

European Union

The future of Election Observation Missions
Key challenges and opportunities

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n *"Election day is only the tip of the iceberg. Democracy is a daily exercise – that goes well beyond the ballot box. It is about equal rights for all voters and a level playing field for all parties. It is about freedom of speech, with diverse and independent media. It is about a lively civil society, and the daily participation of citizens from all backgrounds to a country's public life. Our election observation missions represent a contribution to all this, and to improving the overall quality of each democracy in full respect."*

Federica Mogherini, EU High Representative

- n Election Observation is a highly visible demonstration of international commitment to supporting democracy and promoting respect for human rights around the world.
- n <https://youtu.be/F-t0AGWVwSk>
- n The EU and other international and regional organisations deploy Election Observation Missions globally but these missions are also increasingly exposed to public scrutiny and new challenges.

Election Observation Today

INTER-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

- n European Union (incl. European Parliament)
- n OSCE/ODIHR (incl. OSCE Parliamentary Assembly)
- n Organisation of American States
- n African Union
- n Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly
- n Council of Europe (Congress of Local & Regional Authorities)
- n CARICOM
- n ASEAN
- n La Francophonie
- n Commonwealth
- n Organisation of the Islamic Conference
- n CIS
- n NATO PA

INTERNATIONAL NGOs

- n Carter Centre, NDI, IRI & IFES

OTHER INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS

- n Regional CSO observers (eg Anfrel, ENEMO)
- n Bi-lateral missions
- n Bi-lateral parliamentary groups
- n Bi-lateral EMB delegations
- n Representatives of the IC in country

NATIONAL OBSERVERS

- n National Non-Partisan Observer Groups

PARTISAN OBSERVERS

- n Party observers/agents/representatives, also for candidates
- n Bi-lateral international party observer groups

Different Approaches

European Union

1. The mission is independent in its conclusions
2. The Chief Observer is an MEP
3. International standards are the methodological basis of assessment
4. Interim reporting is internal
5. LTOs and STOs are selected (from nominations)
6. Fewer STOs
7. Service Provider / Implementing Partner
8. Out of EU and OSCE area



OSCE/ODIHR

1. The conclusions are institutional
2. The Head of Mission is has technical expertise
3. In particular, the Copenhagen Commitments are the methodological basis of assessment
4. Interim reporting is public
5. LTOs and STOs are seconded
6. Many more STOs
7. Logistics by the Logistics Expert and the LTOs
8. In the OSCE area



Why send an observation mission?

- n To gather first-hand information on adherence to human rights standards
- n To offer an “informed and impartial” assessment
- n To show support for democratic development
- n To be a visible presence and check that puts people off attempting to manipulate the process (through fraud, violence, intimidation etc.) and promotes positive electoral practice
- n To support domestic non-partisan observers in undertaking this work
- n To make constructive recommendations that become part of the public and policy dialogue
- n To raise the profile of the institution observing



Observation is not...

1. About the political outcome
→ observation is about the process
2. About giving instructions
→ observation is about witnessing, reporting and raising questions and possibilities
Influence not interference
3. About getting countries to do things the "European way"
→ observation refers to the commitments a country has made

The Development of Observation Methodology

As practised by European Union and OSCE/ODIHR

- n Prior to 1995, observation was ad-hoc and not institutionalised
- n Led by OSCE/ODIHR, and established in the EU in the Communication 2000
- n Move away from sole focus on election day
- n A widening of the focus to include areas outside of the capital
- n "Long term" came to mean approximately four – six weeks prior to election day plus post-election presence
- n Observation aims to take account of "entire process" – e.g. monitoring of the media, focusing on gender and minority issues etc.

UN Declaration of Principles and Code of Conduct for International Election Observers



October 2005
New York

Code of Conduct

- n Impartiality and neutrality
- n Not to interfere in the process
- n To abide by the national laws at all times
- n To base conclusions on well-founded observations
- n Observers are subject to the direction of the EOM, and shall report and attend meetings as instructed
- n No judgement by individual observers should be given to the media, election officials or political bodies
- n Each observer must observe the highest levels of personal discretion in the course of their duties

EOM Methodology

- n Nationwide long-term coverage
- n A core group of experienced experts
- n International teams of two – for accuracy and balance of opinion
- n Discussions with a full range of stakeholders
- n Direct observation and credible reports
- n Transparent methodology
- n A framework of international standards



An observation mission requires

- n Minimum conditions for “democratic elections” (to avoid appearing to legitimize a fundamentally flawed process)
- n An invitation from the host country
- n An indication of welcome by the political forces etc
- n Added value to the country from a mission
- n Time for implementation of long term methodology
- n Adequate security and logistical conditions



Reports by Election Observation Missions

Interim Reports

- internal (EU)

