#). All EU observers should also be fully aware of the [International Declaration of Principles for Election Observation](#) (2005) which outlines the agreed key principles for credible observation methodology.

It is crucial for interlocutors to be reminded that EU observation methodology used in the Preliminary Statement will cover the various stages of the electoral process and not just Election Day i.e. both long-term and short-term observations. The Preliminary Statement will represent both a qualitative assessment of events and issues but also uses a quantitative assessment of the statistical data of election day observations of voting and counting.

C: Target Audience for Preliminary Statements

A Preliminary Statement is a public document. This means that it must be written to be read by all election stakeholders in the country being observed: candidates, political parties, journalists and voters. In particular, the Preliminary Statement is going to be read closely by the electoral authorities and the host government. There is also an international target audience to be considered; this will include the European Commission, EU Member State governments, international organisations and the international media.

The potential consequences of the assessments contained in the Preliminary Statement should not be under-estimated. As with all documents produced by an EU EOM, a Preliminary Statement must be based on credible and verifiable sources that can, if necessary, be substantiated with concrete examples.

The Preliminary Statement should provide a clear overall conclusion; not to do so may cause readers – and especially the media – to draw their own, possibly inaccurate, conclusion of what the Preliminary Statement has said. To this extent, a Preliminary Statement often includes a ‘headline conclusion’ and is accompanied by a Press Release that provides a precise overview of the Mission’s findings along with quotes from the Chief Observer.

D: Issuing the Preliminary Statement

There is some sensitivity over the timing of the release of the Preliminary Statement. Normally, it will be delivered in the afternoon on the day after E-Day or on the second day; it would be unusual to have an early release (i.e. on the morning of the day after E-Day) or a later release (more than 2 days later).

It is important that the Chief Observer consults with all key persons – especially the DCO, the Core Teak Press Officer, the RELEX Desk Officer and the heads of other international observer missions – before setting the time of the press conference at which the Preliminary Statement is to be issued.

There are a number of competing priorities that should determine the timing of the conference. While a high level of media interest should be aimed at, it is also important that the Mission should have enough time to include a credible and comprehensive analysis of the EOM’s election day observations in the Preliminary Statement; this is an especially important consideration in elections where problems with the counting and results procedures can be expected.

It is crucial to ensure that a Preliminary Statement is kept confidential prior to its publication. Its contents have significant political and diplomatic implications and the ‘leak’ of a Preliminary Statement could cause immense harm to the credibility of the Mission and even jeopardise the entire election process. The DCO should ensure that all non-final versions of the Preliminary Statement are marked as ‘DRAFT’.

E: Preparation of the Preliminary Statements

The drafting of the Preliminary Statement is often a consultative process within the Core Team, led by the DCO, as well as involving the RELEX Elections Desk Officer. However, ultimate responsibility for its content rests with the CO.

Given the time pressures around election day, preparing a preliminary statement is a challenging task and requires a structured process of drafting, review and finalisation. The drafting process for the Preliminary Statement should start at least one week before Election Day. In essence, much of the Preliminary Statement will cover issues and events that were observed during the pre-election phase; as these are often covered in the Weekly Reports, the basic content of the Preliminary Statement should be ready well ahead of Election Day.

Pre-Preparation – No later than E-Day minus 2 weeks

The DCO should:

- share 'model' Preliminary Statements to all members of the Core Team and allocate which areas are to be covered by each specific CT expert. This ensures that CT members are aware of the general nature, tone, language and length of their contributions to the Preliminary Statement.
- set a timetable for the different phases of the drafting process (e.g. first contributions, group meetings etc), to be shared with CT and RELEX Desk Officer. This timetable should be realistic and should bear in mind the demands on the CO, DCO and CT experts over events in the run-up to E-Day, including the arrival/briefing of STOs etc.
- identify the key issues emerging from Weekly Reports that should be included in the Preliminary Statement.

First Drafting Phase– E-Day minus 7 days, finished by E-day minus 2 days

The Preliminary Statement, drafted by the Deputy Chief Observer based on contributions from all CT experts, will go through many drafts and will initially have 'gaps' where Election Day information will later be added. It is common that the Core Team, headed by the CO or DCO, meets to agree on a 'common direction' of the Preliminary Statement and that it is based on the collective observations of the whole Missions. After receiving and editing contributions, the DCO should share each version of the draft with CT members to receive comments etc.

When ready, the 'Core Team Draft' should be provided to the CO for comments and approval. This entire process should be ready no later than E-Day minus 2 days.

It is crucial that the DCO prominently marks each page as 'DRAFT' stating its version (e.g. 'SECOND DRAFT') and the date and time it was prepared (e.g. '11 January 2007 at 12:00').

