

Mairead McGuinness MEP

Vice-President of the European Parliament

Hon. Mr. Justice Robert Haughton
Chair
European Parliament Constituency Committee
Room 1.65, Custom House
Dublin 1

30.08.2018

Constituency Committee - submission to the public consultation

Dear Judge Haughton,

I welcome the establishment of the European Parliament Constituency Committee and look forward to its report.

The purpose of this submission is to highlight the uncertainty surrounding the UK's withdrawal from the EU and how this might impact on the redrawing of constituency boundaries and on the 2019 European election.

The Committee is tasked with redrawing boundaries to cater for an additional two seats in the European Parliament in the May 2019 election.

There is speculation that, should the negotiations between the UK and the EU not proceed along the agreed timetable, the UK may seek to delay the date of its departure. It is therefore possible to envisage a scenario whereby the UK may want to maintain membership of the EU, including representation in the European Parliament, for a certain period beyond the start of the next legislature of the European Parliament.

The timeframe for the departure of the UK is 29 March 2019, but I would ask the Committee to be mindful of the possibility of the date being extended, a real possibility that may emerge late in the negotiation process.

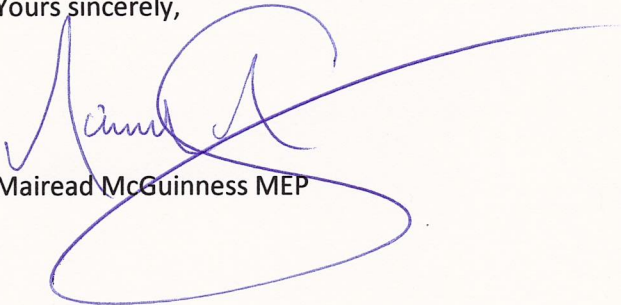
This could impact the redistribution of seats as set out in the European Council Decision (EU) 2018/937.

Article 3, paragraph 2 of the European Council Decision provides for the possibility that the UK will not have left the EU by the start of the next parliamentary term. In this eventuality, the European Parliament would maintain the previous allocation of seats until the UK's withdrawal becomes legally effective, at which point the new allocation would apply. It is therefore possible that Ireland could start the 9th legislature of the European Parliament with 11 seats, increasing to 13 seats during the legislature and before the next election.

I am not sure how this can be accommodated, but it is a scenario that needs to be taken into account.

I respectfully suggest the Committee might consider possible electoral and legislative arrangements that would be future-proofed against all such eventualities.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mairead McGuinness', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

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