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To whom it may concern,

Having read the latest report, I am pleased to see that institutional autonomy is to be strongly retained in the co-regulatory model outlined.

It is important that the principle of equity of participation are included in the updated legislation.

I have a few specific points to make:

1. In relation to the size of Governing Authorities (GA), 12 is very few. There is a need to balance internal and external members. However, for organisations as complex as HEIs, particularly the larger ones, 4 members of staff is a very small number of people to bring all the competencies required to the table of the GA. Similarly for the external members of the authority. In this regard, and speaking from my experience [REDACTED] I would strongly advocate for a larger GA as is consistent with international best practice. An OECD report (OECD (16 September, 2004), “Review of Higher Education in Ireland”, Paris. ) recommends no more than 20. There are dangers in shrinking GAs so dramatically, in my view the risks in terms of loss of expertise are significant. A composition of 8 external members, 3 students and 7 staff + CO and Chair would fall within the OECD recommendation and retain the external/internal balance outlined in the latest report on reform of the Act.
2. The commitment to the existing legislative provisions for Academic Freedom is extremely important and it is crucial that new national legislation is consistent with/anticipates developments at a European level on this issue.
3. The report mentions provisions to take account of the distinction between publicly funded and non-publicly funded institutions. I would suggest that there is a third-class of institutions, those that receive a mixture of public and private funding, assuming that this model will be part of a future HE sector landscape, this will need to be recognised in drafting the legislation.

With kind regards,

[REDACTED]