

**Report to EXCO on**  
**Servas Distant Vote DV Nov2010**  
**30 May – 30 November 2010**

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**Report Date:** 16 January 2011

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Detailed list of the voting for each member group  
DV Nov2010 Voter Mailout and Sample Voting Paper

**Distant Vote Schedule – Key Dates**

12 Nov 09 Timetable of Distant Votes sent to National Secretaries by SI General Secretary.

**30 May 10 Closing date for submitting motions**, SI General Secretary advises that six motions have been received by EXCO for DV Nov2010.

30 Aug 10 SI General Secretary sends a general announcement on DV Nov2010 to all countries on the “country@servas.org” list advising the motions to be decided and the voting procedure.

15 Sept 10 Distant Vote Administrator (DVA) sends a separate DV Nov2010 Voter Mailout by e-mail direct to the National Secretary of each Servas Member Group eligible to vote. This Voter Mailout included the information in the general announcement plus a request to confirm they have received the voter mailout.

31 Oct 2010 Distant Vote Administrator sends out the Voting Paper and instructions to National Secretaries of Member Groups eligible to vote.

**30 Nov 10 Voting Closes/Ends**

3 Dec 10 Results advised to SI General Secretary who announces the result of DV Nov2010 voting to National Secretaries and SI generally (4 Dec 2010).

**Voting Turnout & Results**

At the start of the DV Nov2010 process there were 78 Servas member groups eligible to vote. Of these, five were “provisional voters” since they had not “fulfilled all their financial obligations”. [SI Statutes VI 3) Voting at Meetings]

EXCO set a deadline of 15<sup>th</sup> October for these “provisional voters” to fulfil their obligations and be able to vote in DV Nov2010. Three countries met this deadline making 76 Servas member groups eligible and able to vote in this DV. No contact details are available for one of these countries. Thus 75 voting papers were sent out for DV Nov2010.

At the close of the voting, Midnight GMT 30 November 2010:

- Sixty (60) votes had been received.
- The total number of member group countries eligible and able to vote, was seventy six (76).
- Two voting papers returned without the Vote Number were invalid, they have been recorded as an invalid vote for each motion. Another voting paper contained two voting options for Motion 1 making the vote on this motion invalid.
- No late votes have been received since the close of the voting.
- The vote turnout was 80% of the voting papers sent (60 out of 75), with 77% returning valid voting papers (58 out of 75).

### Voting Results for Motions:

All motions achieved the **double majority** necessary for them to be declared adopted “as if they have been passed by a meeting of the General Assembly”. [SI Statutes VII 11) Distant Voting] (This required at least 30.4 Support/Yes votes, four tenths of the 76 of member groups allowed to vote in Distant Vote Nov2010.)

**Motion 1. Adopted as if passed by a meeting of the General Assembly**

Approve the 2008 Audited Accounts of Servas International and the reports of the Internal Audit Committee and the External Auditor.

Support/Yes = 53, Against/No = 1, Abstain = 3, Invalid = 3

**Motion 2. Adopted as if passed by a meeting of the General Assembly**

Approve the 2009 Audited Accounts of Servas International and the reports of the Internal Audit Committee and the External Auditor.

Support/Yes = 54, Against/No = 1, Abstain = 3, Invalid = 2

**Motion 3. Adopted as if passed by a meeting of the General Assembly**

Approve the 2011 and 2012 Budgets for Servas International.

Support/Yes = 49, Against/No = 4, Abstain = 5, Invalid = 2

**Motion 4. Adopted as if passed by a meeting of the General Assembly**

Approve the revised stamp fees as recommended by the Stamp Fee Review Committee as listed, to apply from 2011. (0 to 10 stamps a fee of CHF 00 per stamp, 11 to 50 fee CHF 10, 51 to 300 fee CHF 15, 301 to 550 fee CHF 18 and 551 and above fee of CHF 20 per stamp)

Support/Yes = 43, Against/No = 11, Abstain = 4, Invalid = 2

**Motion 5. Adopted as if passed by a meeting of the General Assembly**

Accept Sierra Leone as an official Member Group of Servas International, as recommended by the Membership Committee.

