



EU Election Observation Mission Republic of Rwanda 2008



First day of voting conducted peacefully and well prepared, preliminary figures on voter turn-out raise questions on the process of counting and consolidation.

Kigali, 17 September 2008: The second elections to the House of Deputies of the Rwandan parliament since the 1994 genocide mark an important step in the democratic development of Rwanda.

The first day of the voting was conducted peacefully and was well prepared. The elections saw significant improvements for candidates, notably guaranteeing the freedom of association and assembly at local level.

The high voter turn-out reported raises questions about the counting and consolidation process. In about half the Polling Centres observed by the EU EOM, rules and procedures were not properly followed.

There is a positive promotion of gender equality and the Mission also observed the election of the deputies for the 24 seats reserved for women.

“The elections were generally well prepared by the authorities” said Michael Cashman, the Chief Observer of the EU Election Observation Mission (EU EOM). “The problems encountered in the counting and consolidation process point to a need for further training of polling staff in preparation for future elections”

The EU EOM also noted an absence of plurality of public opinions expressed during the election process. This must however be placed within the historical context and the constitutionally enshrined principles of power sharing and decision making by consensus and inclusiveness.

On the first election day, the EU EOM deployed some 101 Observers, including five members of the European Parliament.

“The European Parliament Delegation fully endorse the Preliminary Statement of EU EOM, said the Head of the EP Delegation, Juergen Schroeder. “As Parliamentarians, we observed that the important democratic dialogue is only in its emerging stage in this country, and we therefore recommend the pursuit of its development”.

The EU EOM will continue to observe the rest of the election process closely, including the election of the deputies for the youth and handicapped. In addition the complaints and appeals process will be observed. A more comprehensive, final report including possible recommendations for future elections will be published in one month.