

REO appeals to registered functional constituency electors to pay attention to inquiry letters

The Improving Electoral System (Consolidated Amendments) Ordinance 2021 has been published in the Gazette and came into effect on May 31. For compilation of the 2021 functional constituencies (FCs) provisional register, the Registration and Electoral Office (REO), yesterday (June 23) started sending inquiry letters to more than 20 000 registered electors in the FCs to notify them that they may no longer be eligible for registration in their original FCs, and therefore may not be included in the 2021 FCs provisional register.

FCs with changes in registration eligibility

Under the Ordinance, the electorates of nine FCs (i.e. real estate and construction; commercial (second); industrial (first); financial services; sports, performing arts, culture and publication; import and export; textiles and garment; wholesale and retail; and catering) have been revised to be composed of corporate electors only. Individual electors are no longer eligible for registration in these FCs. The above affected individual electors do not need to reply to the REO upon receipt of the inquiry letters. However, if these electors meet the registration eligibility of any other FC, they must submit an application no later than July 5 in order to register in an FC for which the elector concerned is eligible.

Regarding the individual electors and corporate electors of other FCs, if they receive inquiry letters issued by the REO, they must reply together with the proof of their eligibility via mail, fax or email in accordance with the letter's instructions on or before July 5 in order to maintain their FC elector status and to vote in the Legislative Council General Election (LCGE) to be held in December this year and at subsequent public elections. If electors meet the registration eligibility of any other FC, they must submit an application no later than July 5 in order to register in an FC for which the elector concerned is eligible.

The registration eligibility of the FCs deleted under the Ordinance has been listed in the Annex for reference. Existing electors registered under such eligibility will be included in the inquiry process and receive inquiry letters.

To remind the electors that the letters are important and should be opened and replied to (if applicable) as soon as possible, the envelopes of all inquiry letters (sample envelope attached) carry a prominent message, "Immediate action required. Your voting right is at stake." If the REO does not receive a valid reply from an elector under inquiry by the deadline of July 5, the registered particulars of the elector will be included in the

2021 FCs omissions list to be published on or before September 26. Electors included in the omissions list have to make a claim to the Revising Officer within the statutory duration from September 26 to October 9, such that upon approval of the Revising Officer, their voter registration (VR) status may be reinstated and they may be included in the 2021 FCs final register and be able to vote in the LCGE to be held in December this year.

Three FCs to be deleted

As regards the three FCs to be deleted under the Ordinance (i.e. information technology, District Council (first) and District Council (second)), all existing electors registered in these FCs will be directly removed from the registers of FC electors without being subject to the inquiry process nor issuance of inquiry letters. If a removed elector meets the registration eligibility of any other FC, he or she may submit an application no later than July 5 in order to register in a FC for which he or she is eligible.

The special VR arrangement opened on June 1. Newly eligible electors and affected voters who are no longer eligible must submit VR applications on or before the special VR deadline of July 5 to register in any other FC for which they are eligible in order to be included in the 2021 FCs provisional register.

Electors who have enquiries on the letters received from the REO may call the REO hotline at 2891 1001. Moreover, details on the frequently asked questions, registration forms and the special VR arrangement are available on the VR page of the REO's website (www.reo.gov.hk/en/voter/register.htm).