



Workshop on Out of Country Voting



Bucharest, 7-8 June 2010

Annotated Agenda

As global population mobility increases, a growing number of countries are seeking to enhance the enfranchisement of immigrant populations and diasporas by introducing external voting mechanisms for their citizens living abroad.

At present, the decision as to whether and how to facilitate external voting remains country and case specific; many different approaches have been adopted. Furthermore, the design and implementation of an external voting system raises sensitive political issues, poses important questions relating to representation and legitimacy and is complex to administer.

In this context, the workshop on 'Out of Country Voting' aims at offering a forum for practitioners and experts to share their experiences with Out-of-Country Voting (OCV); examine the full range of approaches and methods for OCV and reflect on the challenges involved in organizing external voting. The workshop is also an opportunity to promote dialogue and enhance cooperation between electoral authorities.

❖ Monday 7th June

08:30 Registration

09:30 Opening and Welcome

Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Dumitriu

United Nations Electoral Assistance Division, Mr. Martinez Valdes

Permanent Electoral Authority of Romania, Mr. Opreș

10:30 Coffee Break

11:00 Session One: Overview of OCV practice and issues

This session will start with an overview of the range of existing out of country voting (OCV) provisions and procedures as well as the common challenges related to their implementation. It will provide the opportunity for participants to indicate the key achievements and significant challenges they are facing in the organization of OCV in their respective countries.

Key issues to consider include:

- What method of OCV is in use?
- Is OCV used for some elections and not for others?
- Is OCV considered a success by election stakeholders and the wider public?
- What improvements have been made to OCV over the years?

Presenter: Permanent Electoral Authority of Romania, Mr. Kovacs

Moderator: UN Electoral Assistance Division, Mr. Martinez Valdes

13:00 Lunch break

14:30 Session Two: Eligibility and Registration of External Voters

This session will provide participants with the opportunity to consider who should be eligible for OCV and how they should be registered to vote. Those eligible may include economic migrants, including undocumented migrants, and conflict-forced migrants. The session will also review how external voters are apportioned in different systems, either through integration into internal districts or through special representation. Participants will be able to outline the approaches that are taken in their respective countries to these issues, indicate whether they are working and have public support and offer any lessons learnt that could be of benefit to other participants.

Key issues to consider include:

- Should all citizens living outside the country be eligible, or should this right be restricted in some way?
- If restrictions are to be put in place, what should these be based on?
- What are the most effective registration procedures to use?
- Are there any registration procedures (postal/in person/in country) that have restricted eligibility in practice?
- Are there specific challenges for registering undocumented migrants or conflict-forced migrants?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of internal integration and the establishment of extra-territorial districts?

Presenter: Spain, Ms. Lopez

Moderator: Permanent Electoral Authority of Romania, Mr. Popescu

16:00 Coffee Break

16:30 Session Three: Outreach to potential external voters and turnout

This session will look at ways in which different countries have reached out to potential external voters, including undocumented migrants and conflict-forced migrants, to encourage them to register and vote. Building on this knowledge, participants will seek to identify what can be considered to be “good practice” in this area.

Key issues to consider include:

- What type of registration and voting arrangements best facilitate external voter participation?
- What means of conducting voter education and providing electoral information abroad have proved to be most successful?
- What means of facilitating and/or regulating campaign activity abroad have proved to be most successful?
- What are the key challenges that need to be overcome in this area of outreach?

Presenter: Mexico, Mr. Andrade

Moderator: OSCE/ODIHR, Ms. Schmidt

18:00 Conclusions

The *Rapporteur* will give an overview of the key findings and conclusions from the discussions throughout the three sessions of the first day.

18:30 Close

❖ Tuesday 8th June

09:00 Session Four: Host country co-operation

This session will consider the issue of host country co-operation for OCV, looking in particular at positive examples of co-operation as well as situations in which problems might have arisen. Participants will be asked to reflect on the issue from the point of view of being a country reaching out to others to request assistance, and from the point of view of a country providing assistance as host countries. The session may include discussion on host country co-operation in relation to undocumented migrants and conflict-forced migrants.

Key issues to consider include:

- What are the key issues that need to be addressed when reaching out to another country to provide assistance in OCV?
- What legal arrangements need to be put in place to facilitate voting in a host country?
- What are the challenges of host-country co-operation in relation to undocumented migrants and conflict-forced migrants?

- What are the key problems that have arisen in the area of host country cooperation and how have these been addressed?
- What are the key improvements that can be made to ensure that this aspect of OCV works better in the future?

Presenter: Senegal, Mr. Ndiaye

Moderator: IOM, Ms. Marzatico

11:00 Coffee Break

11:30 Session Five: E-voting

This session will consider the issue of electronic voting as an OCV method. E-voting was implemented both internally and externally by Estonia in 2007 and has been tested by a number of other countries. With reference to these experiences, the session will examine the advantages and disadvantages of using electronic voting for OCV and ask whether it is a method that should be encouraged.

Key issues to consider include:

- How effective has external e-voting been where it has been used so far?
- How easy to use and popular has e-voting been with external voters?
- What are the main benefits of introducing e-voting for OCV?
- What are the main challenges to be addressed when introducing e-voting for OCV?
- Are there any problems attached to using e-voting only for OCV and not for internal voting as well?
- What risks are there to secrecy of the ballot? Have these been successfully overcome in countries that have adopted e-voting for OCV?

Presenter: France, Mr. Courtade

Moderator: International IDEA, Mr. Wolf

13:00 Lunch Break

14:30 Session Six: Advantages and Disadvantages of OCV methods

This session will provide participants with the possibility to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of OCV methods, with specific reference to the examples provided during the previous sessions. Methods that may be discussed include personal voting (in embassies or elsewhere), external polls, postal voting, proxy voting and electronic voting. Participants will be able to question each other about the various methods with a view to identifying key conclusions about what is working well, and what is working less well. Particular emphasis will be placed on identifying methods that have encouraged high turnout among external voters.

Key issues to consider include:

- What is the impact of the extent of a country's diplomatic network on its capacity to implement OCV?
- How is the external voting population targeted and provided for?
- What are the key challenges to be faced in the establishment of external polling centers?
- What impact does the quality of the postal system have on OCV, particularly in terms of reach and cost?
- What are the benefits and challenges of providing extended timeframes for external voting?
- Which OCV methods are the most cost-effective?
- Are any methods particularly relevant for undocumented migrants or conflict-forced migrants?
- Do different methods provide varying security/secretcy guarantees?
- Which methods have been most successful at encouraging high turnout?

Presenter: Indonesia, Mr. Aziz

Moderator: ACEEEO, Mr. Rádi

16:30 Coffee Break

17:00 Conclusions

The *Rapporteur* will give an overview of the key findings and conclusions from the second day's sessions, as well as overall conclusions and outcome of the workshop.

Closing remarks: Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Baconschi

UN Electoral Assistance Division, Mr. Martinez Valdes

Permanent Electoral Authority of Romania, Mr. Opreș

18:00 Close