



Organization of  
American States

# Official Report on Election Results

Electoral Process 2017-2018  
Nominating Committee  
Staff Association

Organization of American States

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## **I. Introduction**

In compliance with Article 43 of the Statutes of the Staff Association, the Nominating Committee hereby presents to the Staff Association Assembly the Official Report of the Results of the Elections for the Staff Committee and the Retirement and Pension Fund Committee for the 2017-2018 period.

For this electoral period, the Nominating Committee (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) was comprised as follows: Maria Elena De la Flor (President), Michael Bejos, Lorine Durski, Rosa Munarriz, Maria Jose Muñoz, Karoline Oliveira, and Maria Fernanda Solano.

## **II. Initial Actions**

### **1) Establishment of the Nominating Committee**

In accordance with Article 36 of the Statutes, the Nominating Committee was established on June 1<sup>st</sup>. On June 6<sup>th</sup>, the electorate was informed of the names of the members of the Committee assigned to coordinate this electoral process.

### **2) Identification and nomination of the candidates, information gathering and verification of signatures**

On June 6<sup>th</sup>, after its first meeting, the Nominating Committee sent an official notice (Staff News NC 1/17-18) via the email account of the Staff Association, which listed the President and members of the Committee, the requirements that candidates must meet and it included two links, one to the candidate profile format and the other to the nomination petition form. In said notice, the Committee informed that the deadline for presentation of candidates was June 19<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m., Washington, D.C. time. This date was later extended to June 28<sup>th</sup> to give more time for candidates to come forward.

On June 16<sup>th</sup>, the Committee sent an email - Staff News NC 2 - informing of the eligibility criteria for candidates and the code of conduct for the electoral process.

At the closing date for nominations, the Committee had received a total of fourteen (14) nomination petitions: two (2) from candidates for the presidency of the Staff Committee, ten (10) from candidates for membership in the Staff Committee, and two (2) for the Retirement and Pension Fund Committee: one (1) for president and one (1) for alternate.

Following the calendar established by the Statutes, after the corresponding verification and validation of the information received, on June 29<sup>th</sup> the Committee published in Staff News NC 3, the names and profiles of the eligible candidates for the Staff Committee and the Retirement and Pension Fund Committee for the 2017-2018 electoral process. It also

announced the dates for the elections as follows: July 12<sup>th</sup> for staff members away from headquarters and July 13<sup>th</sup> for staff members at headquarters.

### III. Coordination of activities during the Pre-Electoral Process

#### 1) Identification of the Volunteers for the Voting Tables

The Committee identified 32 volunteers to serve at the two designated voting tables in the General Services Building (GSB) and the Administration Building (ADM). There were 16 volunteers for the GSB and 16 for the ADM (2 persons per shift and each shift lasting one hour) assisting with the process of identifying the voters and collecting the ballots in the ballot boxes on election day.

Grouped by building, the volunteers were: **From the GSB:** Leonor Rivera, Eros Negrin, Rosario Monroy, Maria Florencia Fernandez, , Ana Lemos, Katia Eterovic, Maria Story, Fabiana Jaar, Rodrigo Zubieta, Brenda Santamaria, Alejandro Aristizabal, Beatriz Piñeres, Betty Arevalo, Maria Villavicencio, Mariano Vales and Agustina Olivera, **From the ADM and MNB:** Jaime Moreno-Valle, Eduardo Parada, Luisa Quintero, Martha Ramos, Rene Gutierrez, Cinnamon Elizabeth Bottaro, Fanny Morejon, Rodrigo Silva, Adriana Ospina, Luz Convers, Dilian A Martinez, Sheyla Carvalho, Luiz Coimbra, Fiorella Medina, Rocio Suarez and Margaret Palmer

#### 2) Identification of Volunteers for the Teller Committee

In accordance with Article 40 of the Statutes of the Staff Association, the Nominating Committee proposed the members of the Teller Committee, which was comprised of six (6) members and two (2) alternates. They were: Ignacio Alvarez (President), Melene Glynn, Alex Bravo, Gerardo Sanchez, Katherina Diaz-Viana, Cristobal Dupouy, and Francisco Montero. This Committee was responsible for receiving the ballot boxes and tallying the votes at the end of the election.

