

2015/16 Sikyong and Chithue Elections: Frequently Asked Questions

Swiss Local Election Commission for Eastern and Central Europe

Q1. What are the dates for the Primary and Final Election?

Primary election: Sunday, October 18, 2015.

Final election: Sunday, March 20, 2016.

Q2. What are the main requirements for Tibetan in Europe to participate in the election?

There are three principal mandatory requirements to participate in the election:

1. Must be 18 years old (born on or before October 18, 1997)
2. Must register as a voter with their local Tibetan Association
3. Must have paid their annual Green Book contribution for year 2014 to vote in the Primary election, and must have paid their annual Green Book contribution for year 2015 to vote in Final election.

Q3. When is the registration deadline?

Monday August 24, 2015 for those residing in Central and Eastern Europe

Q4. How can I know whether I am already a registered voter or not?

Please check the last few pages of your Green Book, which should list your voter registration number.

Q5. If I am a Europe resident and was registered to vote in the 2010/11 elections, (Swiss Thumi elections 2012, 2015), then do I have to re-register again for the 2015/16 elections?

No. However, you will have to make sure your Green Book contributions are up-to-date.

Q6. Am I required to register if I already registered in India, Nepal or Bhutan but came recently to the Europe?

Tibetans arriving in Europe for family visits, vacation and business on short term stay are eligible to vote in Europe provided they have a prior voter registration from their place of origin. However, they can cast vote only for Sikyong.

Q7. How many polling stations are in Central and Eastern Europe?

There will be at least one polling station in each of the Tibetan Associations in Europe. The Tibet Bureau website and the websites of local Tibetan Associations will list all the polling stations with their addresses as we get closer to the elections.

Q8. Do I need to bring my Tibetan Green Book at the time of voting?

Yes. It is mandatory to have your Tibetan Green Book or chatrel updated receipt (no green book*) at the time of voting.

Q9. Do I have to vote in a primary election in order to vote in the final election?

No. However, we would encourage you to participate in both the Primary and the Final elections.

Q10. What are the eligibility requirements for running for the Sikyong office?

Any Tibetan interested in running for Sikyong office must meet the following requirements:

- Must be of 35 years of age
- No report of mental illness by any judicial court or physician
- No report of insolvency
- No conviction by any criminal court
- No disqualification by 2/3rd majority by the Tibetan Parliament
- Must not have served two consecutive terms as Sikyong or Kalon already
- As per Tibetan Charter section 29(3), one must not have been impeached as a Sikyong earlier
- Must not be a person carrying any act/s or holding position or receiving any monetary benefit from or for any country that goes against the interest of Tibetan people

Q11. What are the eligibility requirements for running for the Chithue office?

Any Tibetan interested in running for the Europe Chithue position must meet the following requirements:

- Must be of 25 years of Age
- No report of mental illness by any judicial court or physician
- No report of inability to pay any debt
- No conviction by any criminal court
- Must not be a staff of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). If any CTA staff member is elected in primary election and decides to run in the final election, then he/she must resign from the Central Tibetan Administration

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Swiss Local Election Commission for Eastern and Central Europe

- Must not be a person carrying any act/s or holding position or receiving any monetary benefit from or for any country that goes against the interest of Tibetan people
- Must not be against or contradict election rules and regulations, and any other rules or laws approved by the Tibetan Parliament in Exile.

Q12. How many Chithue seats are allocated for Europe?

There are two Chithue positions up for an election.

Q13. How can Tibetans in locations where there isn't an Office of Tibet affiliated Tibetan Association vote?

There are two options:

1. Register with the nearest Tibetan Association before August 24, 2015 and go to their polling station on voting day
2. Contact the Tibet Bureau in Geneva at info@tibetoffice.ch or [227387940](tel:227387940) for further instructions. However, you must opt for first option before August 24, 2015

Q14. Where do I find the latest election rules and regulations?

An electronic copy is readily available at Tibetan Parliament in Exile website here (Tibetan): <http://goo.gl/Zvx3Ud>

Q15. Who can I vote for during the primary election of Sikyong and two Europe Chithues?

The right to choose any candidate is one's own fundamental right enshrined in the Tibetan Charter. However, you must have the following information about the Candidate at the time of voting:

- Full Name
- Native Origin (Phayul)
- Present residence
- Present or former occupation.

Q16. Can I cast my vote by post?

No.

Q17. Will there be any assistance at the time of voting for people who cannot write?

A family member can assist with writing the details of candidate(s) at the time of voting. Secondly, the local election officers can also arrange volunteers for people who cannot write.

Q18. Is there any assistance for voters who are bed-ridden or unable to walk to the polling station?

No.

Q19. Can I write my candidate's name on a paper and bring that along with me to the polling station during the Election?

No. Every voter must know the candidate they are supporting. Secondly, we want to prevent the likelihood of individuals distributing the list to other voters at the polling station.

Q20. Can I campaign on the day of the elections?

