



Advisory Committee of Political Parties

MEETING SUMMARY

Annual General Meeting

June 20 and 21, 2016

Content

- 1. Introductory Remarks by the Chief Electoral Officer..... 2
- 2. Engagement with Returning Officers 5
- 3. Voting Services Modernization 7
- 4. Advisory Group for Disability Issues Presentation 10
- 5. Recommendations Report..... 13
- 6. Forward Calendar and Open Forum 14
- 7. Closing Remarks..... 15
- 8. Appendix A: Agenda..... 16
- 9. Appendix B: Meeting Participants..... 17

The objective of the Annual General Meeting of June 20 and 21, 2016, was to share feedback on Elections Canada's activities and upcoming priorities, such as a Retrospective of the 42nd general election, electoral services modernization and the Chief Electoral Officer's recommendations report to Parliament.

This summary follows the order of the Agenda included in Appendix A. A list of the participants is included in Appendix B.

Introductory Remarks by the Chief Electoral Officer

Marc Mayrand, Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), welcomed members of the Advisory Committee of Political Parties (ACPP) to the 2016 Annual General Meeting (AGM). He started by commenting on his recent resignation announcement, explaining that it'd be preferable to leave his position at the end of the year to allow his successor the necessary time to assume the responsibility for and guide the future direction of Elections Canada.

The CEO mentioned that Belaineh Deguefé is also retiring and introduced his replacement, Hughes St-Pierre, who will be Acting Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Integrated Services, Policy and Public Affairs (DCEO ISPPA).

The CEO then recognized participants for whom this was their first ACPP AGM, and brought to members' attention that two returning officers (ROs) would be attending the meeting as observers and to give an overview of the complexity and challenges of running an election. He also advised ACPP members that the members of the Advisory Group for Disability Issues would give a presentation about their experience and some of the barriers faced by electors with disabilities, as well as their suggestions on how to improve the political participation of Canadians with disabilities. He explained that these presentations are meant to provide ACPP members with an understanding of a range of perspectives, both internal and external, that the agency has to take into consideration when planning its ongoing improvements to the electoral process.

The CEO then shared a few broad assessments that Elections Canada has made on trends that are guiding their future direction.

- Increasing comfort with technology.
 - During the 2015 election, 1.7 million Canadians used online registration to check or update their information or to register
 - Online registration was the preferred registration method for those aged 18–44
 - The agency should continue to focus on online services, while maintaining a reasonable level of service at RO offices
- Increasing mobility of Canadians.
 - More and more Canadians are required to travel for work or education and are away from home for extended periods of time
 - An increasing percentage of Canadians cite being out of town or away from home as a reason for not voting (9% in 2004 to 15% in 2008 and subsequent elections, based on Elections Canada's national surveys of electors)

- This means Elections Canada needs to provide more accessible and convenient options for absentee voters than voting in advance or on the day of the election
- The Canadian population is aging, and there’s an increasing number of Canadians with a disability.
 - Seniors are the fastest-growing population group
 - In 2012, an estimated 3.8 million Canadians reported being limited in daily activities due to a disability (*Canadian Survey on Disability*, Statistics Canada, 2012)
 - As the 65+ population increases, we can expect that the number of Canadians limited by a disability will also increase
 - There will be increased pressure on Elections Canada to improve physical and technological accessibility for electors
 - The agency will want to examine ways in which the vote-by-mail process can be made more accessible and convenient for voters, and this will likely involve leveraging web services
- Current voting process is labour-intensive, onerous and error-prone.
 - Between the 38th general election (GE) and the 42nd GE, the average number of election workers per polling location increased from 8.5 to 14 (Source: Elections Canada historical data)
 - More people rather than better technology has been the response to increasingly complex processes
 - The voting process is increasingly out of sync with electors’ and workers’ expectations

Electoral Services Modernization

The CEO explained that, in order to address these challenges and build on the successes of the 42nd GE, Elections Canada is in the process of establishing an agenda for Electoral Services Modernization (ESM) to enhance the experience of voters throughout their voting journey. The agency’s intention is to improve voter information, voter registration and voting services, and to enable better and more efficient front line services to voters and candidates. The centrepiece of the ESM agenda is the Voting Services Modernization (VSM). This initiative seeks to eliminate barriers to voting by simplifying the voting process, providing more opportunities to vote and increasing the awareness and effectiveness of all existing voting channels, including special ballot voting.

