



Advisory Committee of
Political Parties

Meeting Summary
June 13–14, 2019



Contents

1.	Meeting Summary	3
2.	Introductory Remarks by the CEO	3
3.	Political Entities Services & Support — 43rd GE	3
4.	Enhancements to the List of Electors for the GE.....	4
5.	Operations at the Polls — 43rd GE.....	5
6.	Approach to social media monitoring and response coordination.....	6
7.	Interacting with third parties in the pre-election and election periods.....	7
8.	Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC)	7
9.	Commissioner of Canada Elections	8
10.	Improvements to the political financing audit process.....	9
11.	ACPP Forward Calendar and Adjournment	10
12.	Appendix A: Agenda	11
13.	Appendix B: Meeting participants.....	12

1. Meeting Summary

The objective of the June 13–14, 2019, Annual General Meeting was to update the Advisory Committee of Political Parties (ACPP) on the activities that Elections Canada (EC) has conducted since the February 2019 meeting and activities leading up to the general election. Following the meeting's formal adjournment on June 14, the Broadcasting Arbitrator met with ACPP members for approximately one hour.

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

2. Introductory Remarks by the CEO

Presenter: Stéphane Perrault (Chief Electoral Officer [CEO])

Mr. Perrault welcomed the ACPP members to the meeting, and introduced the following newly appointed members: John Evans (National Citizens Alliance of Canada), Johanne Mennie and Daniel Tyrie (People's Party of Canada) and Carl Pilotte (Bloc Québécois).

The CEO updated the committee on the agency's priorities leading up to the general election, which was followed by a question and answer period. Discussion topics included the implementation of Bill C-76, the revised guidelines for using the lists of electors, party policy requirements for the protection of personal information, GE simulation and performance testing, the 2019 triennial review, changes to the nomination process, electoral security, and accessibility of the electoral process.

3. Political Entities Services & Support — 43rd GE

Presenters: Denis Bazinet (Director, Electoral Operations Planning & Administration) and Christopher Morris (Chief, Candidate Services)

Mr. Bazinet gave an overview of operational changes that candidates and parties can expect for the 43rd general election: the nomination processes, candidate ID requirements, candidate endorsement process, the Political Entities Service Centre (PESC), and filing of financial returns. He also updated the committee on findings from the by-elections pilot conducted in 2019. A live demonstration of the PESC was also presented.

Mr. Bazinet explained that the Political Entities Support Network will support PESC. Additionally, a user guide for Desktop Electronic Financial Returns and a toll-free line and email support will be offered. Regarding upcoming engagements, candidate and official agent information sessions have begun across the country and will continue through June 2019. Returning officers will meet with confirmed candidates and their representatives during the election. ACP members were reminded to access the PESC portal and e-nomination forms over the summer.

The session concluded with a question and answer session, in which ACP members inquired about the nomination process, particularly the acceptance and confirmation of candidate nominations; distribution of lists of electors to confirmed candidates; and the endorsement of candidates. There were also questions on the functionality of the new application.

4. Enhancements to the List of Electors for the GE

Presenter: Céline Desbiens (Director, National Register of Electors)

Ms. Desbiens spoke to the ongoing work involved in maintaining and updating the National Register of Electors (NROE). Regarding the 2018 Data Quality Confirmation Study, she explained how Statistics Canada assessed the NROE data using a new record-linkage approach. This resulted in adjustments to quality indicators: NROE coverage target is now 94% instead of 92%.

Ms. Desbiens updated ACP members on NROE update activities for the next general election. On average, managing the register entails processing updates on 10,000 electors per day, due to additions, moves, deaths, etc. The Register routinely receives updates on elector and address information from various data sources.

Following the recent amendments to the *Canada Elections Act*, EC has worked with Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to obtain data on new Canadian citizens that will help improve the integrity of the NROE data. EC is also currently conducting a quality control review in regard to last name and gender changes.

It was also noted that enhancements to the online registration system now allow electors to upload ID to register online, with over 2,000 new registrations since December 2018 using this new feature. This is a significant enhancement to the accessibility of the online registrations system for new electors.

Ms. Desbiens also described the new Register of Future Electors (ROFE). The Bill C-76 amendments to the *Canada Elections Act* included a mandate to launch this new register for youth between the ages of 14 and 17. Future electors on this register will be automatically added to the NROE once they turn 18. The ROFE data cannot be shared with political parties. Registration in the ROFE is paper-based for time being; an online registration system will be developed after the general election.

