



An Roinn
**Cultúir, Ealaíon
agus Fóillíochta**
Department of
**Culture, Arts
and Leisure**

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Consultation on Proposals for an Irish Language Bill

Comhairliúchán ar Thograí faoi choinne
Bille Gaeilge

2015

RESPONSES | FREAGAIRTÍ

PART 2 | CUID 2

Organisations, political parties, and those who identified themselves as elected representatives submitted the responses in this document.

Chuir eagraíochtaí, páirtithe polaitíochta, agus daoine a chuir in iúl gur ionadaithe tofa iad, na freagairtí sa cháipéis seo isteach.

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Alex Easton MLA

10th February

7 High Street,
Donaghadee
BT21 0AA

Dear Response Co-ordinator,

I am writing to respond to the consultation on a proposed an Irish Language Act. I am absolute baffled as to why there is the need for an Irish Language as I don't believe there is much support for one. I believe such a proposal is both divisive and politically motivated and is wrong.

Is there really any need for an Irish Language Act when only 5% of the population speak the language, and of those 5% most can't even speak it fluently as born out in the last census result. I would also point out that the Irish language is already protected under European law as a minority language, and as such does not need any further protection or rights.

I also believe that at a time when there are so many cuts to Government Departments that this is just a sheer waist of public money, which could be better, spent on our Health and Education Systems. As such I don't believe there is a need for an Irish language act. and I do not support or want one for Northern Ireland.

Yours Sincerely,

Alex Easton MLA

Ards Borough Council

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for consulting with Ards Borough Council on Proposals for an Irish Language Bill.

Your consultation document was considered at the March meeting of the Council's External Affairs & Planning Committee where it was resolved to respond as follows:-

The Council is not opposed to any language being spoken, particularly from a cultural perspective. However, it believes that Irish is currently being used as a cultural weapon and territorial marker, thus setting the wrong tone for the use of Irish. The promotion of the Irish language should be encouraged but it should not be mandatory. The Council is equally opposed to the use of Ulster Scots, or other languages, being made mandatory. Users of the Irish language are fluent in English and the Bill will add a layer of cost to every strand of government in Northern Ireland. These costs are not addressed in the Bill. The Council is concerned at the unquantified costs at a time when austerity measures are being imposed and services cut.

Q1: Do you agree with the Irish language being given Official Status through legislation?

No. Irish should not be given official status through legislation

Q2: Do you agree with the inclusion of provisions to allow Irish to be used in the courts?

No. The Council is opposed to Irish being used in the Courts as it is unnecessary and potentially very expensive.

Q3: Do you agree with the inclusion of provisions to allow Irish to be used in the Assembly?

No. The Council is opposed to Irish having equal status to English in the Assembly. It could impede the smooth running of proceedings and cause uncertainty and ambiguity, while being potentially expensive.

Q4: Do you agree with the inclusion of provisions to create the position of an Irish Language Commissioner?

There is no need for a Commissioner who would have powers to prosecute for failure to co-operate with him/her.

Q5: Do you agree with the inclusion of provisions for Public Bodies?

The Council is opposed to forming public bodies to promote Irish as an official language. This would be an additional burden on the public purse.

Q6: Do you agree with the inclusion of provisions for Language Schemes?

The Council does not believe that there is a need for provisions for Language Schemes.

Q7: Do you agree with the inclusion of provisions for Gaeltacht areas?

The Council is opposed to the provision of official Gaeltacht areas. The suggestions contained in the document are undefined and the consequences have been unexplored. Experiences in other Gaeltacht areas show that Irish language speakers struggle to obtain jobs in English speaking organisations and that the

Q8: Do you agree with the inclusion of provisions for place-names?

There is no requirement for provisions for place-names.

Q9: Do you agree with the inclusion of provisions for education?

No. Education in Irish is already available and highly subsidised in comparison with other sectors. To give individual pupils the right to be taught in Irish would place a massive strain on the public purse and the education system. The full impact is unknown and unquantified. Joint education has been repeatedly cited as essential for a shared future and united community. Education provision is already suffering from funding cuts and a debate over language at this time is inappropriate.

The Council also believes that the proposed Bill will not promote equality of opportunity between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial groups.

I hope that this is of assistance to you.

Yours faithfully

Amanda Martin
Head of Administration
On behalf of Ards Borough Council
2 Church Street
Newtownards
BT23 4AP
Tel: 02891 824190

Ballycarry & District Community Association

Memorandum

Response Co-ordinator
Irish Language Bill Consultation
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
Level 7
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG

Proposed Irish Language Bill

Introduction

Ballycarry & District Community Association represents people and affiliated groups in the village and rural community around Ballycarry in County Antrim. The village was established in 1609 by a Scottish settlement from Stirlingshire and is one of the heartlands of the Ulster Scots community.

We therefore approach the issue of the proposed Irish Language Bill with sympathy as a community which has striven to preserve what remains of the Ulster Scots or Lallans tongue in our community.

We wish to also state that we respect those many Irish Language enthusiasts and activists who have sought to preserve and promote the Irish language.

In Ballycarry we have sought, through funding and voluntary efforts, to stage Ulster Scots classes in our community and in our local primary school and this has had Considerable success over the years.

We believe that Ulster Scots and Irish are part of the rich diversity which we have in Northern Ireland and that both languages have been impacted on by the divisions

between communities and are victims of perceptions by others. Sadly, we believe that, from our perspective as a unionist community, the Irish language is still seen as a very political issue.

We therefore believe that;

- a) Development of an Irish Language Act at this time will have a negative impact on community relations in Northern Ireland because the language continues to be perceived as highly politicised
- b) Development of such a Language Act would be to the detriment of the Irish Language as a consequence
- c) Support for the Irish Language should be given in non-statutory fashion at the present time and that at a point within the next five years the consultation should be re-issued in order to ascertain whether the divisive nature of this debate be revisited. In the period efforts must be made by political leaders to work towards a shared future and cultural respect and understanding

The Association believes that the proposals in the bill would lead to the language becoming focus for a major and divisive battle, which would not be to its advantage.

As an Ulster Scots community we could also ask that a similar bill would be brought forward for the Ulster Scots language, but we feel this would similarly become a politically charged issue.

Lastly, we would re-iterate as an Ulster Scots, largely Protestant and Unionist community, we respect the heritage which is encapsulated within the Irish Language and wish no disrespect to the Irish Language or to the community of language enthusiasts which it represents

Ballydonaghly LOL 351

FAO: Response Co-Ordinator, Irish Language Bill Consultation

On behalf of the Officers and Brethren of Ballydonaghly LOL 351, we would like to voice our opposition to the ILB that is currently being proposed.

Reasons for this appear to be fairly obvious, however I would summarise them as follows:

* P1, Q1(B) Too proscriptive, we do not create such bills for any other minority languages in NI. These include Polish, Mandarin, Ulster Scots, Lithuanian, Portuguese and any other that may be spoken in a casual and non-official scenario.

* P2, Q1 Use in the Court system will cause undue inefficiency on top of a system that is already running at capacity.

* P2, Q2 Vast majority of users will speak English as a first or second language. Therefore there is no need for Irish to be catered for in the Courts.

* P3, Q1 Introduction to the assembly will be a considerable expense to the tax payer. All members can speak and understand English (we assume...).

* P3, Q2 Do not agree with provision to allow Irish in the assembly. Any use of it should be translated immediately by the user so that it can be recorded in the Hansard, in English.

* P4, Q1 An Irish language commissioner would not promote or enhance good community relations. Therefore they would be decisive and detrimental to the future of this country.

* P5, Q1 Irish language hobbyists should encourage the language as they best see fit. It should not be official for public bodies.

* P6, Q1 If someone wishes to learn Irish they can attend a language course

* P7, Q1 Not workable, not enough users or interest through the country. It hasn't worked without issues in Rol so doubt it would work here.

* P8, Q1 This is a potentially divisive illustration on how this bill would not work. It is not something that would give any benefit to the country and would only cost money that we don't have. Many place names do not have an Irish derivation, so Ulster Scots, Norman or other heritages could be lost. This is a culture issue, where place names should be examined and their background shared, but not labelled for a whim.

* P9, Q1 Languages are important and all languages should be available for students. However, we should encourage students to learn languages that will benefit them in global business as we compete with other nations for trade deals.

* P10, Q1 There will be a severe impact on equality. Although Irish has been further declining in recent years, it is still predominantly used by the Nationalist community. Even then it is less than a third of that section of population, so less than a 15% of the total population have any knowledge of it. This will probably include the 'Irish' that is spoken by some elected representatives, which clearly disrespects the language as they can't be bothered to learn it properly.

DCAL states the sectors of society that will see a positive impact, however we would disagree and find that it is highly discriminatory.

The politicisation of the Irish language has moved the language backwards over the past 50 years. Where it used to be something for society to enjoy, it is now seen as a weapon for political parties to use. This is highly disrespectful and with the introduction of this Bill it would cause community division along religious and political lines.

The language should be enjoyed like any other, but DCAL needs to find a better way of promoting it.

Regards,
Worshipful Master
LOL 351

RECEIVED
20 FEB

Date 12.2.2015

Address

60^D Beechfield Drive
Dunaphadee
BT21 0BA.

Dear Response Co-ordinator,

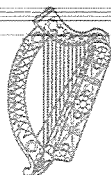
I am writing to respond to the consultation on a proposed an Irish Language Act. I am surprised why there is the need for an Irish Language Act as I don't believe there is much support for one. I believe such a proposal is both devisive and politically motivated and is wrong.

Is there really any need for an Irish Language Act when only 5% of the population speak the Irish Language. I would also point out that the Irish language is already protected under European law as a minority language, and as such does not need any further protection or rights.

I also believe that at a time when there are so many cuts to Government Departments that this is just a sheer waist of public money, which could be better, spent on our Health Service and Education System. As such I don't believe there is any need for an Irish language act, and I do not support or want one for Northern Ireland.

Yours sincerely,

Beechfield Residents Association



30 April 2015

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA
Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG

Dear Minister,

I write to express my support for the public consultation recently launched by your Department on an Irish Language Bill, and also for the recent publication of a “Strategy to Enhance and Protect the Development of the Irish Language 2015-2035”, as well as a similar Strategy for Ulster-Scots.

The Irish language is a vibrant and unique element of our identity, society, history and culture and is rightly cherished and loved throughout the island. The Government, as you know, has provided substantial resources to support the North/South Body Foras na Gaeilge, even in difficult economic times, in its work to support the Irish language on an all-island basis.

As you are also aware, the Government firmly believes that an Irish Language Act, as provided for under the St Andrews Agreement, should be taken forward. The principles and provisions of the St Andrews Agreement (and of the other Agreements since the Good Friday Agreement) in their totality underpin partnership Government in Northern Ireland and peace and reconciliation in Ireland and across these islands. As such the position of the Government always has been, and continues to be, that all outstanding elements of the Agreements should be implemented.

I know that you share my disappointment that a commitment to an Irish Language Act, either enacted in Westminster or the Northern Ireland Assembly, did not form part of the Stormont House Agreement, despite the best efforts of the Government and other likeminded participants in the talks. It is a matter of regret that the necessary political consensus did not exist to enable its inclusion in the Agreement.

I sincerely hope that this exercise allows groups and individuals from all communities to engage with this matter constructively and with a view to enhancing mutual understanding and respect. The linguistic and cultural diversity of this island is a valuable asset in which we all share. Our diverse heritage is something to celebrate and nurture. In this regard, the public consultation on an Irish Language Bill is a very welcome opportunity to expand the understanding of, and engagement with, this important issue.

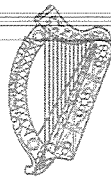
Please be assured that the Northern Ireland Executive has the Government's support in all efforts to engage the public on these issues and to foster a better understanding of why an Irish Language Act would be to the benefit of all citizens of Northern Ireland. I look forward to further engaging with you, and with your colleagues across the Northern Ireland Executive, on these matters.

Yours sincerely,



Charles Flanagan TD

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade



30 Aibreán 2015

Carál Ní Chuilín CTR
Aire Cultúir, Ealaíon agus Fóillíochta
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Béal Feirste
BT2 7EG

A Aire,

Tá mé ag scríobh chugat chun mo thacaíocht a léiriú don gcomhairliúchán poiblí, a sheoil do Roinn le déanaí, ar an mBille Gaeilge agus don bhfoilsíúchán nua “Straitéis le Forbairt na Gaeilge a Chur Chun Cinn agus a Chosaint 2015-2035”, chomh maith le Straitéis den chineál céanna don Albainis Uladh.

Is cuid beoga agus sainiúil d’ár bhféiniúlacht, sochaí, stair agus cultúr í an Ghaeilge atá meas uirthi agus grá ag daoine di ar fud an oileáin. Mar is eol duit, tá an Rialtas tar éis maoiniú a chur ar fáil, fiú i dtréimhsí deacra ó thaobh an gheilleagair de, chun tacú le h-obair an Fhorais Thuaidh-Theas, Foras na Gaeilge, agus é ag cur an Ghaeilge chun cinn ar bhonn uile-oileánda.

Mar is eol duit, creideann an Rialtas go láidir go mba chóir Acht Gaeilge, mar atá foráilte i gComhaontú Chill Rímhinn, a chur chun cinn. Tá prionsabail agus forálacha Chomhaontú Chill Rímhinn (agus comhaontuithe eile ó Chomhaontú Aoine an Chéasta ar aghaidh) ina n-íomlán mar bhonn agus thaca ag rialtas comhpháirtíocht i dTuaisceart Éirinn agus ag síochán agus athmhuintearas in Éirinn agus thar na oileáin seo. Mar sin, is é an seasamh a bhí ag an Rialtas i gcónaí, agus atá ag an Rialtas anois ar bhonn leanúnach, go mba chóir go gcuirfí i bhfeidhm gach cuid de na Comhaontais sin atá le cur i bhfeidhm.

Tá a fhios agam go bhfuil díoma ortsa agus orm fhéin nach riabh tiomantas d’Acht Gaeilge, le bheith achtaithe i Westminster nó i dTionól Thuaisceart Éireann, mar chuid de Chomhaontú Áras Stormont, in ainneoin sár-iarrachtaí an Rialtais, agus baill eile den tuairim céanna, i rith na comhráití. Is cúis díoma nach raibh an comhdhearcaidh polaitíocht a bhí de dhíth i láthair chun é a dhéanamh mar chuid den gComhaontú.

