



## Press release

### **Voters showed commitment to democratic process despite highly politicized management of the elections and violent campaign period**

Tegucigalpa, 30 November 2021 – “Election day was largely calm, with voters turning out in high numbers to the polling stations, showing a strong commitment for democracy”, explained Ms. Željana Zovko, Chief Observer of the European Union Electoral Observation Mission (EU EOM) in Honduras. “The system for transmission of preliminary results (TREP) provided confidence and transparency, although it was limited to half of the planned voting centres. However, the 2021 general elections were characterised by highly politicised management, unprecedented levels of political violence and abuse of State resources during the campaign”, summarised Ms. Zovko presenting the EU EOM’s preliminary statement at a press conference today in Tegucigalpa.

Concerning the campaign, the Chief Observer noted: “At least six mayors, candidates and party activists were killed in the weeks ahead of the elections. Threats and intimidation were widespread. Hostile rhetoric on social networks mounted with instances of accusations, attacks and insults. Distribution of State welfare vouchers increased during the campaign”.

Ms. Zovko highlighted: “The voter register enjoyed more trust than in previous elections, however the ID card did not reach all eligible voters. EU EOM media monitoring findings show that public media visibly promoted the ruling party and its presidential candidate. Electoral silence was largely disregarded, even on election day, with no enforcement by the National Electoral Council (CNE)”.

“The presence of the three main parties in the newly created CNE and Electoral Justice Tribunal (TJE), while allowing for checks and balances, did not bring about an appropriate management of the elections. Preparations for the elections, including the transmission of preliminary results, were marred by weak communication, delays in the election calendar and insufficient planning”, added the EU EOM Chief Observer.

Mr. Javier Nart, Head of the Delegation of the European Parliament, which observed the polls as part of the EU EOM, endorsed the preliminary statement of the Mission and stated: “Hondurans have demonstrated a profound sense of democracy and civic-mindedness by turning out in large numbers to vote on 28 November. Now is the time for politicians to put institutions at the service of citizens to create the opportunities this country needs and ensure a more prosperous and secure future for Honduras”.

Following an invitation from the Government and the CNE, the EU EOM has been present in Honduras since 13 October 2021. On election day it deployed 78 observers who visited 282 polling stations in 16 of the 18 departments of Honduras. The EU mission will stay in the country to observe the remainder of the electoral process and within the next two months will present a public final report containing recommendations for improving the electoral system.

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