

# ACPP Meeting

August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021

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# ACPP Meeting Summary

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## Overview

On August 5, 2021, Elections Canada (EC) held a special pre-General Election (GE) meeting to inform members of the Advisory Committee of Political Parties (ACPP) on a number of decisions made on approaches to the upcoming election happening in a pandemic context. EC offered presentations on four topics, followed by opportunities for members to ask questions of clarification. The four topics addressed at this meeting were Vote-by-Mail, Online Registration, the Political Entities Service Centre (PESC) and the Nomination Process for candidates and Vote Counting and Results Reporting.

## Vote-by-Mail Presentation

Presenter: Jean-Marc Collin, the Associate Director for Outreach and External Relations and Alternative Voting Methods

Mr. Collin stated that the purpose of this presentation was to explain some of the important operational decisions that have been taken and highlight their potential impacts for political parties as well as for candidates.

He reminded ACPP members that all electors, including locals, were now able to apply online to vote by mail, specifying that a local elector is one who submits their application while in their electoral district. Mr. Collin indicated that, previously, these voters had to download and print a paper application form and send it to their local EC office. Mr. Collin highlighted that the prioritisation of Vote-by-Mail services was largely driven by polls conducted, estimating that between 4 and 5 million electors could choose to vote by mail in a pandemic context. In comparison, during the 2019 GE, only 5,000 local voters voted by mail.

Mr. Collin then reviewed the vote-by-mail journey, from the elector using the online voter registration service on the EC website to the counting process.

Mr. Collin fielded questions from participants about the Vote-by-Mail journey focused on clarifying the process.

## Online Registration Presentation

Presenters: Brenda Sandelin, Manager, National Voter Registration Projects and Electoral Readiness and Jean-François Lefebvre, Assistant Manager, National Voter Registration Projects and Electoral Readiness

This session offered participants some key information on EC's List of Electors and the Online Voter Registration Services. The presenters first indicated that, as of August 1, 2021, the list of electors' quality remained high and above key targets. They then pointed out that, to assist registered and eligible political parties in conducting electoral affairs, the lists of electors that candidates and political parties are entitled to obtain are provided through Elections Canada's online portal for candidates, the Political Entities Service Centre (PESC). The presenters specified that preliminary versions of the Lists of Electors are provided as soon as possible after the issuance of the writ, then updated lists are provided at key dates during the electoral calendar. An electronic copy of these various lists would be provided to candidates for their electoral district and to registered political parties for the electoral districts in which they endorsed a candidate.

In the second portion of this session, presenters spoke about the Online Voter Registration Services available to electors. They explained that this system could be used by an elector until 6 days before election day to check if they are registered to vote, update the address on their voter registration, register to vote, and apply to vote by mail. Presenters followed by indicating that, after the close of the revision period, electors could use the Online Voter Registration Service to download and print a pre-filled Registration Certificate, which they could bring to the polling site on polling day to complete their registration. Electors could register online by uploading their proof of identity and address.

Finally, the presenters announced that, in order to help electors who wish to apply to vote by mail, but who live at a non-standard address type (e.g. without a house or building number and that do not include street or road information) a point on map feature has been added to EC's online service to allow these electors to place a pin on a map indicating where their residence is located. This enables EC to assign their registration and/or vote to the appropriate electoral district. The electors that registering to vote by mail, would then need to provide a mailing address where they can receive their ballot kit.

## **Political Entities Service Centre (PESC) and the Nomination Process Presentation**

Presenter: Christopher Morris, Chief of Candidate Services and Alexandre Maclsaac, Chief of PESN.

The presenters of this session briefly covered the candidate nomination process and related services. They began by providing an overview of how the Canada Elections Act (CEA) outlines the candidate endorsement process, information which is outlined on the [Elections Canada website](#). The presenters followed by reviewing The Political Entities Service Centre (PESC) tool, explaining that it is Elections Canada's secure online portal designed to provide quick access to a variety of services and digital documents. They reminded participants that PESC allows candidate campaigns to complete and submit the nomination package online, access useful electoral materials and submit financial

documents after the election. They also highlighted how Political Entities can create an account at any time (there's no need to wait for an election to be called) and submit their nomination shortly after the issue of the writ.

Given the pandemic circumstances across the country, the presenters then encouraged all candidates to submit their nominations through the Political Entities Service Centre portal (PESC), indicating that it provides a streamlined process for completing the nomination form and for submitting information to the returning office, while helping reduce interactions at the RO office and increasing safety for the office, visitors, and candidates. They clarified that in person submissions would still be accepted with scheduled appointments, but that those going into the RO offices would be required to adhere to COVID related provisions.