#### 3) Preparations for the Elections

During the preparatory process for the elections the Committee held various logistics coordination meetings, during which the following actions were agreed to:

- Request an updated list of the personnel who make up the electorate for both the OAS Retirement and Pensions Fund as well as the OAS Staff.
- Prepare the voters lists for headquarters (GSB, and ADM/MNB/CASITA), away from headquarters, and absentee voters, for both the Staff Committee and the Retirement and Pension Fund Committee.

- Maintain the two voters' lists system at Headquarters, requiring the electorate to vote only in the physical location where they work and informing them in advance of their voting location. For example, voters working in the GSB would only appear on the voters list at the GSB polling table, and voters working in the other buildings at headquarters in Washington (ADM, MNB and Casita) would appear only on the list located at the ADM polling table. (Staff News NC 4 of June 30th)
- Prepare and print delivery records for the ballot boxes and the voters' lists to be signed by the Committee members, the polling table volunteers, and the Teller Committee.
- Offer an absentee voting system for those staff members who would be out of office on election day. The Committee assigned one of its members to facilitate the voting process. The absentee voting service was offered from July 5<sup>th</sup> to July 11<sup>th</sup>. For the first time, Staff members who were away from headquarters during that period and who would not be present on Election Day (July 13<sup>th</sup>) were allowed to vote by email from their oas.org account. (Staff News NC 5 of July 5<sup>th</sup>)
- Instruct staff working at OAS Offices and other institutional entities in the member states to submit their votes by email from their oas.org account only to the President of the Nominating Committee.
- Apply the guidelines document on eligibility and campaign conduct that seeks to regulate aspects of the elections campaign and other areas regarding the eligibility of candidates not addressed in the Statutes. (Staff News NC 2 of June 16<sup>th</sup>)
- Make available the form for the submission of complaints and have copies of the form available at all polling tables. (Staff New NC 6, of July 7<sup>th</sup>)
- Dispatch an announcement exclusively for offices and associated entities regarding their process for voting on July 12<sup>th</sup>.

#### IV. 2017-2018 Electoral Process

Pursuant to the provisions of Articles 37 to 40 of the Statutes, the following activities related to organization of the elections held on July 12 and 13 were carried out.

- On Wednesday June 28<sup>th</sup>, e-mail reminders were sent to all voters in the offices of the GS/OAS and other affiliated institutions in the member states to inform them of 1) the electoral process for the Staff Committee and its president, and 2) the election of the representatives of the Retirement and Pension Fund Committee. Two ballots were attached to that e-mail, and the President of the Nominating Committee was identified as the only member of the Committee authorized to receive, print, and compile the ballots received on June 29.
- Also on June 28<sup>th</sup>, the Nominating Committee coordinated with the OAS area responsible for setting up the voting stations in the GSB and ADM buildings.
- On July 11<sup>th</sup>, the Committee held a briefing session with the volunteers at the voting tables. They were reminded to arrive a few minutes before their assigned shifts in order to ensure a smooth transition of the voting lists and ballot boxes. A guidelines-document outlining the procedures and expectations in carrying out their functions was also sent to the volunteers via e-mail.
- On July 11<sup>th</sup>, the Nominating Committee met with members of the Teller Committee to discuss their duties and responsibilities in the counting and final tallying of the votes on election day.
- On July 13<sup>th</sup> a reminder was sent to all voters at headquarters, convening the elections of the Staff Committee and the Retirement and Pension Fund Committee (NC 9). In addition, voting station volunteers were convened to the voting tables.
- All voting materials, including delivery records, ballot boxes, stationery, and pens were prepared and distributed for both the GSB and ADM buildings.
- As has been the standard practice in the past, and in order to avoid any confusion, the ballots were printed in two colors, one for the Staff Committee and the other for the Retirement and Pension Fund Committee.
- In addition, as has been done for a number of years, staff members were required to present their official OAS ID in order to exercise their right to vote.
- In the evening, once the voting process had ended at headquarters, the Nominating Committee submitted to the Teller Committee, - already installed in a predetermined location – the delivery records, which consisted of **six** voting lists, **four** ballot boxes and **six** envelopes; the latter contained the corresponding ballots for both voting locations (4), the ballots for absentee voting (4) and the ballots for the offices away from headquarters (2).
- After a complete count, the Teller Committee submitted to the Nominating Committee its final tally sheet, which listed the number of votes received by each candidate.
- Subsequently, the Committee communicated to staff the results of the 2017 elections (NC 9)

