

1 Introduction and summary of recommendations

1.1 Introduction

The Commission established under the Electoral Act 1997 (as amended) to review the constituencies for Dáil and European Parliament elections in the light of the 2011 Census of Population is pleased to present its report in this volume.

This is the first occasion on which a statutory Commission has been required to carry out a review of constituencies on the basis of a reduced number of members of Dáil Éireann. The amending provisions of the Electoral (Amendment) Act 2011 fixed the range for the total number of members of the Dáil at between 153 and 160, as compared with the previous range of 164 to 168. This fact combined with an increase in population of 348,404 persons or 8.2% has made it necessary to recommend more far-reaching changes than might otherwise have been necessary.

The Commission recommends that the number of members of Dáil Éireann be 158. Any greater reduction would bring the ratio of Dáil members to population close to the constitutional limit of 30,000 per member. Taking into account the Commission's terms of reference the figure of 158 best facilitates the allocation of seats on a county basis and achieves the best parity of representation with minimal variances from the national average of population to Dáil member.

The number of Dáil constituencies recommended is 40 in place of 43. The changes recommended in the Dáil constituencies mean that the number of 5-seat constituencies, at 11, remains unchanged but that the number of 3-seat constituencies will be 13 instead of 17 and the number of 4-seat constituencies will be 16 instead of 15. The changes recommended in Dáil constituencies are summarised below and detailed in Chapter 5. Eleven constituencies remain unchanged.

As explained in Chapter 6 the Commission considers that no change is necessary in the four existing 3-seat constituencies for elections to the European Parliament.

The Commission is very grateful to the organisations and individuals who took the time and trouble to make submissions in response to our public notice. A total of 533 were received of which 8 related to the European Parliament constituencies.

Many submissions were directed at specific concerns in particular counties or constituencies. The Commission has endeavoured to address such concerns so far as possible within the parameters of the constitutional and statutory terms of reference. It is possibly unnecessary to draw attention to the inevitable interdependence of viable recommendations between individual constituencies or counties and neighbouring communities. The reallocation of electoral divisions to enable or preserve a particular allocation of seats in one constituency may have an immediate knock-on impact on the adjacent constituencies and this can in turn have a more far-reaching domino effect on more distant constituencies.

We consider that the recommended arrangement of constituencies achieves a high level of parity of representation. As illustrated in Appendix 2 and explained at paragraph 3.1, in all but 5 constituencies the population per member does not exceed 30,000 and in those the excess is less than 500. In all constituencies the variances above or below the national average of population per member are within five per cent. This is the first occasion on which a statutory Commission has maintained national variances within this range.

1.2 Summary of recommendations for Dáil constituencies

- The number of members of Dáil Éireann should be 158.
- There should be 40 constituencies of which 11 will be 5-seat, 16 will be 4-seat and 13 will be 3-seat.
- The county of Cork, including Cork city, should form the five constituencies of Cork East (4-seat, unchanged), Cork North-Central (4-seat), Cork North-West (3-seat), Cork South-Central (4-seat) and Cork South-West (3-seat, unchanged).
- The counties of Sligo and Leitrim with some population from south Donegal and from west Cavan should form a 4-seat constituency called Sligo-Leitrim. The rest of the county of Donegal should form a 5-seat constituency. The rest of the county of Cavan with the county of Monaghan should become a 4-seat constituency.
- Dublin city should largely form the five constituencies of Dublin Bay North (5-seat), Dublin North-West (3-seat), Dublin Central (3-seat), Dublin South-Central (4-seat) and Dublin Bay South (4-seat). Dublin outside the city should largely form the six constituencies of Dublin Fingal (5-seat) and Dublin West (4-seat); Dublin Mid-West (4-seat, unchanged) and Dublin South-West (5-seat); Dublin Rathdown (3-seat) and Dún Laoghaire (4-seat).
- Galway West with some population from south Mayo should remain a 5-seat constituency. The rest of the county of Mayo should form a 4-seat constituency. The county of Roscommon with population from east Galway should form a 3-seat constituency called Roscommon-Galway. The rest of the Galway East constituency should form a 3-seat constituency.
- The county of Kerry should form a 5-seat constituency. The county of Limerick should form a 4-seat Limerick City constituency and a 3-seat constituency to be called Limerick County.
- The county of Waterford, including Waterford city, should form a 4-seat constituency. The county of Offaly with some population from north west Tipperary should form a 3-seat constituency. The rest of the county of Tipperary should form a 5-seat constituency. The county of Laois with some population from Kildare should form a 3-seat constituency. The rest of the county of Kildare should form a 4-seat and a 3-seat constituency.
- Eight other constituencies should remain unchanged — Carlow-Kilkenny (5-seat), Clare (4-seat), Longford-Westmeath (4-seat), Louth (5-seat), Meath East (3-seat), Meath West (3-seat), Wexford (5-seat), Wicklow (5-seat).

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Recommended Constituencies (40)	Seats (158)	Existing Constituencies (43)	Seats (166)
Carlow-Kilkenny	5	Carlow-Kilkenny	5
Cavan-Monaghan	4	Cavan-Monaghan	5
Clare	4	Clare	4
Cork East	4	Cork East	4
Cork North-Central	4	Cork North-Central	4
Cork North-West	3	Cork North-West	3
Cork South-Central	4	Cork South-Central	5
Cork South-West	3	Cork South-West	3
Donegal	5	Donegal North-East	3
Dublin Bay North	5	Donegal South-West	3
Dublin Bay South	4	Dublin Central	4
Dublin Central	3	Dublin Mid-West	4
Dublin Fingal	5	Dublin North	4
Dublin Mid-West	4	Dublin North-Central	3
Dublin North-West	3	Dublin North-East	3
Dublin Rathdown	3	Dublin North-West	3
Dublin South-Central	4	Dublin South	5
Dublin South-West	5	Dublin South-Central	5
Dublin West	4	Dublin South-East	4
Dún Laoghaire	4	Dublin South-West	4
Galway East	3	Dublin West	4
Galway West	5	Dún Laoghaire	4
Kerry	5	Galway East	4
Kildare North	4	Galway West	5
Kildare South	3	Kerry North-West Limerick	3
Laois	3	Kerry South	3
Limerick City	4	Kildare North	4
Limerick County	3	Kildare South	3
Longford-Westmeath	4	Laois-Offaly	5
Louth	5	Limerick	3
Mayo	4	Limerick City	4
Meath East	3	Longford-Westmeath	4
Meath West	3	Louth	5
Offaly	3	Mayo	5
Roscommon-Galway	3	Meath East	3
Sligo-Leitrim	4	Meath West	3
Tipperary	5	Roscommon-South Leitrim	3
Waterford	4	Sligo-North Leitrim	3
Wexford	5	Tipperary North	3
Wicklow	5	Tipperary South	3
		Waterford	4
		Wexford	5
		Wicklow	5

MAP 1
CONSTITUENCY COMMISSION REPORT 2012
IRELAND - RECOMMENDED DÁIL CONSTITUENCIES



CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES ———

COUNTY BOUNDARIES - - - - -