

**Report to EXCO on**  
**Servas Distant Vote DV Nov2013**  
**30 May – 30 November 2013**

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**Report Date:** 29 January 2014

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**Distant Vote Schedule – Key Dates**

24 July 2013 A general announcement of the procedures and a reminder of key closing dates for Distant Vote DV Nov2013 sent to National Secretaries by SI General Secretary.

**30 July 2013 Closing date for submitting motions**

Following the closing date for motions, the SI General Secretary advised that several motions had been received and that EXCO was discussing wording of the motions for DV Nov2013. No preliminary advice of the topics or draft wording of the motions received was sent to National Secretaries by SI General Secretary.

16 Aug 2013 Distant Vote Administrator (DVA) sends the first DV Nov2013 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.

30 Aug 2013 SI General Secretary sends the final wording of the five motions for DV Nov 2013, including Spanish translation, to the DVA.

31 Aug 2013 DVA sends the motions and voting procedures to confirmed voters and to the National Secretaries that have not yet replied.

2 Sep 2013 DVA also sends the motions to all Servas contacts via their “country@servas.org” email addresses.

30 Oct 2013 Distant Vote Administrator sends out the Voting Paper and instructions to National Secretaries (or nominated Voters) of Member Groups eligible to vote.

Votes were acknowledged by email as they were received and countries that had not yet voted were sent a reminder of the closing date on the 20<sup>th</sup> November.

**30 Nov 13 Voting Closes/Ends**

4 Dec 13 Results advised to SI General Secretary so the result of DV Nov2013 voting can be announced to National Secretaries and SI generally.

24 Jan 2014 The results, with Spanish translation, sent to National Secretaries by SI General Secretary.

## **Voting Turnout & Results**

At the start of the DV Nov2013 process there were 77 Servas Member Groups eligible to vote. All were assumed eligible to vote in this Distant Vote since the SI Treasurer had not advised otherwise. [as provided for in SI Statutes VI 3) Voting at Meetings]

Thus voting papers for DV Nov2013 were sent to the seventy seven (77) Member Group countries eligible and able to vote.

At the close of the voting, Midnight GMT 30 November 2013:

- Fifty four (54) votes had been received.
- One voting paper returned without the Vote Number was invalid, it has been recorded as an invalid vote for each of the motions.
- No late votes have been received since the close of the voting.
- The vote turnout was 70% of the voting papers sent (54 out of 77), with 69% returning valid voting papers (53 out of 77).

### Voting Results for Motions:

All five 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 30.8 Support/Yes votes, four tenths of the 77 of member groups allowed to vote in Distant Vote Nov2013.)

### **All motions adopted as if passed by a meeting of the General Assembly.**

**Motion 1.** Support/Yes = 45, Against/No = 4, Abstain = 3, Invalid = 2  
MOTION EXCO - 001 - 2013. YOUTH TEAM ELECTION

**Motion 2.** Support/Yes = 37, Against/No = 10, Abstain = 6, Invalid = 1  
MOTION EXCO - 002 - 2013. INDIVIDUAL MEMBER STATUS

**Motion 3.** Support/Yes = 40, Against/No = 6, Abstain = 7, Invalid = 1  
MOTION EXCO - 003 -- 2013. NATIONAL PEACE SECRETARY/COMMITTEE

**Motion 4.** Support/Yes = 36, Against/No = 6, Abstain = 10, Invalid = 2  
MOTION USA - 004 - 2013. FOREIGN PERSON REQUESTING A SERVAS LOI

**Motion 5.** Support/Yes = 45, Against/No = 4, Abstain = 2, Invalid = 3  
MOTION EXCO - 005 - 2013. SCOPE OF SI HANDBOOK

The full text of the motions, with the Spanish version, is attached at the end of this report.

