

2021 Charter Amendments

Proposal No. 11 - Country Committee Admission Criteria – Increasing Minimum Membership

Sponsor(s): Kat Allikian, Regional Vice Chair for Asia Pacific, Merrill Oates (Hungary)

Co-Sponsors: Will Bakker, Regional Vice Chair for Europe, Middle East, and Africa

Purpose: This proposed amendment addresses the minimum membership size for Country Committees in formation, which has not been increased in over a decade despite the overall membership more than tripling since 2016 and which, at its current level, is widely-recognized as insufficient for a sustainable CC.

Affected Sections: Sections 5.2, 5.5

Text:

WHEREAS Section 5.2(a) of the Democrats Abroad Charter sets the membership threshold for admission to Democrats Abroad as a Country Committee at “at least fifty (50) U.S. citizens of voting age having their principal residence in that defined geographical area;” and

WHEREAS this threshold of fifty (50) members has remained unchanged in the Democrats Abroad Charter since at least 2011; and

WHEREAS the total global membership of Democrats Abroad has more than doubled since 2016 and the verified global membership of Democrats Abroad has more than tripled since 2016; and

WHEREAS at a minimum, three members are generally required to serve on a Nominations and Elections Committee and at least five additional members are generally needed to run for local office, constituting up to 16% of a 50-member in-formation Country Committee simply to elect local leaders; and

WHEREAS, as of the drafting of this proposed amendment, quorum for general meetings of the membership/election meetings in the five largest Country Committees of Democrats Abroad with stated quorum requirements ranges between 20-35 members, constituting under 0.30% of total members as of the 2021 membership count; and

WHEREAS, as of the drafting of this proposed amendment, quorum for general meetings of the membership/election meetings in the five smallest Country Committees of Democrats Abroad ranges between 5-20 members, constituting between 1.88%-8.13% of total members as of the 2021 membership count; and

WHEREAS the Country Committee Activation Guide notes that the 50-member minimum “is universally considered insufficient for a sustainable CC;” and

WHEREAS it is vital that all of our Country Committees have enough members to remain active and sustainable over the long-term; and

WHEREAS Democrats Abroad has informal initiatives and mechanisms in place to engage and involve members and volunteers in non-Country Committees, including active engagement by the relevant Regional Vice Chair to support and facilitate local activities; sponsorship by an existing Country Committee to include members in the sponsored country in messaging and activities; and placing key members of a non-Country Committee on regional teams; and

WHEREAS it can be damaging and demoralizing to both Country Committees and the DPCA when Country Committees fall out of compliance due to circumstances directly related to there being an insufficient number of members willing to do the bureaucratic work required of Country Committees;

BE IT RESOLVED that Section 5.2(a) of the Democrats Abroad Charter shall be amended as follows:

Section 5.2 (Admission)

To be admitted to Democrats Abroad as a Country Committee, a group must make application to the International Chair containing the following information:

(a) a membership list, certifying that the group is composed of at least one hundred fifty (150) ~~fifty (50)~~ U.S. citizens of voting age having their principal residence in that defined geographical area and who adhere to the principles of the Democratic Party of the United States of America.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Section 5.5 of the Democrats Abroad Charter shall be amended as follows:

Section 5.5 Committees in Formation

A country organization meeting all the requirements of Section 5.2 and having less than one hundred fifty (150) ~~fifty (50)~~ members of Democrats Abroad may, upon application to the International Chair of Democrats Abroad, be admitted as a Committee in Formation and thereafter may participate in activities of Democrats Abroad without the right to vote.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any Country Committee, regardless of membership size or compliance status, in existence at the time of the adoption of this amendment will remain a Country Committee of Democrats Abroad, subject to all other conditions laid forth in the Democrats Abroad Charter, and the following paragraph shall be added to Section 5.5 of the Democrats Abroad Charter:-

Any Country Committee in existence as of May 14, 2021 shall not be deemed out of compliance due solely to having fewer than 150 members after that date.