



EUROPEAN UNION

European Union Heads of Mission in Rwanda

Joint local EU statement on the referendum on a draft constitution in Rwanda

The European Union Delegation issues the following statement in agreement with the EU Member States Heads of Mission in Rwanda

The constitutional review process is now finalised and the draft constitution was put to the people of Rwanda in a national referendum on Friday 18 December 2015.

As stated in the EU declaration of 3 December regarding the constitutional review in Rwanda, modification of a constitution – a document which outlines fundamental principles for the governance of a country – is an important process in any society. It is crucial that constitutional amendments are clearly presented to the population and that sufficient time is given to all sides to present and to consider arguments for or against the changes following transparent, inclusive and accountable processes as laid down in the African Charter.

We note with concern that the one week run-up to the referendum in Rwanda neither fully explained the constitutional changes, nor offered sufficient time and space for debate. The text of the draft constitution adopted by the Parliament was only published publically less than one day ahead of the vote in Rwanda. The short time between the announcement and the holding of the referendum left little or no opportunity for all parties to present their arguments, despite Government assurances that time would be allocated for an open exchange of opinions. In addition, we regret that no process allowing for independent monitoring was put in place.

Kigali, 18 December 2015

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