First Review and Comments Phase – No later than E-Day minus 1 day

When approved by the CO, the 'Core Team Draft' should be shared with the RELEX Elections Desk Officer (EDO) for comments on content or structure. The EDO is often in country to support the Mission at this stage; if not, a clear timetable for sharing the CT Draft should be agreed (bearing in mind weekends etc and time zone differences). As with Weekly Reports, the EDO may ask for clarification on issues raised in the Preliminary Statement, which may require re-drafting.

The revised CT Draft should be ready by the start of E-Day and should then be shared with other branches of the European Commission for comments.

Second Drafting Phase - E-Day / E-Day plus one

The Second Draft updates the Preliminary Statement with information on Election Day (polling and counting) based on the reports from observers and the available statistical data. Drafting of the 'Election Day' section can usually start at the close of polls, when the CT should have a good understanding of how E-Day has been; however, this information may change (sometimes significantly) as statistical data is analysed. Quite often, this information will only become clear late into the night and may need verification through de-briefing observers on their findings.

Work on the second drafting phase will obviously depend on the timing of the release of the Preliminary Statement; the earlier the release, the greater the time-pressure on the DCO and Core Team to finalise the draft. It is common that the EDO is consulted regularly during the second drafting phase.

At the end of this phase, the Mission will produce the Final Draft of the Preliminary Statement. The Final Draft of the Preliminary Statement will be shared with EC RELEX in Brussels and the EU Presidency and the local EC Delegation for comments on the E-Day updates.

Final Version

After comments on the Final Draft, the CO and DCO must agree on the Final Version of the Preliminary Statement which should be ready in good time before the press conference to ensure final translation changes and copying can be made. Usually, a Final Version must be ready no later than three hours before the start of the press conference.

As soon as it is ready, a Final Version of the Preliminary Statement should be sent to the EC RELEX who will share with the EU Presidency to ensure that a common line in any press statements on the election produced by the EU institutions.

The Final Version of the Preliminary Statement will be distributed to all other EC structures by RELEX and to the EU Member States etc. through the EU Presidency at the time of the release of the Preliminary Statement. Just ahead of the Press Conference, the EU EOM may call a Diplomatic Briefing of local EU embassies to brief them on the Preliminary Statement.

Translation

The Preliminary Statement should be translated into the main language(s) of the country being observed as well as English for international distribution. The translation can take time and it is common that a translator is tasked to prepare a first translation at the 'CT Draft' stage and update the translated versions when revisions are made.

Sharing the Preliminary Statement

One hour ahead of the press conference, it is now established courtesy that a copy of the Preliminary Statement (in English and translation) should be provided to the authorities of the country who invited the EU EOM and with whom Memorandums of Understanding have been signed (usually the head of the election management body and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

Electronic versions of the Preliminary Statement (in all languages) should be ready to be put on the Mission website immediately upon its release. Copies should also be provided to all LTOs and STOs.

F: Liaison with Other Observer Delegations

The Preliminary Statement is the independent assessment of an EU EOM. However, there

are circumstances where the Mission will need to liaise closely with other observer delegations when issuing Preliminary Statements.

Observer Delegations from the European Parliament

Delegations of Members of the European Parliament often observe elections along with an EU EOM. Although they are formally separate, the EU EOM and the EP Delegation always work closely together and it is widely recognised that 'separate' Preliminary Statements should not be issued. However, rather than issuing a joint statement, the convention is that the EP Delegation *endorses* the findings of the EU EOMs. (e.g. see [West Bank and Gaza 2006](#)) The CO, DCO and EDO should liaise closely with the EP Delegation to agree on the framework for consultation etc on the Preliminary Statement.

Other International Observer Delegations

An EU EOM will often be observing in a country where there will be other international observer delegations (such as The Carter Centre, the African Union, the Organisation of American States etc).

The signatories of the International Declaration of Principles for Election Observation – which includes all EU EOMs – are “pledge[d] to cooperate with each other in conducting international election observation missions.” To this degree, it is common practice that Preliminary Statements are ‘shared’ with other observer missions of signatory organisations shortly ahead of its official release. The sharing is undertaken upon reciprocity and an agreement of confidentiality in order to seek a ‘common international voice’ in the assessment of the election. Normally, there is a group meeting of the heads of delegations.

On occasion, there may be requests to have a ‘joint’ preliminary statement or a ‘joint’ press conference with other organisations; this issue will need to be discussed and approved by EC RELEX.

G: Preliminary Statements: a ‘How-To’ Guide

There is now a common format for Preliminary Statement (see ‘[Model Template](#)’) and this should be followed for the formatting and structure. The Model Examples provide useful precedents for their style, language and content.

General Guidelines

As with all reports that expect to be read and appreciated by their target audiences, Preliminary Statements should be:

- clear
- concise
- comprehensive
- consistent.