As these changes would require legislative changes, the CEO explained how he will table a new strategic plan and recommendations for amendments to the *Canada Elections Act* (CEA) in early fall 2016.

Elections Canada’s role in electoral reform

The CEO then discussed the government’s program on electoral reform and the special committee that was formed to study various electoral systems, and the possibility of compulsory voting. The CEO clarified that Elections Canada’s role is to prepare for various scenarios and, first and foremost, to ensure that, as they discuss these issues, parliamentarians understand the implementation and operational implications of choosing any particular system. During exchanges with parliamentarians on this matter, the agency has underlined the importance of timing and indicated that the agency needs 24

months to get a reform in place. Therefore, Elections Canada's role is to focus on the administrative implications, whatever shape the reform might take.

The CEO encouraged those political parties not represented in Parliament to reach out to the special committee tasked with studying this matter and invited members to ask their questions and share their comments.

Round table discussion

Following the CEO's opening remarks, ACPD members expressed their appreciation of the CEO's leadership during his mandate and thanked him for his service, professionalism and dedication.

Members asked questions about online services and, more specifically, whether candidate's nominations could be done online. They also noted that Elections Canada must take into consideration people who are not technologically savvy when planning to bring more technology in the voting process. The CEO assured members that exploring changes to the nomination process to eventually bring it online was within the scope of the ESM initiative; that more and more electors are looking for alternatives other than election day; and that there is a significant increase in participation at advance polls. Elections Canada is also proposing that voting day should be on a weekend, as opposed to a Monday, and looking at ways to make voting by mail more convenient.

Members also asked questions about the timeframe that Elections Canada needs to conduct a national referendum. The CEO let members know that the agency would need at least six months to be ready to run a referendum and that, although it is not a constitutional requirement to hold one, it's been the practice in many jurisdictions to seek out public support for changes.

The CEO was asked why would there be a need to change riding boundaries to accommodate the changes brought by the electoral reform. The CEO noted that, for example, some mixed systems have several members representing large ridings, which could involve significant redistribution, unless Canadians wish increase to the number of members of Parliament (MPs) in the House of Commons.

The CEO was asked if Elections Canada was planning to analyze the issues faced by remote communities, namely rural, northern and Indigenous communities, and it was noted that many problems that arose during the last general election seemed to stem from training issues. The CEO let members know that Elections Canada conducts an analysis after each election and that the agency is looking into redesigning its approach, particularly for advance polls. There is a need to engage more locally before elections and the agency is considering recommending ways to better serve small communities, such as by obtaining more flexibility to offer mobile polls.

Finally, members asked about the transition period following the CEO's recent resignation. He explained that the tradition for appointing a CEO is a unanimous resolution in the House of Commons. Internally, Elections Canada is making some adjustments for the transition, but the position cannot be vacant. Should that be the case, the Chief Justice would appoint someone until Parliament makes a decision. There is no interim and Parliament cannot shorten the duration of an appointment, which is 10 years.

Engagement with Returning Officers

Dennis Chronopoulos, RO, Barrie–Innisfil, and Jane Renaud, RO, Outremont, presented the challenges that ROs face when managing a federal election. They provided ACPP members with an overview of their experience and their operational reality, more specifically in terms of recruitment and training, the voters list, identification, the voting process and the polling station.