Preliminary Statements

- Issued within 48 hours of the election day
- A statement of the Mission' s preliminary findings & conclusions
- Contributes to the immediate public discussion of the election
- National and international media interest
- Usually in conjunction with other institutions (e.g. Parliamentary Assemblies) – there are time-pressured negotiations



Final Report

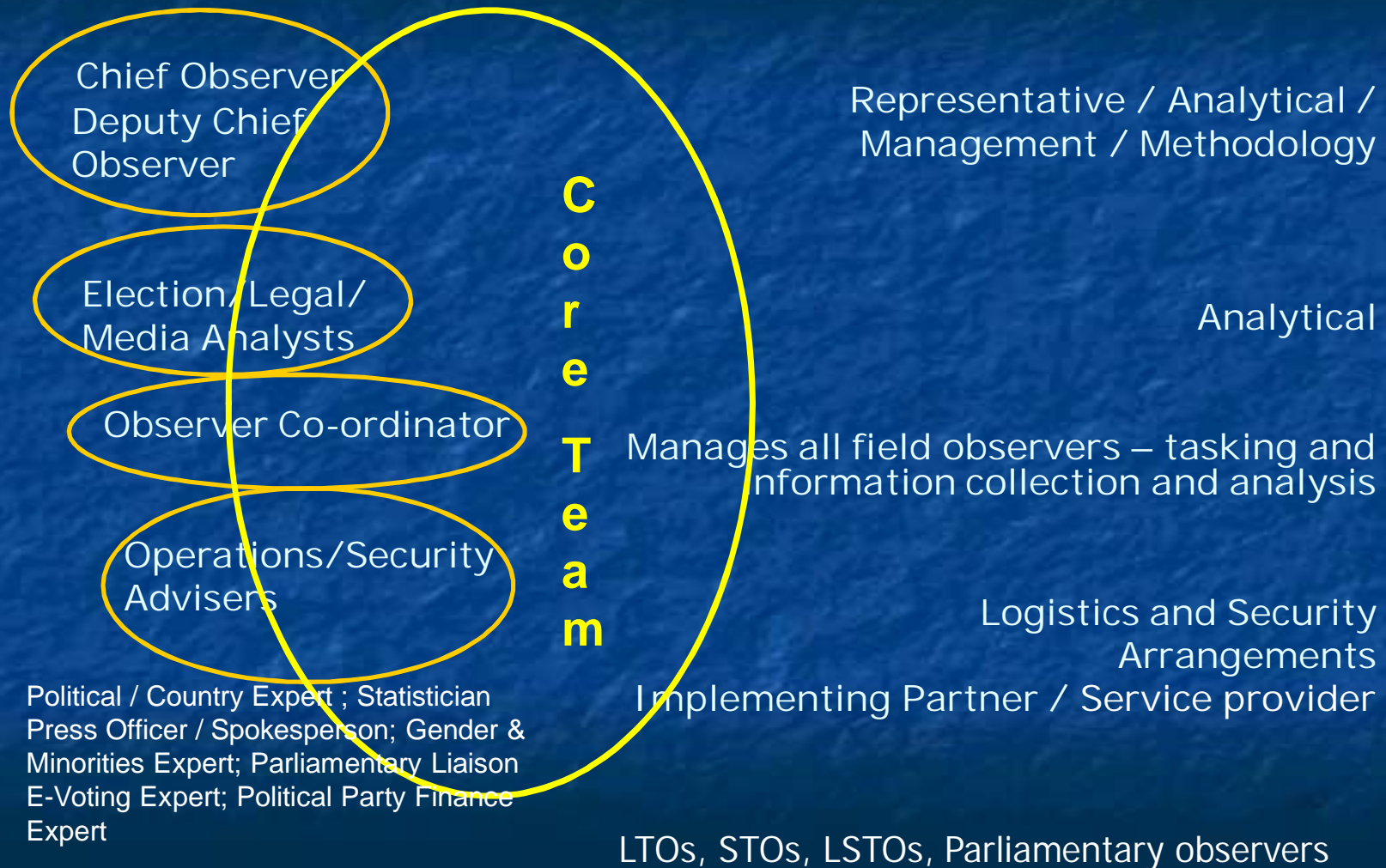
- Issued within two months of the close of the process
- Covers the entire process
- Includes recommendations for longer term electoral development

An effective report needs to be...

- n Trusted – as professional, independent and accurate
- n Based on clear agreed criteria (international standards)
- n Expert and thorough – based on collective specialist analysis
- n Based on extensive information gathering, direct observations, and careful assessments of credibility
- n Constructive – recommendations need to be realistic and positive
- n Understandable – well structured and well written



EOM Personnel Key Functions



Deployment Timing



More than just election day...