No. All campaigning must stop two days before the election date. All campaigning for primary election must stop on or before midnight of October 15, 2015 local time, and midnight of March 17, 2016 for final election.

Q21. Is there a limit on election campaign expenses?

Yes. The Election Commission in Dharamsala in its notification dated June 10, 2015 has set the maximum amount for campaign expenses allowed for Sikyong at Indian Rupees 800,000.00 and Indian Rupees 300,000.00 for individual Chithues.

Q22. What are campaign expense disclosure requirements?

As per the guideline issued by the Election Commission in Dharamsala, any candidate running for Sikyong or Chithue must disclose their campaign related income and expenses account to the office of Swiss Local Election Commission before the announcement of final election results.

Q23. What symbols or pictures are prohibited in the election campaign?

As per the guideline issued by the Election Commission in Dharamsala, candidates are not allowed to use the picture of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Official stamp of the Central Tibetan Administration, Tibetan National Flag and the Map of Tibet.

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Q24. Who will conduct the elections in Central and Eastern Europe?

The elections in Central and Eastern Europe will be conducted by the members of the Swiss Local Election Commission comprised of the Swiss Local Election Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner, and election members and observers affiliated with Tibetan Associations.

The Election Commission in Dharamsala appoints the Representative of the Office of Tibet and a senior staff as the Swiss Local Election Commissioner and his assistant. The local Tibetan communities elect local election officials. The President and Board of Tibetan Associations will support the Commission.

Q25. Who cannot campaign or endorse candidates for Sikyong or Europe Chithue?

The Office of Tibet, Local Election members and observers.

Q26. What are the penalties fixed for the violations of election code of conduct and rules?

Please see below in the Table A

Q27. Who will count the election ballots in Central and Eastern Europe?

The election ballots in Central and Eastern Europe will be counted by the Swiss Local Election Commission consisting of around thirty nine members from the Tibetan Associations in Central and Eastern Europe. All ballots will be sent to the Swiss Local Election Commission in Geneva for counting and tallying of official results.

Q28. What else do I need to keep in mind before supporting someone in the primary election?

As per guideline issued by the Election Commission in Dharamsala, one must obtain written approval from the candidate running for Sikyong or Chithue before publically endorsing a candidate.

Q29. Do Association/private person need to inform Swiss Local Election Commission prior to organizing meeting/debate or publish any campaign materials for election purpose?

Yes

Q30. Where should I report any complaints?

The Office of Swiss Local Election Commissioner:

Telephone: 227387940

Email: info@tibetoffice.ch

Q31. Who are the key Swiss Election Commission officials and where the office located?

Mr. Ngodup Dorjee, Swiss Local Election Commissioner

Mr. Dawa Tsultrim, Swiss Local Assistant Election Commissioner

Office:

Place de la Navigation 10, 1201 Geneva

Email: info@tibetoffice.ch

Telephone: 2237387940

Fax: 2237387941

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Table1: Snapshots of Penalties Fixed by Election Commission, Dharamsala for the election rule and conduct violations in accordance with directive dated 15.07.2015

	Activity/Violations	Penalties
1	Corruption and bribing of voters by candidates and its agent	10 year disqualification of electoral rights and complete disqualification of the votes secured by relevant candidates
2	Candidates involving and instigating hate speech and unverified criticism and allegations	10 year disqualification of electoral rights and full disqualification of the candidates' secured votes.
3	Election Commission Office bearers' unethical and illegal conduct favoring the particular candidates	Immediate recommendation for transfers and removal from electoral office positions.
4	Violation of two days campaign restriction prior to polling day	5 year disqualification of electoral rights and full disqualification of candidates' secured votes
5	Abuse of official positions for election purpose by candidates	Disqualification of all votes secured by the candidates
6	Violation of campaign expenditure limit	Disqualification of 25 votes for every 10000 rupees excess expenditure
7	Candidates' Campaign fund of illegal source	All votes will be disqualified relevant to the candidates
8	Failure to account all campaign related expenditure in the concerned candidates' campaign account	5 year disqualification of the electoral right
9	Failure to submit the campaign account statements and its evidence to Election commission	10% disqualification of the votes secured by the candidates
10	Failure to bear the name of the publisher and campaigner name and address in the campaign materials	5 year disqualification of electoral rights
11	Use of pictures of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, CTA emblem, Tibetan National Flag and Map of Tibet in Campaign materials	5 year disqualification of the electoral rights/5 % disqualification of the candidates' secured vote
12	Failure to inform Swiss Local Election Commission by the Candidate or his supporters for press conference, meeting and distribution of campaign materials	The Swiss Local Election Commission can stop such unauthorized event.
13	Organization of public debate or gathering and distribution of election campaign materials without the approval of candidates	5 year disqualification of the electoral right

Notes:

*those whose green book names change application are under the process

1. The Election Commission will initiate penalties only after finding substantive and concrete evidence of violations.
2. The Tibetan version of the rule and directive shall be final and authoritative should there be any conflict in the interpretation