Preliminary Statements should not exceed eight pages, including one page for an Executive Summary. They should follow a standard format that includes:

- Standard EU EOM logos
- Times New Roman, font size 12
- Consistent use of headings, footnotes etc, using Times New Roman font size 10

Draft versions should be prepared in Word and should be marked as ‘DRAFT’. Final Versions of the Preliminary Statements should only be distributed in PDF format.

Language of Reports

Preliminary Statements are produced in English and the main language(s) of the country being observed. Where the working language of the EU EOM is another EU language other than English, the Preliminary Statement will still need to be produced in English as the official version. Where translations are provided, the 'footer' of the first page should include the following: *This preliminary statement is available in English and [local language(s)] but only the English version is official.*

The language used must be unambiguous and, where possible, should avoid highly technical language or jargons so that, where complex issues are discussed, they must be described in clear language. Of course, clichés or simplistic terms – not least “free and fair” – should be avoided at all costs. Particular attention must be given to avoiding the use of controversial or emotive terms. Acronyms or abbreviations should initially be written in full e.g. the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM).

The Preliminary Statement is a concise document that covers the key issues during an election. Detailed analysis of issues or complex descriptions of technical points or issues of less importance should be left out of the Preliminary Statement and can be covered in depth in the Final Report.

Headline Conclusion

It is now common practice that the Preliminary Statement starts with the 'Headline Conclusion' of the Preliminary Statement. Considerable care should be taken to drafting this phrase so that it clearly describes the overall view of the Mission. This is the phrase likely to be used by the media when reporting the findings of the Preliminary Statement.

Preamble

The preamble to the Preliminary Statement gives basic background information on the Mission. The text of this section follows a regular format to describe the mandate of the EU EOM etc. Extra information will need to be included where there is a Delegation from the European Parliament.

Executive Summary

The Executive Summary is the most crucial part of the Preliminary Statement. It must highlight all the key information and should be drafted so that it can 'stand-alone' as a comprehensive and concise assessment of the electoral process. It often follows a bullet point format, where each 'bullet' is a complete paragraph. It is a convention that the first two paragraphs of the Executive Summary should provide the overall conclusions of the Preliminary Statement and that the third covers E-Day. A separate paragraph should then be developed for each of the areas being assessed by the Mission.

It is extremely important that the Executive Summary uses the phrase “so far” in its opening conclusion e.g. *“The 10 February presidential elections in Sans Serif have **so far** seen an open and genuine contest take place that presented a notable opportunity in the region for an incumbent head of state to face a real challenge at the polls.”* This stresses the preliminary nature of the document and that the overall assessment may still change over the post-election period.

Background

This section should aim to describe the political background of the elections being observed so that there is a context to the Mission's findings (e.g. there may have been a political agreement to enable the elections to take place). This section should provide findings and conclusions on the political issues relevant to the election (e.g. if there was a boycott or any conflict) as well as other democratic issues related to human rights or key issues from

previous elections.

Legal Framework

This section should provide findings on the legislative framework for the elections and, in particular, there should be a key conclusion on whether the election laws provide the basis for the conduct of elections in accordance with international standards, especially on the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms related to democratic elections.

While key problems/strengths with the election laws should be highlighted, a detailed legal analysis should wait until the Final Report.

Election Administration

This section should briefly describe the structure and composition of the election administration bodies. The key findings relate to the impartiality, transparency and professionalism of their work; this will include issues relating to the openness of the election administration and the level of public confidence they hold.

Voter Registration

This section should provide findings and conclusions on the voter registration process, in particular, whether it provided a universal non-discriminatory franchise and held public confidence in its accuracy and reliability. It is also useful to provide key data on the number of registered voters.

Registration of Candidates/Party Lists

This section can usefully provide key data on the names/numbers of the main candidates/political parties. It should also provide findings and conclusions on the procedures used for registering candidates, especially in relation to complaints against refusals to register some candidates.

Campaign Environment

This section provides findings and conclusions on the conduct of the election campaign, especially in cases where there was violence or aggressive rhetoric etc. Key issues to be covered must include the degree of freedom of political parties/candidates to campaign freely, especially arrests or detentions, and the use of and fair access to state resources for campaigning.

Media Environment

This section should briefly cover the wider media environment in the country and the general freedom of the media. Specifically, this section should address the specific role of the media in covering the election process. It must provide an assessment of the fair access by candidates/parties to the media and the manner of the media's coverage; a special focus is given to the State media. The section should also include a summary of the quantitative assessment of the media monitoring data produced by the Mission. The full media monitoring results are also made available as an annex to the Preliminary Statement to be posted on the Mission website.

Participation of Women / Participation of National Minorities

These separate sections are used to provide an assessment of the universality of the electoral process being observed through the participation of groups that are often excluded. The findings and conclusions are based on a set of criteria that monitors the level of participation of women and, where relevant, national minorities.

Civil Society

This section describes the level of civil participation in the election, especially through domestic non-partisan election observation and voter education activities.

