

The Policing Authority should be democratically accountable. The current Policing Authority is not democratically accountable. It's members are appointed by the Government yet supposedly independent and this creates a situation where there is no accountability to the public through democratic representation. Please refer to my letter at this link that was published in the Irish Times last year 23/2/2017 incorporated in to my submission in terms of expanding this point.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/letters/an-garda-s%C3%ADoch%C3%A1na-and-democratic-accountability-1.2985112>

Ireland has very low levels of democratic representation. It's parliamentary representation is about average for countries of similar size and in fact to have the level representation considered the optimum for a population of Ireland's size we should have 10 more TDs than we have presently according to the widely accepted empirically based "cube root law of assembly sizes" (Rein Taagepera and Shuggart 1979). We are way underrepresented in comparison with other EU countries in terms of the levels of local Government representation. Finland a country of similar size has about 10 times the number of elected councillors we have. Other countries have levels of regional representation that we do not have and similarly democratic accountability of health boards, school boards etc. this is a flaw and the argument for greater levels of democratic representation needs to be made forcefully. There are varying models of democratic accountability regarding Policing boards and authorities in other countries at national, regional and local level. The Joint Policing Committees are very limited in terms of what they do and the democratic accountability is very indirect, and they are in private and not reported on so there is no public engagement or awareness of these committees. Local policing meetings organised by local stations where the local community are invited happen sporadically but are obviously welcome initiatives in themselves. If we want a police force that is the public and the public is the police, to paraphrase those remarks of Robert Peel in 1829, it needs to be democratically accountable. I believe the Policing Authority for Ireland's police force should be directly elected.

Also I refer to recent recruitment by PSNI where people from outside the force up to age 57 invited to apply. We should open up recruitment at all levels and all ages up to retirement, as an effort to ensure diversity and maximize the talent of all kinds that can be availed of.

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