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PRESS RELEASE

EU Election Observation Mission to Ethiopia Issues its Final Report in Brussels

Brussels, November 8, 2010 - The Chief Observer of the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) to Ethiopia, Thijs Berman, presented the Mission's Final Report today on Ethiopia's House of Peoples' Representatives and State Council elections that took place on 23 May 2010. The EU EOM was present in Ethiopia from 14 April until 21 June 2010, and deployed 170 observers to all regions of the country to evaluate the electoral process according to international and regional principles for democratic elections as well as the Ethiopian law.

The EU Election Observation Mission was invited by the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE). The final report – which includes the Mission's findings and recommendations for future elections – was brought before the journalists and other officials in Brussels after the refusal of the government of Ethiopia to allow its presentation in the country.

"It is very regrettable that by presenting the report in Europe the citizens of Ethiopia will be deprived of analysis and recommendations on the elections which they should be the first to receive," said the Chief Observer, Thijs Berman, Member of the European parliament (MEP). "Transparency is one major quality of democratic elections that should be respected during the entire electoral process. This includes sharing our mission's findings with all concerned. I urge the Government of Ethiopia to share the mission's final report with its major stakeholders, the Ethiopian citizens."

Main findings of the EU EOM include:

- The electoral process fell short of international commitments for elections regarding the transparency of the process and the lack of a level playing field for political parties;
- The ruling party's presence was unrivalled by opposition parties, especially in rural areas;
- The freedoms of assembly, expression and movement were not consistently respected to the detriment of opposition parties;



European Union
Election Observation Mission to Ethiopia 2010
House of Peoples' Representatives and State Council Elections



- Separation between the ruling party and the public administration was blurred at local levels;
- Misuse of state resources in the ruling party's campaign activities;
- In 27 percent of the polling stations observed results were different to those previously recorded by EU EOM observers on the ground;
- Lack of a voter's list and incomplete list of polling stations affected the transparency of the process; and,
- The state-owned media failed to ensure a balanced coverage of the elections.

The report also contains detailed recommendations to improve future elections in all areas of the electoral process. Key recommendations include:

- Separation between the ruling party and the state should be ensured;
- Measures are necessary to increase the participation and capacity of opposition parties and broaden the political space in Ethiopia;
- NEBE should take measures to increase the transparency of the electoral process and improve the perception of its impartiality; and,
- A computerized, permanent and national voter register should be established for future elections,

The EU EOM expresses its warmest appreciation to the people of Ethiopia for their cooperation and assistance.

The full text of final report is available in English and in Amharic on the mission's website: <http://eueom.eu/ethiopia2010/home>

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