**1) Volunteers who participated in the 2017-2018 electoral process:**

A total of 47 volunteers actively participated in the election process on July 13th, 2017. Of that number **31 (65.96%)** were female and **16 (34.04%)** were male.

Although this year, compared to last year, has seen an increase in the number of male staff members volunteering to assist in carrying out the elections, female staff members continue to volunteer in larger numbers than their male counterparts.

Division of Groups of volunteers	Roles	Volunteer participation		
		Total	Female	Male
<b>Group 1:</b> Nominating Committee	Coordination of the electoral process, acceptance and validation of candidates, publication of results and production of the report	7	6	1
<b>Group 2:</b> Volunteers at voting stations	Assisting at voting stations	32	22	10
<b>Group 3:</b> Teller Committee	Ballot counting, validation of votes, and submission of the results	8	3	5
<b>Total</b>		47	31	16
		100%	65.96%	34.04%

## 2) Participation in the elections

### Staff Committee

For 2017, the total number of votes cast for the Staff Committee was **325**, of which **269 (82.77%)** was cast at headquarters with **12 (3.69%)** ballots cast in absentia. There were **44 (13.54%)** votes cast by staff members away from headquarters and there were **0** void and **0** blank ballots cast.

Voters by location		Male	%	Female	%	Total	Total
Headquarters	Votes - GSB	82	37.61%	136	62.39%	218	281
	Votes - ADM, MNB, and Museum	30	47.62%	33	52.38%	63	
Away from headquarters		16	36.36%	28	63.64%	44	44
Total voters		128	39.38%	197	60.62%	325	325

### Retirement and Pension Fund Committee

The total number of votes cast for Representative and Alternate of the Retirement and Pension Fund Committee was **263**, of which **218 (82.89%)** were cast at headquarters with **8 (3.04%)** ballots cast in absentia. There were **37 (14.07%)** votes cast by staff members away from headquarters, and there were **6** void and **15** blank ballots cast.