The current model

The current model is outdated. An elector registered on the list of electors is associated with a specific polling station, which is tied into the elector's address. A deputy returning officer and a poll clerk ensure that the elector exercises his right to vote. This model involves a manual process that uses three tools: paper, pencil and ruler. The voter identification (address and identity) is also done manually. The ROs pointed out that this current model is outdated, complex and inefficient and that it generates a high error rate. ROs also mentioned that the waiting time is unacceptable to voters in the age of technology, and that the current model doesn't serve the parties because the data is not updated and the reports are rendered too late or are poorly suited to their needs.

Recruitment and training

The ROs face a number of issues related to recruitment and training, mostly due to the requirement to hire a very high number of election workers and the inconsistent quality of election workers. The complexity of the training for the manual processes also poses a problem—there is a constantly increasing number of registers, forms, documents and equipment.

ROs cannot start appointing workers before Day 24 of the election because parties need to suggest candidates first. That means that ROs only have 17 days to train an inordinately high number of workers. Each electoral district has to fill an average of 740 positions, two-thirds of which are required for polling day, and it has become increasingly difficult for candidates and political parties to submit lists of potential election workers. The high last-minute drop-out rate adds an extra layer of stress for training and recruitment officers. The list of poll workers is always changing; therefore, it takes longer for ROs to provide candidates with the final list of election workers.

Meeting the requirements for bilingual staff members at each polling location is a challenge as well. In rural areas, ROs often cannot find anyone who speaks the second official language, and this does not take into account First Nations reserves, where they may prefer that a third language be spoken. Because of this, ROs had to recruit workers to drive to communities at some distance in order to provide bilingual services at as many locations as possible.

The List of Electors

Under the current model, polling station staff works with paper copies of the multiple versions of the list, which is a slow and error-prone process. A copy of the *Preliminary List of Electors* is provided to candidates as soon as possible after the issue of the writ. The *Day 19 List* (the first list), the *Revised List*

of Electors (Day 11) and the *Official List of Electors* (between Days 6 and 3) are also provided to candidates. Paper lists need to be bound and printed on different coloured paper for advance and regular polls and candidates have to pick up the lists themselves, or send their registered agents.

Additionally, the candidates can request the *Statements of Electors Who Voted* (both at advance and regular polls) after each day, and ROs are required to provide it the following day. Photocopying the *Statements of Electors Who Voted* after each day and providing it to each candidate is time consuming and expensive.

Identification

Under the CEA in its current form, the use of the voter information card (VIC) as identification is prohibited.

Electors who do not receive bills in their name or have a driver's licence have difficulties providing proof of residence, and they are unhappy that they cannot use the VIC to do so, even if it is accompanied by a second piece of identification.

Despite the fact that it cannot be used as a proof of address, the VIC contains a lot of valuable information on the elector and on the polling place location. It also eliminates manual transcription of information and the risk of errors; it accelerates and facilitates the flow of operations; and it simplifies the process of identification for certain target groups of voters.

The polling station

Electors are currently required to vote at a specific polling station, based on their address. This polling station is staffed by a deputy returning officer and a poll clerk, and if one of them is absent, electors cannot vote. If a polling station is busy on voting day, the elector must wait and does not have the option of voting at another polling station because each polling station has its own list of electors, which is bound and distributed to the deputy returning officer. This current process impedes the good flow of services offered to electors.

Round table discussion

Members asked questions about bingo cards. ROs explained that an automated and electronic bingo card would contain the same information as the printed one, but the electronic version would be much easier, with clear and consolidated information updated in real time. The CEO added that the agency is exploring the possibility of developing an online portal where candidates could access essential information, such as bingo cards, to facilitate the whole process for both candidates and Elections Canada.

Elections Canada was asked to explain the original intent of the Day 24 rule to start appointing election workers. The CEO answered that it was a checks and balances logic: it would allow parties to check on each other. As for the timing, it can be hypothesized that candidates needed time to get organized before they could provide names. ROs clarified that they are now looking for the freedom to ask parties to provide names without having to wait that late to start recruiting.

When asked about how much outreach they do between elections, Elections Canada replied that it indeed intends to do more outreach and get field liaison officers more involved and engaged during and between elections.

