

Referendum among Tamils living in Denmark – 28 February 2010

Eligible voters were Tamils residing in Denmark as well as their spouses and children over the age of 18 years. The referendum was held at 32 polling stations spread all over Denmark. The polling stations opened on 28 February at 10 am and stayed open until 6 pm the same day.

The topic of the referendum was:

Declaration for referendum on 28 February 2010 held among Tamils living in Denmark in order to ascertain the validity of the political foundation of the Vaddukoddai Resolution presented by all Tamil political parties in 1976 and widely supported by the Tamils at the Parliamentary elections in 1977 on the island known as Sri Lanka (Ceylon).

'I hereby offer my full support to the re-establishment of the independent and sovereign state of Tamileelam in the northern and eastern part of the island known as Sri Lanka (Ceylon) based on the belief that the Tamil community on this island constitutes an individual nation living in their original home country and entitled to the right to self-govern.'

According to Statistics Denmark, 7,147 citizens of Sri Lanka are living in Denmark, among whom 4,147 have cast their vote, equivalent of a turnout of 58%.

Throughout the country, turnout has varied substantially. The polling station demonstrating the highest turnout was Skanderborg at 95%. In total, 13 polling stations enjoyed turnout above 70%, 12 polling stations were between 50% and 69%, 6 polling stations were between 30% and 49% and the only polling station under 30% was Copenhagen where merely 16% of the eligible voters cast their vote. For further details, see the minute below.

The result of the referendum was:

- Yes: 98.2%
- No: 0.5%
- Blank votes: 1.3%

TNS Gallup has worked as the assessor of the referendum, i.e. establishing the system for and inspecting a sample the polling stations in order to ensure a free and democratic election process.

4 polling stations were inspected and all have functioned beyond reproach. Enclosed, please find a short minute concerning the quality checks conducted on registration records and polls.

If you have any queries, please address them to:

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Minute concerning the turnout on polling station level

Votes have been cast at all polling stations. However, turnout varies a good deal. The table below illustrates the share of voters compared to the share of eligible voters of each polling station listed according to turnout.

Polling station:	Number of votes	Population	Turnout
Skanderborg	86	91	95%
Middelfart	127	151	84%
Randers	203	247	82%
Tarm	90	112	80%
Åbenrå	148	188	79%
Grindsted	187	240	78%
Svendborg	110	143	77%
Faaborg	58	76	76%
Holbæk	166	218	76%
Slagelse	104	143	73%
Nyborg	130	182	71%
Fredericia	140	196	71%
Ebletoft	114	163	70%
Sønderborg	102	148	69%
Vejle	205	307	67%
Frederikshavn	78	117	67%
Struer	136	209	65%
Herning	406	651	62%
Hobro	96	161	60%
Holstebro	120	204	59%
Ikast	158	270	59%
Aalborg	202	363	56%
Næstved	65	120	54%
Horsens	174	323	54%
Maribo	37	72	51%
Viborg	135	282	48%
Vejen	128	273	47%
Nykøbing Sj.	53	115	46%
Hillerød	96	216	44%
Odense	81	218	37%
Århus	132	433	30%
København	80	515	16%

The table below illustrates the polling stations according to the number of votes cast. The station where the highest number of votes was cast was Herning, and at 11 of the 32 polling stations less than 100 votes were cast.

Polling station:	Number of votes	Population	Turnout
Herning	406	651	62%
Vejle	205	307	67%
Randers	203	247	82%
Aalborg	202	363	56%
Grindsted	187	240	78%
Horsens	174	323	54%
Holbæk	166	218	76%
Ikast	158	270	59%
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Middelfart	127	151	84%
Holstebro	120	204	59%
Ebletoft	114	163	70%
Svendborg	110	143	77%
Slagelse	104	143	73%
Sønderborg	102	148	69%
Hobro	96	161	60%
Hillerød	96	216	44%
Tarm	90	112	80%
Skanderborg	86	91	95%
Odense	81	218	37%
København	80	515	16%
Frederikshavn	78	117	67%
Næstved	65	120	54%
Faaborg	58	76	76%
Nykøbing Sj.	53	115	46%
Maribo	37	72	51%

Minute concerning the referendum result quality checks carried out by TNS Gallup

The following quality checks have been executed by TNS Gallup:

1. On the election day, four of the polling stations received a inspection visit without prior notice
2. Dialogue was maintained with all Danish returning officers
3. The election records were checked to ensure that identical names did not appear more than once and that all names were Tamil.
4. The number of votes cast was checked against the number of votes registered in the election records
5. Validation of turnout

Ref 1. Inspection visits to four polling stations on the day of the referendum

TNS Gallup visited the following polling station:

Hillerød
Herning
Sønderborg
Holstebro

Dansk Tamilsk Forum had not been informed which polling stations Gallup would be visiting, nor at which time the inspection would take place.

All observers work as appointed polling officials at Danish local and national elections and are consequently fully familiar with the procedure of democratic elections.

The main purpose of the visit was to determine whether all election procedures were being followed. Especially the visits focused on the secrecy of the ballot as well as on whether the registration and identification process of voters was done in accordance with the procedure. The observer was present at the polling station for a minimum of one hour and spoke during this time to the Danish returning officer, the Tamil polling officials as well as a number of voters.

No irregularities were found on either of these visits.

Ref 2. Dialogue with the Danish returning officers

During the entire planning phase and on day of the actual referendum, several Danish returning officers were in dialogue with Gallup by means of telephone and e-mail in order to clarify any uncertainties in the voting procedure. Some of these questions were of a technical nature, e.g. how to access the voting site. Also there were questions regarding the printing of polling cards.

Furthermore, all returning officers were asked to account for any and all circumstances in the case of rejection of voters. Thus, a few remarks were made in reference to a very small number of voters who failed to bring any proof of identification and were consequently rejected at the polling station.

In general, the dialogue with the returning officers revealed that they were well and fully informed of the rules and workings of the democratic polling process, and thus no annotations were made in this respect.

Ref 3. The names in the election records were checked for doublets and Tamil nationality

The election records were thoroughly checked. First a systematic check of all names was made to ensure that no examples could be found where an individual person had been given the possibility of casting his or her vote more than once.

The number of people in the records with Danish sounding family names was very small, i.e. it constituted less than 0.5 % of the total. The majority of these people had Tamil middle or first names.

The check of the election records has not given any cause for annotation.

Ref. 4 Congruence between the number of votes in the election records and the number of votes cast

According to the election records, 4,141 names have cast their vote. The electronic poll registered 4,147 votes. Thus, there is a difference of 6 votes. Due to the small size of this difference, it has no bearing on the election result.

The difference between the election records and the number of votes cast has not given any cause for annotation.

Ref 5. Validation of turnout

No precise register is being kept of the total number of Tamils living in Denmark. Yet, according to Statistics Denmark, 7,147 citizens in Denmark are either born in Sri Lanka or descendents of citizens born in Sri Lanka. Included in this figure are an unknown number of Singhalese. On the other hand, Danes who have married Tamils are not included in the 7,147.

It is the estimate of Gallup that the actual number of eligible voters at this referendum is smaller than 7,147, yet as this is the only official figure available, we have chosen to use it. Consequently, the turnout of 58% may probably be an underestimation.

Furthermore, we would like to note that with a turnout of 58%, the voting result of a 98% yes vote should in all cases be interpreted as a yes majority result, as the eligible voters who failed to use their right to vote could not, even if they had without exception voted no, been able to turn the result into a no.

The turnout is sufficiently high and has not given cause for annotation.