Election Day: Polling and Counting

This section will provide a comprehensive series of findings and an overall conclusion from the reports of the Mission observers on election day. It is the section that is likely to attract the most attention, especially during the press conference.

Where there are reports of problems on E-Day, this section will need to be carefully drafted to evaluate the extent of the problems and whether they had the potential to affect the integrity of the election process e.g. the reported problems may be regionalised or widespread, isolated or indicative of a pattern, caused by mistake or by malice. The assessment of the EU EOM on these issues will have a key impact on the overall conclusions. An important aspect of this section is the use of statistical data to support the conclusions of the Mission but it is appropriate to identify the potential limitations on the statistical coverage by observers.

Concluding Quotes

In some Missions (e.g. see [West Bank and Gaza 2006](#)), the official quotes of the Chief Observer and the Head of the European Delegation are included at the end of the Preliminary Statement.

Appreciations and Contacts

At the end of the Preliminary Statement, there is a box that should express appreciation to key interlocutors and partner organisations. Also, the contacts of the DCO and Press Officer are made available.

H: Press Releases

It is now common practice that the EU EOM issue a press release to accompany the Preliminary Statement that includes key quotes from the Chief Observer and, where relevant, the Head of the EP Delegation. The press release highlights the key conclusions and also provides important background information and quotes. It is drafted by the Press Officer and should be approved by the CO/DCO and, as with all press releases from an EU EOM, should also be consulted with EC RELEX before being issued.

I: Press Conferences

The preparation for the Press Conference should be made well in advance of election day, especially in relation to making bookings for the time and location of the press conference. As the actual timing of the press conference may need to change, it may be useful to 'block book' a room for the full 48 hour period after election day to allow flexibility. The location should be central and capable for use with microphones, television cameras, translations etc. The Mission should ensure there is no 'clash' of timings with press conferences or other events being held by other observer groups or the election administration and, if these arise, careful liaison and compromise will be needed.

For the press conference, the CO should be provided with Speaking Points that include all agreed quotes and the conclusions contained in the Executive Summary. For the question and answer session, the CO should be provided with examples to substantiate all conclusions made.

The press conference is hosted by the Mission's Press Officer. The Mission is represented by the CO and DCO, and translation (simultaneous or consecutive) must be provided. Where relevant, the Head of the EP Delegation should also take part and is invited by the CO to add comments before the Q&A session. Paper copies of the Preliminary Statement (in all languages) should be available for distribution at the end of the presentation.

J: Second Preliminary Statements

If there are significant problems with the post-election period, the EU EOM may choose to release a Second Preliminary Statement. This fact should be highlighted in the initial Preliminary Statement/Press Conference if there is an expectation that there may be problems. The Second Preliminary Statement will usually provide an assessment of the **Post-Election Counting, Tabulation and Publication of Results** and **Election-related Complaints** or if there have been any major problems in the post-election environment.

FINAL REPORT

Template

[Model Template for a Final Report](#)

Examples of Final Reports

[Yemen 2006](#)

[West Bank & Gaza 2006](#)

The Final Report provides the overall assessment of the EU EOM on the election process observed. It is comprehensive and detailed report that addresses the cumulative findings and conclusions of the entire Mission over the pre-election, Election Day and post-election phases. The Final Report is normally issued within two months of the conclusion of the electoral process.

- A: The Role of a Final Report**
- B: Key Assessment Criteria for a Final Report**
- C: Target Audience for Final Reports**
- D: Preparation of the Preliminary Statements**
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A: The Role of a Final Report

The role of the Final Report is:

- to provide a comprehensive, international and independent assessment of all stages and aspects of the electoral process. This will include:
 - the legal and administrative framework for elections
 - all stages of the pre-election period,
 - the Election Day, and
 - the post-election period, up to the publication of results and resolution of election complaints;
- to represent the collective findings of the Mission (Core Team, LTOs and STOs) which are based on a standard set of criteria for the assessment of elections and the use of a credible and proven methodology;

- to contribute towards public confidence in an electoral process through providing a clear and structured assessment of the degree to which the election met international standards relating to democratic elections;
- to be an authoritative source of information on election and democratic processes in the country observed, adding to the catalogue of global expertise contained in Final Reports of EU election observation missions;
- to provide a wider assessment of the status of democratic development in the country observed and, in particular, to contribute to the EU's bilateral arrangements and development policy with the country;
- to offer recommendations to improve future elections and other issues relevant to the strengthening of democratic institutions in the country observed, in particular, to identify possible areas for EU-supported technical advice and assistance.

B: Key Assessment Criteria for a Final Report

As with a Preliminary Statement, the assessments of the EU EOM contained in the Final Report are based on a standard set of criteria for the assessment of the election. These include:

- International obligations, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 21) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 25);
- Relevant regional obligations or commitments agreed upon with the context of regional inter-governmental structures of which the country observed is part;
- The country's Constitution and the electoral legislation governing the specific election process and its implementation, which should reflect international and regional obligations.

