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IRSA Conduct of Committee Elections

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Definitions

Asynchronous	Where communications occur at widely different times.
Cast vote	A vote which is either "Yes" or "No".
Chair	The chairman, chairwoman, or chairperson of the Election Meeting.
Committee	A general term for the Executive Committee (EC) or any EC committee or sub-committee.
Election Meeting	An election is a special kind of meeting, where the "proposal" is the presentation of candidate(s) to be discussed and voted on. For the purpose of these guidelines, an Election Meeting shall be conducted on the IRSA Forum, and shall use the "poll" feature of the Forum.
Electronic communication	A means of exchanging information including but not limited to the World Wide Web, the Internet, e-mail, fax, telephone, message boards, discussion forums, video conferencing, audio conferencing.
Forum	A software application which supports asynchronous electronic communication, often called a discussion forum or discussion board, accommodating Members in different time zones.
Member	A member of the Election Meeting.
Participated	A voting record which is one of "Yes", "No", or "Abstain".

These guidelines cover internal EC elections, such as the election of an official IRSA Representative at an international event, or the election of the chairman of an ad hoc committee. The guidelines may also be used by committees and sub-committees of the EC.

In overview, the guidelines provide that discussion is private, and that each candidate is voted on separately, Yes or No, in a secret ballot. To be elected, a candidate must receive a majority of “Yes” votes in a quorate Election Meeting (even if there is only one candidate). Where the voting is inquorate or no result is declared, further rounds of voting may be called until the position(s) are filled.

Notification

The Election Meeting is notified by a message on a Forum thread constructed specifically for the election.

Nominations

The Election Meeting is opened by the Chair, and a call for nominations is made. Nomination(s) are seconded and discussed. A nomination names the proposed candidate and provides the name of the nominator. Self-nomination is welcome, which is the equivalent of volunteering.

Seconding

Each nomination must be seconded before the person named becomes a candidate who may receive a vote. The seconder names the candidate and provides their own name. In the case of a self-nomination, two seconders are required.

Discussion

The Chair indicates the time limit for discussion. Members consider the nominations and the election with no formal limits on the number of messages they may post. The Chair has the authority to prevent excessive posts by a Member if they are considered dilatory or obstructive to the election.

The Chair has the authority to require that all messages are germane – relevant to the election – and to edit or delete messages which are not. The Chair also has the authority to require that all messages address the issues and not the personalities, and may edit or delete offending messages.

In the context of discussion involving candidates, it may be thought difficult to avoid discussing personalities. The required guidance is given in the document on committee decorum, and summarised here:

“A distinction is commonly made between ‘the person’ and ‘the behaviour’. While behaviour can be accurately described in a variety of ways, ranging from objectionable to exemplary, a candidate is always respected and their motives neither questioned nor judged. Members shall disagree without being disagreeable. Members shall focus on what is said and not on

the person saying it. Members shall be as respectful of others as they would wish others to be of themselves.”

Subsidiary proposals

During the Election Meeting, subsidiary proposals may be made. While the subsidiary proposal “Postpone” can be discussed, the others cannot be debated. Sometimes a subsidiary proposal requires a two-thirds majority to be passed. If a subsidiary proposal is defeated at its vote, it may be re-presented after a reasonable period. The following is the complete list of permitted subsidiary proposals in an Election Meeting; no other proposals are permitted.

Postpone. Proposal to cease the Election Meeting until a specified date, and re-start it from the beginning at that time.	Debateable	Simple majority
Consider formally. Proposal to limit the number of responses a Member may make during discussion and debate (see note below).	Not debateable	Simple majority
Appeal the decision of the Chair. Proposal to overturn a specified <i>decision</i> of the Chair. Although no Member may post a message in discussion of the proposal, apart from the message of the proposer which proposes the appeal, the Chair is permitted one message in defence of their decision.	Not debateable	Simple majority
Adjourn. Proposal to suspend the Election Meeting. The proposal usually provides for a date on which the Election Meeting would resume, or provides that this date shall be “at the call of the Chair”. The Election Meeting resumes and continues from the point in time at which it was suspended.	Not debateable	Simple majority
Extend the time limit. Proposal to increase a specified time limit of the Election Meeting – for discussion or for voting – to a specified value.	Not debateable	2/3 majority
Suspend the rules. Proposal to suspend (disregard) the rules of the Election Meeting. The proposal states what the proposer wishes to be done, and does not refer to any specific rule as such.	Not debateable	2/3 majority

Note on “Consider formally”. The intention of this subsidiary proposal is to focus discussion, so that the Election Meeting may arrive efficiently at the voting period.

