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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Comelec reinstates 238,000 overseas voters, ENFiD calls on Europe diaspora to vote**

BERN, SWITZERLAND—The European Network of Filipino Diaspora or ENFiD today called on registered Filipino voters in Europe to come out and cast their votes for the May 2013 elections, following the reinstatement of 238,000 overseas voters by the Comelec this month.

ENFiD considers a victory the Comelec's reinstatement of the 238,000 overseas voters, who were removed from the Overseas Absentee Voters list for failing to vote in the last two elections in 2007 and 2010.

Following the 2nd Global Summit of the Filipino Diaspora held in Manila last month, a lobby group from the global Filipino Diaspora Council or GFDC called on the Comelec to reconsider its decision on the disenfranchised overseas voters, citing the special circumstances of overseas Filipinos.

ENFiD was represented in the Comelec meeting by its Chairman Gene Alcantara from the U.K. and Filomenita Mongaya-Hoegsholm of ENFiD-Denmark.

The lobbyists explained that without adequate notice and due process, the Comelec had unwittingly wasted the efforts of overseas groups, mainly the Global Filipino Diaspora Council (GFDC), which relentlessly campaigned for absentee voting during the last 10 years.

ENFiD chair Gene Alcantara meanwhile said he had promised Comelec Chairman Sixto Brillantes Jr. that the ENFiD network covering 50 countries would do its very best to get overseas Filipinos in Europe to turn out to vote in May 2013 and to register for future national elections.

Alcantara said that he personally also started campaigning for the overseas Filipino vote in 1985.

“Our task now in ENFiD is to pass the word around as widely as possible to all our contacts across Europe, first to tell them the good news, and then to encourage them to exercise their right to vote,” added Alcantara.

It was not immediately known how many of the 238,000 reinstated overseas voters are from Europe.

Comelec Commissioner Grace Padaca, who along with Chairman Brillantes and other Comelec lawyers had heard out the overseas lobbyists, meanwhile had this message for overseas voters: *“Bumoto nang tama. Panalunin mo ang mga kandidatong hindi sakim.”*

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*“Iboto mo iyong mga magpapaunlad nang tama sa ating bansa para hindi ka kailangang nandiyan at malayo sa iyong mahal na pamilya,” added Padaca.*

Padaca said overseas voters can use postal voting; or go to the voting center in their respective countries, in most cases the Philippine embassies or consulates; or in the case of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Hong Kong and Singapore, through automated elections.

ENFiD meanwhile will attempt to segregate the list of reinstated voters per country and forward the names to the ENFiD country groups to further the vote campaign. (-end-)

*Refer to:*

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