Further pandemic-related accommodations were explained, including EC's offer to allow candidate's solemn declarations to be completed by videoconference with their returning officer. Instructions were provided on what options existed to submit the elector signatures form, as outlined in the [COVID-19 Guidance for Candidates Collecting Elector Signatures](#) document.

The presenters reminded participants of the critical role played by candidate representatives in observing the voting operations, validating outer envelopes and in counting of regular and special ballots. With these roles in mind, EC urged participants to respect of provincial public health authorities' guidelines and indicated that masks are required when attending polling locations. The presenters pointed to addendums to guidelines for candidate representatives that were available, such as Additional guidelines for observing ordinary and advance polls, Guidelines for observing special ballot voting and guidelines for observing the counting at the Special Voting Rules Administrator's office.

In addition, the presenters announced that, for the first time, ROs would be looking to arrange joint meetings with confirmed candidates through a variety of methods to convey the latest information and adaptive measures.

The sessions' presenters then announced that EC issued an interpretation note on Canvassing and Campaigning and in Residential Areas and Public Places to address the question: What are some of the limits on the candidates' right to canvass and campaign in public places and residential areas? While the focus of the answer was broader than questions related to the pandemic context, the presenters underlined the limits to this right in relation to the protection of the health and safety of electors. An example provided was that a person in control of a multiple-residence building or public place may invoke an exception and deny access if the exception is justified based on all the facts of the particular situation.

Finally, before opening the floor to questions, EC reminded everyone that the Political Entities Support Network was available to support candidates and parties during the election and shared their contact information.

## Vote Counting and Results Reporting Presentation

Presenter: Dawn Borutskie, Associate Director, Voting

Ms. Borutskie began her presentation by explaining the process on counting ballots and reporting results that would be largely staying the same, with the exception of a few changes. EC's plan was outlined in order to ensure safe counting during the pandemic. She pointed out that the addendums to the [Guidelines for Candidate Representatives](#) were featured on the EC website. She also shared [EC's Safeguards for Counting Votes and Reporting on Results policy](#).

Ms. Borutskie indicated that EC was anticipating much higher numbers of special ballots in Ottawa and in each RO office. She reviewed the rules and respective roles tied to counting at advance and ordinary polls.

Further, the presenter outlined how counting should take place at EC's counting centre in Ottawa. The most significant change highlighted in this process was that political parties could send observers. However, it was cautioned that due to the pandemic, additional restrictions could apply, such as maintaining physical distancing, needing to respect capacity limits and so on.

Ms. Borutskie also outlined information that is indicated in the [Guidelines for Observing Special Ballot Voting Operations and Special Ballot Verification and Counting at Returning Offices](#).

Finally, regarding reporting results, Ms. Borutskie reminded participants of EC's regular practices for counting processes and validation of results on election night.

## Meeting Wrap Up

Presenter: Juan Melara-Pineda, Senior Outreach Officer

To conclude the event, M. Juan Melara-Pineda provided a quick overview of the content addressed during the meeting.

Following the final remarks, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:00 p.m. on August 5, 2021.

## Appendix

### Meeting Agenda

12:30 – 1:00	Sound & Video Check
1:00 – 1:05	Introductory Remarks
1:05 – 1:15	Vote by Mail Presentation
1:15 – 1:30	Vote by Mail - Q &A
1:30 – 1:40	Online Registration Presentation
1:40 – 1:55	Online registration - Q & A
1:55 – 2:05	PESC and Nomination Process Presentation
2:05 – 2:20	PESC and Nomination Process - Q & A
2:20 – 2:30	Vote Counting and Results Reporting Presentation
2:30 – 2:45	Vote Counting and Results Reporting - Q & A
2:45 – 2:50	Wrap Up

### Participants

#### ACPP Participants:

Stephen Best	Animal Protection Party of Canada
Josée Beaudin	Bloc Québécois
Sylvain Gauthier	Bloc Québécois
Carl Pilotte	Bloc Québécois
Trevor Bailey	Parti conservateur du Canada /Conservative Party of Canada
Yannis Larrouche	Parti conservateur du Canada /Conservative Party of Canada
Patrick Lavelle-Tuns	Parti conservateur du Canada /Conservative Party of Canada
Paolo Tamburello	Parti conservateur du Canada /Conservative Party of Canada
Christophe Lavoie	Parti conservateur du Canada /Conservative Party of Canada
Christine Remedios	Parti conservateur du Canada /Conservative Party of Canada
Esteban Méndez	Parti conservateur du Canada /Conservative Party of Canada
Patricia Morrissette	Parti conservateur du Canada /Conservative Party of Canada
Myriam Tshimanga	Parti conservateur du Canada /Conservative Party of Canada
Raymond St. Louis	Parti conservateur du Canada /Conservative Party of Canada

