

## **Non-CC DPCA Voting Representative Elections 2023**

# **Election Report and Recommendations for Running Future Elections**

**Prepared by: Non-CC Nominations and Elections Committee (Non-CC NEC)**

**Submitted: April 2023**

### **NEC Members:**

Beverle Lax, Kenya -Compliance

Jennifer Phillips, Canada -Candidate Coordinator

Roz Reymers, Ecuador -Communications

Ty Shamar Cofield, Poland -Voting Platform

Merrill Oates, Hungary -Chair

(John Eastwood, Taiwan, was originally appointed to the NEC, but resigned due to other commitments.)

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## **Non-CC NEC Elections Report**

### **Election Outcome: Elected Non-CC DPCA Voting Representatives**

As a result of the elections conducted by this Nominations and Elections Committee, the following individuals were elected:

**Asia-Pacific Non-CC VR:** Anne O'Connell, Kazakhstan

**EMEA Non-CC VR:** Becca Young, Morocco

**Americas Non-CC VR:** Giovany Delgado, Nicaragua

### **Number of Candidates on the Ballot**

11 – Total Completed/Vetted Candidate Nominations

3 – Candidates in Asia Pacific

7 – Candidates in EMEA

1 – Candidate in Americas

### **Votes Cast by Non-CC Voters for the Listed Candidates**

55 – Total Votes cast for Non-CC Candidates in 3 Regions

Zero (0) – Voters reported as not able to cast ballot

Zero (0) – Spoiled or Invalid votes

## **Main Event Timeline – Non-CC VR Elections 2023**

**Established by the RVCs in consultation with International ExCom (including mandated and proposed dates):**

**Feb 6:** Deadline for ExCom to vote to approve Non-CC NEC Members

**Feb 7:** Appointment of NEC members. **Mandated 45 days** prior to Election Meeting.

**Feb 23:** NEC Election announcement and call for Nominations. **Mandated 30 days** prior to Election

Feb 28: Sent reminder email focused on Call for Candidates

March 4: Sent final reminder for Call for Candidates

**March 6:** Nominations due. **Mandated min-17 days** prior to election

**March 9:** Midnight members' time: Deadline to become a DA registered Non-CC voting member

**March 10:** Ballots sent (electronic voting). **Mandated min-14 days** prior to election day

March 15: Sent Election reminder email

March 20: Sent final reminder of Elections

**March 22 –Midnight Voter's local time:** Ballot Submission deadline

**March 25:** Election Reporting Meetings. Results for each Region shared in 3 separate meetings:

AP > 06:00 EDT/ 11:00 CET/ 18:00 HK

EMEA > 08:00 EDT/ 13:00 CET

Amer > 10:00 EDT/ 15:00 CET

**March 31:** DPCA Charter mandated Election Completion deadline

**April 1** - Non-CC NEC distributed Elections Results announcement email.

## **NEC Meetings and Actions:**

**Feb 11: First Meeting:**

**Defined Specific Roles and Access/Skills Requirements for NEC members:**

- **NEC Chair:** Organize the group / lead the election meeting / set planning meetings agendas / communicate as needed with RVCs
- **NEC Communications:** Create and send NB announcements / Website Posts:
  - Needs NationBuilder global email access and Website Posting access
- **Compliance and Editing:** Review communications for DA compliance / editing:
  - Needs familiarity with Election rules (NCCEP) and editing skills
- **Ballots:** Research ranked-choice ballots available / recommend / test:
  - Needs familiarity with technical platforms(Confirmed adoption of on-line ranked-choice voting, only; no in-person voting)
- **Candidate Coordinator:** Collect and certify candidates / advise candidates / publish Candidate Statements:
  - Needs NationBuilder global membership database access, Website Posting access
- **Candidate Forum:** Create and configure Google Groups for both Closed and Open access
  - Needs ability to create, configure, and manage Google Groups

## **Defined Non-CC NEC Communication channels:**

**Agreed on a closed Google Group for Non-CC NEC members**

Merrill arranged with DA IT for the setup of

[noncc-nec-work-grp@democratsabroad.org](mailto:noncc-nec-work-grp@democratsabroad.org) for internal communication

**Public Contact Redirect Address:**

- Public contact address for use when distributing Website announcements and Call for Nominations: [ncc\\_elections@democratsabroad.org](mailto:ncc_elections@democratsabroad.org)
- Set as an alias to re-direct to the NEC Google Group

**Agreed on an open Google Group limited to candidates and voters in the Candidate Forum:**

- Anyone can view and read Group discussions
- Posting / Interaction restricted to Candidates, Non-CC voting members, Non-CC NEC for moderation, if needed to encourage discussion
- Merrill created: [noncc-candidate-forum-2023@democratsabroad.org](mailto:noncc-candidate-forum-2023@democratsabroad.org)

## **Electioneering Violations by Candidate Advocates**

### **Complaint submitted, but no Formal Challenge filed**

During the course of the voting period for these Non-CC Voting Rep elections, the Non-CC NEC was notified of, and took action to address, a series of violations of NCCEP §13 which proscribes the use of DA-related communications channels for the purposes of candidate electioneering.