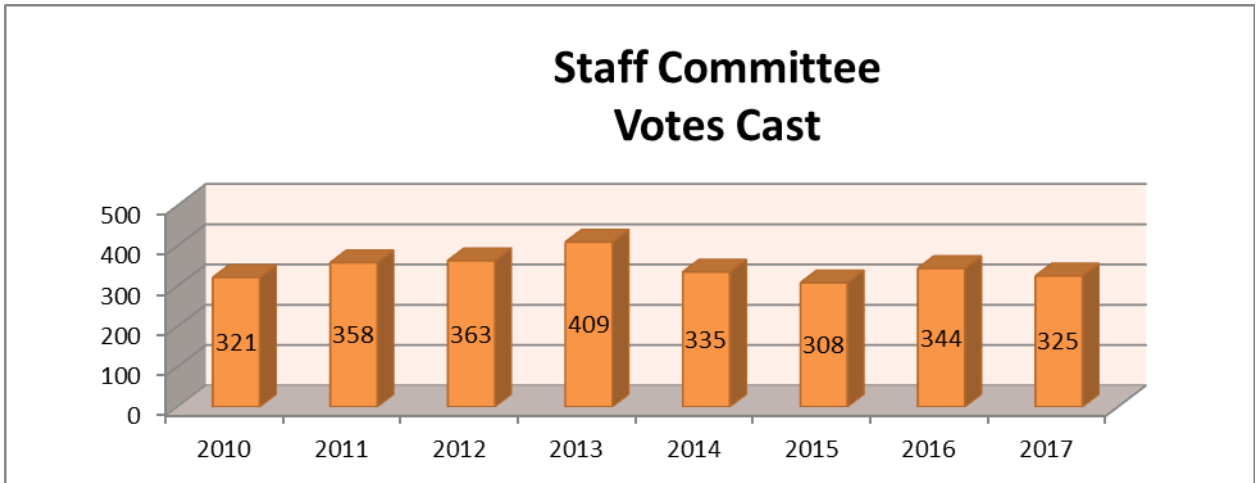
Voters by location		Male	%	Female	%	Total	Total
Headquarters	Votes - GSB	62	35.63%	112	64.37%	174	226
	Votes - ADM, MNB, and Museum	24	46.15%	28	53.85%	52	
Away from headquarters		15	40.54%	22	59.46%	37	37
Total voters		118	38.40%	162	61.60%	263	263



### 3) Historical data on participation

#### Staff Committee

In 2016 the number of votes cast for the Staff Committee was 344 compared with 325 in 2017. This means a decreased participation of 5.52% compared to 2016, representing 19 less voters.



Staff Committee								
Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Total ballots counted</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>325</b>
<b>In headquarters</b>	261	293	300	330	263	252	262	269
<b>Away from headquarters</b>	48	37	38	49	41	33	41	44
<b>Absentee</b>	12	28	25	30	31	23	41	12
<b>Void</b>	2	8	0	0	3	1	0	0
<b>Blank</b>	3	2	2	2	10	1	1	0

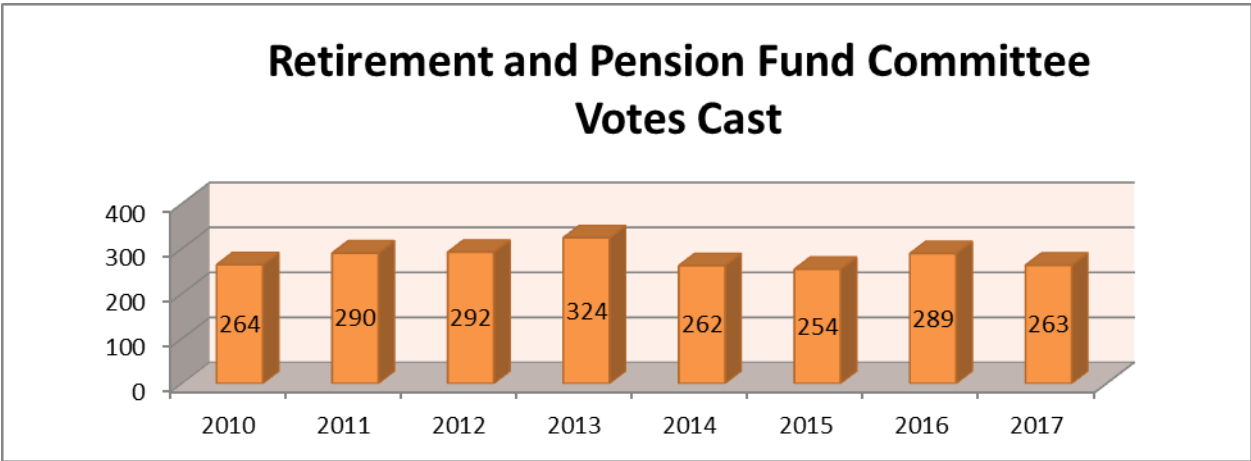
For the 2017-2018 elections, the Committee considered it important to include a comparative table to serve as a reference for the number of voters. The table shows the total number of eligible voters employed at the OAS as of May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017, (Information provided by the Department of Human Resources) and the number of staff members who participated in the electoral process.