Tá súil agam go gcuireann an stráiteas seo ar chumas ghrúpaí agus dhaoine dul i ngleic leis an ábhar seo i slí cuiditheach chun tuiscint dá chéile agus meas a fheabhsú. Tá ilchineálacht teangacha agus chultúir an oileáin seo ina bua dúinn uilig. Is rud le céiliúradh agus le cothú í ár n-oidhreacht ilchineálach. Fá dtaomh de seo, is deis é an comhairliúchán

poiblí ar an mBille Gaeilge chun tuiscint ar, agus rannpháirtíocht leis, an ábhar tábhactach seo a leathnú.

Is féidir leat a bheith cinnte de go bhfuil tacaíocht an Rialtais ag Tionól Thuaisceart Éireann ina iarrachtaí uilig chun plé leis bpobail ar na h-ábhair seo agus tuiscint níos fearr ar na fáthanna go mbeadh Acht Gaeilge ina bhuntáiste do shaoránaigh uilig Thuaisceart Éireann a chothú. Táim ag tnúth leis na rudaí seo a phlé leatsa agus le do chomhghleacaithe eile sa Tionól Thuaisceart Éireann.

Is mise le meas



Cathal Ó Fíannagáin

Aire Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála

CLG An T-Iompu Mag Uidir

Response Co-ordinator
Irish Language Bill Consultation
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
Level 7
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG

A Chara,

On the behalf of the committee and members of Cumann CLG An T-Iompu Mag Uidir (Tempo Maguire's), I wish to register our support for the proposed Irish Language Bill. The Gaelic Athletic Association has always held the Irish language as central to our national identity, and the Irish language and culture is enshrined in the constitution and ethos of the Association.

The Irish language has seen a remarkable revival in the North over recent generations, as evidenced by the thousands of children going through Irish-medium education and the increasing number of people who indicate knowledge of the language in census forms. We feel it is vital that the rights and opportunities of those who wish to use the Irish language in their daily lives, in the public sphere and in their dealings with official bodies, be protected by legislation.

Is mise le meas,

An Tiompu Mag Uidir
St Patrick's Park
Edenmore Lane
Tempo
BT94 3GY

The Irish Language Bill

A submission to the Department of Culture, Arts and Heritage by Coláiste na nGael, Britain, April 2015.





The Irish Language Bill

A Submission to the Department of Culture, Arts and Heritage by Coláiste na nGael, Britain, April 2015.

Coláiste na nGael is a non-political group that organises Irish language classes and residential colleges all over Britain. Our leadership and membership are drawn from a wide range of Protestant denominations, as well as non-Christian faiths.

We teach Irish in British schools, colleges and universities, and organised a large conference in London called *Protestants and the Irish Language – A Celebration*.

Having consulted our membership, we would like to comment on the Irish Language Bill.

'Yes' to an Irish Language Bill.

We ask politely that the Department of Culture, Arts and Heritage support the creation of strong and meaningful legislation. An Irish Language Bill will do no more than bring Northern Ireland into line with custom and practice in Great Britain.

An Irish Language Bill would help *de-politicise* Irish. This in itself would be a major and worthwhile objective.

It is right and proper for the state to treat speakers of a small indigenous language with equality. Advantaging English over Irish feeds a sense of grievance. This destabilises Northern Ireland.

We say that Irish can be a gift and an inheritance to all the people who live in Northern Ireland.

Specific Suggestions.

We recommend that there be an Irish Language Commissioner. Their role will be to assuage the fears of anyone who feels threatened or marginalised by the on-going resurgence of Irish.

An Irish Language Commissioner would also act to widen participation in Irish, and to open the language to communities that may feel alien from, or excluded by the Irish language.

We would recommend that an Irish Language Commissioner have wide and meaningful powers to correct situations where people have been excluded or treated unfairly. Public and private organisations should not be able to discriminate against the Irish language. Laws already exist in this regard, but they must be applied firmly and consistently. Recorded incidents where a driver has thrown children off a bus for speaking Irish amongst themselves would have to be dealt with more firmly than has been the case.

Golf clubs, shops, libraries and most or all other places should not be allowed to discriminate against speakers of the Irish language.

We also recommend that Irish road signage should be phased in. In most of Ireland, signage already recognises the reality of English and Irish. Signage has a limited life before it needs to be replaced. As it stands, perhaps 5% of all road signs are replaced annually. No new funds need be allocated – just introduce Irish signage each time signs need to be replaced.

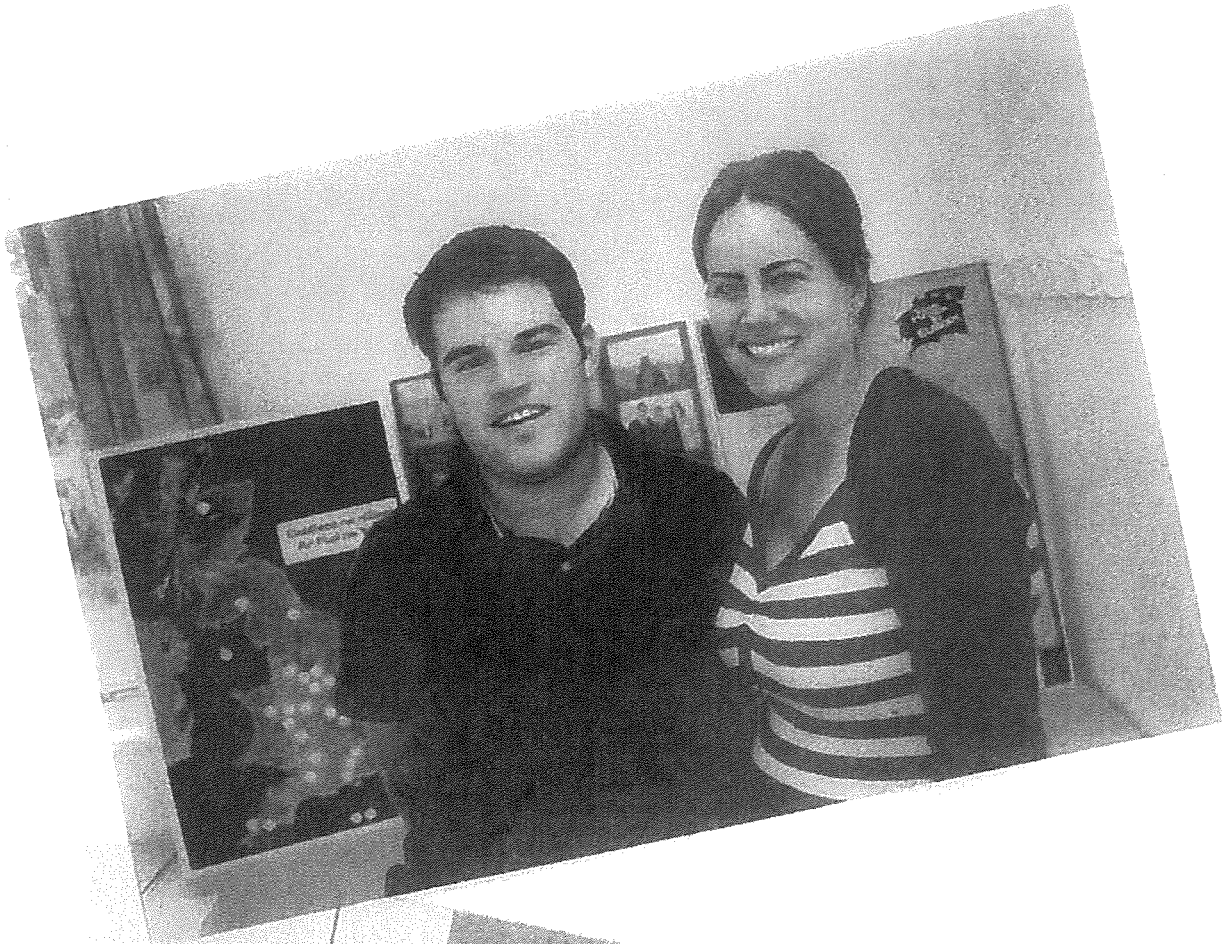
We teach Irish to children of all faiths and backgrounds in Britain. This is not at all controversial here. We recommend that a real effort is made to teach Irish across Northern Ireland, and to widen participation in the life of the language.

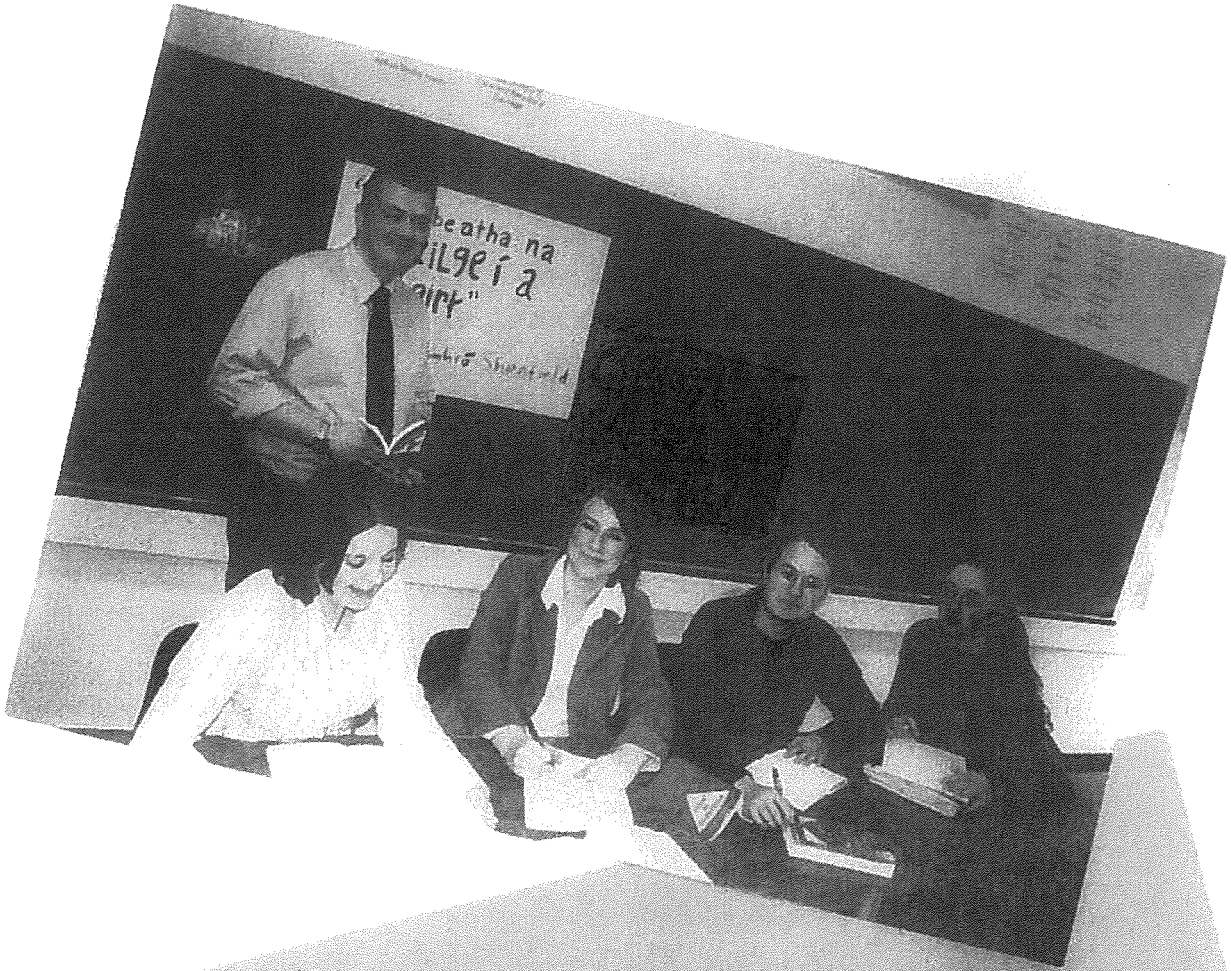
Urban *Gaeltachtaí* of a limited kind already exist in Northern Ireland, plus areas such as South Armagh and West Tyrone where the Irish is growing again. We would like the Irish Language Bill to develop strategies to help these *Gaeltachtaí* to grow further.

We would specifically ask that thought be given to Irish *after* children leave school. Job creation schemes for young Irish speakers and 'start-up' support for businesses that incorporate Irish into their operations are to be encouraged.

Finally, Irish should be, in certain circumstances, a language of court proceedings in Northern Ireland. In some instances Irish-speaking defendants, witnesses and police officers may be drawn from both national territories.

Some thought should be given to the possibility that Irish speaking lawyers and judges from both territories might work together in the same court, also.





The Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ)

Submission to the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure consultation on Tograí faoi choinne Bille Gaeilge (Proposals for an Irish Language Bill) May 2015

The Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) is an independent human rights organisation with cross community membership in Northern Ireland and beyond. It was established in 1981 and lobbies and campaigns on a broad range of human rights issues. CAJ seeks to secure the highest standards in the administration of justice in Northern Ireland by ensuring that the Government complies with its obligations in international human rights law.

CAJ welcomes the opportunity to respond to the February 2015 Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) consultation on the Irish language bill. CAJ responded to two previous consultations on the legislation in 2007.¹

International obligations to legislate to protect Irish

The treaty-based commitment to legislate for the Irish language is provided for in the bilateral (UK-Ireland) St Andrews Agreement 2006. This states that:

The [British] Government will introduce an Irish Language Act reflecting on the experience of Wales and Ireland and work with the incoming Executive to enhance and protect the development of the Irish language.²

CAJ has been concerned for some time that this and other human rights provisions committed to in international instruments as part of the peace settlement have not been implemented by the state party.³

CAJ welcomes that consultation document makes reference to relevant international human rights standards. Legislating for the Irish language also engages the UK's human rights commitments to the United Nations and Council of Europe. A succession of oversight committees of treaties the UK is party to have called for the implementation of the Irish language Act.

In 2009 the United Nations Committee for Social, Economic and Cultural Rights expressed concern that the Irish Language Act had not been legislated for. The UN

¹ S188a CAJ response to consultation paper on Irish Language Legislation for Northern Ireland, March 2007; and s188b Submission from the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) on second consultation on Irish language legislation for Northern Ireland, June 2007.

² St Andrews Agreement, 2006; Annex B, Human Rights, Equality, Victims and Other Issues.

³ See CAJ 'Mapping the Rollback? Human Rights Provisions of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement 15 years on' Report of a conference held in the Great Hall, Queens University Belfast, 26 April 2013 (November 2013).