Members raised the possibility of hiring more 16- and 17-year-olds and integrating youth employment during elections with civic education classes; Elections Canada explained that this is negotiated at the electoral district level and that jurisdictions differ from one province to another.

It was suggested that the language issue could be resolved with the help of Service Canada's interpreters, who are available by phone. The CEO pointed out that the Commissioner of Official Languages expects the same level of service at every polling station. Therefore, distance interpretation would not be enough to meet those standards.

The issue of inconsistency between ridings and ROs and how rules are applied was brought up. The ROs explained that they do their best to interpret the CEA, and that they count on Elections Canada Headquarters for advice to see if they are interpreting it properly. Overall, elections workers strive to approach the CEA with fairness, understand what the intent of the CEA is and apply it consistently.

Finally, members asked about access to buildings for candidates, which remains a key issue, as registered candidates are sometimes denied access. They usually call ROs to solve the issue, but members asked if there is anything else Elections Canada could do to alleviate obstacles. ROs mentioned that they don't think anything else can be done, and that they face the same problem when they do revision. The CEO reminded parties that the protocol is to show Elections Canada's letter, then go to the RO, who may escalate to Legal Services and the Commissioner of Canada Elections.

Voting Services Modernization

Jacques Mailloux, Executive Director, ESM, presented Elections Canada's VSM initiative to ACPP members. He provided project background, overview, rationale and considerations to help members understand the relevancy of the proposed modernization and the approach chosen by the agency.

Scope of work

The scope of VSM is fivefold:

- 1) To identify, elaborate on, select and implement transformation opportunities across all aspects of the voting processes, so that they are increasingly accessible, convenient and effectively delivered to voters.
- 2) To improve existing processes.
- 3) To introduce new processes.
- 4) To consider introducing technology to meet changing expectations of Canadians.
- 5) To research and analyze possible impact of potential electoral reform on voting processes and services.

This work will be carried out in three distinct work streams:

- 1) The in-person voting experience at advance and ordinary polls, including mobile polls.
- 2) The voting experience under Special Voting Rules (SVR).
- 3) Future voting technologies.

Stream 1: The in-person voting experience

VSM applied to the in-person voting experience will revolve around one central objective: to design and develop new advance and ordinary polling place business processes that will integrate electronic voters lists, replace paper-based controls and allow for efficient and effective use of human resources.

Depending on the feasibility and value propositions that are still under assessment, Stream 1 may include the following components:

- Option to vote at any polling station within a site
- Option to vote at any advance polling station
- Electronic bingo sheets

Stream 2: The voting experience under Special Voting Rules

VSM applied to the voting experience under SVR will revolve around three objectives:

- 1) To design and implement an “enhanced vote-by-mail” service to better serve electors who will be away from their riding on advance polling and election days by leveraging online services to minimize delays in receiving special ballots.
- 2) To enhance the SVR process for voting in Elections Canada offices.
- 3) To increase Elections Canada’s ability to support the SVR voting channel.

Stream 3: Future voting technologies

VSM will also focus on researching the options for and feasibility of future voting technologies, including:

- Electronic tabulation
- Internet voting
- Electronic voting

Rationale and approach

Mr. Mailloux noted that, by virtually all accounts, the 42nd GE was successfully administered. In the spirit of continual improvement and innovation, Elections Canada will seek opportunities to improve service to Canadian electors, candidates and election workers. He noted that the option of adding more workers to solve process issues is no longer sustainable.

The agency will seek to reduce administrative process barriers within its control to mitigate the impacts of known barriers.

To do so, the agency is proposing a three-tier approach:

- 1) Continue to refine and improve voting processes, including plans for introducing technology at the polls.
- 2) Identify and recommend to Parliament legislative changes to the CEA that eliminate or modify provisions that are barriers to providing better service to Canadians in 43rd GE and 44th GE.
- 3) Adjust to the outcomes of the CEO's recommendations report to Parliament and electoral reform.