When considering formally the election and candidates, Members are limited to two (2) responses (messages, posts).

When considering formally a subsidiary proposal, Members are limited to one (1) response to the proposal in the form of a complete message or posting.

The response limit comes into force after the “consider formally” proposal is passed, and previous posts in the thread (if any) are ignored for purposes of counting towards the limit.

The time limit for discussion is unaffected, regardless of whether the “consider formally” proposal succeeds or fails.

Enquiries: other kinds of discussion

While the Election Meeting is in progress, questions can be posted and messages sent in answer (which do not count towards any message limit if the election is being “considered formally”). These are three of the more common enquiries.

Point of order. A Member may question whether, or state that, a rule has been broken. The Chair decides whether there has indeed been a breach of the rules of the Election Meeting or decorum, and states their reasons briefly.

Procedural inquiry of the Chair. A Member may ask the Chair about the rules or the procedure of the Election Meeting or about decorum. The Chair provides an answer. The Chair’s answer is not a decision, and may not be appealed. If a Member believes that the Chair’s answer is incorrect, they are then obliged to act contrary to the answer and wait for the Chair to rule that act out of order. The decision of the Chair can then be appealed.

Request for information from a Member. A Member may ask the Chair for information, naming the Member who is believed to possess that information. The Chair has the authority to permit the named Member to reply, or to refuse the request for information.

Voting procedure

The Chair calls for a secret vote after discussion ends and specifies the time limit for voting.

To be a candidate for election, a nomination must be seconded.

Voting shall be carried out for each candidate, even where there is only one candidate, to ensure that the resulting election has the approval of the majority of the Members.

The Chair shall use the “poll” feature for voting, set up to ensure the identities of voters are secret, and to make the count of the votes viewable by the Members.

A poll thread is created and opened, one for each candidate. Members may cast a vote for each candidate, “Yes/For” or “No/Against”, or may abstain by indicating “Abstain”.

Quorum

For the EC, if at least 5 Officers have participated for at least one candidate, the Chair formally announces the result as in the next section.

For the EC, if no candidate poll shows that at least 5 Officers have participated, the Chair formally announces “Inquorate election” and specifies a further round of voting as below.

For a committee or sub-committee, the quorum is a number decided in advance by the committee or sub-committee Chair in consultation with the committee or sub-committee, and may be a number as small as 0 (when the Chair would exercise a casting vote). If no number has been decided, then it is that number which corresponds to the majority of the committee or sub-committee Members.

Announcing the election result

The candidate with the largest majority of cast votes (Yes or No) shall be declared elected.

If the candidate with the largest number of "Yes" votes has not received a majority of the votes cast (Yes or No), the Chair formally declares "No election for the position, no majority", and specifies a further round of voting, as below.

Two examples may help to clarify this point. It may be that the candidate with the largest number of "Yes" votes received 3 "Yes" votes and 3 "No" votes in a quorate Election Meeting of 10 Members, where there were 4 "Abstain" votes. The candidate failed to receive a majority of the votes cast and the Chair thus declares "No election for the position, no majority", and specifies a further round of voting.

Alternatively, it may be that the candidate with the largest number of "Yes" votes received 3 "Yes" votes and 2 "No" votes in a quorate Election Meeting of 10 Members, where there were 5 "Abstain" votes. The candidate received a majority of the votes cast and is declared elected.

Dealing with a tie for the first time

If two or more candidates are tied for the largest majority of cast votes, the tie shall be broken in favour of the candidate with the fewest number of "No" votes. If the tie remains unbroken, the Chair formally declares "No election for the position, tied vote", and specifies a further round of voting as below (if this was the first declared tie). Note that, in a further round of voting for the position, a second tie (if any) is broken by a different rule, as below.

