

Guidance on Maintaining Compliance for DPCA Country Committees

February 2017

The DPCA Charter defines a set of responsibilities and compliance requirements for its constituent Country Committees.

These requirements stem from the mission of Democrats Abroad, provide guidance and are intended to ensure that:

- local Country Committees have active and committed leaders who have been democratically and transparently chosen by the body of local members
- local membership records are as up-to-date and accurate as possible
- regular local activities and events take place
- members are being regularly reached and communicated with by local leaders
- members are being personally informed of important voter registration/ballot request deadlines, and election dates
- elected Country Committee leaders are engaged and participating in the global and regional organization and relevant DPCA activities, so that shared resources and knowledge benefit all local committees and DA members.

Elected leaders of Country Committees must see that compliance requirements are fulfilled in order for the Country Committee to be considered in compliance and to earn/retain their DPCA voting privileges.

Requirements from the DA Charter to cast votes allocated to a Country Committee

1. **Conduct an AGM in the first half of every year.**
2. **Conduct elections** for all Country Committee officers (under the conditions of Section 5.2(d)¹) and an appropriate number of voting representatives (Section 3.6(f)), no later than June 30 of the most recent odd-numbered year (Section 5.4(b)).²
3. **Publicize elections** with “reasonable notice to United States citizens in [the] defined geographical area” of the Country Committee (Section 5.2(c)). Elections must be held according to guidelines set forth by the DPCA Executive Committee (ExCom) (Section 2.3), see below.

¹ Section 5.2(d): “... who (i) at the time of their election and thereafter have their principal residence in that defined geographical area; (ii) have been elected for a term of office not exceeding two (2) years; (iii) are eligible to serve in the same office no more than two (2) consecutive terms; and (iv) include a Chair and Vice Chair (or First Vice Chair) of opposite sex.”

² Only those elected under these conditions may use the title “Chair” or any other variation, except as specifically granted by the DPCA Executive Committee (e.g. “Acting Chair”) or under the bylaws of the country committee itself.

4. **Send minutes** of the Country Committee election meeting and certification of the election results (including full address and contact information of office-holders) to the International Secretary within 15 days of the election meeting (Section 5.4(b)). The minutes should be attested to by the Country Committee Chair and at least one other elected officer (Section 5.2(d)). The distribution of votes among voting representatives must be set at the time of the election and communicated to the International Secretary with the foregoing documents (Section 3.6(f) and Section 5.4(f)).
5. Send up-to-date Country Committee **Bylaws** to the International Secretary and International Counsel by January 31 of each year (Section 5.4(a)). The Bylaws should be attested to by the Country Committee Chair and at least one other elected officer (Section 5.2(b)).
6. Have at least 50 U.S. citizens of voting age with their principal residence in the geographic area of the Country Committee (regardless of verified or unverified status in the database) on your Country Committee **membership list**.
7. Successfully complete **membership certification** using the forms and procedures distributed by the International Secretary (Section 5.4(e))³ in accordance with the policies adopted by the DPCA ExCom (Section 5.4(d)), within the deadlines set by the DPCA ExCom or January 31, whichever is later. This form must be signed by the Chair and Secretary of the Country Committee.
8. In the absence of any of the above requirement, submit a written application for, and receive approval of, a **waiver** from the DPCA ExCom (Section 5.4(c)). The DPCA ExCom will consider waivers on a case by case basis and is under no obligation to grant waivers based on precedent. A waiver is not in effect until it is certified by the International Secretary and sent directly to the elected Chair or Acting Chair of the Country Committee. Such a waiver enumerates and sets a deadline or separate deadlines to meet all of the requirements not yet met. A written waiver for one requirement does not eliminate other requirements for compliance.⁴
9. **Attend** (a DPCA Voting Member from the Country Committee) at least one of any the three previous global meetings of the DPCA, either in-person or electronically (Section 2.4(b)).
10. The Country Committee must not be under **suspension** (Section 5.9 of the Charter).⁵

³ "By January 31st of each year, the Chair of each Country Committee shall certify to the International Chair of the DPCA that the membership database containing the names and such other information as the DPCA Executive Committee shall require is current and correct for certification of the number of members, and such certification must be attested to by the Secretary or Treasurer of such Country Committee."

⁴ For this reason, a Country Committee granted a specific waiver for a specific requirement may still fail to be in compliance.

⁵ A Country Committee or Committee-in-Formation may be suspended from full membership by a seven-eighths (7/8ths) vote of the DPCA Executive Committee or by a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote of the DPCA, which suspension shall be promptly communicated in writing to the Chair and Vice Chair of the affected Country Committee

11. **Comply “with applicable laws**, including without limitation the laws and regulations of the United States of America and the several States applicable to political parties and contributions to them (notably to the United States Federal Election Commission)” (Section 5.1).

Democrats Abroad Country Committee Election Procedures: DA-CCEP

The DPCA ExCom, in consultation with DPCA Voting Members, has adopted and distributed a set of minimum standards for Democrats Abroad Country Committee elections. These are provided in the Democrats Abroad Country Committee Election Procedures: DA-CCEP document which is available in the DA Wiki at:

<https://wiki.democratsabroad.org/display/ccBylaws/CC+Election+Procedures>

In the event that a Country Committee is In-Formation, or is out of Compliance without current DPCA recognized elected officers, elections must be closely coordinated with and carried out under the guidance of the Regional Vice Chair.

Items regularly requested by the DPCA International Secretary or Regional Vice Chairs, but not bearing directly on compliance

1. Up-to-date contact information for officers who move or fill vacancies in Country Committees and Chapters.
2. Designated Country Committee and/or Chapter Press Contacts, Social Media Contacts, VR-GOTV Contacts and Fundraising Contacts.
3. Field Plans, GOTV Plans, and other documents relating to Country Committee and Chapter activities.
4. Administrative access to local DA Country Committee websites and social media accounts (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.).
5. Copies of earned media coverage and paid advertisements.

Recommended minimum activities of a Country Committee

1. Comply with the Country Committee’s bylaws and the DA Charter.
2. Find U.S. citizens in the Country Committee or Chapter area and help them register to vote or request their ballots.
3. Conduct an Annual General Meeting (AGM) in the first half of the year to meet the requirements of the DA Charter and the Country Committee’s bylaws.

4. Hold easily accessible regular gatherings open to all members (in-person or electronically).
5. Update information on the Country Committee page on the www.democratsabroad.org web presence (minimum: current Country Committee Chair contact information and a schedule of upcoming meetings).
6. Attend the annual DPCA Global Meeting.
7. Attend annual or biennial Regional Meetings in your region.
8. Participate in monthly regional teleconferences and maintain contact with the appropriate Regional Vice Chair.
9. Maintain a social media presence OR request that the global Communications Committee manage social media on the Country Committee's behalf.
10. Locally promote www.VoteFromAbroad.org for voter registration/ballot request prior to federal elections.
11. Verify all Country Committee members by phone or other confirmed contact at least once every 4 years.
12. Assist with raising funds for DPCA where possible and appropriate.