Conclusion

When moving forward with VSM and implementing changes, the agency must align its activities with its core values of transparency, trust and integrity. The agency must also take into account the multiple perspectives and experiences of all process stakeholders, which include electors, ROs, election workers, candidates and Elections Canada Headquarters staff.

A fundamental challenge to VSM is consistency of service offerings and levels across the country, given Canada's geography and the digital and technological disparities. Timing might also present a challenge to implementation, depending on how much time is left to get ready once decisions on the CEO's recommendations report to Parliament and electoral reform are known.

In terms of process re-engineering, considerations should be given to specific requirements related to the CEA. For instance, the CEO will need latitude to redefine roles and responsibilities of electoral workers, as well as to introduce leaner business processes and enable technologies. Some trade-offs may be needed as well, such as the accessibility and convenience of a "Vote Anywhere" model versus the cost of tabulators to preserve the ability to provide poll-by-poll results.

Round table discussion

A member asked if there are any legal restrictions to announcing poll results before the vote is finished in other parts of the country. Stéphane Perrault, Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Regulatory Affairs (DCEO RA), answered that legal restrictions on results have been removed from the CEA and that the divulgation of results in real-time is inevitable in today's world.

Some members expressed their concerns about security aspects of online services and wanted to know if Elections Canada had reached out to third parties such as security firms. Mr. Mailloux assured members that the agency is researching and keeping up-to-date with current developments, as they need to be experts in that area. Michel Roussel, Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Electoral Events (DCEO EE), specified that Elections Canada does not intend to recommend internet voting at the moment, but bring in technology at the polls, such as electronic lists. A member asked if the agency was planning to leverage by-elections to pilot some new technologies. Mr. Roussel let members know that, while Elections Canada is planning to do so as soon as there is something concrete to test, it is not in the plan to pilot anything in the upcoming by-elections.

There were some questions around timeframe and whether it will possible to implement VSM for the next general elections in 2019. Mr. Mailloux informed members that Stream 1 (in-person voting

experience) is expected to be ready for 2019. However, the agency will need to adapt depending on the outcomes of the electoral reform and the CEO's recommendations.

A member commented that anonymous online voting is already available, but they believe Canadians might not care about anonymous voting if they could see in the tally that their vote is counted, with a bar code, for example. The Executive Director, ESM, explained that the agency would need to assess any technology before proceeding with such changes, to ensure that the system would be secure and reliable. The priority is to maintain integrity of the process. Canadians should have complete trust and faith in the results.

Some members expressed their concerns about losing poll-by-poll results, if a "vote at any table in the polling place" or a "vote anywhere" model were implemented. Mr. Mailloux said that, in the case of a more complex ballot than what we currently have, only electronic tabulators would resolve this issue. However, with our current simple ballot, a re-designed manual counting process can be developed to sort and tally votes by candidate and polling division in a single pass.

Overall, members supported VSM, the integration of technology and improving voters' experience. Members expressed their interest in knowing more about future opportunities for their participation and engagement, such as consultation activities and pilot projects. Mr. Mailloux let members know that the agency is currently working on an engagement plan, which might include technical working groups and technical briefing sessions.

Advisory Group for Disability Issues Presentation

Five members of Elections Canada's Advisory Group for Disability Issues (the Advisory Group) presented their experiences during the last general election, described some of the barriers faced by electors with disabilities and suggested ways to improve the political participation of Canadians with disabilities.

The Advisory Group thanked ACPP members for inviting them to come and discuss the involvement of persons with disabilities in the political process, and pointed out that voting is just one part of democratic participation. They mentioned that Canadians with disabilities represent a large portion of the population, and that if political parties do not include them in every aspect of their work, they can potentially lose a lot of support at the polls.

They also explained that the literacy rate in Canada is not as high as some may think. In fact, a significant amount of Canadian adults between 16 and 65 have low literacy skills, and the number increases after the age of 65. Given the rising population of seniors in Canada, this is something political parties should really consider while planning their campaigns, as literacy is involved in all political activities: signs, pamphlets, platforms, party position papers and voting. To ensure that the involvement of people with disabilities is a positive one, political parties need to look at all of their activities. Parties may have to bring people with disabilities in to do sensitivity training as people who have less environmental restrictions sometimes don't realize that they can offend people with language, gestures and treatment.