Further details on these Assessment Criteria can be found in the EU/NEEDS Network Publication [Benchmarks For Electoral Standards](#).

The Final Report builds upon the conclusions made by the Mission in its Preliminary Statement. If the overall assessment of the Mission has changed in any way from the preliminary assessments (i.e. if a 'positive' Preliminary Statement has become a 'negative' Final Report because e.g. of post-election problems with results or violence), the Final Report must clearly explain the reasons for this change.

C: Target Audience for Final Reports

The Final Report is a public document. This means that it must be written to be read by all election stakeholders in the country being observed: candidates, political parties, domestic observers, journalists and voters. In particular, the Final Report is going to be read closely by the electoral authorities and the host government. There is also an international target audience to be considered; this will include the European Commission, EU Member State governments, international organisations and the international media.

It will be particularly important to ensure that the Final Report's Recommendations are addressed to be considered by the authorities of the country, who must agree to adopt the Recommendations, and the international community, who may be called upon to fund their implementation.

The potential consequences of the assessments contained in the Final Report should not be

under-estimated. As with all documents produced by an EU EOM, its conclusions and recommendations must be based on credible and verifiable sources that can be used as concrete examples within the text of the Final Report – especially where these have been directly observed by LTOs. The use of specific examples strengthens the credibility of the Final Report.

D: Preparation of the Preliminary Statements

The drafting of the Final Report is undertaken by the DCO based on contributions from the Core Team experts before the draft is submitted to the EC RELEX Elections Unit for review. However, ultimate responsibility for its content rests with the CO.

The final report is usually prepared during the closing period of the Mission and a 'first draft' is often ready before the departure of the Core Team. If there are on-going political and electoral developments (such as delays in the results process, the resolution of complaints or any post-election instability), it may be necessary for the draft to be updated after the return of the Core Team to Europe. In any case, the CO and DCO are usually required to submit a 'final draft' of the Final Report to RELEX within 30 days of the close of the Mission. The CO/DCO may then need to revise the draft further to incorporate the comments of RELEX.

In essence, the Final Report will build upon the conclusions reached in the Mission's Preliminary Statement, which covered issued issues and events that were observed during the pre-election phase. In addition, the Final Report will cover post-election events that are likely to have been covered in Weekly Reports. Thus, the basic content of the Final Report should be known to the Core Team well ahead of the start of drafting their contributions.

The Final Report is a lengthy document – often more than 40 pages long – and requires extensive drafting skills and fact management. The DCO will need to ensure they have all relevant information to hand when drafting, including copies of e.g. all Weekly Reports, LTO reports, election laws etc.

Pre-Preparation

The DCO should:

- share 'model' Final Reports to all members of the Core Team and allocate which areas are to be covered by each specific CT expert. This ensures that CT members are aware of the general nature, tone, language and length of their contributions to the Final Report.
- set a timetable for the CT on the different phases of the drafting process (e.g. first contributions, group meetings etc). This timetable should be realistic and should bear in mind the demands on the CO, DCO and CT experts over the closing period of the mission.
- identify the key issues emerging from the Preliminary Statement and Weekly Reports that should be included in the Final Report.
- identify the key areas where the Final Report shall be offering Recommendations and to ensure there is initial consultation within the CT on these.

First Drafting Phase

The Preliminary Statement, drafted by the Deputy Chief Observer based on contributions from all CT experts, will go through many drafts. It is good practice that the Core Team, headed by the CO or DCO, meets to agree on a 'common direction' of the Final Report and that it is based on the collective observations of the whole Missions. After receiving and editing contributions, the DCO should share each version of the draft with CT members to

receive comments etc. When ready, the 'Core Team Draft' should be provided to the CO for comments and approval.

It is crucial that the DCO prominently marks each page as 'DRAFT' stating its version (e.g. 'SECOND DRAFT') and the date and time it was prepared (e.g. '22 January 2007 at 21:00').

Review and Comments Phase

When approved by the CO, the 'Core Team Draft' should be submitted to the RELEX Elections Desk Officer for comments on content or structure. These comments provide a positive contribution based on extensive experience from other missions, knowledge of the electoral and diplomatic environment and ensure quality control of Final Reports. RELEX will share the draft with the EC Delegation in the country to provide confidential comments.

Quite often, the draft of the Final Report will be discussed at the Core Team debriefing that follows their return to Europe.

Finalisation Phase

After the comments from RELEX are received, the CO and DCO should agree on the Final Version of the Final Report. When ready, the Final Report will be returned to RELEX for formatting and translation into the main language(s) of the country (if required). The Final Report, however, will not be distributed until it is formally released.

E: Preliminary Statements: a 'How-To' Guide

There is now a common format for Final Reports (see '[Model Template](#)') and this should be followed for the formatting and structure. The [Model Examples](#) provide useful precedents for their style, language and content.

