

**Election Observation Instrument in the Context of Democracy Building**  
**Expert Seminar**  
**Friday 4 July, from 9.30-13.00**

This seminar will take place under Chatham house rules, at the Egmont Institute, 69 rue de Namur- 1000 Brussels and will be followed by a light lunch.

**1- The place of the EOM in the context of democracy promotion.**

Democracy promotion is a cornerstone of the external policy of the European Union. The EU has developed various tools to promote, support and assess the progress of democracy in partner countries. However, the concept of democracy itself is being challenged internally with the economic and social crisis and the rise of populism and anti-European feelings in Europe, and externally, as emerging powers offer other models of governance. If European citizens themselves harbor doubts about their own model, the soft power of the EU will start shrinking.

This general context underlines the need to analyse closely the link between election and democracy. Elections are only a stepping stone measuring a.o. the capacity of power alternation. Election processes – with clear and identifiable results and processes- seem however to receive the biggest share of attention and budget. Elections have also been regularly used as a way to solve political crises, with mitigated results, and at times, an impact on the legitimacy of the EU action abroad. Additionally, the focus on election processes seem to encourage the promotion of a ritual and procedural democracy and in some cases, favors a “the-winner-takes-it-all” rule.

In that context, the debate could focus a.o. on the following questions :

- Do the EU and its Members States use all the available tools and means to consolidate democracy appropriately?
- Does the EU possess the right tools for its objectives? Are elections, electoral assistance and observation missions a useful tool for the democracy promotion agenda of the EU?
- What place does the EOM have in the context of democracy promotion? Which objectives do we pursue?

**2- How to optimize the election observation tool ?**

In order to reach their objectives, elections and their observation have, to be integrated in a larger democratization process that takes into account civil and governmental institutions (institution building, judiciary reform, human rights, minorities' protection, civil society, etc.)

To be efficient, EOMs need to cover the entire electoral process, not limited to “polling observation”, but also observing the process upstream and downstream, drafting a final report with recommendations that could allow enhancing the electoral system of the guest country and therefore contribute to institution building. Yet, very often, recommendations are ignored and the shortcomings are not taken into consideration while deciding to launch another EOM in the same country.

The added value of an EOM is in doubt in hostile environments or in autocratic countries, where the political context or security concerns alter its methodology and efficiency. The political nature of this tool – that needs to take into account the context of a country or a region - cannot be contested. Yet when opting for “realpolitik”, the EU needs to preserve the credibility of the instrument. The plurality of European actors and at times their lack of coherence vis-à-vis the results of a mission impact may endanger the credibility of the EOM instrument. The utmost contradiction is reached when Europe is pushing to launch a mission but eventually does not accept the consequences of the results (Palestine 2006 or DRC 2011).

In this context, the debate could address the following questions :

- How to avoid promoting procedural democracy and how to integrate the mission in a comprehensive effort of democratization?
- How to reconcile EU values and political considerations?
- Could conditions for a meaningful mission be fixed, while respecting more general political objectives?
- How to ensure a better follow up of the evaluation of the EOM?
- How to optimize the means dedicated to EOM?
- How to reconcile the coherence of the Union and the independence of the observation mission?

**PROGRAMME**

**09.00 : Welcome coffee**

**09h30 : opening session**

Opening remark by Mr. Marc Otte, Director General, Egmont Institute

Introductory remarks, Mr. Pierre Vimont, Executive Secretary General, EEAS

**09.45 : session I - The EOM in the context of democracy promotion by the EU**

Short introduction by Mr. Olivier Louis, Head of Democracy sector, DEVCO B1 – Governance, Democracy, Human Rights and Gender, Directorate General for Development and Cooperation - EuropeAid - European Commission

**11.10 : Coffee break**

**11.30 : Session II - Assessment of the EOM instrument and ways towards its optimisation**

Short introduction by M. Emanuele Giaufret, Head of division, Democracy and Electoral observation , EEAS

**12.50 : closing session, Marc Otte**

**13.00 : Light Lunch**