

Subject: FW: New submission from Research Form

From: The Electoral Commission <noreply@electoralcommission.eu>

Sent: Thursday 7 December 2023 08:46

To: ELC Research <research@electoralcommission.ie>

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1. What is your view on the five proposed research strands? Are there amendments or additions you would suggest?

This is a very well thought out research plan, which covers key areas under the auspices of the Electoral Commission.

In relation to strand C, I think the perception of electoral integrity could be strengthened from the perspective of deliberate, malign (or other) influences on people's thinking. This would cover, for example, attitude manipulation via algorithms which influence exposure to different types online information content. This is a fundamental threat to election integrity.

I am particularly pleased to see Strand E, emphasising the importance of curiosity driven and blue skies research, the impact of which cannot necessarily be anticipated, except with reference to the impact of this type research conducted over the last decades.

2. Which of the research questions under section 4 would you consider most important and why?

I think that each strand is of importance, and they are inter-linked. However, perception of the integrity of elections is a key enabler in relation to election behaviours.

3. Are there additional research projects that you consider important to promote and enhance Ireland's democracy and electoral events? If yes, please specify?

See my answer regarding Strand C above.

In relation to Strand D and voting age, this should include reference to young people's age related neurological development and thus decision making processes. Addition of new age cohorts to the electoral process would have significant impact, and the decision making abilities of such cohorts must be well understood.

In addition, Strand D could include reference to education (and evaluation of same) on electoral processes in Ireland for new arrivals.

4. Are there any other comments or observations that you wish to make regarding An Coimisiún's research programme?

As mentioned above, this is a well thought out programme and I am pleased to have the opportunity to comment.

Name

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Email

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Are you replying as an Individual or representing an Organisation?

I represent an Organisation

Name of Organisation

Maynooth University