**Deliberative Event 05.02.2021**

**Participant Survey**

Thank you for your participation in the event today. Your contribution to the discussions has been invaluable. Now that we have reached the end of the day, we’d like to ask you again for your views on the way Northern Ireland is governed. We also would like to get your feedback on the event today.

This survey should take about 10 minutes to complete. If you would like assistance filling out the survey please just let one of the moderators know. Please be assured that all responses that you provide today will be treated in the strictest confidence and the research will be conducted in line with the principles of the Market Research Society Code of Conduct.

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1. In general, thinking about how power-sharing government works in Northern Ireland, how informed do you think you are about this subject?

*Please circle one answer*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Very well informed | 1 |
| Fairly well informed | 2 |
| Not very well informed | 3 |
| Not at all informed | 4 |
| Don’t know | 5 |

1. Please take a moment to think about the way democracy generally works in Northern Ireland. On a scale of 0-10, where 0 means not at all satisfied and 10 means completely satisfied, to what extent are you satisfied with how democracy works in Northern Ireland?

*Sliding scale* [0 = Not at all satisfied; 10 = Completely satisfied; + Don't know]

1. There are a number of different opinions on the Good Friday or Belfast Agreement, which was signed in 1998. Which one of these statements is closest to your view? *Please select one answer.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The Agreement remains the best basis for governing Northern Ireland as it is | 1 |
| The Agreement remains the best basis for governing Northern Ireland but needs to undergo some changes to work better | 2 |
| The Agreement is no longer a good basis for governing Northern Ireland and should be substantially changed | 3 |
| The Agreement has never been a good basis for governing Northern Ireland and should be removed | 4 |
| Other answer (please write in) | 5 |
| I don’t know | 8 |
| Prefer not to say | 9 |

1. As part of the Good Friday or Belfast Agreement, Northern Ireland has a power-sharing government at Stormont. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about power-sharing.

*Please select one answer for each row.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Strongly disagree** | **Tend to disagree** | **Neither agree / disagree** | **Tend to agree** | **Strongly agree** | **Don’t know** |
| a. Power-sharing devolution is the most appropriate form of government for Northern Ireland. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |
| b. Power-sharing could be improved with further reforms. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |
| c. Overall, power-sharing has been good for Northern Ireland. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |
| d. Power-sharing works better now than it did in the past. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

1. Thinking about some of the specific aspects of power-sharing in Northern Ireland, please indicate the extent to which you think the following features are important or unimportant.

*Please select one answer for each row.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Very import-ant** | **Somewhat important** | **Neither important / unimport-ant** | **Somewhat unimport-ant** | **Very unimpo-rtant** | **DK** |
| a. All of the major political parties, having secured a certain number of seats in the Assembly, are *guaranteed* a place in the government (known as the ‘Executive’). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |
| b. The number of seats each party gets in the Executive is roughly proportional to the seats they have in the Assembly. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |
| c. Parties eligible to enter the Executive can still choose to enter an Official Opposition instead. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |
| d. Positions in the Executive Office – i.e. the First Minister and deputy First Minister – are occupied by MLAs from the two largest communities in Northern Ireland | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |
| e. The First Minister and deputy First Minister hold equal powers. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |
| f. Members of the Assembly officially designate as ‘unionist’, ‘nationalist’ or ‘other’. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |
| g. Important decisions are decided on a cross-community basis. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

1. The present model of power-sharing in Northern Ireland is known as **‘mandatory coalition’**. It guarantees any party which has a certain number of seats in the Assembly, *usually* around 10 seats or more, to be part of the devolved government if it so wishes. Some people have called for this model of power-sharing to be reformed. There are two main options for reform.

One possible option for reform is **a voluntary coalition model**, which would give parties complete freedom to negotiate amongst themselves which parties should form the government.

Another possible option for reform is a **qualifiedvoluntary coalition model**, which gives parties some freedom to decide who forms the government, but there would be additional rules to ensure cross-community representation.

Please indicate the extent to which you oppose or support these options.

*Please select one answer for each row.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Strongly opposed** |  |  |  |  |  | **Strongly in favour** | **Don’t know** |
| 1. Power-sharing model stays as it is. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 1. Power-sharing based on voluntary coalition. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 1. Power-sharing based on *qualified* voluntary coalition. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |

1. Imagine that at some point in the future proposals emerge to reform how power-sharing works in Northern Ireland. Would it be important for any conditions to be met before these reforms were introduced? Please indicate below how important or unimportant you think it would be for the following conditions to be met before reforms to power-sharing were introduced.

*Please select one answer for each row.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Very import-ant** | **Somewhat important** | **Neither important / unimport-ant** | **Somewhat unimport-ant** | **Very unimpo-rtant** | **DK** |
| A majority of MLAs support the reform. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |
| A majority of MLAs support the reform – including a majority of unionist MLAs, a majority of nationalist MLAs, and a majority of other MLAs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |
| A majority of voters in Northern Ireland support the reform in a referendum. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |
| An official citizens’ assembly recommends the reform. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |
| The British government supports the reform. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |
| The Irish government supports the reform. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

1. In a democracy, people can expect their government to reflect certain principles. Take a look at the list below. Please rank the following principles in order, from the one you think is most important (at the top) to the one you think is least important (at the bottom).

*Randomise initial order; respondents can then reorder.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A government should be effectively scrutinised and held to account. | 1 |
| A government should represent as many interests in society as possible. | 2 |
| A government should be able to implement policies efficiently. | 3 |
| A government should rely on evidence to make decisions. | 4 |
| A government should be stable. | 5 |
| A government should speak with one, collective, voice. | 6 |
| A government should follow the will of the majority of citizens. | 7 |
| A government should protect minority interests. | 8 |

**Final thoughts on different models of power-sharing**

In this section, we would like to hear any more thoughts that you have on the topics we have discussed today.

1. How do you feel about the different possible types of power-sharing? What are the good or bad things about the current arrangements? And what are the good or bad things about alternative arrangements – either a voluntary coalition model or a qualified voluntary coalition model? *Please type your response in the box below:*

**Good or bad things about the current power-sharing arrangements:**

**Good or bad things about a voluntary coalition model:**

**Good or bad things about a qualified voluntary coalition model:**

**Table discussions**

In this last section, we would like your feedback on the discussions you had around the table.

**The Table Discussions**

In this last section, we would like to hear your thoughts on the discussions you had in your virtual group today.

1. Please state the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements, still selecting one box per question.

*Please select one answer for each row.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Totally disagree** | **Tend to disagree** | **Neither agree / disagree** | **Tend to agree** | **Totally agree** | **Don’t know** |
| a. I had ample opportunity to express my opinion during the discussions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| b. The opinions of the other participants did not differ so much from my own opinions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| c. In general, everyone showed respect for the others in the discussion. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| d. I have changed my mind as a result of the discussions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

**Thank you, this survey is now complete.**