Gus Nelson	Parti conservateur du Canada / Conservative Party of Canada
Sarah Fudge	Parti conservateur du Canada / Conservative Party of Canada
Jeremy Hollingsworth	Parti conservateur du Canada / Conservative Party of Canada
Stephanie Cattrysse	Parti conservateur du Canada / Conservative Party of Canada
Josiah Martinoski	Parti conservateur du Canada / Conservative Party of Canada
Stewart Fairgrieve	Parti conservateur du Canada / Conservative Party of Canada
Steve Kent	Parti conservateur du Canada / Conservative Party of Canada
Chelsie McIntee	Parti conservateur du Canada / Conservative Party of Canada
Sean Osmar	Parti conservateur du Canada / Conservative Party of Canada
Jordan Katz	Parti conservateur du Canada / Conservative Party of Canada
Jim Ross	Parti conservateur du Canada / Conservative Party of Canada
Tannis Drysdale	Parti conservateur du Canada / Conservative Party of Canada
Jackie Leach	Parti conservateur du Canada / Conservative Party of Canada
Malcolm Coady	Parti conservateur du Canada / Conservative Party of Canada
Graham O'Brien	Parti conservateur du Canada / Conservative Party of Canada
Gregor McGregor	Parti conservateur du Canada / Conservative Party of Canada
Rod Taylor	Parti de l'Héritage Chrétien / Christian Heritage Party of Canada
Ken Stouffer	Parti de l'Héritage Chrétien / Christian Heritage Party of Canada
George Zekveld	Parti de l'Héritage Chrétien / Christian Heritage Party of Canada
Azam Ishmael	Parti libéral du Canada / Liberal Party of Canada
John Arnold	Parti libéral du Canada / Liberal Party of Canada
Jamie Kippen	Parti libéral du Canada / Liberal Party of Canada
Andrée-Lyne Hallé	Parti libéral du Canada / Liberal Party of Canada
Derek Lipman	Parti libéral du Canada / Liberal Party of Canada
Matt Stickney	Parti libéral du Canada / Liberal Party of Canada
Olivier Duchesneau	Parti libéral du Canada / Liberal Party of Canada
Brett Thalmann	Parti libéral du Canada / Liberal Party of Canada
Marjorie Michel	Parti libéral du Canada / Liberal Party of Canada
Coreen Corcoran	Parti Libertarien du Canada / Libertarian Party of Canada
Danny Légaré	Parti Marijuana / Marijuana Party
Anna Di Carlo	Parti Marxiste-Léniniste du Canada / Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada
Jesse Calvert	Nouveau Parti Démocratique / New Democratic Party
Anne McGrath	Nouveau Parti Démocratique / New Democratic Party
Shannon Cruikshank	Nouveau Parti Démocratique / New Democratic Party
Lily Mackenzie	Nouveau Parti Démocratique / New Democratic Party
Maria Glavine	Nouveau Parti Démocratique / New Democratic Party
Tanya Fredette	Nouveau Parti Démocratique / New Democratic Party
Daniel Tyrie	Parti populaire du Canada / People's Party of Canada
Jacinthe Lafrenaye	Parti pour l'indépendance du Québec



Matthew Clarke	Parti Vert du Canada / Green Party of Canada
Honora Nedwidek	Parti Vert du Canada / Green Party of Canada

## Elections Canada Participants

Stéphane Perrault	Elections Canada
Anne Lawson	Elections Canada
Annie Desrosiers	Elections Canada
Audray Frechette	Elections Canada
Bradley Darch	Elections Canada
Christopher Morris	Elections Canada
Cyntia Henley	Elections Canada
Denis Bazinet	Elections Canada
Duncan Toswell	Elections Canada
Jane Dunlop	Elections Canada
Jeff Merrett	Elections Canada
Josée Villeneuve	Elections Canada
Juan Melara-Pineda	Elections Canada
Karine Masson	Elections Canada
Lisa Drouillard	Elections Canada
Mariann Canning	Elections Canada
Martin Genier	Elections Canada
Michel Roussel	Elections Canada
Mira Raatikainen	Elections Canada
Mario Lavoie	Elections Canada
Patrick Therrien	Elections Canada
Serge Caron	Elections Canada
Sophie Martineau	Elections Canada
Aboubacar Dakuyo	Elections Canada
Stéphanie Thomas	Elections Canada
Steven Tyrie	Elections Canada
Susan Torosian	Elections Canada
Sylvie Jacmain	Elections Canada
Tamara Kluge	Elections Canada
Trevor Knight	Elections Canada
Wendy Larsose	Elections Canada

## Meeting facilitator

Alain Rabeau, Principal, Senior Consultant, Facilitator and Trainer, Intersol Group.