**2017-2018 Elections – Staff Committee**

OAS employees	Total number of Employees	Number of staff members who voted	%
At headquarters	391	281	71.87%
Away from headquarters	105	44	41.90%
<b>Total</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>65.52%</b>

**Retirement and Pension Fund Committee**

With regard to the Retirement and Pension Fund Committee, there was a similar trend. In 2016 the number of votes cast was 289 and in 2017, 263, showing a decreased participation of 9%, which represents 26 less voters.



<b>Retirement and Pension Fund Committee</b>								
<b>Year</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>Total ballots counted</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>263</b>
<b>In headquarters</b>	205	217	230	249	202	194	210	218
<b>Away from headquarters</b>	47	44	38	48	36	34	47	37
<b>Absentee</b>	12	29	24	27	24	26	32	8
<b>Void</b>	6	4	3	0	4	1	0	6
<b>Blank</b>	10	7	2	25	0	1	1	15

The table below shows the total number of eligible voters in the Retirement and Pension Fund as of June 7, 2017, (Information provided by the Office of the Retirement and Pension Fund) and the number of staff members and associates who participated in the electoral process.

**2017-2018 Elections – Retirement and Pension Fund Committee**

<b>Eligible voters</b>	<b>Total eligible voters</b>	<b>Number of voters</b>	<b>%</b>
At headquarters	300	226	75.33%
Away from headquarters	118	37	31.36%
<b>Total</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>62.92%</b>

## V. Results of the 2017-2018 Electoral Process

### STAFF COMMITTEE

#### **For President:**

1.	Steven Griner	222 Votes	Elected
2.	Blanca Ochoa	98 Votes	

#### **For Members:**

1.	Luiz Marcelo Azevedo	205 Votes	Elected
2.	Rebeca Omaña Peñaloza	192 Votes	Elected
3.	Adam Ayouba Siegel	177 Votes	Elected
4.	Luis Villalobos	170 Votes	Elected
5.	María Elena Cruz	161 Votes	Elected
6.	Magali Santos	144 Votes	Elected
7.	Pamela Izaguirre	127 Votes	Elected
8.	Clara Ximena Hoyos	123 Votes	
9.	Rafael del Castillo e Melo Silva	116 Votes	
10.	Jan S. Astaphan	104 Votes	

### RETIREMENT AND PENSION FUND COMMITTEE

#### **Representative:**

1.	Carla M. Sorani Hluchan	218 Votes	Elected
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#### **Alternate:**

1.	Beatriz Ferro-Santos	204 Votes	Elected
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The above data shows that there were two (2) candidates for President of the Staff Committee; ten (10) candidates for Staff Committee members (50% female and 50% male). Of these latter candidates, and based on the final results, one (1) president and seven (7) members were elected.

As for the Retirement and Pension and Pension Fund Committee, there were a total of two candidates, one for Representative (female) and one for Alternate (female).

## VI. Recommendations

Having completed the 2017-2018 electoral process, the Nominating Committee presents the following recommendations, which it hopes will help to improve efficiency and ensure the optimal application of procedures.

It should be noted that some of the recommendations below were put forward by previous nominating committees and, in the view of the current Nominating Committee, continue to be valid.

### **Recommendations from previous nominating committees:**

To consider all aspects of the regulations related to the organization of elections to include:

- Appointment of the Nominating Committee by the Staff Association within a longer time span so that elections can be organized in a more efficient manner.
- Analysis and implementation during the next election process, of the proposed regulations document for voting away from headquarters in order to ensure a secret ballot.
- Adoption of all guidelines established by the Nominating Committee related to eligibility and code of conduct for election campaigns, which bridges the gaps in the statutes currently in force.
- Requirements for preparing the voting lists, the deadline for preparing said lists, the colors of the ballots, the content of communiques, and the language(s) to be used be clearly defined.
- Continue the policy of having voters present their official OAS ID in order to exercise their right to vote.
- Prepare a manual for the Teller Committee. Said manual should clearly establish the duties and responsibilities of the Committee as well as the procedure for counting the votes, the use of the delivery records, and the definitions of valid, blank, and void votes, among others.
- That the Nominating Committee consists of at least two (2) staff members from each of the buildings where voting takes place.
- Continue implementation of the conflict resolution mechanism, established for the first time in this election.
- Organize events where voters and candidates can interact and the latter can present their proposals to staff.