The first instance occurred during a meeting of the International ExCom, during the final section of the meeting which allows for participants to share comments on local events and activities. An individual began advocating for specific Non-CC Voting Rep. Candidates from their own geographic area. The speaker was duly cut off from speaking by the International Chair when it became clear that the election advocacy was for specific candidates, rather than for the Non-CC election process in general. The Chair of the Non-CC NEC then asked to speak and when recognized expressed appreciation for the general support received for the Non-CC election process, but then specifically highlighted that it was entirely inappropriate to use DA-related communications channels, such as an ExCom meeting, to advocate for or promote individual candidates for election.

Several days later, during the afternoon of 21 March 2023, a day before the close of voting, the Non-CC NEC Chair received several urgent notifications of Candidate Advocacy postings on a DA Branded Facebook page. This posting included a custom designed graphic promoting specific candidates. It included a personal photo of a candidate who had specifically declined to submit a photo for their official Candidate Statement. All indications were that this was posted by the same individual who had made the statements and received the previous admonition during the ExCom meeting. With the assistance of members of the DA IT Team we were able to arrange for the permanent removal of the Facebook post within just over one hour after the original posting.

A message of reprimand and clarification on the NCCEP rules around Candidate Electioneering was sent by the Chair of the Non-CC NEC to the individual who had made the post. No response or confirmation was received.

Subsequently, the NEC was later informed that there were other similar postings on additional DA-related social media channels.

The NEC did receive a formal Complaint about this inappropriate electioneering activity submitted by one of the other candidates for this same position. Following the announcement of the Election Results at the meetings on 25 March, the aggrieved candidate notified the NEC that they would not file a Formal Challenge, or otherwise question the election results as previously announced.

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# Non-CC NEC Recommendations for Future Non-CC Regional Elections

## NEC Recommendations for Modification of Election Rules and Timeline

### Extend the general timeline:

- RVCs should send out preliminary notifications to Region Non-CC members in November of prior year and in January as a general notification of upcoming elections in the 1st Quarter of year.
- The NEC should be named and approved a full 2 months (60 days) prior to the election deadline (rather than just 45 days) to allow more advance planning of the election process
- The NEC should send out an advance notice of the upcoming elections, containing a full description of the position, as soon as possible, but no later than 45 days prior to the election so as not to over-email members during the time of the 40-day and 14-day announcements and follow up reminder emails.
- Allow an additional day to collect and verify candidates and compile Candidate Statements by shortening the Candidate Nominations deadline by 1 day. (Allowing for 3 to 4 full days between Close of Nominations and Posting of Official Ballot/Candidate Statements.)
- Potentially hold online webinars to discuss Voting Rep responsibilities and Candidate application process
- Potentially hold Regional Meet the Candidate online events, but keep multi-Regional Candidate Email Forum.
- Assuming only remote online voting is allowed, provide for at least 2 full days between Close of Voting and Results Reporting Meetings.
- Send official notification emails as follows:
  - 40 days prior – Announcement of Elections and Call for Nominations
  - Send 2 follow-up reminder emails prior to Call for Nominations deadline
  - 14 days prior – Candidate Statements and Ballot Distribution
  - Send 2 follow-up reminder emails prior to Elections deadline

## Election Rules: Suggested Modifications and Policy Changes

### Continue with a 3-Region Coordinated Non-CC NEC

We encourage future RVCs to continue coordination and shared implementation of jointly managed Non-CC VR elections across all three DA Regions. This created efficiencies in timing, planning, and work effort. NEC members were able to support each other and contribute valuable experience from across different regions.

### Advance Selection and Testing of RCV Platform

Considerable effort went into evaluating, testing, and configuring a suitable online Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) platform. RCV is not a voting/tabulation methodology that should be attempted or managed manually. If RCV is to be used for such elections – and it did work well in this case – then DA *must* have a pre-established and subscribed service already available for the NEC to make use of. The testing and novel implementation of this feature should not be left for the NEC to solve.

### **Establish a Secure Randomized Voter ID**

If using an online voting platform, it is critical that we have a secure and verified means of identifying the voters and the validity of the ballots that they have cast. This cannot simply be the voter's email address, as this is widely accessible, and could be forged. It should also not simply be the member's database ID as this is also known by others and could be used to cast illegitimate votes. DA needs to establish a standardized process for generating a secure unique voter ID for this kind of voting process.

