



# ENSURING TRANSPARENCY AND THE LEVEL PLAYING FIELD SRI LANKA

**Civil society in Sri Lanka was active promoting an EU EOM recommendation proposing the introduction of regulations on campaign finance. The law adopted in 2023 represented a major step forward in ensuring electoral transparency, accountability and the level playing field.**

Full story below 

**The European Union (EU)  
has been supporting democracy  
observing elections in Sri Lanka  
for over two decades.**

**In 2024 the EU deployed an Election  
Observation Mission (EU EOM)  
for the presidential elections,  
which stressed the  
role of the civil society  
and of the citizen observers  
in enhancing transparency  
and public confidence  
in the integrity of the  
electoral process.**



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*Citizen election observers have a crucial role providing an independent scrutiny of voting and counting on election day. Similarly to the EU observers' methodology, they contribute with analysis of the legal framework, as well as monitoring of campaign events, the media, campaign finance, and impartiality of the public administration. In addition, and significantly, **citizen observers can also play a key advocacy role in promoting election reforms, often on the basis of the EU EOM recommendations.***

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# That's what happened in Sri Lanka.

*Local organisations were instrumental in drafting Sri Lanka's first regulation on campaign finance adopted in 2023, as recommended by previous EU EOMs. The new legislation on election expenditure introduced spending ceilings for presidential elections, a major step to ensure a level playing field and greater electoral accountability.*

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*Observing elections and assessing whether they are inclusive, credible and transparent, as well as providing recommendations for improvement of future electoral processes, “**is a matter of fundamental rights**” stressed **Professor Arjuna Parakrama**, Chief Operating Officer at Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV).*

*Election observers, both national and international, have been recognised as human rights defenders for their role in safeguarding fundamental rights.*

**The EU EOM 2024 considered that with the introduction of regulation of campaign finance, the country had fulfilled the priority recommendation from the previous EU EOM, which advocated such a framework.**

However, the EU EOM stressed that gaps in the legislation remained and therefore, the proposed reforms were not realised in full.

**As a result, the EU EOM included new recommendations in its 2024 final report, aiming at strengthening transparency in political finance and improving campaign finance oversight.**

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