

APPENDIX: MEXICO

DEMOGRAPHICS AND ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Mexico is a federal republic consisting of 31 states and a federal district. It has an estimated population of 111.2 million.¹ More than 77.8 million individuals are registered to vote, or 95% of the voting age population.² In the last presidential election, there were 59% of registered voters turned out to vote.³

The Federal Electoral Institute (*Instituto Federal Electoral* — IFE) was created in 1990 as an autonomous agency to administer all aspect of Mexican elections.⁴ A division of the IFE known as the Executive Directorate of the Federal Register of Electors (*Dirección Ejecutiva del Registro Federal de Electores*) is responsible for creating and maintaining voter lists.⁵ The IFE manages 332 district election offices and employs 13,600 people across the country.⁶

VOTER REGISTRATION

Throughout much of the 20th century, Mexican elections were widely viewed as corrupt and the national voter roll perceived as highly inaccurate. Following an upsurge of political reforms in the early 1990s, Mexico created a new voter list from scratch by conducting a nationwide door-to-door enumeration from November 1990 to July 1991.⁷ To compile the list, enumerators visited 16.5 million homes multiple times to register eligible citizens.⁸ The voter list built through this process ultimately contained 39.5 million voters.⁹ This list is still in use, although today, new voters must initiate voter registration by making an in-person visit to their local election office.¹⁰ Registration is open throughout the year.¹¹

Adding New Voters

To register to vote, eligible citizens must visit one of the federal election agency's 332 district offices.¹² After filling out a voter registration form,¹³ registrants have their fingerprint, signature, and photograph taken for a voter card.¹⁴ The agency will notify a voter when her card is ready to be picked up, typically 20 days after submission of a registration application.¹⁵ The voter must provide valid identification to pick up their voter card.¹⁶

Updating Existing Voter Entries

While voters are expected to notify election officials of changes in voter registration information, including address changes,¹⁷ the federal election agency also receives information from other state agencies that trigger revisions to the voter list.¹⁸ For example, the government agency that

issues death certificates is responsible for informing election officials of a deceased voter, who is then removed from the rolls.¹⁹

In addition, in cases where an individual's voting rights are suspended (or restored) by court order, the ruling judges are required to notify the election agency with 10 days of the decision.²⁰

FILLING GAPS AND CORRECTING INACCURACIES IN THE ROLLS

Mexico engages in two voter roll updating campaigns to ensure that voter records are current and accurate. The federal election agency conducts an ongoing registration campaign known as the Permanent Updating Campaign (*Campaña de Actualización Permanente* — CAP) from January 16 to September 30 of each year.²¹ During the 2008 campaign in the Mexican state of Tabasco, there were nearly 475,000 registration transactions.²² Nearly half of the transactions were new registrations, updates to voter records, and address changes. The rest were related to the retrieval of voter cards.²³

While the government undergoes registration activities year-round under the auspices of this campaign, the bulk of registrations or updates to the federal register of electors occur during the Intensive Updating Campaign (*Campaña de Actualización Intensa* — CAI) that occurs between October 1 and January 15 of each year.²⁴ During this period, voters may register to vote or update their registration information.²⁵ In 2004, the IFE deployed 788 registration units during this period, 384 of which were in permanent locations, 128 of which were semi-fixed, and 266 of which were mobile.²⁶ Mobile units are deployed to rural and remote areas.²⁷ In 2008, the federal election agency used incentives such as gift bags to encourage young citizens to register to vote.²⁸

PRIVACY CONSIDERATIONS

Voter privacy is not an overarching concern in Mexico, as the entire national voter list — which includes each voter's photograph, voter ID number, full name, age, and address²⁹ — is made available for political parties to review.³⁰ Voters may also check their registration status at district election offices,³¹ or online at the federal election agency's website.³²

ENDNOTES

¹ Estimated for July 2009. U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, The World Factbook—Mexico, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/print/mx.html> (last updated May 14, 2009).

² Instituto Federal Electoral, *Distribución de Ciudadanos por Sexo* (2009), http://sist-internet.ife.org.mx/ubicamodulo/PHP/est_sex.php?edo=0. Carlos Navarro, Case Study 5: Mexico, *in* GETTING TO THE CORE: A GLOBAL SURVEY ON THE COST AND REGISTRATION OF ELECTIONS, at 111 (Center for Transitional & Post-Conflict Governance, IFES & Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP, June 2005), *available at* <http://www.undp.org/governance/docs/Elections-Pub-Core.pdf>.

