Padraig Power (ELC)

Subject: FW: New submission from Research Form

From: The Electoral Commission <noreply@electoralcommission.eu>
Sent: Sunday 17 December 2023 13:21
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?

Under Strand B of the Draft Research Programme, Electoral Law, Electoral Systems and Electoral Infrastructure, the topic of reform of the electoral process and franchise for elections in respect of Seanad Éireann should be explicitly included.
This research should not seek to replicate the work of the 2015 Working Group on Seanad Reform or the 2018 Seanad Reform Implementation Group, but instead should set out how the reforms proposed by those two groups should be implemented and the basis for their implementation - including compliance with the provisions of the Constitution of Ireland, and to give true legitimacy to, and improve public confidence in, the Seanad.
The research should also provide a clear and achievable timeline for implementation of electoral reform in respect of the Seanad.

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

Strand B would be the most important, in my opinion. This should include research in respect of reforming the electoral system for elections in respect of Seanad Éireann. This will allow for a clearer plan, with achievable deadlines set, for implementation and once the relevant changes are implemented, true legitimacy could be given to the Seanad and public confidence in the institution can begin to be improved and strengthened.

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

Yes. Research on reforming the electoral system and franchise in respect of elections for Seanad Éireann should be conducted, with a view to setting clear and achievable timelines for implementation of the recommendations of the 2015 Working Group on Seanad Reform and the 2018 Seanad Reform Implementation Group.

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

The proposal by An Coimisiún to review the voting age is very welcome. It is important for any healthy democracy that those impacted by decisions of government can have a part in deciding who governs, where they hold capacity to make such decisions.
The proposals to examine the number of TDs per constituency, the use of posters, and

extension of postal voting are also very welcome, and are long-overdue for review and research.

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