Website accessibility

The Advisory Group members informed ACPP members that the majority of federal political party's websites are inaccessible to persons who are blind and print disabled, and the same could be said for the majority of websites of MPs. This means that a growing group of Canadians are unable to get

important information about federal parties and their candidates during an election. Therefore, Canadians with a print disability cannot make informed decisions when it comes to choosing from among federal parties and their candidates.

In order to level the playing field for Canadians with a print disability, there needs to be a conscientious initiative to build awareness. All stakeholders should define strategies and ways to make websites more accessible. Website accessibility should be a team effort between MPs, federal parties and members of the print disabled community.

Sign language

The Advisory Group members addressed how to make an inclusive and accessible Canada for deaf and hard of hearing people, so they can participate in the political and electoral process.

Sign language is recognized seven times in five different articles through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In Canada, deaf people use American Sign Language (ASL) and Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ). Providing information in sign languages would foster an inclusive and accessible democratic process where deaf and hard of hearing voters could make their own political choices.

To ensure that deaf and hard of hearing Canadians can fully participate in democracy, political parties should provide sign language interpretation at all candidates' meetings, candidates' events and federal leaders' debates. To ensure that their videos are accessible, parties should ensure they include sign language interpretation in ASL and LSQ, as well as closed captioning in English and French.

The Advisory Group also noted that it is difficult for a deaf or hard of hearing person to become a candidate for a political party because there are no accessibility accommodation funds to reimburse expenses incurred for accessibility measures.

Plain language

Plain language is an accommodation right for many people with disabilities, just like door openers, ramps and ASL interpretation. Providing information in plain language also benefits other groups such as seniors, new Canadians, people with low literacy skills, and others who may have barriers to language and printed information. Providing pictures of the candidates on ballots is another step in plain language as the information is provided in both words and pictures. Many people with intellectual disabilities find it easier to understand information when there is a visual element to further explain the text.

A large portion of Canadians labelled with an intellectual disability cannot read, making it even more relevant to include photos of candidates on ballots. This issue is a key priority in the area of the secret and independent vote, and also in the priority of addressing full access to the entire electoral process. In order for people with intellectual disabilities to fully participate in the election process, they need to know who the candidates are from the very beginning of the process, right up to when they cast their ballot.

General accessibility and recommendations

Accessibility also means ensuring physical access to buildings and locations. Election-related events should be held in a physically accessible place, and information about accessibility should be easy to find in the invitation. Parties and candidates should learn about disability issues and seek advice from experts from the disability community.

The Advisory Group suggested that parties should hire a person involved in accessibility and inclusion of people with disabilities, or appoint volunteers who would be dedicated to disability issues. Political parties should also be encouraged to hire people with disabilities and make sure that they provide the necessary accommodations to their employees with disabilities.

Accessibility measures should be planned before launching an election campaign, and the necessary resources should be allocated to implementing the accessibility plan.

Conclusion

Canadians with disabilities simply want to be informed and included in any information strategy, including alternate formats and plain language. They want physical access to places where candidates and elected officials are holding events and to their offices. They want to participate with the parties before, during and after the election. They want to be potential employees of candidates and MPs. They want to be candidates. In essence, Canadians with disabilities want to be included in a dignified manner that uses their strengths and accommodates barriers caused by inaccessible environments, activities and attitudes.

Round table discussion

ACPP members sought clarification on video accessibility requirements, more specifically around closed captioning and sign language interpretation, and whether both are necessary or equally accessible. The Advisory Group explained that the deaf community has identified sign language as its primary language. Captioning is very inclusive and also benefits the hard of hearing community and people with low literacy skills. For a 30-second clip, captioning is sufficient. Including both captioning and sign language interpretation helps with content for videos longer than 30 seconds. Video accessibility also includes descriptive audio, which describes contextual details that are not understandable through audio components. The Advisory Group also informed ACPP members that adding captioning through automated software should be avoided, as their captions can be really off; for instance, “deaf” sometimes is written as “dead.”

