



## European Institute for Asian Studies asbl

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### Invitation to an EIAS Luncheon Briefing

## *The 2005 Presidential Elections in Sri Lanka – The Observer's Assessment*

*Thursday, 1 December, 2005 from 13h00 – 14h30*

#### **Speaker: Mr. John Cushnahan**

*Chief Observer, European Union Election Observation Mission (EOM) to Sri Lanka  
Board Member, European Institute for Asian Studies, Brussels*

**Chair: Dr. Willem van der Geest, Director, European Institute for Asian Studies, Brussels**

On 17 November, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) won Sri Lanka's closely fought presidential election. In the run-up to the election, reports of misuse of public resources for campaigning, biased coverage by the state media and even a Supreme Court interim order discriminating against voters from LTTE areas threatened to de-legitimise the election process. On the day of the election, violence in the North and East of the country obstructed balanced participation whilst an enforced boycott by the LTTE further hindered voter turnout.

A European Union Election Observation Mission (EOM) was present in Sri Lanka, both leading up to elections and on election day, to monitor the process. EOMs are deployed, at the invitation of the concerned government, by the European Union as a tool for advancing democracy, human rights and respect for the rule of law. Over the years, the EU has built up a reputation in the field of election observation as a fair and impartial actor promoting transparency and international standards for democratic elections through its presence and reporting in a wide range of countries.

The European Institute for Asian Studies is honoured to welcome Mr. John Cushnahan, Chief Observer of the EOM in Sri Lanka, to speak on the presidential election in Sri Lanka and the Preliminary Statement issued by the EOM on 19 November in Colombo. Has Sri Lanka made progress in the conduct of democratic elections; what lessons can be drawn from this latest presidential election; and what challenges are foreseen in the future? You are kindly invited to attend this presentation which will be followed by a Q & A session.

You are kindly invited from 12:30-13:00 for a Sandwich Lunch;  
The Briefing followed by invited comments and Q&A will be from 13:00 to 14:30.

#### **Venue: European Institute for Asian Studies**

Entry is free for EIAS members, press, and officials of European Union institutions.

For all others a charge of €10,00 applies.

Please confirm by **Tuesday, 29 November 2005** via fax at +32 (0) 2 230 5402 to Zoe McCarthy ([z.mccarthy@eias.org](mailto:z.mccarthy@eias.org))

Name:

Organisation:

Yes, I will attend

No, I will not attend (please check as applicable)

**\*\*PLEASE NOTE:** The European Institute for Asian Studies has relocated to new premises at **Rue de la Loi 67, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, B-1040 Brussels, Belgium\*\***