Committee contrasted the more favourable positions in Wales and Scotland and advised that in relation to compliance with duties under the UN Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) that:

...the State party, or the devolved administration in Northern Ireland, adopt an Irish Language Act with a view to preserving and promoting minority languages and cultural heritage...⁴

In 2010 the Council of Europe assessed UK compliance with its commitments under the European Charter for Minority Languages. The Committee of Experts (COMEX) who oversee compliance with the Charter have urged the UK to legislate to promote and protect the Irish language. COMEX held that legislation was:

...needed to protect and promote the Irish language in Northern Ireland, as is the case for Welsh in Wales and Scottish Gaelic in Scotland. Furthermore the Committee of Experts agrees with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission that a legislative basis is even more important in the environment of political conflict as a means of achieving reconciliation.⁵

COMEX noted that it was unlikely legislation to protect Irish would be passed by the Assembly given the need for consensus with unionist and nationalist parties, but that the Act could instead be passed by Westminster given its parallel legislative competence.⁶

In 2011 another Council of Europe treaty body, the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for National Minorities (FCNM), included the following provision among only three 'Issues for Immediate Action' by the UK to ensure compliance with its obligations under that treaty:

Develop comprehensive legislation on the Irish language in Northern Ireland and take resolute measures to protect and implement more effectively the language rights of persons belonging to the Irish-speaking community.⁷

The Committee stated it was 'deeply concerned by the failure to adopt legislation on the Irish language due to a lack of political consensus in the Northern Ireland Assembly'.⁸ In 2014 COMEX reiterated its position on the Irish Language Act. CAJ is conscious that the Act was a treaty-based obligation entered into by the State-party at St Andrews and that, as these quotes highlight, legislating to protect the Irish language engages the international human rights obligations entered into by the UK.

⁴ UNDOC E/C.12/GBR/CO/5, 22 May 2009 (ICESCR Concluding Observations on UK) paragraph 37.

⁵ Council of Europe, (UK Third Monitoring Report) Report of the Committee of Experts on the Charter ECRML 2010(4), Paragraph 14.

⁶ As above, paragraph 15.

⁷ Council of Europe, (UK Third Opinion on the UK) Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for National Minorities. 2011(006).

⁸ As above, Paragraph 146.

The commitment to legislate for the Irish language in St Andrews did not include a pre-requisite of cross party support. It is clear that at present there is no prospect of the Northern Ireland Assembly legislating for the Irish language in the context of opposition within considerable numbers of unionist elected representatives. CAJ has taken the position that given the UK commitment to the Irish Language Act constitutes an international obligation which is not being discharged by the regional legislature, the obligation should fall to the UK Parliament. The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission highlighted the obligations to legislate for treaty-based commitments in specific relation to the Irish Language Act in its own submission to COMEX:

While treaty compliance can be achieved by regional authorities meeting relevant standards, if a devolved government fails to deliver the state does not escape the obligations that it assumed, and the Commission therefore expects the UK Government to ensure that legislation is enacted. The Commission understands that a similar situation arose in 2007 with reference to another international obligation, namely the EU Gender Directive on Goods and Services, where, in the reported absence of agreement in the Northern Ireland Executive, the UK Government legislated on the matter.⁹

The precedent referred to by the Commission whereby Westminster intervened on behalf of the Assembly in 2007 relates to the transposition of EU directive (2004/113/EC) which implements the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services. The then deputy First Minister was willing to legislate for the directive but the then First Minister reportedly wrote to an Assembly Committee to state he was 'not agreeable' due to 'to the explicit inclusion of reference to transgender or gender reassignment in the regulations'. Whilst gender reassignment is a different matter to sexual orientation, a DUP colleague on the Committee, Stephen Moutray, stated their concern was that 'Bible-believing Christians would be put in a position where they could have to take part in ceremonies at gay weddings, or if they were a guesthouse owner, they would have to give a double room to two gay men.'¹⁰ In the context of this opposition to the policy, and lack of 'cross-party' consensus, UK Ministers intervened and the legislation was passed at Westminster to implement the international obligation.¹¹ The UK government has powers to direct action (including legislation) be taken by a Northern Ireland Minister in order to fulfil international obligations.¹² However, these powers have not been exercised in relation to the Irish Language Act.

In the likely event that the legislation cannot progress through the devolved institutions following the consultation CAJ would urge DCAL to make this clear to the UK government and seek their intervention to legislate in Westminster for the Act.

⁹ NIHRC, Parallel Report to the Committee of Experts on the Third Periodical Report of the United Kingdom, September 2009, paragraph 33.

¹⁰ Paisley and McGuinness disagree over gay rights PINK NEWS 13 December 2007.

¹¹ The Sex Discrimination (Amendment of Legislation) Regulations 2008. For further information see: Decision Notice Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Section 50) Reference: FS50216279 Date: 24 June 2010.

¹² S26-27 Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The proposals on the content of the Act

CAJ wishes to make the following brief comments in relation to the proposals on four issues:

Consultation with Irish speakers and the POBAL proposals

Article 7(4) of the ECRML (as applied to Irish) provides that in determining policy as regards the use of the Irish language states must take into consideration the needs and wishes expressed by speakers of the Irish language. CAJ is conscious that POBAL, the umbrella group for Irish language organisations has developed and published proposals for the Act which in addition to being developed and supported by international experts, were developed by and with speakers of Irish.¹³ CAJ welcomes that the current consultation references and draws on the POBAL proposals, and would urge further consideration of them as the basis for the Act.

The Act should reflect experience in Wales and Ireland

The nature of the treaty-based commitment to legislate for the Irish language is specific to the Act reflecting experience in Wales and Ireland. CAJ can see this is reflected in, for example, proposals for official status for Irish in Northern Ireland. CAJ wishes to draw attention in particular to the situation in relation to legislative protection for the Welsh language having developed and strengthened since both the St Andrews Agreement and even since the initiation of the current consultation. In March 2015 the Welsh Assembly approved Welsh Language Standards that are to replace the Language Schemes in designated public authorities.¹⁴ CAJ would urge DCAL to study this development in order for it to be reflected in proposals for the Act.

Statutory Duty to tackle prejudice against the Irish language

Human rights bodies have expressed concern in relation to ongoing examples of intolerance, hostility and even demonization of speakers of the Irish language.¹⁵ In this context CAJ urges consideration within the legislation of a statutory duty on public authorities, modelled on Article 7(3) of the ECRML, to promote, by appropriate measures, mutual understanding between all linguistic groups, and in particular respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to the Irish language.

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

Finally CAJ concurs with the conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment that the proposals for the Irish language legislation will not constitute an 'adverse impact' on any section 75 group. In relation to other EQIAs and screening exercises CAJ has articulated concerns that the concept of 'adverse impact' has often been misinterpreted. In such instances actions to promote Irish compatible with the ECRML framework have been misconstrued as having an 'adverse impact' on the mere basis that there is political opposition to them, or that speakers are more concentrated in one ethnic group than another. Neither of these matters meets the

¹³ POBAL, *Acht na Gaeilge do TÉ / The Irish Language Act NI 2nd edition 2012.*

¹⁴ *Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015.*

¹⁵ See for example Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, *Parallel Report to the Committee of Experts on the Third Periodical Report of the United Kingdom*, September 2009, paragraph 61.

threshold of 'adverse impact' in relation to EQIAs and CAJ welcomes that DCAL has not misinterpreted the duties in this manner.¹⁶

**Committee on the Administration of Justice
May 2015**

¹⁶ For further information see CAJ *'Unequal Relations? Policy, the Section 75 duties and Equality Commission advice: has 'good relations' been allowed to undermine equality?'* May 2013.

Irish Language Bill and Language Strategies Team
Department of Culture, Arts and Language
Causeway Exchange, 1-7 Bedford Street,
Belfast,
BT2 7EG

29th May 2015

RE: Proposals for an Irish Language Bill

The Community Relations Council (CRC) welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation on 'Proposals for an Irish Language Bill'. CRC has previously commented and supported the development of legislation which protects and promotes the use of Irish Language during earlier DCAL consultation exercises¹. This response will largely echo what has previously been stated.

General Comments

CRC views the Irish language as a significant element in the cultural diversity that makes this place what it is. The Irish language is a living language with shared roots, and it has both a cultural and heritage value for the whole community – it is not a single community issue, it belongs to everyone. CRC wants the Irish language to be protected and supported to the benefit of the language itself, to the benefit of the treatment of other minority issues (where the approach to the Irish language is an important indicator of how other contentious cultural issues will be dealt with) and to the benefit of a culture of tolerance, diversity and engagement.

CRC also notes the various political agreements e.g. the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement and the St Andrew's Agreement, which make commitments to the protection of the Irish language, as well as international protections and obligations e.g. the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (1992). The 2014 report from the Committee of the Experts (COMEX) regarding the application of the Charter drew attention to fulfilled/partly fulfilled and unfulfilled commitments relating to Education, Judicial Authorities, Administrative Authorities and Public Services, Media and Cultural Activities and Facilities.

The Committee reported on its findings and stated 'in Northern Ireland, the difficulties regarding the promotion of Irish and Ulster Scots observed in the previous monitoring round have continued, especially in the case of Irish. There is still no legislative basis for the use of Irish due to the lack of political support. Unjustified restrictions on the use of Irish in some fields covered by the Charter, including in courts, still persist'² COMEX recommended 'that the authorities of the

¹ CRC officially responded to the DCAL public consultations - February 2007 and May 2007.

² EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES; APPLICATION OF THE CHARTER IN THE UNITED KINGDOM; 4th monitoring cycle; 36:2014; https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/minlang/Report/EvaluationReports/UKECRML4_en.pdf

United Kingdom take account of all the observations and recommendations of the Committee of Experts and, as a matter of priority: adopt and implement a comprehensive Irish language policy, preferably through the adoption of legislation providing statutory rights for the Irish speakers³

Furthermore, the recent Stormont House Agreement stated that *participants agree* 'The UK Government and the Irish Government, recalling commitments from previous Agreements, and recognising the importance of understanding, tolerance and respect in relation to linguistic diversity, endorse the need for respect for and recognition of the Irish language in Northern Ireland, consistent with the Council of Europe Charter on Regional or Minority Languages'⁴.

Based on all of the above and engagement with Irish language users and stakeholders⁵, as well as previous CRC comments, CRC continues to support the need for the development of an appropriate legislative provision that will protect the language.

Good Relations & A United Community

Given that the promotion of good relations and cross-community engagement is core to our business, CRC is keen to see language legislation developed that enables support for the development of a shared and united community. CRC has previously asked that cultural issues are approached with generosity. Unfortunately this generosity is not always forthcoming. Negative and disrespectful comments regarding the Irish language can be destructive to relationships. This should be important to everyone with an interest in the protection and promotion of Irish, as well as those in wider society. The critical task of accommodating cultural diversity within the public sphere remains difficult and efforts must be renewed to deal with differences in a constructive and positive manner. Further delays in progressing legislative provision do not help in creating a culture of mutual respect and appreciation.

It therefore remains important to present a strong framework which supports individual cultural traditions and identities, and in doing so take particular account of the need to engage the whole society, including those who feel threatened. This will mean paying due regard to the need for equity and fairness, the need to respect and celebrate diversity and difference and the overarching need to ensure that fairness and difference work to the benefit of the whole society. Again it is worth reflecting on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, whose signatories consider the protection of historical regional or minority languages of Europe as an important way of maintaining and developing

³ EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES; APPLICATION OF THE CHARTER IN THE UNITED KINGDOM; 4th monitoring cycle; 45:2014; https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/minlang/Report/EvaluationReports/UKECRML4_en.pdf

⁴ Stormont House Agreement; 13:2014;

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/390672/Stormont_House_Agreement.pdf

⁵ As part of this consultation process CRC has noted the views of a range of expert groups either through public events or direct engagement with stakeholders.

Europe's cultural wealth and traditions and stress the value of interculturalism and multilingualism⁶.

CRC's 2007 response stated *'CRC believes that laws should seek to promote universal rather than partisan or sectional solutions to this challenge. Given the association of culture and religion with 'sides' in conflict, there is a risk that any action in this area will be divisive and deeply controversial. This cannot justify inaction or timidity, but it should shape the manner or way in which the challenges of change are approached. In the view of CRC changes in approach to the Irish language should be cast within a general commitment to sharing, diversity and tolerance, on the principle of non-violence and equality. Pursued in this way, it must be made clear that legislation in no way encroaches on the rights of the English speaking community; rather, it is an opportunity to embrace another element of our rich culture'*. This remains fundamental for CRC in moving forward in this current process.

CRC is fully aware of the sensitivities surrounding the promotion and usage of the Irish language, and too often the issue of language has become reduced to an emblem of cultural resistance or aggression set within the context of a national identity dispute. As our society continues to emerge from conflict we need to adopt a progressive approach to cultural diversity in which we move away from exclusion and public neutrality and move towards inclusion of key aspects of identity. The task is to turn issues previously understood as the property of 'one side' into opportunities to establish new links, partnerships and new appreciations for the entire community.

CRC recognises the importance of supporting and cultivating the development of minority languages – offering opportunities to acknowledge, respect and support diversity. This is particularly important in the context of a society that continues to grapple with a post-conflict situation. For many, there is a limited sense of ownership which can create barriers to understanding.

Clearly the development of legislation remains a contested exercise, reflected in an inability to progress legislative changes regardless of the various consultations, as well as the recommendations from the recent report from the Committee of the Experts⁷. In moving forward it is critical to develop society's relationship with the language. Therefore legislation must provide a framework that enables opportunities to understand it and as well as giving recognition to the language in the context of a society emerging from conflict.

The development of a legislative framework must therefore contain provisions aimed at opening and improving access and use of the language (private or public) in the context of a post-conflict society. CRC supports the work being

⁶ European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, preamble.

⁷ EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES; APPLICATION OF THE CHARTER IN THE UNITED KINGDOM; 4th monitoring cycle; 2014; https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/minlang/Report/EvaluationReports/UKECRML4_en.pdf

done to broaden interest in the language on a cross-community basis and is disappointed that the current Bill does not contain proposals relating to community relations or community development. During this consultation exercise it is important for the department to pay attention to various commitments already given by the Executive such as 'Together Building A United Community' which seeks to build 'a united community', as well as the current Programme for Government which commits to 'Building a Strong and Shared Community'⁸, also echoed in DCAL's Strategy to Enhance and Protect the Development of the Irish Language 2015-2035.

CRC also notes that as part of the Stormont House Agreement, a Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition is to be established. CRC looks forward to seeing how this consultation process evolves within the context of the work of this Commission.