ACPP members also asked how they could help the disability community find their videos online. The Advisory Group suggested hiring specialized companies to do descriptive audio. Coding and encrypting techniques can also help identify whether content is accessible. Accessibility of a website starts with the web designer, the developer and then the tester. The Advisory Group also further described the components that make a website accessible. It all has to do with the ability for someone to navigate independently, without asking for assistance. There are standards that can be used, such as colour contrast, background, text size, font, plain language, using Word documents instead of PDF, removing acronyms, etc.

There was a question about pictures on ballots, and whether it could lead to discrimination and racism. The Advisory Group answered that, without a picture, it makes it impossible for some people to vote. Pictures of the candidates can already be found on posters, flyers and websites. The main concern should be electoral participation.

Finally, the Advisory Group encouraged political parties to work with the disability community to raise awareness and remove the barriers to electoral participation.

Recommendations Report

Anne Lawson, General Counsel and Senior Director, Legal Services, gave ACPP members an overview of proposed amendments to the CEA under consideration for inclusion in the CEO's recommendations report to Parliament, scheduled for tabling in September 2016. This was followed by a working session, in which members learned more about the recommendations that would directly impact political parties and their activities.

ACPP members then broke into five groups for the working session and round table discussions about the proposed recommendations. They were invited to provide written input on the recommendations following the meeting.

Proposed recommendations for 2016 report covering issues previously raised by the CEO:

- Definition of leadership and nomination expenses
- CEO's public education and information mandate
- Requirement for political parties to provide expense receipts on request
- Power to compel testimony for Commissioner
- Privacy principles to apply to political parties
- Candidate offences for filing incomplete or misleading returns

Proposed key recommendations discussed during the working session (five groups):

Group 1: New Voting Model

- Sever link between job function and specific election worker
- Sever link between voter and specific polling station
- Online application for electronic special ballot
- Adjustments to vote-counting process
- Electronic bingo sheets

Group 2: Other Voting Issues

- Pre-registration of 16- and 17-year-olds
- Polling day on a weekend

- Maximum limit for the election period
- More mobile polls
- 9:00 a.m. start time for advance polls

Group 3: Candidate and Party Issues

- Simplified nomination process for candidates
- ID requirement for candidates
- Elimination of partisan nominees
- Broadcasting rules
- Deadlines in OGI process

Group 4: Political Financing

- Personal expenses of candidates
- Exceeding candidate expense limits
- Costs of accommodating voters with disabilities
- Elimination of audit requirement
- Reimbursement of official agents

Group 5: Compliance Issues

- Compliance through Administrative Monetary Penalties (AMPs) as option to prosecution
- Rules around electoral district associations
- Length of party name on ballot

Forward Calendar and Open Forum

Hughes St-Pierre, Acting Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Integrated Services, Policy and Public Affairs, thanked members for their initial reflections and feedback on the proposed recommendations and reminded them to send their written comments and suggestions by July 6, 2016.

Mr. St-Pierre informed members that the annual list of electors will be completed in November 2016. Elections Canada will send out a reminder email and a request form to be filled out by parties. He also noted that the engagement on the VSM initiative began with the presentation from Jacques Mailloux, and that members should expect to be engaged again in the fall, once the agency has finalized its work plan. Mr. St-Pierre concluded by reminding members that Elections Canada is currently exploring options to develop and implement a candidate's portal for the next general election, and that members should expect to be engaged on the matter once the agency has a better sense of the project.

Proposed forward agenda items and open forum

ACPP members were invited to propose agenda items for the next meeting.

Elections Canada was asked if there would be a future opportunity for parties to discuss voter contact calling rules. Mr. St-Pierre assured members that this request was duly noted, and that maybe the issue should be addressed in a joint meeting with the CRTC. The CEO invited members to bring up their issues during the parliamentary hearing that usually follows the tabling of the recommendations report.