³ Figures from the 2006 presidential election. Instituto Federal Electoral, *Elección de Presidente de Los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, Cómputos Distritales de Las Elecciones Federales de 2006*, <http://www.ife.org.mx/documentos/Estadisticas2006/presidente/nac.html><http://www.ife.org.mx/documentos/Estadisticas2006/presidente/nac.html>.

⁴ Código Federal de Instituciones y Procedimientos Electorales, [COFIPE] [Federal Code of Electoral Institutions and Procedures], *as amended*, art 104, 106, Diario Oficial de Federación, 3 de Octubre de 2008 (Mex.).

⁵ *Id.* art. 128.

⁶ Navarro, *supra* note 2, at 109.

⁷ *Id.* at 111-112.

⁸ Juan Manuel Herrero Alvarez, *Mexico: The Electoral Register*, at 6, *available at* http://aceproject.org/ero-en/topics/voter-registration/vry_mex1.pdf.

⁹ Navarro, *supra* note 2, at 112; Alvarez, *supra* note 8, at 6.

¹⁰ Although eligible voters in Mexico are legally obligated to register and vote, the governing regulations are rarely enforced. *See* Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos [Const.], *as amended*, art. 36, § III, Diario Oficial de la Federación [D.O.], 25 de Marzo de 2009 (voting); Const. art. 36, § I; COFIPE art. 175(1) (voter registration).

¹¹ COFIPE, *supra* note 4, art. 183(1).

¹² There are special allowances for the disabled, who may not be able to visit a registration office in person. *Id.* art. 185. Mail-in registration is not accepted for other voters.

¹³ *Id.* art. 184.

¹⁴ *Id.* arts. 180(3), 179(1).

¹⁵ George W. Grayson, *Registering and Identifying Voters: What the United States Can Learn from Mexico*, 3 ELEC. LAW J. 513, 516.

¹⁶ Many types of identity documents are accepted, including birth certificates, military service cards, passports, and educational and health documents. In cases where no such document is available, a voter may bring two witnesses, both of whom must already possess voter cards, to vouch for her identity. Telephone Interview by Judith Joffe-Block with Carlos Navarro, Director of Electoral Studies, International Affairs Unit, Federal Electoral Institute (Sept. 28, 2006) [hereinafter Navarro Interview].

¹⁷ Voters are required to notify election officials of a change of address within 30 days of moving. COFIPE, *supra* note 4, art. 186(1).

¹⁸ *Id.* art. 198(1).

¹⁹ *Id.* arts. 192(2), 199(9).

²⁰ *Id.* arts. 192(3), 199(8).

²¹ *See* Arturo Lopez Remigio, *Prevé IFE en 2009 20 Mil Nuevos Votos*, TABASCO HOY.COM, Oct. 21, 2008, *available at* http://www.tabascohoy.com.mx/nota.php?id_nota=164497.

²² *Id.*

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ *See* COFIPE, *supra* note 4, art. 182(1).

²⁵ *Id.* art. 182(2)(b)-(3).

²⁶ Comisión Nacional de Vigilancia, Proyecto de Acuerdo de la comisión nacional de vigilancia del registro federal de electores por el que se aprueba la adecuación del número de módulos de atención ciudadana a operar durante la campaña de actualización permanente 2004 a partir del primer día hábil del mes de mayo del año en curso. [Agreement of the national oversight commission regarding the federal register of electors for the approval of the adjustment in the number of modules to operate during the permanent updating campaign of 2004, on the first possible day in May of the present year.] Acuerdo 2-170, 29 de Abril de 2004 (Mex.).

²⁷ Navarro Interview, *supra* note 16.

²⁸ David M. Dominguez, *Festeja el IFE Su Mayoría de Edad Hoy*, DIARIO DE YUCATÁN, Nov. 10, 2008, available at [http://www.yucatan.com.mx/noticia.asp?cx=11\\$0928010000\\$3929894&f=20081011](http://www.yucatan.com.mx/noticia.asp?cx=11$0928010000$3929894&f=20081011).

²⁹ Instituto Federal Electoral, Qué es la Lista Nominal?, http://www.ife.org.mx/portal/site/ifev2/Que_es_la_Lista_Nominal/.

³⁰ COFIPE, *supra* note 4, art. 192(2).

³¹ *Id.* arts. 192(1), 196(2).

³² Web portal available at: http://sist-internet.ife.org.mx/listanominal/consulta_permanente_ln.htm.