Ms. Desbiens noted that the June 2019 annual lists of electors are being delivered to MPs and to registered political parties who requested them on USB keys. A pilot project has been initiated to allow registered political parties to obtain the lists via EC's Political Entities Service Centre (PESC). Parties will also be able to use PESC to obtain various lists of electors as an alternative to a USB key.

5. Operations at the Polls — 43rd GE

Presenter: Dawn Borutskie (Associate Director, Voting and Results Services)

Ms. Borutskie provided an overview of changes and strategy for managing polls and to facilitate the hiring of election workers. Ms. Borutskie discussed new flexibility in staffing for the upcoming election. Specifically, there are now more staffing options for returning officers. For advance polls, for example, ROs can hire two teams to cover the four-day period, and a supervisor can act as the DRO or poll clerk when necessary or to give breaks.

Ms. Borutskie also discussed changes to the process of verifying an elector's identity and address. The list of documents to prove a voter's identity and address now includes the voter information card (VIC). However, the VIC can only be used to prove address and must be used in combination with another piece of identification that proves identity. In regards to vouching, both a voter's name and address may be vouched for in person at an RO office and at the polling station.

Other updates included services to persons with disabilities. Also, members of the Canadian Armed Forces will now be able to vote using any of the options available to the public (military polls will still be available).

EC then answered questions from parties on pay rates and non-partisanship of workers. There were also questions on voting options for students, vouching, distribution of the lists of electors and bingo sheets.

6. Approach to Social Media Monitoring and Response Coordination

Presenter: Melanie Wise (Assistant Director, Media Relations & Issues Management)

Ms. Wise updated ACPP representatives on how EC will monitor and analyze social media to detect information and incidents that could interfere with Canadians' ability to vote in the 43rd general election.

In terms of dedicated teams, Ms. Wise explained the division of labour between the Public Affairs team that manages EC's corporate social media channels, posting messages and responding to questions; and the Electoral Integrity Office team that monitors the social media landscape for information and incidents not directed at EC's accounts. These two teams will be co-located and will be cross-trained to leverage our resources efficiently and facilitate information-sharing.

Ms. Wise explained that EC will monitor print, online and broadcast media in English and French, as well as 20 other non-official languages. For social media, EC's social media monitoring tool scans 40+ languages and the monitoring staff is fluent in 12 languages.

Ms. Wise stated that while EC will not monitor topics related to political issues, candidates or party platforms, they will monitor social media and the Web for three types of information:

- Inaccurate information about the electoral process: where, when and ways to register and vote, voter ID requirements, etc.
- Indicators of incidents that could affect our election delivery: extreme weather, road closures, fires, etc.
- Websites or accounts impersonating EC.

Regarding social media analysis, EC will validate the authenticity of digital information, triangulate findings with information from other sources, and measure reach and estimate potential impact on the electoral process. Ms. Wise explained how responses to social media issues will be timely, proportional with the estimated scope and impact, aligned with EC's electoral integrity program and coordinated with external actors, as required.

The session concluded with questions from committee members, through which parties sought to better understand EC's role and approach to addressing complaints and misinformation on its social media channels. EC reiterated its role within the context of other stakeholders within the Government of Canada.

7. Interacting with Third Parties in the Pre-election and Election Periods

Presenters: Jeff Merrett (Director, Regulatory Affairs & Systems)

Support: Trevor Knight (Senior Counsel)

Mr. Merrett spoke to ACPP members about how the rules introduced by Bill C-76 affect the way political entities—especially registered parties—may interact with third parties.

He explained how the *Canada Elections Act* defines third parties as individuals, corporations, trade unions or groups that want to participate in an election other than as a political party, candidate or electoral district association. Third parties need to register if they spend \$500 or more on regulated activities in the pre-election period or election period. If they do not have a Canadian connection, third parties are prohibited from spending money to influence an election.

Mr. Merrett explained that, under Bill C-76, the following third party activities are regulated:

- Partisan advertising in the pre-election period;
- Election advertising in the election period;
- Partisan activities in both periods; and
- Election surveys in both periods.

Mr. Merrett also discussed the new provisions in the Act respecting collusion between parties and third parties.