General Guidelines

As with all reports that expect to be read and appreciated by their target audiences, Final Reports should be:

- clear
- concise
- comprehensive
- consistent.

Final Reports is usually around 40-50 pages. They should follow a standard format that includes:

- Standard EU EOM logos
- Times New Roman, font size 12
- Consistent use of headings and footnotes, using Times New Roman font size 10

Draft versions should be prepared in Word and should be marked as 'DRAFT'.

Language of Reports

Final Reports are produced officially in English but are also translated into the main language(s) of the country being observed. Where translations are made into a non-EU language, the 'footer' of the first page should include the following: *This preliminary statement is available in English and [local language(s)] but only the English version is official.*

The language used must be unambiguous. Unlike the Preliminary Statement, the Final Report can provide a detailed analysis of issues or complex descriptions of technical points; where

complex issues are discussed, they must be described in clear language and, whenever possible, the Final Report should avoid highly technical language or jargons. Of course, clichés or simplistic terms – not least “free and fair” – should be avoided at all costs. Particular attention must be given to avoiding the use of controversial or emotive terms. Acronyms or abbreviations should initially be written in full e.g. the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM).

Executive Summary

The Executive Summary is the most crucial part of the Final Report. It must highlight all the key information and should be drafted so that it can ‘stand-alone’ as a comprehensive and concise assessment of the electoral process. It is a convention that the initial paragraphs of the Executive Summary should provide the overall conclusions of the Final Report. A separate paragraph should then be developed for each of the areas being assessed – whether positively or negatively – in the Final Report although it does not usually refer to the Recommendations. The Executive Summary is often between two and three pages long.

Introduction

This section gives basic background information on the Mission. The text of this section follows a regular format to describe: dates of deployment, the invitation to observe, the mandate of the EU EOM etc. Extra information will need to be included where there is a Delegation from the European Parliament.

Political Background

a. Political Context

This section should aim to describe the political background of the elections being observed. It should be prepared to provide an overview of the context of the election, identifying all political issues relevant to the election as well as other democratic issues related to human rights or key issues from previous elections.

b. Key Political Actors

This section should describe the background to the key political actors in an election process i.e. the major candidates/political parties.

Legal Issues

a. Legal Framework

This section should provide clear analytical findings on the legislative framework for the elections. In particular, there should be a key conclusion on whether the election laws provide the basis for the conduct of elections in accordance with international standards, especially on the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms related to democratic elections. The analysis of the election laws should highlighted problematic areas where the legal framework needs improvement. See the International IDEA publication [International Electoral Standards: Guidelines for Reviewing The Legal Framework For Elections](#).

b. Other Legal Sections

Where specific legal issues can be analysed in depth, it is good practice to use separate sections. For example, it may be necessary to provide analysis of

- the complaints and appeals procedures and the mechanism for enforcement of legal provisions
- the legal framework for e.g. the registration of political parties
- the electoral system.

The analysis of the legal framework will provide the basis for many of the recommendations to be offered by the Final Report. However, there should be consideration to the practical implications for implementing recommendations that require legislative change, especially if it

requires amendment to the Constitution.

The language used in the Legal Issues section should be comprehensible to all readers. Where reference is made to a legislative provision, it should be quoted as a footnote.

Election Administration

a. Structure and Composition of the Election Administration

This section should describe the structure and composition of the election administration bodies and the issues that arise e.g. whether it is an independent body, whether its neutrality is guaranteed.

b. Administration of the Elections

This section should describe the manner in which the elections were administered and, in particular, address whether there was impartiality, transparency and professionalism in the work of the election administration. It should refer to the level of public confidence in the election administration, its compliance with legal requirements and the level of openness shown to electoral actors, including the EU EOM.

Voter Registration

a. The Right To Vote

This section should describe the legal requirements for citizens to hold the franchise and analysis on whether there is a universal non-discriminatory franchise. Data on the number of registered voters etc can be provided, using charts.

b. Voter Registration Procedures

This section assesses the quality of the voter register and whether there is public confidence in its accuracy and reliability. It should also refer to complaints against relating to voter registration and the manner in which they were resolved.

Registration of Candidates/Party Lists

a. Registration Procedures

This section should describe the requirements for registration to contest the elections and identify whether procedural improvements are required. It can also provide key data on the names/numbers of the main candidates/political parties.

b. Complaints relating to Registration

Where relevant, this section should refer to complaints against relating to registration and the manner in which they were resolved.

