

Submission to the European Constituency Boundary Review

The Secretary, European Parliament Constituencies Committee,
Room 1.65, Custom House, Dublin 1

Submission by Joe Carey T.D., Francis Street, Ennis, Co. Clare

Acknowledging the difficult task involved in balancing the sometimes opposing provisions within the Terms of Reference of your committee, I would like to make a few brief observations.

Given the uncertainty surrounding Brexit and the many important issues to be resolved in the incoming Parliament, I believe that we should retain three constituencies for the next European elections. Disruption should be kept to a minimum and the two additional seats should be allocated keeping in mind both numerical equality of representation and population density. I know from having looked at the figures that moving to a four-constituency, and particularly having Dublin as a stand alone constituency, scenario would stretch the Terms of Reference. In particular, as a rural T.D., I would call on your committee to ensure that the more rural and more peripheral areas get the benefit of any 50-50 calls that have to be made rather than the more densely populated ones.

The other reason that I am keen to see minimum disruption is that the Dáil constituency of Clare, the constituency that I represent has been moved over and back in various boundary reviews. Constant change like this is not ideal and I believe that I speak for a significant majority of Clare people and Clare Public Representatives when I say that our strong preference would be to stay in the Ireland South Constituency.

Clare, historically, culturally, socially and from a sporting perspective associates with Munster and has little in common with counties such as Donegal, Longford or Louth. I mean no offense to any of those counties, but our relationship is strongest with our

nearest neighbours. Clare is and always has been a part of Munster; along with Limerick and North Tipperary it makes up the Mid-West Region and Clare is part of the Southern Regional Assembly.

More so than with any of our other neighbours, Clare has a strong economic and cultural interdependence with Limerick. Many Clare people travel to work and to college in Limerick. Likewise, many of the employers and businesses in Limerick rely on Shannon Airport. This special relationship has been acknowledged previously in the National Spatial Strategy and in the current National Planning Framework, the Limerick Metropolitan Area extends considerably into Co. Clare, including Shannon and its hinterland. The vast majority of the population of Clare live within 30km of Limerick City.

I understand that decisions on boundaries are made primarily on the basis of numbers, but they should also involve common sense. So, I am strongly recommending to you that Clare should remain within the Ireland South constituency.

I wish you well with your deliberations,

Joe Carey T.D.