The session concluded with questions from parties on different scenarios of interactions with third parties, which gave EC an opportunity to elaborate on best practices for interacting with third parties and what is and is not acceptable under the new Bill C-76 requirements.

8. Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission

Presenter: Alain Garneau (Director, Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission [CRTC])

Mr. Garneau provided an overview of CRTC's compliance and enforcement mandate, and outlined CRTC's roles under the Voter Contact Registry (VCR) and for increasing awareness amongst political parties, candidates and other groups about the VCR.

Mr. Garneau discussed who specifically must register under the VCR. He explained that this includes anyone using an Automatic Dialing-Announcing Device (ADAD), anyone using a calling service provider, and any corporation or group that uses its internal services to make live calls.

Further information was presented regarding Unsolicited Telecommunications Rules (UTRs) including National Do Not Call List (National DNCL) rules, telemarketing rules, and ADAD rules.

Mr. Garneau shared information on Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL) with ACPP members. He explained that CASL prohibits, among other things, the sending of commercial electronic messages (CEM), including via email and short message service (SMS), without express consent.

The session concluded with a question and answer period with ACPP members. CRTC and EC staff answered a range of clarifying questions. Members expressed interest in the impact the regulations will have on individuals including official agents, financial agents and volunteers.

9. Commissioner of Canada Elections

Presenter: Yves Côté (Commissioner of Canada Elections)

Support: Marc Chenier (Office of the Commissioner of Canada Elections) and Michelle Laliberté (Office of the Commissioner of Canada Elections)

Mr. Côté outlined the new tools available to the Commissioner of Canada Elections (CCE) following the passage of Bill C-76: administrative monetary penalties (AMPs), undertakings (an alternative to the imposition of an AMP), compliance agreements with broader terms and conditions, and the power to seek court order to compel testimony.

Mr. Côté briefed ACPP members that foreign interference in the upcoming general election remains a serious concern and described how the CCE has been working in collaboration with EC and security partners across government, including CSIS, CSE and the RCMP, to address this issue.

Mr. Côté briefed the committee that good progress has been made with most social media/digital platforms in securing a framework for cooperation between them and the CCE. He also explained that the CCE is currently reviewing its communications approach to provide more information about its processes and the factors underlying compliance and enforcement decisions.

Mr. Côté confirmed that CCE's observations regarding the 43rd general election will be included as part of its annual report in spring 2020. Formal recommendations for legislative changes on compliance and enforcement issues will appear in a separate part of the CEO's Recommendation Report.

After the conclusion of his presentation, Mr. Coté answered a number of queries from ACP members. Questions regarded expected turnaround times for investigations and applying penalties, as well as how the Commissioner will deal with volunteers, specifically in regards to violations undertaken on behalf of organizations.

10. Improvements to the Political Financing Audit Process

Presenters: Josée Villeneuve (Director, Political Finance); Jeff Merrett (Director, Regulatory Affairs & Systems); François Leblanc (Director, Political Financing and Audit)

Ms. Villeneuve, along with Mr. Merrett and Mr. Leblanc, presented a detailed update on specific improvements to the political financing audit process. EC has reviewed the audit process to improve its overall efficiency, including reducing the time to audit reports; increase the transparency and predictability of the regulatory framework; and analyze information with a horizontal perspective.

Ms. Villeneuve reported that a multi-year plan has been designed and that there will be a new audit methodology for candidates, including a streamlined audit program.

Ms. Villeneuve informed ACP members that the new audit methodology for candidates includes a streamlined risk-based audit program and a target deadline of 12 months to complete audits. To make this possible, EC has created a Centre of Expertise that includes an experienced team of auditors assigned to complex files to provide standardized advice to entities.

Regarding systems modernization, Ms. Villeneuve explained that the legacy political financing systems are being improved in terms of overall readiness and new online service offerings for political entities, and to allow for a fully digital process with paperless registration and reporting.

Ms. Villeneuve explained that these improvements to the audit process and systems will reduce treatment time for political entities, allow for the timely review of the returns' supporting documents, provide greater transparency with timely publication of audited returns, and increase predictability of political financing rules for political entities.

11. ACPP Forward Calendar and Adjournment

Presenter: Susan Torosian (Executive Director, Policy & Public Affairs)

Ms. Torosian shared the Forward Calendar of upcoming dates, events and items of interest to ACPP representatives.

