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# Foreign Nationals and Local Elections: a Tool for Integration?

Agnès Maillot\*<sup>†</sup> and Bairbre Ní Chiosáin\*<sup>‡</sup>

<sup>1</sup>(Dublin City University) – Irlande

<sup>2</sup>Université Toulouse I Capitole – Université toulouse I Capitole, (Université Toulouse I Capitole) –  
France

## Résumé

**Foreign nationals and local elections: A tool for integration?** Ireland is among the twelve EU countries which grant the right to vote at local elections to non-EU nationals. However, it is the only member state that does so with no restriction in terms of length of residence. At present, four foreign nationals are sitting on local councils in Ireland, after the 2009 elections (Portlaoise and Monaghan Co. Councils, Lismore and Carrickmacross Town Councils). The aim of this paper is to assess the role and impact of these elected representatives in local political life. The first part will devise a theoretical framework on the benefits of the right to vote in terms of integration. Then this paper will analyse the work and achievements of foreign nationals elected to County/Town councils in Ireland in 2009 and will look at 2014 perspectives. Finally, it will assess whether local political representation has an impact over the integration of non-foreign nationals in the areas where they stand for election and where they are elected.

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\*Intervenant

<sup>†</sup>Auteur correspondant:

<sup>‡</sup>Auteur correspondant: