



## EUROPEAN UNION ELECTION FOLLOW-UP MISSION

### ZIMBABWE 2022

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#### **PRESS RELEASE**

***Harare, Zimbabwe  
20 May 2022***

***The EU Election Follow-up Mission urges authorities to address key recommendations in due time ahead of the 2023 elections***

A European Union Election Follow-up Mission has been deployed to Zimbabwe to assess the status of implementation of the recommendations of the EU Election Observation Mission (EOM) of 2018 and discuss ways to achieve further progress on electoral reform in view of the 2023 elections. The mission was headed by Mr. Elmar Brok, former Member of the European Parliament and Chief Observer of the EU EOM of the 2018 Harmonised Elections in Zimbabwe. The Follow-up Mission met with the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), the Zimbabwe Media Commission, several ministries, political parties, civil society organisations, media and the international community.

The 2018 EU EOM proposed 23 recommendations, including 10 priority ones, aiming at aligning the Electoral Act with the 2013 Constitution, strengthening the independence of the ZEC and increasing its information-sharing throughout the electoral process, improving voter registration as well as the transparency, verifiability and integrity of the results management process, introducing legal measures to mitigate abuse of state resources, developing regulations on political party financing, reforming the state-owned media to fully guarantee their independence and impartiality, and holding regular meetings of the Multi-Party Liaison Committees throughout the electoral process.

In a press conference in Harare on 20 May, Mr. Brok stated: *“We strongly encourage all political parties, in consultation with civil society, to engage in good faith deliberations to amend the electoral legislation well in advance of the 2023 elections to avoid uncertainty and allow sufficient time for implementation and voter education. The government and the Parliament carry here special responsibilities. The goal must be free, transparent, credible and impartial elections.”*

To date, progress on the implementation of the EU EOM recommendations has been limited, with the majority of the priority ones not yet adequately addressed. The EFM welcomes that stakeholder consultations on some legal reforms have taken place or are ongoing but notes with concern that the adoption of important reforms, such as amendments to the Electoral Act, remain outstanding. Furthermore, the Mission appreciates initiatives made by the ZEC to increase its engagement through the Multi-Party Liaison Committees at district and provincial level but considers that further determined efforts are needed to fully respond to its role as an independent and transparent election management body. This includes that there is more transparency on every step of the electoral process on local, regional and national level.

Mr. Brok further emphasised *“If the authorities and the legislators do not address recurring problems related to voter registration, constituency delimitation, level playing field in the campaign, partisan behaviour of traditional leaders and public administration, freedoms of expression, assembly and of the media, they will undermine progress towards achieving an environment conducive to a greater level of public trust in the electoral process and peaceful elections.”*

*“We are concerned that if the Private Voluntary Organisations (PVO) Amendment Bill is adopted, it will severely impact the freedom of association and restrict legitimate activities of civil society organisations. Therefore, we urge the authorities and the legislature to reconsider, keeping in mind Zimbabwe’s international commitment. We heard also concerns from part of the opposition and civil society that amendments to the Criminal law might be introduced which would endanger the freedom of expression”* noted Mr. Brok.

The EU Follow-up Mission will publish a final report with conclusions in the beginning of June 2022.

The full archive of EU election observation reports can be found at <http://database.eueom.eu>