

What International Observers Say About Venezuela's Elections

Venezuela's elections are among the most heavily scrutinized in the world. The legislative elections from December 2005 were observed by delegations from the European Union and the Organization of American States (OAS). The 2004 Recall Referendum was observed by a number of international bodies, including the OAS and the Carter Center. Below, in their own words, are statements from these observers on how Venezuela's elections are conducted, as well as their comments on Venezuela's opposition parties.

On Electronic Voting Machines:

"The Venezuelan voting system possesses a number of features that are in line with the most advanced international standards of e-voting. In certain aspects, such as the paper trail audit, the system developed in Venezuela is probably the most advanced system in the world to date."

**-European Union Election Observation Mission
March 2006¹**

"The security and transparency measures introduced in the automated voting process are in line with the most advanced international practice." Also, "The general conclusion of the observers was that the voting machines seemed very reliable."

**-European Union Election Observation Mission
March 2006²**

On 2005 Legislative Elections, and the Opposition's decision to boycott:

"We had a problem with the Venezuelan opposition, which assured us that they would not withdraw from the [electoral] process if certain conditions were met. These were met and despite this, they withdrew. This had an impact on the high abstention."

**-OAS General Secretary Jose Miguel Insulza
December 2005³**

Venezuelan elections officials "technically administered the process well," and "demonstrated a clear willingness to meet the demands of the opposition parties to increase confidence in the process."

**-European Union Election Observation Mission
March 2006⁴**

¹ "Final Report: Parliamentary Elections, Venezuela 2005," European Union Election Observation Mission, March 2006.

http://www.eueomvenezuela.org/final_statement_en.pdf

² "Election Observation and Legitimacy of Venezuela's Parliamentary Elections," Venezuelanalysis.com, December 19, 2005.

<http://www.venezuelanalysis.com/articles.php?artno=1633>

³ El Mercurio (Chile), December 25, 2006. <http://www.venezuelanalysis.com/news.php?newsno=1855>

“It is of concern that due to the withdrawal of the opposition, an important portion of the citizenry is left without representation in the National Assembly,” and “Every democracy requires an institutional opposition committed to the electoral process, so that it can loyally participate in the democratic system.”

**-Electoral Observation Mission of the Organization of American States
December 2005⁵**

On the 2004 Recall Referendum:

“The Carter Center concludes that the automated machines worked well and the voting results do reflect the will of the people.”

**-Carter Center Venezuela Referendum Observation Delegation
August 2004⁶**

“The unusually high turnout of 73 percent reflects the intense interest in this recall referendum. The Venezuelan people are to be commended for standing in line for hours without incidents, in this demonstration of civic participation and pride.” “We urge all Venezuelans to accept these results and look to the future.”

**-Carter Center Venezuela Referendum Observation Delegation
August 2004⁷**

⁴ “Final Report: Parliamentary Elections, Venezuela 2005,” European Union Election Observation Mission, March 2006.
http://www.eueomvenezuela.org/final_statement_en.pdf

⁵ “Preliminary OAS Observations on the Legislative Elections in Venezuela,” Organization of American States Press Release, December 6, 2006. http://www.oas.org/oaspage/press_releases/press_release.asp?sCodigo=EOM-VE-04

⁶ “Last Phase of the Venezuelan Recall Referendum” Carter Center Report, August 21, 2004.
<http://www.cartercenter.org/doc1807.htm>

⁷ “Last Phase of the Venezuelan Recall Referendum” Carter Center Report, August 21, 2004.
<http://www.cartercenter.org/doc1807.htm>