

This note continues from the earlier one on voting process, and describes the importance of having a standing IGC members list, which got made for the first time after the charter was adopted, as a part of the voting process that was being followed. This discussion is in fact much more important than about the 'technicalities' of the voting process, and differences on this 'IGC membership issue' are the real root of the voting process problem.

Why the present voting process was not aborted when we got access to the possibility of using a web-based process

As noted earlier, we got access to the possibility of using a web-based system about two weeks back. Though the process we were following was, in my view, completely valid as per the charter, and most of the laborious work was already done, I do acknowledge that a web-based voting process is a smoother and easier way to go, given the charter's condition of affirmation of the charter prior to voting. However, I did not announce the new process at that point, about two weeks back, because preparation of IGC members list was already underway and, as discussed below, the caucus does need a standing IGC members list. The important task of finalizing such a list would have got disrupted by announcement of a change in the voting process midway.

Why does IGC need a standing IGC members list

Creation of a standing members list is an important organizational requirement. In my view, it should have been done immediately after the charter was adopted, and periodically new members should have been invited and added. The charter is clear that members of IGC constitute a category separate from the IGC mailing list participants, though with obvious overlap. A simple reading, for instance, of objectives and tasks of IGC as per the charter will make it clear that they connote a very specific set of organizational activities which can only be done by an organized body consisting of recognizable members bound by some clear common principles that are provided by the charter.

If one does not think so, in my opinion, one simply does not take the charter, and the full range of the listed objectives and tasks, seriously. There are a considerable number of IGC list participants who do take them seriously. I am among them, and this is the reason that, in the position of co-coordinatorship with the specific responsibility of upholding the charter, I have labored on the processes that I have labored on in these last few weeks. At the end of these processes, we will have a co-coordinator election as per the charter (unlike the last one) and a full standing IGC members list, which, quite incongruently, was never there.

Two kinds of views have been expressed (representing a small minority, in my opinion) that are against the above view of the requirement of a standing IGC

members list. One view is that there is no need at all of any members list. I have argued against this view above. It is also clear from a reading of the charter that a list subscriber is a different from an IGC member. For instance, in the part on 'working methods' where the charter describes its "mailing list - governance@lists.cpsr.org", it speaks of 'list subscribers' in all descriptions of list related rules. In all other sections, which deal with substantive matters beyond activity on the mailing list, the charter clearly speaks about IGC 'members'. For instance, in speaking about 'ad hoc sub-groups' the charter mentions members, unlike when it speaks of the mailing list, and therefore the distinction should be quite clear.

A second view is that IGC members are simply those who voted in the last elections (Avri has often professed this view, though also veering at times to 'no need for any standing members list' view.) This view, while a distinct improvement on 'no need for standing IGC members list' viewpoint, leads to many complications, which I will briefly touch upon, and is therefore also not tenable.

This view implies that voting is compulsory for retaining membership. I never thought so; neither, I am sure, the overwhelming majority of IGC members think so. (In any case, if voting was considered compulsory for retaining membership it was of utmost importance to declare so before voting took place in the last election.) Many members who voted for the charter did not vote at the co-coordinator elections just a few weeks later. Do we consider them to have lost membership of the IGC in the process? In fact, since I was standing for the last elections, I was in two minds whether to vote or not, and I almost did not. I had no inkling that had I not voted I would have lost membership and then perhaps even if elected would have not been eligible to be a co-coordinator.

The charter speaks about the appeals team as consisting of 'five (5) IGC members'. If membership is as per the last voting list, then I am sorry to note that two of the five nomcom members are actually non IGC members, which would be a violation of the charter. (In any case I do not understand how a nomcom member can adjudicate as per the charter without declaring adherence to it.) One of the two candidates for the present election did not vote in the last election for co-coordinators. Can he even stand for this election as a 'non-member', or is he *ab initio* debarred as a non-member?

As I said, I am sure that most members do not think they lose membership if they do not vote at any one election. And I do not think that it is the intention of the charter to make voting compulsory, though I do think that as responsible and engaged members we must all vote, as far, and as frequently, as possible.

However, while I am this subject, I must say that the charter does state that for amending the charter (and only for this purpose) the voter eligibility is of having voted in the last elections. I do understand that a process of charter amendment perhaps calls for a stricter voting criterion to avoid capture, but, personally, I think

this is an issue that the group may need to look into. However, if 'looking into it' means seeking amendment then first this criterion - of voter eligibility as per the last voting list - will apply to the process of amendment itself. For the sake of enabling everyone to be able to vote if any amendment is brought up I strongly encourage that everyone votes for the co-coordinator's election. To have voted in the last election as I said is a qualification requirement (only for) for voting on a charter amendment motion. I will also remind members about this a few times during the voting process.

Meanwhile, I completely fail to understand how – as alleged by some – a thorough process of enlisting around 130 IGC members can be considered a more exclusive or disenfranchising activity compared to a process that ends with 47 members on its list, and all others rendered as having a doubtful standing *vis a vis* all substantive IGC processes as per the charter, where IGC 'members' are referred to. I have no doubt that the process I used, along with the process of outreach to new members earlier this year, is much more pro-actively inclusive. It is also takes the IGC charter seriously and sets the ground for the caucus to achieve the kind of objectives and do the kind of tasks that it sets for itself through its charter. However, I have no illusion that these processes in themselves would ensure that this happens. It is up to the IGC members now to effectively take forward the IGC's role as a public interest group doing advocacy, holding a civil society policy dialogue and providing a platform for broader CS engagement.

In my view this is good time and opportunity to discuss these issues and, if found appropriate and possible, to take steps to make the IGC more effective in terms of these objectives and tasks. Many members – for instance, Bill, Meryem and Avri – at different times have stated that IGC should get down to discuss all these issues. I think we should do it now, or, if so preferred, immediately after the election.