Implementation

Implementation should be addressed within a clear framework that builds on international and domestic best practice and contributes to a shared and equal future. Official guidance and action plans should allow a degree of flexibility in order to meet new demands/challenges. Taking account of public finances and competing priorities it would be useful if DCAL provided further detail as to what resources will be needed for implementation and if it will be a progressive model of implementation - in particular that the department would explore any economies of scale that can be auctioned in translation services. These clarifications would help strengthen the current proposals as well as provide a realistic approach for delivery and implementation.

Conclusion

CRC wants legislation to broaden acceptance, respect and knowledge of the language and encourage new audiences and appreciation. It will be important to devise actions that enhance understanding of the language, as well as helping individuals and groups to relate to it more positively. There are many ways of achieving this e.g. education, arts and cultural activities. Those involved in linguistic policy and promotion should be asked to advise accordingly.

Beyond these comments and CRC's support for a Bill that must meet the various international obligations for minority languages and meet Human Rights standards, CRC is not in a position to determine the content of the final bill but hopes our contribution can move the consultation forward to deliver a resolution that supports and protects the Irish language, as well as encouraging intercultural dialogue.

Finally, it must be made clear that this legislation should be viewed as an opportunity to embrace another element of our rich culture. Developed and

⁸ Priority 4; Programme for Government.

**RESPONSE OF THE COUNCIL FOR CHURCH IN SOCIETY
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND
TO THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, ARTS AND LEISURE'S
CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS FOR AN IRISH LANGUAGE BILL**

MAY 2015

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland has over 230,000 members belonging to 545 congregations across 19 Presbyteries throughout Ireland, north and south.

The Council for Church in Society is authorised by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to speak on behalf of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland on matters of public policy. We welcome the opportunity to respond to the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure's (DCAL) Consultation on proposals for an Irish Language Bill. This response reflects our current thinking on some of the issues raised in the consultation document. We do not directly address each of the proposals but wish to make the following comments:

1. We recognise that many in our society regard the Irish language as a key part of their cultural heritage and identity.
2. As Presbyterians, we acknowledge the important role played by the Irish language in our history. Indeed, it is often said that Presbyterians helped to save the Irish language. Historically, many spoke it as their first language, or as a language they learned to socialise and trade with their neighbours. Moreover, Presbyterians were to the forefront of Irish language revivals and some became experts, developing language resources and using Irish as a medium for conducting church services. The Irish language remains highly valued by many in our congregations today.
3. We want the Irish language to be properly respected and valued by those who do and do not speak it. A central and significant challenge in this regard is depoliticising its use. DCAL needs to set out clearly and in detail how this is to be achieved in our society, which remains highly polarised.
4. We welcome the increasing interest in learning Irish across our society, believing that better understanding of our shared heritage can contribute to building a stronger and more united community.
5. The Northern Ireland Executive has a role in protecting and promoting the Irish language. However, to achieve the above aims, language policy must be constructed realistically and effectively: policy makers need to give thorough consideration to the way languages are perceived and used, and the effects of their use on our divided society.

6. We believe that the group of proposals in the consultation document does not represent the most appropriate and effective way forward and even risks devaluing the Irish language in the eyes of many across Northern Ireland.
7. With regard to the public administration aspects, for example, we are concerned that negative attitudes towards the language will increase if there is considerable expenditure on bureaucracy, such as translating documents that are rarely or never accessed, or an open-ended commitment to the use of Irish in tribunals or courts, potentially necessitating simultaneous translation.
8. On place-names and signage, we acknowledge that languages have great potential to make a positive contribution in helping to promote and enjoy our shared heritage. However, we emphasise that this is a difficult, complex and controversial issue. Any action in this regard would need to be measured and considerate of the risk of exacerbating societal division.
9. Evaluating the potential and actual impact of language policy is complicated due to the difficulty in establishing straightforward causal connections between the pursuit of various policy options and outcomes for language development. However, we would question whether the apparent 'top down' approach of many of the proposals is the most appropriate in the current context.
10. The influence of public administration and bureaucracy is arguably less personal, direct and effective than opportunities to learn languages at home and through inclusive engagement at community level.
11. With the vast majority of the population having little or no ability in Irish,¹ we suggest that it would be more appropriate to focus on the provision of learning programmes and resources that support and encourage the use and enjoyment of the language in our community.
12. Linguistic diversity can form part of a healthy and vibrant civic society. The learning of languages can also create better understanding between people from different backgrounds and traditions, promoting community cohesion. We are therefore open to further consideration of how legislation could positively contribute to the protection and development of minority languages in our society, though we recognise that this challenge is not specifically within the remit of DCAL. We would be very willing to meet the Minister and engage with the Committee to discuss this issue further.



Very Rev Dr T Norman Hamilton (Convener of the Council for Church in Society)



Rev Trevor D Gribben (Clerk of the General Assembly)

¹ http://www.nisra.gov.uk/Census/key_report_2011.pdf and
http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/irish_language_chs_2011-12_bulletin.pdf

Councillor John Finlay
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

**RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION ON PROPOSAL FOR AN IRISH
LANGUAGE ACT - April 2015**

I am responding, as an individual citizen but also as a DUP elected representative at Council level, to the DCAL consultation paper on proposals for an Irish Language Act.

1. General comments

I wish to state at the outset that I have no problem with the Irish language for I regard it as part of our history, heritage and culture. Indeed, my Protestant and Unionist ancestors embraced the language on that very basis. Many of our towns, villages, parishes and townlands have names that derive from Gaelic.

That said, I am totally opposed to the growing politicisation of the Irish language which, especially in recent years, has resulted in Irish becoming a divisive and negative, rather than a unifying and positive, influence in our society. I regard that as extremely unfortunate, for it has guaranteed that the majority in my community want to have nothing to do with the promotion of the Irish language. Nationalism and Republicanism have turned Irish into a weapon to be used in an attack on Britishness, and that simply means that Unionists will now oppose any attempts to pass an Irish Language Act. If Sinn Fein regards the equality agenda as a Trojan Horse, then surely the Irish Language Act is its battering ram. And no-one who is to be attacked by that battering ram is likely to want to welcome it.

I have considered the proposals in the consultation paper very carefully and have found them to be exactly what I had anticipated. At least "it does what it says on the tin" for, other than the usual references to "equality" (and we all know what that word means in Sinn Fein's vocabulary), there is little attempt to put a spin on the proposals to make them less unpalatable to unionists. Each proposal bears the hallmark of the Sinn Fein agenda. I am confident it will never see the light of day, but I now offer some comments on a number of the specific questions.

2. Specific Comments

Question 1 – I am totally opposed to Irish being given official status through legislation, thus placing it on a par with English. English is the first language of the vast majority of citizens of Northern Ireland – including those who are Irish speakers. I suspect that there are very few Irish speakers who do not easily understand English. To elevate Irish to the statutory level proposed would be a complete waste of public resources and would lead to widespread anger within the community.

Question 2 – I am totally opposed to the inclusions of provisions to allow Irish to be used in the law courts. Again, this is completely unnecessary on practical grounds and would be a complete waste of limited financial resources. The court system in Northern Ireland is British and British symbols must be the only ones which are permitted. The only language to be used must be English.

Question 3 – in relation to the NI Assembly, we already see Irish being used very frequently and openly. Indeed, its use by some Ministers when answering questions is a studied insult to those who have asked the question but do not understand the Irish version of the answer. The misuse of Irish in that way illustrates the point I am seeking to make in this submission. I therefore totally object to any proposal to give Irish equality with English in the Assembly. The mind boggles at the sheer mountain of needless bureaucracy and business delays, not to mention financial implications, which would flow from such co-called “equality”. There is reference to simultaneous interpretation to ensure that a person without Irish/English is not at a disadvantage when Irish/English is spoken. I am not aware of anyone in the Assembly who understands only Irish. I oppose any further enhancement of the role of Irish in the NI Assembly. Indeed, any such move would cause great resentment across the unionist community and, quite possibly, beyond.

Question 4 – I feel that there are already far too many quangos which, with a few exceptions, are largely a waste of public resources. I oppose the creation of an Irish language commissioner.

Question 5 – this covers public bodies, and the recommendations cause me many concerns indeed for they would place unacceptable demands on a range of hard-pressed public bodies. I note with dismay the suggestion that there should be provision for affirmative action in favour of Irish speakers in recruitment to the Civil Service and other public bodies. Such a move would, quite rightly, be resented by the unionist and Protestant community. In a spurious effort to promote the Sinn Fein version of “equality”, there is to be inequality in public service recruitment that will militate against my community.

Question 6 – this is linked to the previous question. Again, there must be no statutory requirement for public bodies to produce language schemes. It would be a total waste of scarce resources.

Question 7 – this relates to Gaeltacht areas, but we would need a lot more details about the number, nature and size of such areas before support could be given to even limited, non-statutory, measures to assist them. A key for me would be the number of people in such areas who are unable to understand English.

Question 8 – as I mentioned at the outset, many of our place names are already of Irish derivation. That in itself is a sufficient recognition of the role of the Gaelic language in our heritage. I am opposed to any proposals to officially and legally recognise place names in Irish. Many names of roads, streets etc are purely of English origin. Why concoct Irish versions? Any plans for bi-lingual road signs would be completely unacceptable. Further, it would cause serious road safety issues as it would lead to confusion for commuters who would have to quickly make sense of far

CUCHULAINN HURLING CLUB, ARMAGH



Response Co-ordinator
Irish Language Bill Consultation
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
Level 7
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG

A Chara,

On the behalf of the committee and members of Cuchulainn Hurling Club I wish to register our support for the proposed Irish Language Bill. The Gaelic Athletic Association has always held the Irish language as central to our national identity, and the Irish language and culture is enshrined in the constitution and ethos of the Association.

The Irish language has seen a remarkable revival in the North over recent generations, as evidenced by the thousands of children going through Irish-medium education and the increasing number of people who indicate knowledge of the language in census forms. We feel it is vital that the rights and opportunities of those who wish to use the Irish language in their daily lives, in the public sphere and in their dealings with official bodies, be protected by legislation.

Is mise le meas,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'George Bradshaw'.

George Bradshaw

Chairman
Jim Kirk

Secretary
George Bradshaw

Treasurer
John Sheehan

CUCHULAINN HURLING CLUB, ARMAGH



Rúnaí

Chairman
Jim Kirk

Secretary
George Bradshaw

Treasurer
John Sheehan

Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich

Tograí faoi choinne Bhille Gaeilge

Aighneacht ó:

Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich

216 Bóthar na bhFál, An Cheathrú Ghaeltachta, Béal Feirste, BT12 6AH

Ionad ealaíon is ea Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich a bunaíodh sa bhliain 1991 chun freastal ar phobal na Gaeilge trí imeachtaí sóisialta agus ealaíona a chur ar siúl chomh maith le fiontraíocht Gaeilge a spreagadh. 24 bliain ar aghaidh agus tá éileamh níos mó ná ariamh ar áiseanna agus ar chlár na Cultúrlainne agus an tionscadal tar éis fás agus forbairt. Tuigean muid go maith anois nach pobal na Gaeilge amháin atá ag freastal ar an chultúrlann ach daoine ó gach cearn den chathair agus daoine nach bhfuil an teanga acu ach a bhfuil suim acu innti, nó fiú turasóirí ar mhaith leo blaiseadh di.

Fáiltíonn an Chultúrlann anois roimh fhoilseachán na dtograí seo do Bhille na Gaeilge. Ag éirí as Chomhaontú Aoine an Chéasta agus Comhaontú Chill Rímhinn 2006, tá an cás do reachtaíocht cosanta don teanga pléite go soiléir agus dúil againn go mbeadh acht Gaeilge i bhfeidhm roimhe seo. Tuigean muid go bhfuil reachtaíocht teanga de dhíth de réir na Cairte Eorpaí do Theangacha Mionlaigh agus Réigiúnacha.

CEIST 1

(a) An bhfuil tú i bhfách le Stádas Oifigiúil a thabhairt don Ghaeilge trí reachtaíocht?

Tá. Go deimhin léiríonn an t-easpa gníomhaíochta ar an cheist seo, go soiléir an fáth go bhfuil Acht de dhíth, go bhfuil reachtaíocht de dhíth. Tar éis Comhaontú Aoine an Chéasta, agus comhaontu Chill Rímhinn ar bharr an méid a bhí le rá ag Coiste na Saineolaithe, tá sé ríshoiléir, ach amháin go gcaithfear feidhmiú faoin dlí, bheadh cearta do lucht labhartha na Gaeilge i bhfad siar ar an liosta tosaíochta.

CEIST 2

(a) An bhfuil tú i bhfách le forálacha a bheith san áireamh a cheadódh úsáid na Gaeilge in imeachtaí cúirte?

Tá. Ba chóir go mbeadh deireadh leis an Acht um Riar an Chirt (Éirinn) (Teanga) 1737. Reachtaíocht seanaimseartha é nach bhfuil i bhfeidhm áit ar bith eile.

Moladh 1: Scileanna Aistritheoirí

Caithfear a chinntiú nach bhfuil aon mhoill ar chásanna cúirte mar gheall ar rogha duine a gcás a dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge. Tá córas de dhíth le cinntiú go mbeidh aistritheoirí ar fáil nuair a thagann cás os comhair na cúirte. Le cinntiú go mbeidh go leor daoine cáilithe ar fáil le plé leis na cásanna seo, ba cheart tuilleadh oiliúna a chur ar fáil atá dírithe ar na scileanna cuí a thabhairt do dhaoine sa dóigh is gur féidir leo plé leis na cúrsaí seo go héifeachtach agus taobh istigh de sprioc ama.

Moladh 2: Foirmeacha Clárúcháin:

Tá an tAcht tábhachtach do theaglaigh, baineann sé go dlúth le gnáthdhaoine atá ag tógáil clainne le Gaeilge. Tá sé tábhachtach mar sin go gcinnteofaí gur féidir le daoine na cearta seo a úsáid ar bhonn praiticiúil. Ba chóir go mbeadh gach cineál foirm chlárúcháin ar fáil le líonadh isteach as Gaeilge, agus ba chóir go nglacfaí leis na foirmeacha seo gan aon mhoill nó aon bhac eile. Clúdaíonn sé seo clárúcháin do bhreitheanna, bhásanna, phósadh nó do pháirtithe sibhialta, ceadúnas tiomána nó clárúchán ar bith eile a mbeadh ar dhuine éigin tabhairt faoi.

