

Green Party Submission to the Electoral Commission review of European Parliament Constituencies

The Green Party notes the outcome of the work of the European Parliament's Constitutional Affairs Committee and welcomes its endorsement of an extra seat for Ireland in next years' European Elections.

As stated in our previous submission to the Commission's Constituency review process, there are several principles that we as a party believe must inform the Commission's approach.

Broad Principles

Proportionality

The goal of our electoral system must be proportionality – the representatives elected in a constituency should represent the preferences of the voters that elect them. The principle of 'one person, one vote' is damaged by the lack of proportionality in our system, whereby voters for larger parties tend to get more political representation than those supporting smaller parties. The expert research on this points to a simple way in which PR-STV systems can be made more proportional: larger constituencies.

The Green Party also notes that the normal practice for 23 of 26 other EU states (with only Belgium, Italy, and Poland excluded) use single national constituencies, ensuring a good vote-to-representation ratio and more policy focused election process.

It is the Green Party's position that this requires the use of the largest allowable constituency size (currently 5) where possible and that there should be no reversion to the pre 2014 regime of multiple, smaller constituencies with 3-4 seats. The Commission should also consider the implications and practicality of a single national constituency, while recognising it is outside of the TOR and current legislative framework.

Representation

As stated in greater detail in our previous submission, the Green Party advocates for the use of larger constituencies because these allow for the emergence of more diverse political representation, and in particular that of women and people from minority backgrounds.

A focus on the greater use of 5 seat and larger constituencies will promote diversity and gender balance. Smaller constituencies have disadvantaged those currently under-represented in politics and act as a barrier to entry and success to these groups. This leaves women in particular under-represented and is contrary to other efforts to increase diversity and proportionality in representation amongst our public representatives. It is the Green Party's opinion that 3 seat European constituencies must be avoided as a result and larger constituencies favoured where possible.

Recommendations

With 14 seats to represent the population, and with consideration to the principles of representativeness and continuity, the Green Party recommends that:

- The existing three constituencies of Dublin, South and Midlands North West be retained;
- That the counties of Laois and Offaly be moved from the South Constituency to the Midlands North West constituency;
- That the South Constituency be maintained at 5 seats, the Dublin Constituency 4 seats and the Midlands North West constituency be increased to 5 seats.

It is our belief that this is the most obvious configuration for 14 seats, preserving both continuity, alignment with county boundaries, proportionality and the principle of representation as addressed above.

Additionally, the Green Party believes that the Commission should consider the future development of the European constituencies to address further growth in the population and addition of more seats in future reviews. This is particularly relevant currently considering [proposals of the European Parliament's Constitutional Affairs Committee](#) for reform of the Treaties and consideration of new democratic methods, including transnational lists for future EU elections, multinational referenda, etc. These considerations could include examination of the feasibility and desirability of a single European constituency, to bring Ireland in line with 22 of 26 other EU states for European elections.