

## **Election Observation Methodology**

Prior to deciding whether or not to deploy an EOM, the EU will send an Exploratory Mission (ExM) to take account of the legal and political situation. In short, the EU will wish to determine whether its involvement in monitoring is likely to promote further democratisation in the country.

The ExM will also determine whether the minimum conditions for democratic elections are present. These minimum conditions include the following factors:

- voting franchise is genuinely universal
- political parties and candidates are able to enjoy their legitimate right to participate
- there is freedom of expression, freedom of movement and freedom of assembly
- contesting parties and candidates have reasonable access to the media

The EU will also require an invitation from the host government as well as assurances that other pre-conditions for the work of observers are present. These include: the welcoming of observers by contesting parties; sufficient lead-in time for an effective observation; clearly stated objectives written and agreed with host country; freedom of access to all parties; access to the polling and counting processes; freedom of movement; access to information; and, confidence in the security situation.

If there is no possibility of election being held under minimum conditions, or if the pre-conditions for observation are not present, then the EU may decide not to deploy an EOM in order to avoid giving credibility to a flawed election. However, this decision will also take account of other factors, such as whether the election is the first for the country, if it follows a period of conflict or oppression and whether the elections are part of a peace process and the possible return of refugees.