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

### **Distant Vote Process**

The process used for DV Nov2013 followed the procedures as set out in the Section VII Distant Voting of the SI Statutes and the Servas Regulations for Distant Voting. The process used for DV Nov 2013 was essentially the same as for DV Nov2010 & DV Nov2011, the key steps are summarised below with comments specific to DV Nov2013 in italics:

1. The proposed procedures and timetable were advised to EXCO and approved.
2. The formal DV Nov2013 process started with the General Announcement 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 announcement advised the timetable and an outline of the process.
3. 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 16<sup>th</sup> August, 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.  
*The e-mail addresses were downloaded from Dolphin mid-August, thus later problems did not affect DV Nov2013 directly.*

4. Both the General Announcement and the Voter Mailout were translated into Spanish. Translations has been a shared task this time. First, thanks to the SI General Secretary, Jaime. Second, thanks to Yanelli Rodriguez in Mexico, one of the list of potential translators offered by Dinora Sanz of Servas Uruguay. Where necessary, less formal e-mails were translated to and from Spanish using Google Translate.  
*Regrettably information relating to DV Nov 2013 has not be posted to the Distant Vote section of the SI website. In the past this provided a backup to the information sent by e-mail.*
5. The Voter Mailout asked Nat Secs to confirm receipt of the mailout e-mail and to advise/confirm the contact details for the person voting for their country.  
*The results of this process were:*
  - a. *Confirmed and acknowledged contact details, for 63 countries.*
  - b. *The voting e-mail list was these 63, plus 14 “no-reply” countries making the total of 77 countries eligible to vote in DV Nov2013.*
  - c. *A number of the Voter Mailout e-mails were returned with “mail delivery issues”. Every effort was made to address and resolve these issues promptly .*
6. The voting papers and instructions (in English and Spanish) were e-mailed to seventy-seven (77) nominated Voters or National Secretaries on 30thOctober. A copy of the voting paper and instructions was also sent to EXCO for their information.
7. 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. As they came in, votes were filed, recorded and an acknowledging “vote received” message sent to the voter. A reminder was sent to countries that had not yet voted. Several votes that were unclear or missing the Voting Paper Number were returned to voters so they could rectify the problem.
8. 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.
9. The results, as set out above, were e-mailed to the SI Gen Sec on 4th December 2013 who sent the result to Servas Member Groups, EXCO and SI generally on the 24<sup>th</sup> January 2014.
10. This report to EXCO completes the Distant Vote process, apart from deleting the vote e-mails and destroying the printed copies.

Note:

- i. Again 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.
- ii. No on-line discussion group was set up for DV Nov 2103. This reflected the miniscule use of the Google Groups forums set up for earlier DVs and the late availability of any information on the topics or draft wording of the motions.
- iii. I received comments on the motions from Amir Levy in Israel and David Northey in France. These were the only comments relating to the motions that I received. Since we did not have a discussion forum for this Distant Vote I agreed with Amir and David to send their comments out with the voting papers.
- iv. Since by 23<sup>rd</sup> December, it appeared the SI General Secretary had not yet sent the DV results to Nat Secs, I copied my follow-up email to him to EXCO with a copy of the results.

### **Review of Process for DV Nov2013**

As Distant Vote Officer I feel that the distant vote process, as outlined above, has been somewhat of a learning exercise for EXCO, with the to and fro communication process between the SI General Secretary (SI Gen Sec) and the Distant Vote Administrator (DVA) problematic at times.

That said, DV Nov 2013 generally appears to have worked out satisfactorily and it is great to have completed our first Distant Vote together.

I feel these comments and issues that arose during the conduct of DV Nov 2013 should be recorded:

1. A few voters expressed concern that there was no opportunity to comment on the wording of the motions, before the voting process started. They were also concerned that there was no supporting information with the motions to explain their intent and the reasoning behind them. In previous Distant Votes, the draft motions were sent out to National Secretaries at

the start of the process, providing several months for comment on the motions and their wording.