Support/Yes = 55, Against/No = 0, Abstain = 3, Invalid = 2

**Motion 6. Adopted as if passed by a meeting of the General Assembly**

Accept Ecuador as an official Member Group of Servas International, as recommended by the Membership Committee.

Support/Yes = 55, Against/No = 0, Abstain = 3, Invalid = 2

Results as declared 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2010.

A detailed list of the voting for each member group provided as an attachment.

### **Distant Vote Process**

The process used for DV Nov2010 followed the procedures as set out in the Section VII Distant Voting, of the SI Statutes and the Servas Regulations for Distant Voting. The key steps in the process were:

1. The proposed procedures for the election were sent to the SI General Secretary (SI Gen Sec) and EXCO for their approval around 23<sup>rd</sup> July. The proposal that the voting be conducted by e-mail using a unique Voting Paper Number to verify the authenticity of votes was accepted.
2. The Timetable for Distant Votes (sent out Nov 2009) set the closing date for DV Nov2010 and a schedule of key dates was established, in accordance with the Servas Regulations for Distant Voting and in consultation with the SI Gen Sec.
3. The formal DV Nov2010 process started with the General Announcement sent out by the SI Gen Sec on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2010. This was sent by e-mail to all National Secretaries and Servas contacts at their “country@servas.org” addresses as listed in the Dolphin system, with a copy to EXCO and SI Committees. The e-mail included three attachments, the announcement, background information and some accounts. It also contained the contact DVA address and the Distant Vote website address.

4. The Voter Mailout was sent to National Secretaries (Nat Secs) of Servas member groups eligible to vote at their e-mail address as listed in Dolphin on 15<sup>th</sup> September, with copies to EXCO and Area Co-ordinators. This mailout contained the same attachments as the announcement plus information on the DV process directly relevant to voters. (See attachments)
5. Both the General Announcement and the Voter Mailout were translated into Spanish, with both English and Spanish versions being posted on the Distant Vote website. My thanks to Pablo Colangelo for doing the Spanish translations of these and the voting information. Again thanks Pablo, a great contribution to the Distant Vote process. Where necessary, less formal e-mails were translated to and from Spanish using Google Translate. (A quick check with Francophone Servas groups indicated that there was no interest in having DV information translated into French.)
6. The Voter Mailout asked Nat Secs to confirm receipt of the mailout e-mail and to advise/confirm the contact details for the Authorised Voter for their country. It also asked if e-mail was an OK means of communication and if they could receive and read attachments in PDF format. No-one asked for DV information to be sent by fax or mail. Several people noted they had limited access to e-mail and/or slow line speeds.
7. In the six weeks following the Voter Mailout the list of Authorised Voters (mostly Nat Secs) with confirmed contact details grew. Several follow-up e-mails were sent to Nat Secs who had not yet replied. Finally in a few cases, the follow-up was an e-mail to other Servas contacts or a text/SMS message or a fax and in one case a phone call was tried.
8. The results of this process were:
  - a. Confirmed and acknowledged contact details, for 72 countries
  - b. One country (Latvia) with no contact details or Nat Sec
  - c. A e-mailing list for 75 of the 76 countries eligible to vote in DV Nov2010.
9. The voting papers and instructions (in English and Spanish) were e-mailed to seventy-five (75) Authorised Voters and National Secretaries on 31<sup>st</sup> October. (See attachments)  
A copy of the voting paper and instructions was also sent to EXCO for their information.
10. The voting papers were generated and sent using a database system so that each vote had the name of the country and a unique vote number as part of the message.  
Note: There was a technical problem with the text in the voting paper and instructions that made it difficult to read when received by voters. To work round this problem the instructions were sent out to all voters again plus a second very simple message with the voter specific information. Given the voter turnout, this appears to have been successful as a quick fix to this problem. It is expected that this problem can be solved for the next Distant Vote.
11. The votes received were printed, filed, recorded and an acknowledging “vote received” message sent to the voter.
12. Reminders of the close/end date and time for voting were sent to all voters who had not yet voted on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of November – 7 and 2 days before voting closed.
13. The authenticity of each vote received was confirmed by checking the Voting Paper Number and that the sender’s e-mail address was as advised by the voter earlier. No irregularities were found. A number of votes were initially unclear or omitted the Voting Paper Number, these were sent back to the voters seeking clarification or the Voting Paper Number. Most of these were returned and have been counted in the voting totals.
14. After the close/end of the voting 12:00 Midnight GMT 30 November, the 60 votes received were checked and counted. The results, as set out above, were e-mailed to the SI Gen Sec on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2010.
15. The SI Gen Sec e-mailed the result of the vote on each motion to Servas member groups, EXCO and SI Committees on the 4<sup>th</sup> December. This e-mail also advised that detailed results had been posted on the Distant Vote web page at:  
[http://www.servas.org/siexco/index.php/Distant\\_Vote#DV\\_Nov\\_2010](http://www.servas.org/siexco/index.php/Distant_Vote#DV_Nov_2010)
16. The vote e-mails etc. will be deleted early March 2011, ie. three months after the results were advised to Nat Secs.
17. This report to EXCO completes the Distant Vote process, apart from deleting the vote e-mails and destroying the printed copies.