It may be that two candidates tie for the largest majority of votes, where candidate A received 3 "Yes" votes and 2 "No" votes, and candidate B received 3 "Yes" votes and 1 "No" vote in a quorate Election Meeting. Neither candidate received the largest number of "Yes" votes. The tie is broken in favour of candidate B who received fewer "No" votes.

Elections for more than one position

The voting procedure, as described above, shall also be applied where the election is for a number of positions, for example, where two official IRSA Representatives are to be elected, or three persons are to be elected to a sub-committee.

In this case, the positions available shall be filled by candidates who have received a majority of cast votes, in order of decreasing number of their "Yes" votes.

It may be that there are three candidates for two positions. Candidate A received 2 "Yes" votes and 1 "No" vote, candidate B received 3 "Yes" votes and 3 "No" votes, and candidate C received 4 "Yes" votes and 5 "No" votes in a quorate Election Meeting. Only candidate A received a majority of their votes cast, and is declared elected to one position. Neither candidates B or C received a majority of their votes, even though they received larger numbers of "Yes" votes. The remaining position is declared, "No election for the remaining position, no majority", and a further round of voting is specified for the remaining position.

If two or more candidates are tied for a position, they shall be declared elected provided there are available positions equal to the number of ties. Otherwise, ties shall be broken in favour of the candidate(s) with the fewest number of "No" votes. If two or more candidates have unbroken ties for the remaining available position or positions, the Chair formally declares "No election for remaining position(s), tied vote", and specifies a further round of voting, as below (if this was the first declared tie for the position(s)). Note that, in a further round of voting for the position(s), a second tie (if any) is broken by a 'coin toss', as below.

It may be that there are three candidates for two positions. Candidate A received 6 "Yes" votes and 1 "No" vote, and both candidates B and C received 5 "Yes" votes and 2 "No" votes in a quorate Election Meeting. Candidate A is declared elected to one position. Both candidates B and C have an unbroken tie for the last available position, and the Chair formally declares "No election for the remaining position, tie vote" and specifies a further round of voting for the remaining position (if this was the first declared tie for the position).

Further rounds of voting

A call for a further round of voting may be made. Such a further round may be initiated promptly after the declaration of the previous round, or may be "at the call of the Chair".

Where an election is "inquorate", or an election result is "no election, no majority", the Chair shall call further round(s) of voting until a candidate is declared elected.

Where an election result is "no election, tie vote" for a given position or positions, the Chair shall call one further round of voting for those position(s). Should a tie again occur, the Chair shall explicitly post a message calling for a 'coin toss' to break the tie(s).

'Coin toss' procedure

The tied candidates are listed in alphabetical order of surname and are allocated a letter in sequence starting at "A". The Chair inspects the time stamp of the post calling for the 'coin toss', and notes the seconds reported in the stamp. This time stamp is "A's time stamp". The Chair inspects the time stamp of the first post of the thread with the poll for each of the other tied candidates, and notes the seconds reported in each stamp.

Candidate A is placed on the list. The position of candidate B in the list is determined from Table 1, such that B is placed ahead of A if B's time stamp has an odd number of seconds and A's time stamp is even, or if B's time stamp is odd and A's time stamp is even. Otherwise B is placed after A in the list.

If there are more than two tied candidates, candidate C is placed at the front, the middle, or the end of the list, according to Table 2. Note that Table 2 uses the A and B result from Table 1, and may re-arrange the list depending upon the last seconds digit of C's time stamp.

The procedure is repeated for up to five tied candidates similarly, where their time stamp determines their position in a re-arranged list, using Tables 3 and 4.

When the list is complete, starting from the head of the list, the previously tied candidates are declared elected until all remaining positions are filled.

It may be that there are four candidates who are equally tied for two remaining positions. Candidate A's time stamp is 02:58:56 PM, B's is 11:26:48 AM, C's is 12:45:19 PM, and D's is 09:17:27 PM. The list of elected candidates starts with A. When B is considered, the list now reads AB (B's second is 8, even, and A's is 6, also even). When C is considered, the list now reads BCA (C's second is 9). When D is considered, the list finally reads DBCA (D's seconds are 27). Candidates B and D are declared elected.

