
RTÉ General Election / Climate

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18 November 2024 at 15:05

Prof. Barry McMullin
Dublin City University

18 November 2024

Re: RTÉ General Election

Dear Prof. Mc Mullin and colleagues,

I wish to acknowledge your letter of 16 November 2024 and petition to the Director General.

Election planning takes place over many weeks, including studio bookings, etc and in RTÉ's planning we aim to cover a wide range of issues for the electorate.

Your letter urges a debate with questions from a studio audience that should be "strongly biased" towards those under 35.

Selecting an audience that was representative primarily of one demographic, could be seen to be 'loading' a debate towards a particular outcome, and in contravention of RTÉ's statutory and regulatory obligations to be impartial and objective.

Audience selection for current affairs programmes requires particular diligence and there are also additional considerations during an election campaign when broadcasters are required to abide by the election rules outlined by Coimisiun na Meán.

RTÉ's planning for the General Election was conveyed to political parties in Dáil Eireann on 27 September 2024 when it was confirmed that Party Political Broadcasts would be offered to qualifying parties.

This was followed by a document issued and published on 04 November and sent to political parties, outlining our broad approach to the General Election, including two party leader debates.

In advance of the General Election no party asked or suggested to RTÉ that there should be a dedicated leaders' debate on climate change.

But climate change has been, and will continue to be, covered in our election programmes to date, on television and radio. Parties and candidates have been given an opportunity to outline their views and plans.

This has included two dedicated radio debates: on *Today With Claire Byrne* on RTÉ Radio including spokespersons for Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, Sinn Féin, Green Party and Independent Ireland and can be found at –

[Climate debate | Today with Claire Byrne - RTÉ Radio 1](#)

And on *Late Debate* with Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, Sinn Féin, Labour Party, Green Party and an Independent candidate, which can be found at –

[Climate Debate | The Late Debate - RTÉ Radio 1](#)

Likewise, in tonight's leader debate, climate will be one of the issues to be addressed, over the course of a two hour programme.

Outside of the election period, RTÉ has consistently been to the forefront in programming dealing with climate and related issues on television, radio and online, where RTÉ's digital platform maintains a daily updated Climate page.

Over the past two weeks, our Environment Correspondent, George Lee has been reporting from the COP29 and likewise reported from COP28 last year.

Yours Sincerely

On Behalf of the RTÉ Election Steering Group

Brian

BRIAN DOWLING

Head of Editorial Standards and Compliance

Ceannasaí um Chaighdeáin Eagarthóireachta agus Comhlíonadh

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