2. I was somewhat surprised that EXCO decided to take over a number of the motions, ending up as the mover of all five motions and then apparently spent significant time discussing them and their wording. While Section 7 of the Distant Vote Statute provides for member groups to request that a motion be included in a Distant Vote, it also requires this to be supported by at least one tenth of the member groups. The intent was to ensure reasonable support for potential motions and to prompt some consideration and discussion of the wording. In contrast to this time, in the previous Distant Vote, 3 of the 4 draft motions were withdrawn before the final voting papers were sent out.
3. I am concerned that it took seven weeks for the result of the Distant Vote to be sent to National Secretaries. The reason behind the revised Distant Vote timetable, adopted at the GA2012 in Piaski, was to allow the results of a Distant Vote to be published before the closing date for motions for the next Distant Vote. The logic being that any follow-on motions should be based on or reflect or the results of the previous Distant Vote.
4. In the event, the results of DV Nov 2013 were sent out just 7 days before the closing date for the submission of motions for DV May 2014!
5. A number of our National Secretaries and voters seem to use mobile phones and tablets to receive and respond to e-mails. As a result long e-mails and/or attachments get limited, if any attention. As I noted last time:

“While ‘web based’ communication makes it easier to view/read longer documents, the recipient needs to go to the web page to read it. Prompting that may be not be easy. A Distant Vote system may be a useful addition to Dolphin (or its successor) and the Servas web site as Servas becomes more electronic – integration and operational efficiency may be an appropriate trade-off against reduced independence.”
6. Finally, I wrote several times to Mirek, the SI Treasurer, asking if any Servas Member Groups would not be eligible to vote in this Distant Vote because they had not “fulfilled their obligations to Servas International”, as required by SI Statutes VI 3) Voting at Meetings. Since I received no reply I had to assume all Member Groups were eligible to vote.

**MOTIONS PASSED in DISTANT VOTE NOV 2013.**

**Mociones aprobadas en VOTO A DISTANCIA 11 2013.**

**MOTION EXCO – 001 – 2013. YOUTH TEAM ELECTION**

In recognition of what has already been accomplished by the Servas Youth Team appointed at the General Assembly 2012 and its plans already in place for further youth activities, the Distant Vote now reconsiders the decision to hold an election by distant vote for a new team. Instead the Distant Vote endorses and elects as a group those members of the existing team who are willing and able to continue in their role until the next General Assembly planned for 2015. The existing team members elected are:

Reut Harel (Israel)	Janek Dzierzawski (Poland),
Gonzalo Forero (Colombia),	Heather Mason (USA),
Nauman Naseem (Pakistan)	Cristian Ferrero (Argentina),
Bina Sengar (India)	

In addition, efforts will be made by Exco and the team to ensure there is worldwide publicity to make known the opportunity for all those interested to participate in the work of the team. New members will be invited to join the team at the joint discretion of the team and Exco.

En reconocimiento de aquello que hasta el momento se ha alcanzado en el Equipo Juventud Servas, nombrado en la Asamblea General 2012 y de sus planes en ejecución para futuras actividades juveniles, el Voto a Distancia reconsidera ahora ejecutar una elección de un nuevo equipo mediante el voto a distancia. En su lugar, el Voto a Distancia apoya y elige como grupo a aquellos miembros del equipo existente que estén dispuestos y en condiciones de continuar en su cargo hasta que tenga lugar la próxima Asamblea General 2015. El equipo existente consiste de los siguiente miembros:

Reut Harel (Israel)	Janek Dzierzawski (Polonia),
Gonzalo Forero (Colombia),	Heather Mason (E.U.A.),
Nauman Naseem (Pakistán)	Cristian Ferrero (Argentina),
Bina Sengar (India)	

Adicionalmente, EXCO y el equipo Juventud harán todos los esfuerzos para asegurar que haya adecuada publicidad alrededor del mundo para dar a conocer las oportunidades a aquellos interesados en participar en la labor del equipo. Nuevos miembros serán invitados a formar parte del equipo, a discreción del Equipo Juventud y de EXCO.

### **MOTION EXCO – 002 – 2013. INDIVIDUAL MEMBER STATUS**

To Include in the ITEM I General Servas Information of the SI Handbook the definition of the Individual Membership of Servas as follows:

Servas Individual membership status is given to persons recognized as travelers, hosts and the people who make up the leadership of the organization at the international and national level in each group, the key people in each national group, the people who run projects in Servas with proper registrations and authorizations and in short, each member to be recognized by the authorities of a national group or by the authorities of Servas International.