### **Recommendations of the 2017 Nominating Committee:**

In addition to the recommendations of previous Nominating Committees, the 2017 Nominating Committee places on record the following recommendations for future election processes. The Nominating Committee recognizes that some of these recommendations may entail some statutory amendments, but considers these measures necessary in order to strengthen future electoral processes.

1. That the incoming Staff Committee establish a sub-committee or working group to review existing procedures for voting, and thereafter:
  - a. Develop a guide for future Nominating Committees which would include best practices from previous elections cycles, a code of conduct, duties and responsibilities, etc.
  - b. Recommend amendments that will establish clear and specific voting procedures for eligible voters who are located in offices or agencies away from Headquarters, including the establishment of an e-voting system to be implemented in 2018 for eligible voters located at Headquarters and in offices or agencies away from Headquarters.
  - c. This committee or working group can be composed of staff volunteers as follows: an IT expert, an elections expert, a member of the Staff Committee (as liaison), and two or three members of previous Nominating Committees. An e-voting system offering more flexibility in absentee voting for staff away from headquarters will ensure greater participation in the elections as well as 100% confidentiality of the ballot, which the current system does not provide.
2. That consideration be given to extending the time allowed for the Nominating Committee to organize the elections. The current five- to six-week time-frame, which occurs during a period of heightened activity for all areas of the General Secretariat, is insufficient for the breadth of work that needs to be completed by the Nominating Committee and leaves little time for candidates to develop and share their ideas.
3. That the Nominating Committee consists of at least two (2) staff members from each of the buildings at headquarters – GSB, ADM, and MNB/Casita, and should be composed by individuals from different Secretariats and backgrounds.
4. In order to allow voters to make more informed decisions on Election Day, the Nominating Committee could consider organizing a town hall style event in which candidates share their plans and ideas with staff members.
5. That the Nominating Committee clearly communicate and emphasize the need for staff members to review and confirm their information in the distributed voters lists, to ensure its correctness.

6. That the Nominating Committee provide explicit instructions to the Staff away from Headquarters not to sign their ballots.
7. That the Teller Committee be increased by at least two persons, to facilitate more timely counting procedures. Also, it should be composed by individuals from different Secretariats and backgrounds.
8. That two observers be appointed to be present during the ballot count by the Teller Committee in future elections. We suggest including one member of the Nominating Committee and a staff volunteer – preferably an elections expert.
9. Continue with the use of the document - created and used for the first time by the 2016 Nominating Committee - detailing the number of blank ballots received, ballots unused, and ballots used to ensure transparency in the final ballot count.
10. Continue the use of the guidelines established by the previous Nominating Committee related to eligibility and code of conduct for election campaigns, as well as the conflict resolution mechanism.
11. Prepare a guide for the Teller Committee on the procedures to be followed as part of their duties and responsibilities on Election Day.

**Other Issues Emerging from the 2017 Elections Process:**

The Nominating Committee brings to the attention of the 2017-2018 Staff Association Committee a formal complaint presented by a staff member via the established Conflict Resolution Mechanism. The staff member formally requests that OAS local contractors be included in the list of eligible voters for Staff Committee elections and allowed to vote therein. A copy of the complaint is annexed to this report, as well as correspondence from the Nominating Committee on this matter. The Nominating Committee hereby submits this matter to the Staff Association Committee for due consideration and necessary action.