What would be the list if there was a candidate E with time stamp 22:37:12 PM? (Answer at the end of the Appendix.)

Summary of time limits

Stage	Election Meeting	Subsidiary proposal
Discussion: From the opening of the Election Meeting to voting being called	Within 2 weeks	Within 1 week
Voting: From the call to vote to the close of voting	Within 1 week	Within 3 days

Summary of procedure for Election Meetings

The Election Meeting shall be opened and nominations called. Nominations shall be notified. Nominations may be seconded. Discussion takes place. During discussion, Members may propose subsidiary proposals, or make enquiries. After the specified time limit, discussion closes and voting is called. No nomination may proceed to being voted upon without having been seconded. After voting, a formal tally provides the count of the voting results for each candidate. If a quorum has not voted for at least one candidate, the Chair declares "Inquorate election". If no candidate has received a majority of "Yes" votes cast, the Chair declares "No election". Otherwise, the candidate with the largest majority of votes is declared elected.

Appendix: 'Coin toss' tables

Table 1: Two candidates A & B

		A sec	
		Even	Odd
B sec	Even	AB	BA
	Odd	BA	AB

Table 2: Three candidates A, B, & C

		From table 1:	
		AB	BA
C sec	0-2	CAB	ACB
	3-6	ABC	CBA
	7-9	BCA	BAC

Table 3: Four candidates A, B, C, & D

		From table 2:					
		CAB	CBA	ABC	BAC	BCA	ACB
D secs	0-14	DCAB	CBAD	ABDC	BDAC	BCAD	ACBD
	15-29	CDAB	DCBA	ABCD	BADC	DBCA	ADCB
	30-44	CADB	CDBA	DABC	BACD	BCDA	DACB
	45-59	CABD	CBDA	ADBC	DBAC	BDCA	ACDB

Table 4: Five candidates A, B, C, D, & E

		From table 3:					
		DCAB	CBAD	ABDC	BDAC	BCAD	ACBD
E sec	0-1	DCABE	ECBAD	AEBDC	BDEAC	BCAED	ACBDE
	2-3	DCAEB	CBADE	EABDC	BEDAC	BCEAD	ACBED
	4-5	DCEAB	CBAED	ABDCE	EBDAC	BECAD	ACEBD
	6-7	DECAB	CBEAD	ABDEC	BDACE	EBCAD	AECBD
	8-9	EDCAB	CEBAD	ABEDC	BDAEC	BCADE	EACBD

		From table 3:					
		CDAB	DCBA	ABCD	BADC	DBCA	ADCB
E sec	0-1	ECDAB	DECBA	ABECD	BADEC	DBCAE	EADCB
	2-3	CDABE	EDCBA	AEBDC	BAEDC	DBCEA	ADCBE
	4-5	CDAEB	DCBAE	EABCD	BEADC	DBECA	ADCEB
	6-7	CDEAB	DCBEA	ABCDE	EBADC	DEBCA	ADECB
	8-9	CEDAB	DCEBA	ABCED	BADCE	EDBCA	AEDCB

		From table 3:					
		CADB	CDBA	DABC	BACD	BCDA	DACB
E sec	0-1	CEADB	CDEBA	DABEC	BACDE	EBCDA	DEACB
	2-3	ECADB	CEDBA	DAEBC	BACED	BCDAE	EDACB
	4-5	CADBE	ECDBA	DEABC	BAECD	BCDEA	DACBE
	6-7	CADEB	CDBAE	EDABC	BEACD	BCEDA	DACEB
	8-9	CAEDB	CDBEA	DABCE	EBACD	BECDA	DAECB

		From table 3:					
		CABD	CBDA	ADBC	DBAC	BDCA	ACDB
E sec	0-1	CAEBD	CBDEA	ADBCE	DBEAC	BDCEA	ACDBE
	2-3	CEABD	CBEDA	ADBEC	DEBAC	BEDCA	ACDEB
	4-5	ECABD	CEBDA	ADEBC	EDBAC	BDCAE	ACEDB
	6-7	CABDE	ECBDA	AEDBC	DBAEC	EBDCA	AECDB
	8-9	CABED	CBDAE	EADBC	DBACE	BDECA	EACDB

(Answer to question: DBCEA)