Incluir en el ITEM I – Información General de Servas – del Manual de Servas Internacional la definición de membresía individual de Servas como a continuación se describe: El Estatus de Miembro Individual de Servas se otorga a las personas reconocidas como viajeros, anfitriones y personas que conforman la dirección de la organización a nivel internacional y a nivel de cada grupo nacional, las personas claves de cada grupo nacional, las personas que ejecutan proyectos en Servas con las debidas inscripciones y autorizaciones y en fin, todo aquel miembro que sea reconocido por las autoridades de los grupos nacionales o por las autoridades de Servas Internacional.

### **MOTION EXCO – 003 -2013. NATIONAL PEACE SECRETARY/COMMITTEE**

To comply with our values of peace, each Servas member country should make every effort to have a National Peace Secretary elected and/or Peace Committee, and have it listed in the Key persons Dolphin section. Also in case of having a national webpage or other media, each Servas member country should keep record and publish UN peace related activities, most notably in countries where there are Servas International representatives at a UN venue, so as to support their efforts in any feasible way.

Cumplir con nuestros valores de Paz, cada país miembro de Servas deberá hacer todos los esfuerzos para tener un Secretario Nacional de Paz electo y/o un Comité de Paz e incluirlos en la lista de las personas Clave en la respectiva sección de Dolphin. Así mismo, en el caso que el grupo tenga una página web nacional o cualquier otro medio, cada País Miembro de Servas deberá llevar un registro y publicar las actividades de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas relativas a paz, con mayor énfasis en aquellos países donde hay representantes de Servas Internacional en las sedes de las Naciones Unidas, de manera que se apoyen sus esfuerzos en cualquier forma factible.

### **MOTION USA – 004 – 2013. FOREIGN PERSON REQUESTING A SERVAS LOI**

(Drafted by Servas USA and submitted by EXCO)

To help assure good Servas visits, all National Servas Groups are to ask every foreign person requesting a Servas Letter of Introduction (LOI) whether s/he has ever been a Servas Traveler before. If the answer is "no", proceed as usual with the background check and interview to issue an LOI. If the answer is "yes", ask which countries issued the LOI and contact each Country to check if there is a reason for denying a new LOI. From this inquiry, the Country requested to issue a current LOI can decide whether it is in the best interests of Servas to allow this foreign person to be an approved Servas Traveler.

Como colaboración para asegurar buenos visitantes Servas, todos los grupos nacionales Servas deberán preguntar a cada persona extranjera que esté solicitando sus cartas de presentación (LOI) si esta persona ha sido alguna vez Viajero Servas. Si la respuesta es "no", se deberá proceder normalmente con la revisión de los antecedentes y la entrevista para emitir una LOI. En cambio, si la respuesta es "sí", se deberá preguntar cuáles países han emitido la respectiva LOI y contactarlos para verificar si existe alguna razón para negar la emisión de la nueva LOI. De acuerdo a la investigación realizada, el país solicitado para emitir la LOI podrá decidir si por el bien de Servas es adecuado permitir que el extranjero sea un viajero autorizado de Servas.

### **MOTION EXCO – 005 -2013. SCOPE OF SI HANDBOOK**

To define the scope of Servas International Manual as follows:

The handbook of Servas International is a guide to the procedures for officials Servas International and the reference document on Servas procedures for national groups. It contains recommendations of the way things should be done in the organization and provides the basis for implementing the statutes of the organization. The SI Handbook is regulated by the Statutes of Servas International.

Definir el alcance del Manual de Servas Internacional como se indica:

El manual de Servas Internacional es una guía de procedimientos para los responsables de Servas Internacional y un documento de referencia para los grupos nacionales. Contiene recomendaciones acerca modo en que se deben hacer las cosas en la organización y aporta las bases para implementar los estatutos de la organización. El Manual de Servas Internacional está regulado por los Estatutos de Servas Internacional.





