

# Electoral Affairs Commission responds to media enquiries

The following is issued on behalf of the Electoral Affairs Commission:

In response to media enquiries today (December 7) about counting for the 2019 District Council Ordinary Election, a spokesman for the Electoral Affairs Commission gives the following reply:

Counting of votes is conducted in an open and transparent environment, under public scrutiny.

Once the poll closes, candidates, their election agents and polling agents may stay in the polling station to observe the process of locking of ballot boxes, and the conversion of polling stations into counting stations. They can observe the entire counting process at the counting station, which includes the breaking of seals on the ballot boxes, the sorting, separation and counting of ballot papers, the counting of votes recorded on the valid ballot papers and the determination by Presiding Officers (PROs) on the validity of questionable ballot papers. They may also copy what is recorded on the ballot paper account if needed. Other than that, members of the public and reporters are also able to watch the counting process at designated areas inside the counting stations.

According to Electoral Affairs Commission (Electoral Procedure) (District Councils) Regulation (Cap. 541F) section 80A and 80B, PRO may decide whether a re-count of the votes of the counting stations is necessary. If a candidate or his/her agent requests to re-count, such a request shall be made to the PRO, and he/she will decide whether the request should be acceded to. If he/she decides that such a re-count is reasonable in the circumstances, a re-count will be conducted.

The spokesman reiterated that the EAC is an independent, apolitical and impartial body established under the Electoral Affairs Commission Ordinance, responsible for organising and supervising public elections in an open, fair and honest manner. If anyone thinks that the election is interfered by corrupt or illegal conduct, or there is a material irregularity, candidates and the electors of the relevant constituency can make election petitions to query the result of the election, which will be determined by the court.

The Electoral Affairs Commission will review various electoral arrangements. A report will be submitted to the Chief Executive within the next three months.