B'fhéarr go mbeadh na foirmeacha seo ar fad ar fáil go dátheangach, leis an Ghaeilge taobh leis an Bhéarla, le cinntiú go bhfuil sé soiléir agus infheicthe. Nuair a chuirtear an dá theanga ar aon fhoirm amháin, spreagfaidh sé seo daoine atá ag foghlaim na Gaeilge chun úsáid a bhaint as an teanga, agus mar sin tá buntáiste oideachasúil ann fosta. Tá sé seo ag cloí le samplaí dea-chleachtais i dtíortha dátheangacha eile.

Moladh 4: Cúrsaí Oiliúna

Ag aithint na n-athruithe suntasach do bhall foirne ba chóir go mbeadh cúrsaí oiliúna agus feachtas ardaithe feasachta á reáchtáil i gcomhair le heagraíochtaí Gaeilge. Chuideodh sé le stát-seirbhísí tuiscint a fháil ar na dualgais i dtaca leis an Ghaeilge, agus le cinntiú gur féidir glacadh leis na foirmeacha seo agus iad a phróiseáil mar is ceart. Ní amháin go gcuideodh sé seo le baill foirne ar bhonn praiticiúil, ach bheadh níos mó tuisceana acu ar an teanga agus cúrsaí a bhaineann léi. Ar a bharr seo, nuair is gá, ba chóir ranganna a eagrú do bhaill foirne atá ag iarraidh cur lena gcumas féin sa teanga.

CEIST 3

(a) An bhfuil tú i bhfách le forálacha a bheith san áireamh a cheadódh úsáid na Gaeilge sa Tionól?

Tá.

Moladh 1: Gearáin leis an Choimisinéir Caighdeán

Is dóigh linn go mbeadh sé inmhianaithe go mbeadh fadhbanna a thagann aníos maidir le cur i bhfeidhm an achta sa Tionól á phlé ar an gcéad dul síos leis an Choimisinéar Caighdeáin sa Tionól sa dóigh is go mbeidh na forálacha a bhaineann leis an Ghaeilge príomhshruthaithe mar chuid de reachtáil an tionóil. Mholfaimis áfach, go mbeadh maoirseacht go fóill ag an Coimisinéir Teanga.

Moladh 2: Áiseanna Aistriúcháin sa Tionól

Ba chóir go mbeadh áiseanna aistriúcháin do BTR sa Tionól, mar atá ar fáil i bPáirlimintí eile fud fad na cruinne seachas am á cur amú le hathrá mar atá faoi láthair. Ba chóir go mbeadh na seirbhísí ceánna sínithe amach le húsáid na Gaeilge a éascú sna Coistí, do BTR agus d'fhinnéithe ar mhaith leo a gcuid fianaise a thabhairt don Tionól as Gaeilge.

Moladh 3: Aistriúcháin Chaipéisí

Molann cuid (d) den chaipéis chomhairliúcháin go mbeadh Bilí agus Achtanna foilsithe go dátheangach go huathoibríoch i nGaeilge agus i mBéarla. Cé go bhfuil sé seo tábhachtach, ba chóir cáipéisí agus le heolas eile a chur san áireamh fosta, mar shampla, an suíomh idirlín, Dialann Gnó an Tionóil, clár ama na gCoistí srl. Seo an t-eolas a bhíonn de dhíth níos minice ar an phobal, agus ba chóir gur féidir leo a rogha teanga a úsáid.

CEIST 4

(a) An bhfuil tú i bhfách le forálacha a bheith san áireamh le post an Choimisinéara Gaeilge a chruthú?

Tá.

Moladh 1:

Tá sé tábhachtach go maoineofaí an oifig mar is ceart agus go mbeidh sí/sé ábalta foireann a earcú.

Moladh 2: Athbhreithniú ar Bhilí agus Pholasaithe an Fheidhmeannais

Bunaithe ar shampla na Breataine Bige, ba chóir go mbeadh an deis ag an Choimisinéir Teanga athbhreithniú a dhéanamh ar pholasaithe nó Bilí ar bith atá le foilsiú, le cinntiú nach ndéanfadh siad aon dochar don teanga, go díreach nó go hindíreach. Más amlaidh go ndéanann go mbeidh sé de cheart aige plé leis an aire cuí chun teacht ar réitigh.

Moladh 3: Neamhspleáchas an Ról

De réir forail (d) sa chaipéis chomhairliúcháin seo 'comhlíonfaidh an Coimisinéir Gaeilge a c(h)uid dualgas go neamhspleách ar an rialtas.' Tá sé iontach

tábhachtach go mbeidh an ról seo neamhspléach agus apolaitíoch. Is gá neamhspléachas an róil a chosaint.

CEIST 5

(a) An bhfuil tú i bhfách le forálacha a bheith san áireamh do Chomhlachtaí Poiblí?

Tá.

Moladh 1: Treoir agus Comhairle

Tá treoir shoiléir agus comhairle shuntasach de dhíth le cinntiú go bhfuil comhlachtaí poiblí ábalta cibé dualgais atá orthu a chomhlíonadh. Le cur i bhfeidhm na rialacha nua, ba chóir go mbeadh comhairle agus tacaíocht ar fáil go réadúil leis na caighdeáin a bhaint amach i dtús báire. Clúdaíonn sé seo: oiliúint, comhairle do bhainisteoirí ar dhualgais a roinnt, cad é mar is féidir timpeallacht dátheangach a chruthú srl.

Moladh 2: Ardú Feasachta

Caithfear baill den phobal a chur ar an eolas go bhfuil na seirbhísí seo ar fáil dóibh trí Ghaeilge ó chomhlachtaí poiblí.

Moladh 3: Oiliúint do Bhaill Foirne

Mar atá ráite thuas i 'Gaeilge sna Cúirteanna', Moladh 3, ba chóir go mbeadh oiliúint ar fáil do stát-seirbhísí le cuidiú leo a gcuid dualgas nua a chomhlíonadh agus le cinntiú go mbeadh na seirbhísí atá ar fáil trí Ghaeilge ar chomh-chéim leo siúd atá ar fáil trí Bhéarla. In áit idirdhealú dearfach ar son Gaeilgeoiríin earcaíocht sa státseirbhís ba chóir iniúchadh a dhéanamh fud fad na stát-seirbhíse le líon na nGaeilgeoirí atá ann faoi láthair a mheas agus le cinntiú go mbainfí an úsáid is fearr as na scileanna teanga atá acu.

Moladh 4: Comhfhreagras

Le stádas oifigiúil na Gaeilge a aithint, ba chóir go mbeadh sé de chumas ar Ranna glacadh le comhfhreagras ón phobal i nGaeilge agus freagra pras a thabhairt dóibh as Gaeilge fosta.

CEIST 6

(a) An bhfuil tú i bhfách le forálacha a bheith san áireamh do scéimeanna teanga

Tá.

Moladh 1: Caighdeán Teanga a thabhairt isteach do Chomhlachtaí Poiblí

In áit sraith scéimeanna teanga a thabhairt isteach áfach, moltar go mbainfí úsáid as caighdeán theanga mar atá le feiceáil sa Bhreatain Bheag. Ciallaíonn córas caighdeán do chomhlachtaí poiblí go mbeadh rangú déanta ar chomhlachtaí poiblí agus go mbeidh liosta seirbhísí a bheas ar fáil trí Ghaeilge curtha le chéile do ghach catagóir, mar shampla, bheadh na hinstiúidí tríú leibhéal ar fad in aon chatagóir amháin agus liosta le 10 seirbhís atá ar fáil trí Ghaeilge, cibé instiúid ina bhfuil siad.

Tá dhá bhuntáiste shuntasacha ann leis an chóras seo in áit chóras scéimeanna teanga: I dtús báire, tá an córas seo níos soiléire agus níos leanúnaí, rud a chiallaíonn go mbeadh daoine níos eolaí ar na rudaí ar féidir leo a éileamh ó chomhlachtaí poiblí, agus bheadh níos mó seans ann go n-iarrfadh siad seirbhísí Gaeilge a úsáid. Ar a bharr seo, bhainfeadh an córas seo dualgas ó chomhlachtaí poiblí scéimeanna dá gcuid féin a chruthú agus a chur i bhfeidhm. Déanfaidh sé seo méid an mhaorlathais a laghdú agus ní bheadh gá do ghach chomhlacht poiblí a scéim féin a chruthú ón tús.

Moladh 2: Monatóireacht forbartha

Ba chóir go mbeadh athbhreithniú leanúnach á dhéanamh ar dhul chun cinn na gcomhlachtaí poiblí le cinntiú gur féidir leo cibé comhairle maidir le tacaíocht breise a bheadh de dhíth a fháil lena gcuid spriocanna a bhaint amach. i. ní bheadh siad ag fanacht go dtí deireadh scéime/tréimhse ama fada le moltaí a fháil faoi dhul chun cinn na heagraíochta. Ba chóir go mbeadh córas comhairleach ar fáil do chomhlachtaí poiblí atá praiticiúil agus úsáideach. Ní leor glacadh le scéim nó caighdeán a thabhairt isteach gan tacú le comhlachtaí na spriocanna seo a bhaint amach, go háirithe ag tús scéime/cur i bhfeidhm caighdeán nua. Ciallaíonn sé seo nach mbeadh aon leithscéal ag comhlachtaí poiblí gan a gcuid dualgas a chomhlíonadh, agus beidh siad in ann úsáid a bhaint as samplaí dea-chleachtais eile leis seo a dhéanamh.

CEIST 7

(a) An bhfuil tú i bhfách le forálacha a bheith san áireamh do na limistéir Ghaeltachta?

Tá.

Moladh 1: Limistéir Ghaeltachta

Ba chóir sainmhíniú ar na coinníollacha faoina n-aithneofar limistéir Ghaeltachta, idir Thuaithe agus Uirbeacha agus bunaithe ar na coinníollacha sin na teorannacha a shocrú.

Ba cheart údarás le stádas oifigiúil limistéir Ghaeltachta a bhronnadh ar limistéir laistigh de dháil an tuascirt má bhaintear amach spriocanna mar atá soiléirithe sna coinníollacha.

Ba cheart go mbeadh Forálacha ann leis na limistéir Ghaeltachta ainmnithe seo a chosaint agus a fhorbairt.

Moladh 2: Pleanáil Ceantair agus Tacaíocht Cuí

Ba chóir go mbeadh an tacaíocht atá curtha ar fáil do na ceantair seo oiriúnach do cheantair dhifriúla – is cosúil nach mbeadh an tacaíocht atá ar fáil i gceantar amháin oiriúnach do cheantar eile, go háirithe maidir le scoilt uirbeach/iarghúlta. Caithfear seo a chur san áireamh i ndrúachtú critéar leis an stádas seo a bhaint amach. I dtaca le ceantair a bhaineann an stádas speisialta seo amach, ba chóir go mbeadh dualgas ar na húdaráis ar fad pleanáil a dhéanamh ar na riachtanais teanga sa cheantar sin agus iad ag plé leis. Clúdaíonn sé seo cinnithe atá le déanamh maidir le cúrsaí oideachais, seirbhísí óige, seirbhísí comhairlí áitiúla srl.

CEIST 8

(a) An bhfuil tú i bhfách le forálacha a bheith san áireamh do Logainmneacha?

Moladh 1: Aitheantas do Logainmneacha agus Seoltaí Gaeilge

Mar chuid d'aitheantas oifigiúil na Gaeilge, ba chóir go nglacadh comhlachtaí poiblí le hainmneacha agus le seoltaí Gaeilge, logainmneacha agus ainmneacha sráide san áireamh. Tá dualgas ag údaráis áitiúil faoin CETRM glacadh le leagan traidisiúnta de logainmneacha agus sloinntí teaghlaigh, agus ba chóir go mbeadh an ceart seo cosanta i reachtaíocht.

Moladh 2: Soláthar Poist

Tá sé tábhachtach go n-oibreodh Royal Mail nó aon chomhlacht eile le cinntiú nach mbeadh aon mhoill ar sholáthar poist agus logainmneacha nó seoltaí Gaeilge in úsáid. Cuireann seo as do dhaoine an Ghaeilge a úsáid ar bhealach phraiticiúil, rud a chiallaíonn a gcearta a bheith teoranta.

Moladh 3: Tionscadal Logainmneacha

Ba chóir scéim fheasachta a reáchtáil le tábhacht na logainmneacha dúchasacha a chur i mbéal an phobail, le go mbeadh gach duine sa phobal ar an eolas faoi. Ba chóir tacaíocht a lorg ón 'Tionscadal Logainmneacha' a bhí ar bun ag Ollscoil na Banríona le cinntiú go mbainfí úsáid as na leaganacha cearta de logainmneacha áitiúla.

CEIST 9

(a) An bhfuil tú i bhfách le foráil a bheith san áireamh don oideachas?

Tá.

Tá an togra le cearta ar Ghaeloideachas a chinntiú le moladh sa cháipéis chomhairliúcháin seo. Dá mbeadh an ceart seo luaite go soiléir i reachtaíocht ní bheadh aon amhras fágtha, mar atá faoi láthair i dtaca leis an cheist seo. Mar a sheasann sé faoi láthair, is léir go bhfuil ceart ar Ghaeloideachas anseo cheana féin, bunaithe ar chleachtas idirnáisiúnta a bunaíodh roimhe seo.

Moladh 1: An Dualgas Reachtúil

Faoi láthair, níl aon tionchar ag an dualgas reachtúil le Gaeloideachas 'a spreagadh agus a éascú' ach ar an Roinn Oideachas, agus níl tionchar aige ar na comhlachtaí poiblí atá freagrach as cuid mhór de na réimsí praiticiúla ar bhonn laethúil. Ruaigfeadh síneadh amach an dualgais seo go dtí comhlachtaí eile aon amhras a mhaireann maidir leis an géarghá le hobair a dhéanamh chun an Gaeloideachas a spreagadh agus a éascú. Tháinig an dualgas seo amach as Comhaontú Aoine an Chéasta agus bheadh síneadh amach an dualgais seo ag cloí le spiorad an Chomhaontaithe seo. Mar atá ráite thuas, léirigh an cás Ard Chúirte Coláiste Feirste v Roinn Oideachais (2011) go raibh an dualgas seo i gcónaí chun 'practical consequences and legislative significance' a bheith aige. Mar sin de, is bealach soiléir é seo leis an dualgas seo a chomhlíonadh ná an dualgas seo a leathnú amach leis an Údarás Oideachais nua agus comhlachtaí oideachais eile a chur san áireamh.