### **Confirm Consistency between Voting Instructions and Voting Platform**

When a voting platform is selected, we need to ensure that the instructions provided in the platform interface conform with the instructions provided to voters for the specific election taking place. Ideally, the platform interface should allow for some customization that would then match the election instructions. (For example, in our Non-CC elections, the platform asked for "ID or email address" while we were *only* allowing for the submission of a "Voter ID".)

### **Confirm and Emphasize the Autonomy of the NEC**

The election procedures and rules, as well as communication out to voters and candidates, need to regularly clarify and re-affirm that the Non-CC NEC is solely responsible for implementing the election process and addressing any complaints or challenges relating to the election.

NEC members should be informed, and agree, at the time of original appointment that they are expected to actively participate in the NEC activities through to the completion of the final NEC Report on Election Results.

### **Eliminate the Requirement for a "Second" for Nomination (§12.c.i)**

The Non-CC NEC found that there was no added value or benefit in requiring that Candidates obtain a "Second" for their candidate nomination. Most of our candidates in the Non-CC areas – almost by definition – do not have contacts with fellow Non-CC members. If strictly enforced, this rule could have led to the exclusion of otherwise fully eligible and qualified Candidates.

### **Reduce or Remove the Quorum Requirement (§12.b.ii)**

While we recognize the importance of a minimum Quorum participation requirement for Country Committee elections, in the case of Non-CC elections this does not serve a meaningful purpose. Non-CC elections involve candidates and voters who are – by definition – geographically dispersed, and unlike in most CCs, there is no way for a candidate or voter to formally or informally establish contact with fellow Non-CC members. Therefore, the recruitment and motivation for voters to turn up to vote in a Non-CC election rests almost entirely with the NEC, who are hopefully supported in this by the RVCs.

### **A Challenge May be Raised by Any (Single) Eligible Voter (§14.c)**

The NCCEP should be changed to clarify that a formal Election Challenge may be filed by any eligible voter (regardless of whether they have voted or not). If there are valid grounds for submitting a formal Election Challenge, then any eligible voter (or Candidate, but in this case, candidates are eligible voters) should be allowed to submit such a Challenge. As noted in the above suggested "Quorum" modification, it may not be possible or practical for voters to communicate and coordinate with other voters to file a joint Challenge.

### **Extend Election Results Reporting and Distribution Period to 7-full-days after Election (§11.a.i,ii)**

In the instance that there might be either formal Complaints and/or Challenges to the election process or the declared results, the Non-CC NEC should be given additional time for widely distributing announcement of the official results of the election. The current 3-day period is not sufficient to assess and address any potential Complaints that may evolve into a Challenge. A full 7-day period should be the timeframe after which final results announcement is sent out to all Non-CC members.

### **Challenges for Electioneering Violations Identified During Election Period to be filed within 7 days (§13)**

If a violation of the rules regarding the use of DA-related communication channels is discovered and reported during the course of an election, then the time for submitting a formal Challenge to the election should be limited to within 7 days of the Election Results Reporting meeting. This would be in-line with the 7-day reporting/announcement period above.

### **Standardize the Candidate Nomination Form**

Create and provide to the NEC a standardized template of questions and input requirements for the Candidate Nomination Submission Form that can be included in the website-posted Candidate Statements. This should include standardized questions that confirm eligibility and relevant personal details, such as a motivation statement, relevant experience, and a personal photo.

### **Regularly Implement a Candidate Forum Google Group**

The global time-zone spread of Candidates and Voters in a 3-region Non-CC election makes live Candidate Presentation events impractical. To effectively facilitate meaningful Candidate and Voter interaction, we implemented a Candidate Forum Google Group that was open for public viewing/reading, but which only allowed Candidates to submit their Statements and Voters to ask questions of the Candidates.

This proved to be an effective and equally accessible forum for both candidates and voters to productively engage with each other across multiple time zones, and we recommend implementing this feature in future elections. The **Non-CC Candidate Forum 2023** remains accessible for a limited period here:

<https://groups.google.com/a/democratsabroad.org/g/noncc-candidate-forum-2023>

### **Document All Important Non-CC NEC Records in the DA Wiki**

All International-level NECs should be expected to retain and post key documentation records of the Election Rules, Announcements, and Processes in the DA Wiki for long-term archiving and reference purposes. Future NECs should not be constantly tasked with “reinventing the wheel” in defining their election preparation and implementation routines. Each NEC should be able to easily reference the work products and reports of previous NECs by finding them archived in the DA Wiki. The work of this Non-CC NEC has been maintained and regularly updated in the Wiki here:

<https://wiki.democratsabroad.org/NCCelections2023>