Election Campaign and the Pre-Election Environment

a. Overview of the Election Campaign

This section should provide a comprehensive overview on the conduct of the election campaign. In particular, the degree of freedom of political parties/candidates to campaign, organise, assemble etc must be addressed. Reference should also be made to: the legal framework for campaigning and whether it was complied with; the peacefulness of the campaign; whether overtly aggressive rhetoric was used etc.

b. Use of State Resources

Where relevant, this section should detail the use of and fair access to state resources for campaigning.

c. Complaints During The Campaign Period

This section should provide detailed reporting on the complaints made during the course of the campaign and the manner in which they were resolved.

d. Arrests and Detention

Where relevant, this section should provide information on reports of any arrests and detentions that are related to the election, especially where they appear to be politically motivated and where the Mission has verified problem areas.

e. Voter Education

The Mission often may wish to comment on the effectiveness of voter education campaigns.

Media and Elections

a. Media Landscape

This section should cover the wider media environment in the country and issues related to the freedom of the media.

b. Legal Framework for the Media and Elections

This section should provide a thorough analysis of the regulatory framework for the role of the media and elections, especially if there are guarantees for equal access etc.

c. Monitoring of Media Coverage of the Elections

This section should address the specific role of the media in covering the election process. It must provide an assessment of the fair access by candidates/parties to the media and the manner of the media's coverage; a special focus is given to the State media. The section should also include a summary of the quantitative assessment of the media monitoring data produced by the Mission.

Participation of Women in the Electoral Process

This section should provide an assessment of the universality of the electoral process being observed through the participation of women in the electoral process. The findings and conclusions are based on a set of criteria that monitors the level of participation of women. See the OSCE/ODIHR publication [Handbook for Monitoring Women's Participation in Elections](#).

Participation of National Minorities in the Electoral Process

Where relevant in a country, this section should assess the participation of national minorities in the electoral process. See the OSCE/ODIHR publication [Guidelines to Assist National Minority Participation in the Electoral Process](#).

Participation of Civil Society

This section should describe the level of civil participation in the election, especially through domestic non-partisan election observation and voter education activities.

Election Day: Polling and Counting

a. Overview of Voting

This section should describe the Mission's direct observations on election day and also refer to the wider environment. This section should provide a focus on:

- the basis of EU EOM observations (i.e. the number of observers, the level of coverage of polling stations etc
- qualitative and statistical assessment of EU observers on voting procedures
- any problems on election day

b. Counting

This section should describe the Mission's observation on the counting of votes. It is not usual that the Mission has sufficient number of observers or coverage of counting centres to have credible statistical data on counting procedures.

Results

a. Tabulation and Announcement of Results

This section should describe the Mission's observations relating to the manner in which the results of the counted votes were tabulated, announced and transmitted to higher bodies. In particular, there should be an assessment of whether the procedures ensured transparency (e.g. whether results were posted and candidates were provided with copies of results).

b. Publication of Results

This section assesses whether there were problems with the publication of results (e.g. whether there was any delay). It is useful if this section – or an annex – also includes a chart of the results.

c. Complaints Relating to the Election Results

This section should provide detailed reporting on the complaints made in relation to election day or election results and the manner in which they were resolved. If the resolution of the cases is not completed by the time the report is finalised, this should be mentioned.

d. Political Overview of the Election Results

This section provides an analysis of the impact of the election results and any significant political consequences that occurred in their aftermath.

Recommendations

The section that outlines the Mission's Recommendations to improve the electoral process is arguably the most important part of the Final Report. The Recommendations can be distinguished between those that are key priorities and others of lesser priority (e.g. if there are major issues of concern, or in circumstances where the next electoral cycle will follow closely).

Each Recommendation should be drafted carefully to ensure that:

- it is based on concrete examples of problems, referred to in the body of the Final Report;
- it addresses an issue of concern that is
 - related to a failure to fully meet international standards for democratic elections or international best practice on elections, and/or
 - caused by inconsistency, lack of clarity, lack of transparency, a lack of capacity, or a lack of public confidence etc;
- it is realistically achievable assuming there is political will to improve the electoral process ahead of future elections;
- it does not contradict other recommendations or, in itself, is contrary to standard international technical advice and assistance on elections.

The Recommendations may be used as the basis for an offer of capacity development from the European Commission to provide technical advice and assistance. See the EC Background Document [Methodological Guide on Election Assistance](#).

F: Release of the Final Report

Usually the CO and the DCO return to the country to deliver the Final Report. In the course of this visit, they will present the report to the government authorities, the election administration and political parties. At these meetings, the CO should be prepared to explain the basis of the assessments contained in the Final Report and, in particular, to discuss practical steps for the implementation of the Recommendations.

After sharing with key interlocutors, the CO holds a press conference to officially release the Final Report to the media and the wider public. A press release may also be issued to accompany the Final Report that includes key quotes from the CO. The preparation of the return visit – which will also include a briefing for the diplomatic community and, occasionally, roundtables for civil society organisations – is organised by the EC Delegation in

country.

