

## NEWS

# European Tamils mandate Eelam

TAMILS in another three mainland European countries have mandated Eelam at referenda held in January. Over 99 percent of the voters in Germany, Switzerland and Holland who cast their ballots on the weekend of 23 and 24 January mandated the formation of Tamil Eelam as a solution to the oppression of Tamils in Sri Lanka.

99.2 percent of voters said yes to Tamil Eelam in an impressive turn out of more than 90% of eligible voters in Germany. 23,089 voters participated in the poll in 110 centres across the country and 22,904 of them said yes. 136 voters said no and 49 votes were invalid.

The International Human Rights Association in Bremen conducted the referendum on the question of forming an independent and sovereign state of Tamil Eelam in the North and East of the island of Sri Lanka.

Around 25,000 eligible Eezham Tamil voters are estimated to be present in Germany.

No record of voter registration was maintained considering the confidentiality of the identity of the voters. They were permitted to vote after verification of identity and eligibility. Indelible ink was applied to mark participation.

99.49 percent of 16,441 voters who participated in the referendum in Switzerland mandated the formation of an independent and sovereign Tamil Eelam in the North and East of the island of Sri Lanka.

The referendum was organised by a coalition of 2nd generation Eelam Tamils in Switzerland and the task of conducting the ballot process was undertaken by an independent election commission that was headed by M. Pagani, ex-Mayor of the city of Biel and included journalists, politicians and members of Young Socialist Party (JUSO) of Switzerland.

Estimating the number of eli-

gible voters in Switzerland as 25,000 the organisers in their official website [tamilelection.ch](http://tamilelection.ch) put the turnout at 65.76%. Considering the conditions of the Tamil diaspora in Switzerland, much varied in facing the brunt of the struggle in several ways, the turnout was considered to be very impressive by many diaspora observers, reported TamilNet.

Well-covered by the Swiss media, Pia Holenstein, a member of the federal parliament, described the process as something neatly organised and exemplary. Reporters of major media outlets such as NZZ Sonntag and Tages Anzeiger were present to cover the news of the referendum, the organisers said.

Of the 2,750 voters who participated in the poll in Holland, 99.2 percent aspired for the formation of Eelam. 2,728 said yes, 9 voted no and 13 votes were invalid.

The poll organised by an independent group of the diaspora in the Netherlands was conducted in 15 centres across the country under the supervision of non-Tamil election officials.

The organisers estimated roughly 4,000 eligible Eelam Tamil voters in the country and said the turnout was 68.7 percent. As the size of the country and the number of voters were small, the organisers were largely depending on a door-to-door campaign for participation.

A comment commonly heard in the four non English-speaking European countries, Germany, Switzerland and Holland, which went for the referendum last weekend, and in France where it was held in mid-December, was that the democratic exercise would have been much easier to organise, had there been a Tamil visual media providing adequate coverage.

Observers note that Tamils of Eelam origin have been consistent in their demand for Eelam.