Moladh 2: Sainriachtanais Oideachais

Ní mór go mbeadh soláthar ceart dírithe ar shainriachtanais na nGaelscoileanna, mar atá sna scoileanna Béarla. Ní mór go mbeadh aona(i)d ina bhfuil páistí le sainriachtanais oideachasúla ón earnáil Gaeilge in inmhe tacaíocht shainiúil, dírithe a fháil, trí Ghaeilge. Ba chóir go mbeadh an Bille um Sainriachtanais Oideachais atá ag dul fríd an Tionól faoi láthair airdeallach air seo agus ar na riachtanais áirithe breise atá ag páistí le sainriachtanais oideachais i gcóras tumoideachais. Clúdaíonn sé seo gach tacaíocht agus cuidiú a chur ar fáil trí Ghaeilge, agus fosta go mbeadh cibé oiliúint nó treoir atá ar fáil d'fhostaithe scoile nó do Bhoird Gobhnóirí dírithe ar riachtanais lucht an tumoideachais.

Moladh 3: Aitheantas ar Thábhacht Fhoghlaim Teangacha Eile

Ba chóir go mbeadh níos mó béime curtha ar fhoghlaim teangacha fríd an chóras oideachais ar fad. Fosta, ba chóir go mbeadh scéim á reáchtáil le foghlaim na Gaeilge a spreagadh ag leibhéal Bunscoile agus iar-bhunscoile san earnáil Bhéarla – dóibh siúd ar suim leo í.

Chuidigh an 'Primary Languages Programme' le páistí óga foghlaim faoin tábhacht a bhaineann le teangacha breise. Léiríonn taighde gur mó an buntáiste do pháistí teangacha a fhoghlaim agus iad an-óg, agus go mbíonn sé níos fusa dóibh teangacha a fhoghlaim sna luathbhlianta seo. Ba cheart gach scoil a bheith ábalta rogha a dhéanamh faoi na teangacha a gcuirfeadh siad ar fáil dá scoláirí, agus mar gheall air seo bheifí ag dúil go mbeadh níos mó scoláirí ag déanamh staidéir ar an Ghaeilge.

Measúnú ar Thionchar Comhoinnannais

Níl bealach ar bith ann go mbeadh tionchar diúltach ag Acht Gaeilge ar chearta duine ar bith. Mar gheall go mbeadh an reachtaíocht seo ag cosaint cearta mionlaigh, beidh sé ag cur leis an rud is dea-chaidrimh ann anseo agus ag cinntiú go bhfuil meas agus aitheantas á léiriú dóibh siúd roghnaíonn an Ghaeilge a úsáid.

Baintear úsáid as reachtaíocht fud fad an domhain le cearta daoine a chosaint. Níl rud ar bith istigh sna tograí seo a chuirfidh duine ar bith faoi bhagairt, a chuirfidh isteach ar dhuine ar bith nó a bheith ag obair in éadan daoine. Níl idirdhealú ar bith i gceist má chomhlíontar na dualgais sa CETMR.

Mar achoimre, is léir go bhfuil Acht Gaeilge de dhíth ar an stát chun freastal ar an líon daoine a roghnaíonn a dteanga dhúchais a úsáid, atá ag tógáil clainne le Gaeilge, daoine atá ag foghlaim na Gaeilge. Is ceist comhionannais í agus is deacair a thuiscint nuair a aontaíodh Acht Gaeilge a thabhairt isteach ag Comhaontú Cill Ríbhinn, nár tharla sé go fóill agus tá súil againn ag éirí as an chomhairliúcháin seo go gcuirfí i bhfeidhm é gan a thuilleadh moille.

Cumann Gaelach Charn Tóchair

Comhordaitheoir Freagairtí
Comhairliúchán ar Bhille Gaeilge
An Roinn Cultúir, Ealaíon agus Fóillíochta
Malartán an Chabhosa
1-7 Sráid Bedford
Béal Feirste
BT2 7EG

5 Bealtaine 2015

A chara,

Thar ceann Chumann Gaelach Charn Tóchair, ba mhaith linn ár dtacaíocht do na tograí atá molta don Bhille Gaeilge a chur ar taifead sa chomhairliúchán poiblí atá ar siúl ag an Roinn Cultúir, Ealaíon agus Fóillíochta faoi láthair.

Tá borradh láidir tagtha faoi athbheochan na Gaeilge in Éirinn ó tháinig ann do ghluaiseacht na nGaelscoileanna, agus tá an ceantar s'againn féin i gCarn Tóchair i gcontae Dhoire ar thús cadhnaíochta san athbheochan sin. Is anseo, beagnach 25 bliain ó shin, a bunaíodh an chéad náiscoil agus an chéad bhunscoil lán-Ghaeilge tuaithe taobh amuigh den Ghaeltacht áit ar bith in Éirinn, agus tá pobal bríomhar Gaeilgeoirí sa cheantar. Tá ag méadú go leanúnach ó shin ar an líon daoine sa cheantar a bhfuil Gaeilge acu; is trí Ghaeilge atá formhór na bpáistí bunscoile sa cheantar ag fáil a gcuid oideachais agus tá go leor teaghlach sa cheantar ar cainteoirí dúchais Gaeilge na páistí iontu.

Is buncheart daonna ag gach duine é ceart agus cosaint faoin reachtaíocht a bheith acu teanga a dtíre a labhairt agus a úsáid ina dtír féin. Tá aitheantas faighte ag an Ghaeilge sa Tuaisceart faoi Chomhaontú Aoine an Chéasta agus faoin Chairt Eorpach do Theangacha Eorpacha nó Mionlaigh ach níl bonn dlíthiúil reachtaíochta faoin aitheantas sin, rud a fhágann gur go treallach agus go doicheallach den chuid is mó a fhaightear seirbhísí nó soláthar trí Ghaeilge san earnáil stáit agus phoiblí. Má táthar le caitheamh le Gaeilgeoirí sa Tuaisceart ar bhonn comhionannais agus cothromaíochta, tá gá le bonn reachtaíochta a chur faoina gcearta ar an Ghaeilge a labhairt agus a úsáid ina saol féin, i gcúrsaí oideachais agus sa réimse poiblí, agus ag déileáil le heagraíochtaí agus forais stáit. Dá mbeadh cearta agus cosaintí cuí teanga daingnithe ar bhonn reachtaíochta, bhainfí ceist na teanga as lámha na bpolaiteoirí agus ní bheadh sí ina cnámh spairne pholaitiúil mar atá faoi láthair.

Is sinne le meas,

Pádraig Ó Mianáin & Diarmuid de Brún, Reachtairí

Cumann Gaelach Charn Tóchair

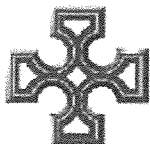
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CUMANN GAELACH NA hEAGLAISE

Ag cothú na Gaeilge in Eaglais na hÉireann

The Irish Guild of the Church

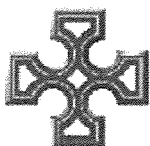
Ardteampall Chríost, Baile Átha Cliath 8/ Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin 8

“THE IRISH LANGUAGE IS A GIFT AND A PART OF OUR HERITAGE”

SUBMISSION BY CUMANN GAELACH NA hEAGLAISE ON THE PROPOSAL FOR AN IRISH LANGUAGE BILL.

Introduction:

- ❖ Throughout the history of the Church of Ireland the Irish language has been cherished and promoted by members of the Church. From its earliest days the Church has contributed to the language, with the first translation of the Bible into Irish being commissioned by the Bishop of Kilrush, Bishop Bedell.
- ❖ Language is a means of spiritual expression and growth. We believe that enabling individuals to use their preferred language is a matter of equality, sensitivity and friendship in God’s name. To deny people the use of the language of their choice is to deny them their personal means of understanding, thinking and feeling.
- ❖ The dedicated Irish Guild of the Church, Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise, in existence for over 100 years, continues to oversee the translation of liturgical materials into Irish and to promote worship through Irish and bilingually throughout the country. In recent times we have seen the greenshoots of interest in the language grow in our community and we will work to keep the language accessible and open to everyone. The use of Irish in worship is never intended to be exclusive and the use of parallel texts, following on the tradition in the Church in Wales, is specifically to allow individuals to move comfortably from one language to another.
- ❖ The Irish language has a powerful role in unifying and building our cultural heritage. We recognize the dangers of it being used manipulatively and negatively but we believe the adoption of a sensible and phased approach will work to safeguard the rights of those individuals who wish to use it, while allowing for flexibility to remain sensitive to local circumstances.
- ❖ We believe that we, in the Church of Ireland, can play an important role in helping Protestants not to be afraid of the language and to nurture the sense that it belongs to all of us and is part and parcel of our cultural and spiritual being. We recognize that there are different groups within the community that constitutes the Church of Ireland, with different cultures and languages. As there is unity without uniformity within the Trinity, so too, within the Church is there diversity within a general unity.



CUMANN GAELACH NA hEAGLAISE

Ag cothú na Gaeilge in Eaglais na hÉireann

The Irish Guild of the Church

Ardteampall Chríost, Baile Átha Cliath 8/ Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin 8

Background

Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise, the Irish Guild of the Church, works to promote the greater use of Irish within the Church of Ireland. It carries out this work by:

1. Facilitating the greater use of Irish in liturgical services.
2. Encouraging the greater use of Irish language in post-primary schools protestant schools.
3. Creating awareness of the language and providing opportunities for members of the Church to use Irish.

Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise has an all-Ireland remit serving the 12 dioceses of the Church of Ireland. Its key activities include; the development of bilingual worship materials, the provision of training and support to clergy who wish to lead a service in Irish or bilingually; organizing an annual inter-school competition, and a series of outreach events to raise the profile of the work.

The specific objectives set down by Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise in 1914 are still current today:

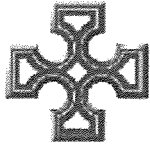
1. To promote all that tends to preserve within the Church of Ireland the spirit of the ancient Celtic Church and to provide a bond of union for all members of the Church of Ireland inspired with Irish ideals
2. To promote the use of the Irish language in the public Services of the Church
3. To collect from Irish sources suitable hymns and other devotional literature
4. To encourage the use of Irish art and Irish music in the Church, and whatever goes to enrich its national character.

Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise has witnessed a growing interest in the use of Irish in services in the Church of Ireland. The feedback from these services is overwhelmingly positive and the number of regular services continues to grow. The Cumann promotes the use of bilingual texts in and aims to be open and accessible to all members of the Church. Liturgical materials, including the Book of Common Prayer and parallel texts, based on the style of the Church in Wales, have been produced of frequently used services and hymns in recent years.

There are now regular monthly services in Dublin, Cork and Belfast as well as regular annual services in Armagh, Belfast, Dublin, Kilkenny, Galway, Cork, Limerick, and many parishes throughout the country.

Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise also runs an inter-school competition in Protestant post-primary schools with entries from schools in Monaghan, Sligo, Cork, Dublin (several schools) and Kilkenny as well as awareness sessions in Regent's College, Newtownards, and requests for lectures/awareness sessions in Enniskillen, Belfast (Linenhall Library, East Belfast Mission, Monkstown) and a collaborative project in the city of Derry around the feast of St. Columba.

There is also a Facebook page (www.facebook.com/gaeleaglais) and a website (www.gaeleaglais.ie) to keep members abreast of resources and events.



CUMANN GAELACH NA hEAGLAISE

Ag cothú na Gaeilge in Eaglais na hÉireann

The Irish Guild of the Church

Ardteampall Chríost, Baile Átha Cliath 8/ Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin 8

In relation to the specific consultation questions we include the following responses:

An bhfuil tú i bhfách le Stádas Oifigiúil a thabhairt don Ghaeilge trí reachtaíocht?

Do you agree with the Irish Language being given Official Status through legislation.

We believe that giving official status to the language is part of a process of allowing individuals to use their preferred language and this is a matter of equality and sensitivity.

In relation to the questions concerning; Irish in the Courts, The Assembly, Irish Language Commissioner, Public bodies, Language Schemes and the designation of Gaeltacht areas, we do not have any specific comment to make.

In relation to the use of Place-names and Education we make the following response.

Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise has begun a new initiative to include the place-names of dioceses and parishes in Irish (and a short explanation of the meaning of the words) in the Church of Ireland directory. We believe that understanding place-names goes beyond mere language, giving people a greater understanding of their heritage and has a bonding effect to identify with a sense of place.

We also note that the Church in Wales, which voluntarily developed its own Language Scheme and had it approached by the Welsh Board, also places great significance on the use of place-names in local parishes and diocesan areas.

In relation to the provision of education through the medium of Irish we believe that the study of Irish should be seen in a wider context and encouraged in all schools across the spectrum. Every child should have the opportunity to learn Irish, but in the context of parental choice. We believe that it is important, in the strategies adopted, to facilitate schools that wish to introduce the subject.

Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise

Christ Church Cathedral

Dublin 7

Tel: 00+44 7885 633 651

Tel: 00+353 85 1632 772

Email: gaeleaglais@gmail.com

By email: May 2015

A RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSED IRISH LANGUAGE BILL

FROM DONEMANA L.O.L. NO. 503

Part 1 The Situation with the Irish Language.

A) We do not believe that the Irish Language should be imposed upon people's lives in any way by An Act of The Northern Ireland Executive.

B) Our feelings are that this would go too far and that Irish should not be put forward, by the Government any more so than other minority languages such as :- Various Eastern European Languages or for that matter The Languages of The Far Eastern Countries of The World.

Part 2 The Use of The Irish Language in The Courts.

We cannot understand as to why Irish or any other languages should be used ⁱⁿ the business of any Court.

There should not be exceptions under any circumstances in any Case made in A Court of Law.

All Cases should be heard in English as this is the most widely Language in the Country as a whole.

If there are more costs involved such as interpreters for foreign nationals then that is a matter for The Court Service.

No Justice Acts should be abolished.

As English is Our Official Language and is used by the most people in Northern Ireland whatever their religion, interests or way of life, therefore Irish should not be catered for. At a time when Government is making cuts to public services we firmly believe that the money saved should not be wasted on this.

Part 3 The Government of Northern Ireland At Stormont.

We feel that it should be the case that Irish and English should not be used in our seat of Power.

Once again this would be a waste of public money.

Irish is not used by all members of the Irish Parliament in Dublin, therefore why should some MLA's use Irish in Our Assembly?

Part 4 The Irish Language Commissioner.

There should be no need for An Irish Language Commissioner as this would mean more money being used unwisely, We know that such a Commissioner would not be promoting good community relations. We also don't like the prospect of the powers the person would have.

A RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSED IRISH LANGUAGE BILL

FROM DONEMANA L.O.L. NO. 503

Part 5 Public Bodies.

Irish should not be used by any Public Body. Anyone who is interested in the Irish Language should think of other ways to gain its tolerance by not trying to dominate other people who have no interest in it what so ever. We would there like to think that any people with no interest should not be forced to accept Irish by any means by The Government.

Part 6 Language Schemes.

Persons wishing to learn Irish should be able to by doing courses which can be funded in another way the DCAL. Any other language scheme is not worth anything as far as we are concerned.

Part 7 Gaeltrach Areas.

We do not believe that the formation of such areas is any way useful or would benefit anyone wishing to promote the Irish Language.

As Gaeltrach Areas such as The Donegal Gaeltrach Region exists with any problems in The Republic Of Ireland, there are however no areas in any way similar to this in Northern Ireland.

Part 8 Place-Names.

Place-names are shared by everyone regardless of class or creed many people would use therefore use Irish at least once a day in this respect, just as there are Ulster Scots Place-Names.

We also have place-names from other languages in different parts of Europe. However there should be no need for road signs to have 2 Languages (such as English and Irish) in place as this can be confusing to both locals and visitors alike and would cause problems in Our Country.

Part 9 Education.

While we do believe that all the common foreign languages in the world should be taught in schools these being both European and Asian, we do however say that there should be no Irish Language Schools.

We believe that if these Schools Continue to be established then it will only be a matter of time before pupils in The Controlled Sector as well as that of The Maintained will have to learn a certain amount of Irish against their will.

Part 10 Equality impact assesment.

It is firmly our opinion that An Irish Language Bill does provide some issues in equalilty, however if such as Bill to become law it could affect the relationships between both communities. Roman Catholics are more likely to have some understanding of Irish than Protestants, this makes the whole idea one-sided, it forces people against their will to accept the language. As stated carlier in this response the fact is that most people in Northern Ireland neither speak Irish or have any interest in the Language, therefore in closing we feel that it would be a waste of time, money and effort passing such an Act.

Dungannon Volunteer L. O. L. 178

1st May 2015

Dear Sir/Madam,

At the recent monthly meeting of the above Lodge the proposed Irish Language Bill was discussed in great detail and we have noted responses as detailed below:

Q1. Do you agree with the Irish language being given Official Status through legislation?

We do not agree with the Irish Language been given Official Status through Legislation. The Irish Language is a minority language and should not be promoted legislatively any more than the Ulster Scots language, Polish, Lithuanian for example.

Q2. Do you agree with the inclusion of provisions to allow Irish to be used in the Courts?

We do not agree with the inclusion of provisions to allow Irish to be used in Courts.

It is our view that the official language to be used in Courts should be English as this is understood by the vast majority of people in Northern Ireland, whatever their backgrounds or Culture. There would be considerable additional expenses involved in providing translation to any other language other than English.

Q3. Do you agree with the inclusion of provisions to allow Irish to be used in the Assembly?

We do not agree with the inclusion of provisions to allow Irish to be used in the Assembly.

We believe that when MLA's speak in Irish at the start or the close of their remarks in Assembly that this is sufficient and interpretation should be provided by the MLAs speaking.

Q4. Do you agree with the inclusion of provisions to create the position of an Irish Language Commissioner?

We do not believe in the provision of an Irish Language Commissioner. Again additional expense would be added to the cost of local administration and an Irish Language Commissioner would not promote good community relations and negatively impact on community relations

Q5. Do you agree with the inclusion of provisions for Public Bodies?

We do not feel that there should be official provision in terms of the Irish language for Public Bodies. It is our belief that including the provision for Public Bodies would not lead to greater respect for the Irish language and would indeed prompt very negative views on it.

Q6. Do you agree with the inclusion of provisions for Language Schemes?

It is our view that those who wish to learn the Irish language should have the opportunity to do so through language courses. There should not be provision for language to promote the Irish Language.

Dungannon Volunteer L. O. L. 178

Q7. Do you agree with the inclusion of provisions for Gaeltacht areas?

We do not feel that official Gaeltacht Areas designated under an Irish language Act are appropriate or workable.

Q8. Do you agree with the inclusion of provisions for Place-names?

At present the nature of place-names are non-contentious and we do not believe that there should be Bilingual Road signs to provide Irish content on a par with English. There would be a considerable adding Irish names place names.

We believe that the proposal to add Irish place names would be contentious and would cause division within our society.

Q9. Do you agree with the inclusion of a provision for Education?

We do not however believe that there can be a right to education through the medium of Irish any more than there can be for other languages. We would also be very much opposed to the idea that all pupils might end up having to learn a measure of Irish in school.

Q10. Do you have any views on any of the aspects of equality covered in this EQIA?

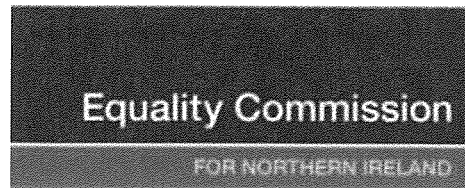
We believe that if there is to be an Irish language Act then community relations would suffer as a consequence as clearly the Irish language is seen to belong more to one community than any other community. In our view therefore the Irish language has a contentious aspect which should not be enforced in any way by legislation forcing its provision within the population. We also do not believe that the Act will succeed in its declared aim of encouraging respect for the Irish language as it will result in community division along religious and political lines.

We trust these responses will be taken on board.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. Emerson', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

David Emerson (Secretary)



Response by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland to the Consultation by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure on *Proposals for an Irish Language Bill*

May 2015

Introduction

1. The Equality Commission (the Commission) for Northern Ireland welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure's consultation on Proposals for an Irish Language Bill.
2. The Commission's statutory duties and functions are not directly or primarily concerned with the promotion of languages and we do not have direct jurisdiction on language issues. The Commission is responsible for implementing the legislation on fair employment, sex discrimination and equal pay, race relations, sexual orientation, disability and age. The Commission's remit also includes overseeing the statutory duties on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity and good relations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the positive disability duties¹.
3. On the relatively few occasions that language issues have been brought to our attention, it has come about because they were raised in the context of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and/or the provisions of the anti-discrimination legislation, specifically the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 and the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998. The Commission's advice to public authorities has been specific to the context presented by the public authority. It has referenced our position on minority languages (as set out below), the public authority's compliance with its Equality Scheme commitments and

¹ An overview of the Commission's remit is included in Annex 1

the Commission's guidance², as well as the provisions of the relevant anti-discrimination legislation, if appropriate (as set out below).

4. As the Commission does not have direct jurisdiction on language issues, our response should be viewed within the context of our remit and the scope of our advice to date.

Context

5. The Commission recognises that minority language speakers are entitled to protection of their internationally recognised rights as set out in the Council of Europe Charter for Regional and Minority Languages³ (the Charter) and the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Rights of National Minorities⁴. We also note the references to language rights in the Belfast Agreement (1998), the Joint Declaration (2003) and the St. Andrews Agreement (2006). The UK Government ratification of the Charter in 2001 recognised obligations, in the Northern Ireland context, to protect and promote both Ulster Scots (in respect of Part 2) and Irish (in respect of Part 3).
6. We also note that the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers recommended in 2007 that the UK "*develop a comprehensive Irish language policy*"⁵ and again in 2010 that the authorities "*adopt and implement a comprehensive Irish language policy, preferably through the adoption of legislation providing statutory rights for the Irish speakers*"⁶. The Commission is aware that the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern at the absence of such legislation in Northern Ireland, in contrast to the protection afforded to the other two main UK minority languages, under the Welsh Language Act 1993 and the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. The

² Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (2010): Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities. Available at:

<http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/S75GuideforPublicAuthoritiesApril2010.pdf>

³ Available at: <http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/en/Treaties/Html/148.htm>

⁴ Available at: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/157.htm>

⁵ Council of Europe, Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers, RecChL (2007)2, adopted 14 March 2007, recommendation 2, page 69. Available at:

https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/minlang/Report/EvaluationReports/UKECRML3_en.pdf.

⁶ Council of Europe: Committee of Ministers, Recommendation CM/RecCh (2010) 4 of the Committee of Ministers on the application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages by the United Kingdom, 21 April 2010. Available at:

http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/minlang/Report/default_en.asp#United

Committee recommended “that the State party, or the devolved administration in Northern Ireland, adopt an Irish Language Act with a view to preserving and promoting minority languages and cultural heritage...” (E/C.12/GBR/CO/5, 22 May 2009 (Concluding Observations) paragraph 10).

Commission Views

7. The Commission has placed on record our view that a specific language statute is an appropriate mechanism of protection for the Irish language⁷. We also set out our view that legislation should be drafted so as to enable the language to be promoted in a way that is proportionate to the language needs of the situation, in a spirit of respect for the freedom of minority language speakers to speak what they consider to be their home language or language of preference.
8. The Commission considers that the use of minority languages, particularly Irish or Ulster Scots languages in Northern Ireland for common or official purposes would normally and objectively be considered to be a neutral act that would not be discriminatory.
9. The Commission also considers that the speaking of any language in Northern Ireland should not be perceived as a threat to any individual or group, nor should it be used in such a manner. We consider that the speaking of Irish or its more general use in the community does not diminish the entitlements of those whose right to their British identity is guaranteed in the Belfast / Good Friday Agreement. Similarly, the Commission considers that the wider use of Ulster Scots does not diminish the entitlements of those whose right to their Irish identity is guaranteed.
10. The Commission however notes the differential context of promoting minority languages in Northern Ireland⁸ and we welcome initiatives

⁷ Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (2007): *Response to DCAL Consultation on Proposed Irish Language Legislation*.

⁸ Public Attitudes towards the Irish Language in Northern Ireland 2012: Findings from the Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey January 2012. Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. In Northern Ireland the views of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities on the use and promotion of the Irish language are distinct e.g.

taken to promote the Irish and the Ulster Scots language to as wide an audience as possible⁹. The Commission also acknowledges the generally reported concerns among some sections of the community regarding the promotion of minority languages, including the reported concern among some sections of the community that the promotion of the Irish language is considered to have a political aim.

11. An important aspect of language policy is the interrelationship between individuals or groups that speak different languages. Any duty placed on public authorities should ensure that the development of provisions to protect and promote the language is viewed within the context of the duty to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations within the provision of public services. Public authorities should consider aspects of mutual understanding, co-operation, communication and partnership between different 'language communities', including engagement with relevant communities to seek to explore and take reasonable account of concerns or perceptions about the promotion of minority languages.
12. The Commission welcomes that the proposed legislation will seek to bring about clarity in respect of the level of provisions and protections available within a range of areas, and trusts that the proposed legislation will provide a useful opportunity to afford a more consistent approach across the public sector in the matter of language policy.
13. With regards to proposals regarding specific provisions of the Bill, the Commission recommends that the Department ensures that the

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- A significantly higher proportion of Catholics than Protestants were in favour of Irish language usage (66% and 14% respectively);
 - Around one out of every two Catholics (52%) said Irish was important to their personal identity compared with one out of every twenty Protestants (5%);
 - Almost three-quarters of Catholics (74%) and less than a fifth of Protestants (18%) agreed that the use of Irish should be supported and encouraged throughout Northern Ireland.

Public Views on Ulster Scots Culture, Heritage and Language in Northern Ireland: Findings from the Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey April 2010. Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. This survey focuses on awareness of and views about Ulster Scots Culture Heritage and Language: showing higher levels of awareness and positive engagement with Ulster Scots Culture Heritage and Language among the Protestant community and older respondents (aged 55-64).

⁶ For example, the Liofa 2015 project (Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure).

provisions of the Bill are consistent with those of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.

Relevant Areas of Commission Advice

14. The Commission provides advice to public authorities and other employers on the promotion of equality in the employment context. For example, we advise that, where an ability to speak and / or read a particular language is an objectively justified requirement of a job, then the employer may place an advertisement exclusively in that language¹⁰. In selecting personnel, either initially or for promotion purposes, the Commission advises that employers may include criteria with regard to knowledge and skills of a certain language; as long as they are satisfied that such criteria and their relative importance are justifiable, appropriate to the job and clearly objective¹¹.
15. With regards to proposed provisions set out in Part 5 of the consultation we recommend that the intended meaning of 'affirmative action' is clarified, given that it is a specific provision within fair employment legislation¹².
16. In relation to the use of languages other than English, for example in corporate logos and communications, the Commission advises that these will not, in general, constitute an infringement of a good and harmonious working environment.¹³ However, the Commission also notes that decisions on this must rest with the employer and should be based on relevant policies and procedures that are proportionate, reasonable and appropriate to the context in which the organisation operates. We recommend that employers work to ensure that their premises are a welcoming and harmonious space for all their workers and customers alike.

Equality Impact Assessment

¹⁰ Recruitment Advertising: A Good Practice Guide for Employers (Equality Commission Guidance)

¹¹ General advice contained in the Fair Employment Code of Practice: Section 5.3 Good Practice for All Employers – Core Components

¹² Fair employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998.

¹³ Promoting a Good and Harmonious Working Environment: A Guide for Employers and Employees

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17. The EQIA reported in the consultation document considers quantitative data from the Census of Population and other surveys on knowledge of the Irish language. The relevance of educational qualifications as well as use of the language will also be important considerations.
18. While the EQIA notes the differences in knowledge of the language between the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities and on the grounds of political opinion, it does not consider the concern among some sections of the community that the promotion of the language is considered to have a political aim. The Commission recommends that the Department fully assesses the potential impacts of the policy, taking account of qualitative and quantitative information, on each of the aims of the policy so that any appropriate mitigation may be identified.

Conclusion

19. The Commission trusts that this submission will be of value to the Department in setting out the Commission's position with regard to minority languages.
20. The Commission will continue to provide advice to public authorities and others to ensure clarity with regard to anti-discrimination law, the Section 75 duties, and our position in relation to the use of minority languages.

May 2015

Annex 1

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

1. The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (the Commission) is an independent public body established under the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The Commission is responsible for implementing the legislation on fair employment and treatment, sex discrimination and equal pay, race relations, sexual orientation, disability and age.
2. The Commission's remit also includes overseeing the statutory duties on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity and good relations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Section 75) and to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage participation by disabled people in public life under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
3. The Commission's general duties include:
 - working towards the elimination of discrimination;
 - promoting equality of opportunity and encouraging good practice;
 - promoting positive / affirmative action
 - promoting good relations between people of different racial groups;
 - overseeing the implementation and effectiveness of the statutory duty on relevant public authorities;
 - keeping the legislation under review;
 - promoting good relations between people of different religious belief and / or political opinion.
4. The Commission, with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, has been designated under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) as the independent mechanism tasked with promoting, protecting and monitoring implementation of UNCRPD in Northern Ireland.

