

Padraig Power (ELC)

From: The Electoral Commission <noreply@electoralcommission.eu>
Sent: Wednesday 15 November 2023 18:52
To: ELC Research
Subject: New submission from Research Form

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

Re. replacing By-elections - I disagree with the suggestion of a list system. E.g. if a TD resigns because they have lost the support/mandate of their constituents, why should the seat be assigned to a person of their choosing (who, presumably, would support the same policies etc that may have caused the loss of the electorate's support)? By-elections should be retained for for Dáil seats.

Similarly, I would extend the question/issue to include County Council seats. Currently, when a Councillor resigns/dies, their party or independent group, etc, gets to nominate a replacement. That is even worse than the alternative list system, as at the time of original election, voters have no idea who may end up occupying the seat if the elected candidate vacates. (There was also the situation when Cllr Anthony Flynn, Dublin City Council, died and there was no alternative listed and he was not a member of any grouping - who gets to "claim" authority to assign that seat?) Council seat vacancies should be filled from a panel of the eliminated candidates from the originating election.

Re. postal voting - it needs to be considered in line with updates to the electoral register. With a centrally-managed register, it will make it much easier for voters to update their current residence, so there should be no need in most instances for postal voting within the state.

Postal voting/residency rights to vote should not be eased. If not normally resident in Ireland (with some exception), why get to vote?

Re. the issue of "regulating information" - I urge the Commission to be very careful of mission-creep and not to micro-manage elections, regulate speech, censor candidates etc. It's the Commission's role to manage and facilitate elections, but it's the candidates' role to convince their electorate to vote for them over other candidates (by demonstrating their qualities and their opponents failings), and it's then the electorate's role to choose which candidates to elect.

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I am responding as an Individual