Note:

- i. Throughout the Distant Vote process a dedicated e-mail address: **servasdva@pl.net** has been used. This has made it easy to collate Distant Vote correspondence and to direct incoming e-mails to a separate dedicated in-box.

### **Review of Distant Vote Process**

As Distant Vote Officer I believe that the distant vote process, as outlined above, generally appears to have worked satisfactorily for all concerned. To date no concerns have been drawn to my attention (apart from the text issues in voting papers). Thus I feel the distant vote process has been successful for my first full scale distant vote among all Member Group countries.

In particular:

- The timetable provided adequate time to get responses and follow-up where no confirmation of e-mail address etc. had been received.
- The use of two levels of translation, by volunteers for “formal items” and Google for other e-mails. This ensured that items critical to the process, eg. instructions and the voting paper, were accurately translated and allowed me as Election Officer to read and respond to e-mails in Spanish, so hopefully we both – me and the voter - “got the message”.
- Using e-mail as the “voting paper” in conjunction with the Voting Paper Number and a known e-mail address provided a simple way of voters advising how they wanted to vote.
- Manual counting and checking of votes was no problem – with 60 voters returned from the 76 Member Group countries and six motions - counting and tabulating was easily managed.

Generally, as the Regulations for Distant Voting are drafted, there is a to and fro communication process between the SI General Secretary (SI Gen Sec) and the Distant Vote Administrator (DVA):

- At the start the SI Gen Sec advises the closing date for motions to be submitted for the upcoming Distant Vote.
- Soon after this the SI Gen Sec advises the DVA that motions have been received, that a Distant Vote will be needed, and the text of the motions.
- The DVA runs the DV process, including collation and distribution of background information by e-mail. (Information was also posted on the DV web page.)
- At the end the DVA advises the SI Gen Sec of the results.
- Then the SI Gen Sec sends the results to Servas member groups and publishes the results within the Servas networks.

In practice there was an extra step – finalising the wording of the motions to be used on the voting papers. This occurred between the General Announcement, that included the draft motions as submitted, and the formal mailout to Distant Voters. In part for DV Nov2010 this related to the completion of the latest accounts and the protracted deliberations of the Membership Committee, as well as rewording motions and splitting compound motions into one decision per motion. This is a useful and desirable part of the process that facilitates the inclusion of timely information and clear wording in the Distant Vote. It also fills the function of the “agenda working group” process, used for recent General Assemblies, that assembles the motions received into an orderly agenda.

One issue that arose as we looked forward to the next DV was that the closing dates were the same for voting on the current DV Nov2010 and for submitting motions for the next DV May 2011. This is a result of adopting a six month cycle for Distant Votes and the deadline for submitting motions for a DV being six months before the close of voting. [SI Statutes VII 7) Distant Voting.] While there is clearly potential for confusion or overload, this timetable has the effect that the results of the current DV are not available at the time motions for the next DV are to be submitted – for better or worse.

### Recommendation:

- 1/ That a review be under taken of the pros and cons of having the same date for the close of DV voting and the deadline for the submission of motions for the next DV and if seen fit, the drafting of an amendment to the Distant Vote Statue to give more flexibility in timetabling Distant Votes.