Guidelines on the EU EOM Mission Follow-Up Report

The recommendations to improve the electoral process are arguably the most important part of an EU EOM's final report as they are likely to be used as the key benchmarks for the assessment of future elections and the wider democratisation process in the country observed. The European Commission is responsible for following-up on the implementation of the recommendations.

Of key importance is the opportunity the recommendations provide for the EC to tailor its programmes of technical advice and assistance for electoral assistance to address the areas requiring improvement that were identified by the EU EOM's recommendations.

In many ways, an EU EOM is often well-placed to identify where electoral assistance is necessary, feasible and useful. As part of its work, therefore, an EU EOM should consider the possible areas where technical advice and assistance can be provided by the EC to encourage the implementation of its recommendations. To this extent, an EU EOM should prepare a brief report – the Mission Follow-Up Report – that makes practical recommendations for possible areas of electoral assistance by the EC.

The Follow-Up Report is **internal** and is submitted to the EC by the Chief Observer. It is usually drafted by the Deputy Chief Observer upon consultation with the Core Team. It is submitted as an annex to the Internal Mission Report.

Drafting Final Report Recommendations

In their final report, an EU EOM will make recommendations for improvements to the electoral process that are based on shortcomings that have been identified by observers. Each recommendation should be drafted carefully to ensure that:

- it is based on concrete examples of problems, referred to in the body of the Final Report;
- it addresses an issue of concern that relates to:
 - failures to fully meet international standards for democratic elections or international best practice on elections, and/or
 - examples of inconsistency, lack of clarity, lack of transparency, a lack of capacity, or a lack of public confidence etc; and/or
 - examples of notable inefficiency or ineffectiveness during the implementation of the election process; and/or
 - weaknesses in the institutional capacity of electoral stakeholders (e.g. the election administration; political parties; civil society; media)
- it would be realistically achievable assuming there is political will to improve the electoral process ahead of future elections;
- it does not contradict other recommendations or, in itself, is contrary to standard international standards and best practice for elections.

The Final Report should attempt to distinguish between the recommendations that are key priorities and others of lesser priority (e.g. if there are major issues of concern, or in circumstances where the next electoral cycle will follow closely).

Importance of Recommendations for Follow-Up

(a) Political Follow-Up

Progress towards achieving the recommendations will be monitored by the European Commission and it is likely that there will be political or diplomatic 'follow-up' where progress is not taking place.

(b) Technical Advice and Assistance

As part of its global work to support democratisation and human rights, the EC has developed many programmes that have provided technical advice and assistance on electoral initiatives. A comprehensive overview of these programmes in this field can be found in the publication [EC Methodological Guide on Electoral Assistance](#).

Recent experience has shown that, more and more, the EC has been able to identify possible priority areas for where its support is needed from the recommendations of an EU EOM. Through offering proposals for electoral assistance

projects, the EC can encourage the country to take steps towards implementing the recommendations of a Mission, which should lead to a long-term improvement of the electoral process in the country.

The Mission Follow-Up Report

The Mission Follow-Up Report is the tool by which the EC can ensure that its election observation and electoral assistance activities can be collaborative and complementary through identifying the areas where assistance projects could address the recommendations made by the Mission.

The proposals made by the Mission Follow-Up Report will contribute towards the EC determining the priority to be given towards assessing the need for electoral assistance and the feasibility for its successful implementation. It should be borne in mind, however, that many of the recommendations made by an EU EOM will be ‘political’ and may not require or be suitable for a technical electoral assistance project. Moreover, the Mission Follow-Up Report cannot – and should not attempt to – replace the standard project assessment phases that are used by the EC to decide on the projects it supports and the EC is not bound to implement the proposals that are made by the EU EOM.

To ensure institutional memory, the Mission Follow-Up Report can also give basic background information, such as names and contact details, for the key interlocutors who should be consulted with by the EC when assessing possible electoral assistance.

Format of the Mission Follow-Up Report

The Mission Follow-Up Report is usually submitted to the EC by the CO as an annex to the Internal Mission Report, but there may be agreement on alternative timings. It is drafted by the DCO upon consultation with the Core Team, especially the Election and Legal Experts. It is an **internal** EC document.

The report uses a standard ‘matrix’ format that provides the relevant information on each area where electoral assistance is recommended.

Matrix for Proposed Areas of Assistance

Recommendation	Refer to the recommendation contained in the Final Report
Level of Priority	Urgent / High / Medium / Low
Background	Briefly describe the problem that needs to be addressed e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the scale of the problem? - How significant is its impact on the electoral process? - Is the problem recognised by stakeholders? - Would there be willingness to address problem?
Possible Area(s) of EC-Assistance	Suggest what assistance could be provided by the EU to address the problem
Main activities	Briefly describe how the project could be implemented, including its key activities and an estimate of the likely timing of events
Main results	Briefly describe what the project could achieve and its likelihood of being achieved
Potential Partners	Identify what local or international partners could be involved in the project development and implementation