PRESS RELEASE - Date: 10/07/2014

EU EAT: Preliminary results confirm the need for a comprehensive audit

Kabul, 10 July 2014 – The EU Election Assessment Team (EU EAT) takes note of the announcement by the IEC of Preliminary Results of the Presidential run-off, and welcomes the publication online of detailed results per polling station.

Afghan voters have the right to see their votes respected, and the candidates are entitled to a full investigation on the serious allegations of fraud, outlined by the election administration and other relevant stakeholders.

EU Chief Observer Thijs Berman notes that "at this stage of the analysis of the preliminary results, and without an in-depth audit, the final result is as yet uncertain and it is not possible to declare a winner, given the very high number of votes yet to be validated or annulled."

Analysis of the data on all polling stations, provided by the IEC, shows a very high number of inconsistencies. As yet, polling stations where one candidate obtained extremely high scores, e.g. 90% and above have not been audited. This affects one third of the polling stations and 4.2 million votes, which is a highly worrying proportion.

Analysis of the figures published by the IEC leads to an estimate that between 2 and 4 million of the votes should be further investigated. In spite of the vote increasing by 17% in the run-off, the IEC has invalidated 90% less problematic polling stations than in the first round.

The number of audited polling stations - mainly those with an exceptionally high turnout exceeding 599 ballots - does not match the significantly higher level of inconsistencies identified by the EU EAT in its analysis of the preliminary results. Indeed, the audit mechanism was not sufficient to identify proxy voting, ballot stuffing, early shortages of ballot papers, and other illegal acts or unusual events. The EU EAT observes that out of 2,229 problematic polling stations, only 135 were excluded from the preliminary results after the conduct of an unsatisfactory, hasty, audit conducted at provincial level.

EU Chief Observer Thijs Berman: "The EU EAT encourages the election authorities to carry out, in Kabul, a comprehensive and transparent audit of the results in a neutral environment and in close cooperation with all the stakeholders as well as to concentrate audit efforts on the polling stations with very high turnouts, and the polling stations where nearly all the votes were cast in favor of a sole candidate."

The votes of women should also be protected. The list of the female polling stations, where men were in charge of the polling and counting, should lead to further investigations.

The EU EAT will remain in Afghanistan until the end of the electoral process and will issue its Final Report shortly after.

The European Union Election Assessment Team (EU EAT) has been present in Afghanistan since 15 March 2014. The Mission is led by Chief Observer Thijs Berman, a Dutch member of the European Parliament (2004-2014). The EU EAT is independent in its findings and conclusions and adheres to the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation signed at the United Nations in October 2005.

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