

**Balloting from abroad 'possible' via postal vote, says EC**  
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**By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal**

KUALA LUMPUR, March 14 — Malaysians living abroad will only be able vote in the next general election if they use the postal voting system, the Election Commission (EC) said today.

EC deputy chairman Datuk Wan Ahmad Wan Omar told members of the Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) on electoral reforms during a closed-door meeting that any other method would be "difficult" to execute due to a lack of infrastructure as well as registered voters abroad.

"Overseas voting, the EC has come back to us that...it can be done but through the postal voting process," PSC chairman Datuk Seri Dr Maximus Ongkili told reporters after the meeting had ended.

Ongkili said, however, that it might not be possible for the EC to implement any form of overseas voting if national polls were held in the near future.

He also said the EC deputy chairman's remarks had not sat well with some of the PSC committee members, who have voiced "reservations" about the postal voting system.

"In the spirit of trying to reduce the number of postal voters...it might not be consistent with this stand.

"However, we let it float for another week and see what happens...to be practical although we want to reduce postal votings, in certain cases it's just unavoidable," added Ongkili.

He also said it would be difficult to set up ballot boxes and mobilise polling agents in the 220 Malaysian embassies worldwide.

"It might not be practical," he added.

At present, only civil students, full-time students and their spouses living abroad are allowed to vote.

Ongkili said that there are currently an estimated 2,000 registered Malaysian voters living overseas.

Another PSC member, Anthony Loke told reporters that the committee has yet to decide whether to accept the EC's proposal on overseas voting.

"There have been reservations from some of the committee members, but nothing has been decided yet.

"We will meet next Tuesday to finalise," the DAP Rasah MP told reporters.

The PSC's final report is expected to be tabled in Parliament on April 2.

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