



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council Conclusions on Zimbabwe

*2870th EXTERNAL RELATIONS Council meeting
Brussels, 26 and 27 May 2008*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

1. The Council notes the announcement by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission that the second round of the Presidential election will be held on 27 June, nearly 3 months after the first round of the elections.
2. The EU strongly condemns the state-sponsored campaign of violence and intimidation against Zimbabweans that has been increasing throughout the prolonged electoral process and calls for an immediate end to the beatings, tortures, killings and other human rights abuses. The Council calls upon the government of Zimbabwe to ensure a level playing field and a secure environment conducive to ensuring that the results of forthcoming second round will reflect the free and democratic will of the Zimbabwean people. In this respect the Council stresses the importance that all necessary measures be adopted in order to allow all candidates and supporters to participate safely and fully in the electoral process.
3. The second round presents an opportunity for the free and democratic will of the Zimbabwean people to be expressed and respected, opening the way for delivering political stability. The Council reiterates that the credibility of the electoral process requires conditions on the ground to be in full accordance with international standards, particularly those adopted by the African Union (AU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), of which Zimbabwe is a signatory, including the freedom of assembly and access to media. In this context the Council underlines specifically the importance of the publication of results outside the polling stations once counting is completed.

P R E S S

4. The Council emphasises the importance of effective election observation, local as well as international, to ensure regularity and transparency for the second round and reiterates the important role of the countries in the region in achieving this. The Council further welcomes the positive role played by the AU and the SADC Electoral Observation Missions (EOMs) during the first phase of the electoral process. The Council supports the intent of the AU and the SADC to ensure continued presence of their EOMs until the electoral process is complete and results announced and to deploy, as soon as possible, a significant number of election monitors across Zimbabwe, including rural areas, well in advance of the election day. The EU remains ready to deploy an EU election observation mission, if the right conditions are met, yet the Council notes that no invitation has been made to the EU as of today.

 5. The Council calls upon SADC to continue to engage with strong determination with the Zimbabwean authorities to implement the outcome of the Lusaka Summit. The EU shares the concern of the SADC about the situation and reiterates full support for SADC's efforts to resolve the current crisis.
-