



Press Release

For Immediate Release

THE EUROPEAN UNION NOTIFIES ITS INTENTION TO SUSPEND SUPPORT FOR THE ZIMBABWE ELECTORAL COMMISSION'S PROJECT

Harare, 19 September 2023 – The European Union (EU) has formally communicated its intention to suspend its 5 million USD financial support for the Zimbabwean Electoral Commission (ZEC) to both the Ministry of Finance and Investment Promotion and ZEC. The project supporting ZEC, which is managed by UNDP and scheduled to run until December 2024, is currently under scrutiny due to concerns raised by several international Electoral Observation Missions (EOMs) regarding the independence and transparency of ZEC during the 2023 harmonised elections.

The recent preliminary statements from multiple EOMs, including the EU EOM, have raised concerns about ZEC's management of the electoral process, particularly regarding its independence and transparency. The EU contributes together with other donors to a UNDP-managed project aiming at enhancing ZEC's institutional and technical capabilities to fulfil its constitutional mandate. In response to these concerns and in adherence to responsible management of EU development cooperation funds, the EU has initiated a procedure to suspend its contribution to this project.

The EU firmly underscores the critical importance of electoral management bodies serving as independent and transparent institutions in fulfilling their mandates to deliver credible and inclusive electoral processes that enjoy the trust of citizens. The EU remains open to the possibility of resuming its contribution to support efforts aiming at strengthening the electoral processes and bring such processes closer to the regional and international standards that Zimbabwe has signed.

The European Union will continue closely monitoring developments in Zimbabwe and reaffirms its commitment to collaborate with the government, independent commissions, civil society, and other stakeholders in promoting democracy, human rights and rule of law.

Background information -The ZIM-ECO2 project:

The primary goal of the ZIM ECO 2 project is to enhance ZEC's capacity to conduct the electoral process, with the aim of contributing to the improvement of the entire electoral cycle, not limited to elections alone. This project is managed by UNDP and receives support from various donors, including the EU. Following the signing of the Financing Agreement with the Ministry of Finance in November 2022, the EU officially entered into the ZIM-ECO2 project with UNDP in December 2022, providing a total contribution of 4.7 million USD, of which approximately 1 million Euros have been spent.

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