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Answer given by Mr Šefčovič
on behalf of the European Commission
(19.6.2026)

The EU deployed an Election Observation Mission which presented its preliminary findings in a press conference on 14 February 2026. It noted that the elections were credible and competently managed, marking a pivotal step towards restoring democratic governance and rule of law. The mission's final report was published on 28 April 2026¹. The final report confirmed the preliminary assessment on the 2026 parliamentary elections, as described above. For the first time since 2008, elections were genuinely competitive, with fundamental freedoms broadly respected. In its report, the Election Observation Mission also indicated six recommendations on priorities for further improving future electoral processes and upholding the international commitments adopted by Bangladesh.

As a least developed country, Bangladesh is a beneficiary of the Everything But Arms arrangement of the EU Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP)². The country is subject to the Enhanced Engagement process, which is conducted by the Commission and the European External Action Service. It aims to facilitate and incentivise Bangladesh to make progress on critical areas with regard to the core human rights and labour rights international conventions listed in the GSP Regulation³. The process focuses on the most serious issues linked to the implementation of key principles laid down in UN and International Labour Organisation reports and recommendations. It also reflects the concerns regarding the implementation status as expressed by the European Parliament and the Council, international organisations, and civil society, including trade unions.

¹ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eom-bangladesh-2026/european-union-election-observation-mission-bangladesh-2026-final-report_en.

² https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/development-and-sustainability/generalised-scheme-preferences_en.

³ Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 applying a scheme of generalised tariff preferences and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 732/2008 (OJ L 303, 31.10.2012, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2012/978/oj>).