There were some questions on the Special Committee on Electoral Reform and whether Elections Canada plans to invite the Minister to meet with ACPP members. The CEO reiterated that the special committee is public and encouraged members to closely follow its work and debates by regularly visiting the special committee's website to stay up to date on the latest developments and on opportunities for engagement and consultation that may be offered.

Concerns were raised about Elections Canada's civic education mandate and its current restrictions, more specifically how it limits the agency to teach the general population on what considerations should be in their mind when looking at electoral platforms and proposals from different parties, and the electoral reform options, as new voters might need to be educated on more than voting procedures.

It was suggested that the current system under which the Broadcasting Arbitrator operates might be outdated and irrelevant in 2016.

Overall, members gave positive feedback on the sessions and panel discussion that occurred during this AGM, which helped them get a wide variety of perspectives on the last general election. They expressed their interest in having more panels and discussions at future meetings.

Closing Remarks

In closing, the CEO thanked ACPP members for their participation, feedback and comments. He reminded members that they should expect to hear back from Elections Canada about the various current and upcoming initiatives, as the agency will need to get parties' views on some course of actions.

Appendix A: Agenda

Meeting of the Advisory Committee of Political Parties and OGI Steering Committee

Hilton Lac-Leamy (Chopin Ballroom)
3 boulevard du Casino, Gatineau, Quebec

AGENDA

Day 1: Monday, June 20, 2016

Time	Agenda Item
8:00–9:00	<i>Breakfast and Registration</i>
9:00–9:15	Welcome
9:15–10:30	CEO's Introductory Remarks
10:30–10:45	<i>Break</i>
10:45–12:15	Engagement with Returning Officers
12:15–13:30	<i>Lunch (served on site)</i>
13:30–15:00	Voting Services Modernization
15:00–15:15	<i>Break</i>
15:15–16:30	Advisory Group for Disability Issues Presentation
16:30–16:45	Wrap-up of Day 1

Day 2: Tuesday, June 21, 2016

Time	Agenda Item
8:00–8:45	<i>Breakfast</i>
8:45–9:00	Welcome
9:00–10:45	Recommendations Report
10:45–11:00	<i>Break</i>
11:00–12:00	Forward Calendar and Open Forum
12:00–12:15	Closing Remarks
12:15–13:00	<i>Lunch (served on site)</i>
13:00–14:30	OGI Steering Committee Meeting
14:30–14:50	<i>Break</i>
14:50–16:50	Broadcasting Arbitrator Meeting

Appendix B: Meeting Participants

Political Party	Representatives
Animal Alliance Environment Voters Party of Canada	Liz White Stephen Best
Canadian Action Party	Jeremy Arney Will Arlow
Christian Heritage Party of Canada	Peter Vogel Rod Taylor
Communist Party of Canada	Johan Boyden
Conservative Party of Canada	Dustin Van Vugt Greg Labuschagne
Democratic Advancement Party of Canada	Elizabeth Valentine Stephen Garvey
Forces et Démocratie	Robert D. Morais
Green Party of Canada	Marlene Wells Nick Carter
Liberal Party of Canada	John Arnold (OGI and Broadcasting Arbitrator only) Leslie Hardy Rob Jamieson Adam Carroll (Observer)
Libertarian Party of Canada	Allen K. W. Paley Nichole Adams
Marijuana Party of Canada	John Akpata Talis Brauns
Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada	Anna Di Carlo Louis Lang
New Democratic Party of Canada	Dave Hare Karine Fortin
Party for Accountability, Competency and Transparency	Michael Nicula Mihai Slavei
Pirate Party of Canada	James Phillips Travis McCrea
Progressive Canadian Party	Al Gullon
Rhinoceros Party	Jean-Patrick Berthiaume Pascal Gélinas
Seniors Party of Canada	Murdoch Ross Martyn
The Bridge Party of Canada	David Berlin John Richardson