Specific items identified included:

- ACPP GE Teleconference (August/September 2019)
- Post-GE ACPP Meeting (November/December 2019)
- Advisory Group of Disability Issues (AGDI) Meeting (February 2020)
- ACPP AGM (June 2020)

Following the presentation of the Forward Calendar, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:00 p.m. on June 14, 2019. Following the adjournment of the ACPP meeting, the Broadcasting Arbitrator met with ACPP representatives for approximately 60 minutes from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. to discuss the proposed broadcasting time allocation and Broadcasting Guidelines.

12. Appendix A: Agenda

Day 1: June 13, 2019

- 8:00 – 8:55 Breakfast and registration
- 8:55 – 9:00 Welcome
- 9:00 – 10:15 Introductory Remarks by the CEO
- 10:15 – 10:30 Break and InfoFair
- 10:30 – 11:30 Political Entities Services & Support — 43rd GE
- 11:30 – 12:15 Enhancements to the List of Electors for the GE
- 12:15 – 1:15 Lunch and InfoFair
- 1:15 – 2:00 Operations at the Polls — 43rd GE
- 2:00 – 2:30 Social Media Monitoring & Response Coordination for GE43
- 2:30 – 2:45 Break and InfoFair
- 2:45 – 3:45 Interacting With Third Parties in the Pre-election and Election Periods
- 3:45 – 4:45 CRTC Presentation
- 4:45 – 4:50 Adjournment

Day 2: June 14, 2019

- 8:30 – 9:30 Breakfast
- 9:30 – 10:45 Commissioner of Canada Elections Presentation
- 10:45 – 11:00 Break
- 11:00 – 11:30 Improvements to the Political Financing Audit Process
- 11:30 – 11:55 Forward Calendar
- 11:55 – 12:00 Adjournment
- 12:00 – 1:00 Lunch
- 1:00 – 2:00 Broadcasting Arbitrator Presentation

13. Appendix B: Meeting participants

ACPP representatives:

Name	Political Party
Stephen Best	Animal Protection Party of Canada
Liz White	Animal Protection Party of Canada
Carl Pilotte	Bloc Québécois
Sylvain Boyer	Bloc Québécois
Rod Taylor	Christian Heritage Party of Canada
Peter Vogel	Christian Heritage Party of Canada
Elizabeth Rowley	Communist Party of Canada
Dustin Van Vugt	Conservative Party of Canada
Trevor Bailey	Conservative Party of Canada
Nick Carter	Green Party of Canada
Sky Losier (observer)	Green Party of Canada
John Arnold	Liberal Party of Canada
Azam Ishmael	Liberal Party of Canada
Jessica Spindler (observer)	Liberal Party of Canada
Coreen Corcoran	Libertarian Party of Canada
Jean-Serge Brisson	Libertarian Party of Canada
Anna Di Carlo	Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada
Christian Legais	Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada
John Evans	National Citizens Alliance of Canada
Jesse Calvert	New Democratic Party
Johanne Mennie	People's Party of Canada
Daniel Tyrie	People's Party of Canada
Al Gullon	Progressive Canadian Party
Talis-Ilmars Brauns	Marijuana Party
John Akpata	Marijuana Party
Pascal Gélinas	Rhinoceros Party

Other invited guests and presenters:

Name	Organization
Yves Côté	Office of the Commissioner of Canada Elections
Michelle Laliberté	Office of the Commissioner of Canada Elections
Marc Chenier	Office of the Commissioner of Canada Elections
Peter S. Grant	Broadcasting Arbitrator
Christopher Prince	Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada
Alain Garneau	Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission

EC staff present at all or part of meeting:

Denis Bazinet, Kevin Boucher, Dawn Borutskie, Bradley Darch, Lisa Drouillard, Cyntia Henley, Paul Jorgenson, Trevor Knight, François Leblanc, Juan Melara-Pineda, Jeff Merrett, Céline Desbiens, Christopher Morris, Michelle AuCoin-Power , Deborah Landry, Anne Lawson, Stéphane Perrault, Michel Roussel, Dani Srour, Stéphanie Thomas, Victoria Bennett, Karen Thomas, Susan Torosian, Duncan Toswell, Josée Villeneuve, Karine Richer, François Villeneuve, Melanie Wise, Daniel Larrivee, Kerrie Rodier, Genevieve Latulippe, Jane Dunlop, Joanne Geremian

Meeting facilitator:

Alain Rabeau