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21st April 2015

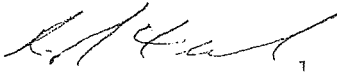
Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to voice our objections to the proposed Irish Language Bill in its present form.

Whilst we believe that it is an individuals choice to learn and use a language that is part of some people's culture, we do not believe that it is beneficial to our children to have a forced learning thrust upon them. It is widely believed by ourselves and our families that it would cause division in our community which is already strained at this time when we are trying to move forwards together.

We feel that the Department could look at other more positive ways to promote the Irish Language within the community without alienating sections of our people.

yours faithfully



Robert McCauley



GLÓR DHÚN GEIMHIN
55 Bóthar Gharbh Achaidh
Dún Geimhin
Contae Dhoire
BT47 4LU

Comhordaitheoir Freagairtí
Comharliúchán ar Bhille Gaeilge
An Roinn Cultúr, Ealaíon agus Fóillíochta
Leibheál 7, Malártan an Chabhsa
1-7 Sráid Bedford
Béal Feirste
Co Antrama
BT2 7EG

28/4/2015

COMHARLIÚCHÁN MAIDIR LE ACHT NA GAEILGE

A Chara,

Cuireann Glór Dhún Geimhin fáilte roimh an chomharliúchán seo ar son phobal na Gaeilge i nDún Geimhin. Cuireann muid féin seirbhísí ar fáil do phobal na Gaeilge idir óg agus aosta sa cheantar, pobal atá ga meadú i rith an ama. Tá Glór ag tacú le Naíscoil Neachtain, Gaelscoil Neachtain, bunú Ghaelcholáiste Dhoire, Ranganna do dhaoine fásta, Ógras, ÓgÓgras, Scoil na gCláirseach agus amhránaíocht trí mheán na Gaeilge, campa samhraidh do dhaoine óga agus tá muid chun ionad teaghlaigh/cultúrlann a thógáil. Níl duine ar bith fostaithe ag Glór Dhún Geimhin agus táimid ag cur na seirbhísí seo uilig ar fáil ar bhonn dheonach.

Tá coiste Ghlór ag plé leis na húdaráis agus na eagrais stáit maidir leis an Ghaeilge le sé mbliain anuas ó bunaíodh Glór Dhún Geimhin. Is léir dúinn na bearnaí atá sa choras maidir le seirbhísí do ghaeilgeoirí sa tuaisceart. Is rí-shoiléir go bhfuil Gaeilgeoirí ag brath ar an chomhairle cheantar ina bhfuil siad lonnaithe nó ag brath ar an Roinn lena bhfuil siad ag plé. Tá gear-ghá le coras cuimsitheach comhsheasmhach agus tá acht na Gaeilge de dhíth chun sin a chur i bhfeidhm. Tá easpa seirbhísí ann do theaghlaigh a ba mhaith leo páistí a thógáil le Gaeilge. Ní fhaigheann teaghlaigh tacaíocht ar bith do dtí go dtosaíonn na páistí ag an naiscoil agus taobh amuigh den chóras oideachais ón Stát níl tacaíocht ar bith curtha ar fáil do na teaghlaigh sin.

Léiríonn an cás s'againne an fhadhb i láthair na huaire. Bhí Dún Geimhin i gcomhairle bhuirg léim an mhadaidh agus cé nach raibh polasaí dhá-theangach ag an chomhairle, bhí an Ghaeilge le feiceáil. Anois tá muid i nollcheantar úr agus níl an Ghaeilge le feiceáil ar chor ar bith. Síos an bhóthar 6 mhíle tá polasaí dhá-theangach ag an ollchomhairle, Lár Uladh agus is léir ón tús go mbeidh pobal na Gaeilge anseo faoi mhí-bhuntaiste i gcomparáid leis an phobal Gaeilge i Lár Uladh. Tá cúig Ghaelscoil i nDoire tuaithe agus beidh an chéad Mheánscoil sa cheantar ag oscailt i mí Mheán an Fhómhair 2015 ach beidh difear idir na seirbhísí a fhaigheann na daltaí agus a dteaghláigh ón Stát bunaithe ar an chomhairle cheantar ina chonaíonn siad. Níl sé seo ceart nó cothrom agus níl sé ag teacht leis na dualgais faoin Chart Eorpach.

Tá idirdhealú idir gach Roinn sa rialtas. Níor choir go mbeadh cur chun cinn agus caomhnú na Gaeilge ag brath ar dhea-thoil. Chun seirbhísí a chur ar fáil do phobal na Gaeilge (beag bán ar cá háit a chonaíonn siad nó cén roinn óna bhfuil siad ar lorg seirbhísí) agus chun chomhthuiscint agus meas a chothú sa phobal, bunaithe ar chomhaontú an Chéasta- tá coras cuimsitheach chomhsheastach de dhíth sa Tuaisceart. Mas maith leat chomhartha dhá-theangach don scoil is féidir sin a fháil ón Roinn Oideachais agus mas mian le do chomhlacht chomhartha thurasóireachta dhá-theangach ón Roinn Fiontar agus tradála ní féidir é a fháil.

Ar bhonn regiúnda tá idirdhealú ann. Tá reachtaíocht curtha i bhfeidhm in Alban agus sa Bhreatain Bheag agus tá stadas bunreachtúil ag an Ghaeilge ó dheas ach níl reachtaíocht ar bith (ach amháin don ghaeloideas) sa Tuaisceart. Tá stadas ag na teangacha seo in sna chúirteanna agus in sna tionóil in sna háiteanna seo ach chan sa Tuaisceart agus níos measa ná sin tá aithne naimhdeach sa tionól ó thaobh na Gaeilge dé. Is mór an trua sin dar linn nuair a chuireann stair agus oidhreacht roinnte na Gaeilge. Is féidir le reachtaíocht an Ghaeilge a chur ar fail go córasach le go mbeadh an phobal i gcoitinne níos eolaí faoin oidhreacht sin agus le go gcuirfí an Ghaeilge ar fáil do dhaoine thar trasna an phobail.

Bheadh sé tabhachtach Comisnéir a cheapadh faoin Acht a bhfuil cumhachtaí forfheidhmithe aige nó aici. Ní fiú reachtaíocht gan éifeacht. Ba choir go mbeadh cead monotóireachta ag an Chomisinéir maidir le gach uile píosa reachtaíochta a théann fríd an Tionól le cinntiú go bhfuil an reachtaíocht ag teacht le forálacha Acht na Gaeilge agus scéimeanna don Ghaeilge.

Is léir ón 'Lá Dearg' go bhfuil an éileamh i measc an phobail faoi choinne Acht. Is í an Ghaeilge ár dteanga dhúchais agus cuireann sí go mór le saibhreas an tsaoil anseo agus is fiú agus is ceart í a chosaint agus a fhorbairt ag an Stát. Tá ar an Stát na dualgais faoin Chart Eorpach agus faoin chomhaontú Aoine an Chéasta a chomhlíonadh.

Is mise le meas,



Maria Ní Mhaoláin

Cathaoirleach Ghlor Dhún Geimhin



Glór
na nGael

Frainc Mac Cionnaith
Bainisteoir Forbartha
Glór na nGael
Gaeláras Mhic Ardghail,
Cnocán Phádraig Naofa
6b Sráid an tSéipéil Uacht.,
Iúr Chinn Trá, BT34 2DS

Comhordaitheoir Freagairtí
Comhairliúchán ar Bhille Gaeilge
An Roinn Cultúir, Ealaíon agus Fóillíochta
Leibhéal 7
Malartán an Chabhsa
1-7 Sráid Bedford
Béal Feirste
BT2 7EG

A Aire, a chara,

Mar Bhainisteoir Forbartha le Glór na nGael, ceann de sé cheanneagras Gaeilge, seolaim chugat m'aighneacht féin i leith Bhille na Gaeilge.

Tacaim go mór leis na moltaí a chur ceannródaithe na hoibre seo (POBAL) chun tosaigh sa cháipéis 'Acht na Gaeilge, Eisiúint 2', agus le moltaí Chonradh na Gaeilge ar an ábhair seo chomh maith. Aithním an saothar mór a chur an dá eagrais seo orthu féin chun moltaí bunaithe ar thaighde agus ar shaineolas a chur os comhair na roinne agus os comhair an phobail. Luíonn sé le ciall go léiríonn na moltaí thausluaite an múla is sásúla do aon Bhille Gaeilge.

Ar an ábhar sin, is mian liom mo thacaíocht le haghaidh na piontí seo a leanas atá molta ag Conradh na Gaeilge a léiriú agus iad a mholadh mar aighneacht uaim féin:

Stádas Oifigiúil

Moladh 1:

Caithfear bheith cinnte go bhfuil impleachtaí praiticiúla ag baint leis an stádas seo. Ní hionann stádas oifigiúil agus feidhm dhleathach nó phraiticiúil.

Cé go bhfuil an t-aitheantas seo an-tábhachtach, ní leor an stádas seo i bhfoclaíocht amháin – caithfear impleachtaí i leith a bheith ann.

Moladh 2:

Ba chóir go mbeadh sé soiléir go gcaithfear meas a thaispeáint do theanga na Gaeilge, mar gur chóir a thaispeáint do ghach rud eile a bhaineann le féiniúlacht m.s. cine, aois, inscne, gnéaschlaonadh srl.

An Ghaeilge sna Cúirteanna

Moladh 1:

Ba chóir a chinntiú nach mbeidh aon mhoil ar chásanna cúirte mar gheall ar rogha an duine a gcás a dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge. Tá córas de dhíth le cinntiú go mbeidh aistritheoirí ar fáil nuair a thagann na cásanna seo os comhair na cúirte. Le cinntiú go mbeidh go leor daoine cáilithe le tabhairt faoi na cásanna seo, ba chóir amharc ar sampla na 26 contae i dtaca le mic léinn a ullmhú do na poist breise san Aontas Eorpach i.e. cuireadh cúrsaí oiliúna breise ar fáil a bhí dírithe ar na scileanna cuí a thabhairt do dhaoine sa dóigh is go mbeadh siad ábalta plé leis na cúrsaí seo.

Moladh 2:

Ba chóir gur féidir le saoránaigh gach saghas clárúcháin a dhéanamh nó foirmeacha a líonadh isteach trí Ghaeilge. Ba cheart go bhfuil na foirmeacha seo ar fáil gan aon chostas nó am breise don saoránaigh. B'fhearr na foirmeacha a bheith dátheangach leis an nGaeilge taobh le taobh leis an mBéarla.

Moladh 3:

Ba chóir oiliúint / cúrsa feasachta a chur ar fáil do ghach fostaí a n-oibríonn sna réimsí oibre seo le cinntiú go dtuigeann siad na dualgais atá ar na heagraíochta seo glacadh leis na foirmeacha seo agus aitheantas a thabhairt don Ghaeilge.

An Tionól

Moladh 1:

Ba chóir go mbeadh córas i bhfeidhm a ligeann do BTR nó baill phobail gearáin a dhéanamh leis an Choimisinéir Caighdeán sa Tionól. Tá sé seo níos fearr ná gearáin ag dul díreach chuig an Choimisinéir Teanga, mar ba chóir go mbeadh forálacha teanga príomhshruthaithe sa Tionól, ach is féidir próiseas achomhairc a bheith ar fáil leis an Choimisinéir Teanga fosta.

Moladh 2:

Mar atá ráite sa cháipéis comhairliúcháin, ba chóir go mbeadh aistriúchán reatha comhuaineach ar fáil sa Tionól ar nós parlaiminte éagsúla eile ar fud an domhain, le cinntiú go mbeadh BTR ábalta a gcuid Gaeilge a úsáid agus gan an bhrú orthu á gcuid focail féin a aistriú, mar atá an stad reatha faoi láthair.

Moladh 3:

Ba chóir cuid (d) a leathnú amach le cáipéisí/eolas eile a chuir san áireamh fosta mar shampla, Dialann Gnó an Tionóil agus sceideal na gCoistí srl.

Moladh 4:

Ba chóir gur féidir le BTR agus baill den phobal ceisteanna a chur ar Airí trí Ghaeilge, agus freagraí a fháil trí Ghaeilge fosta.

An Coimisinéir Gaeilge

Moladh 1:

Tá sé riachtanach go mbeadh go leor acmhainní ag Oifig an Choimisinéara seo le cinntiú go mbeadh siad ábalta a gcuid oibre a dhéanamh.

Moladh 2:

Ba cheart go ndéanfadh an coimisinéir teanga faomhadh ar ghach bille agus polasaí Feidhmeannais nua le cinntiú nach mbíonn impleachtaí diúltacha acu don teanga – mar atá le feiceáil sa Bhreatain Bheag.

Moladh 3:

Tá foráil (d) iontach tábhachtach mar caithfear an ról seo bheith neamhspléach apolaitíoch. Ní féidir le haon dream polaitíochta iarracht a dhéanamh tionchar a imirt orthu nó ionsaithe poiblí a dhéanamh ar a gcinntithe a dhéantar mar chuid den ról seo.

Moladh 4:

Ba chóir gur ról comhairleach é an ról seo. Bheadh an duine sa ról seo agus na daoine san oifig seo eolach ar na céimeanna atá de dhíth leis an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn sa saol poiblí, agus mar gheall air seo ba chóir go mbeadh ról lárnach acu i ndruchtú scéimeanna ar bith nó polasaithe ar bith atá bainte leis an Ghaeilge amach anseo.

Comhlachtaí Poiblí

Moladh 1:

Tá treoir soiléir agus comhairle súntasach de dhíth le cinntiú go mbeadh na comhlachtaí poiblí ábalta cibé dualgais a leagtar síos orthu a chomhlíonadh. Ag tús na rialacha nua, ba chóir go mbeadh cibé comhairle nó tacaíocht atá de dhíth ar na comhlachtaí seo ar fáil leis na caighdeáin nua a bhaint amach mar is ceart ar an

chéad dul síos. Clúdaíonn sé seo: oiliúint, comhairle do bhainisteoirí ar dhualgais a roinnt, timpeallacht dhátheangach a chruthú srl.

Moladh 2:

Caithfear saoránaigh a chur ar an eolas faoi na cearta atá acu seirbhísí a bhaint amach trí Ghaeilge. Is cosúil, go háirithe ag an tús, nach mbeadh daoine cinnte cad iad na seirbhísí atá ar fáil/nach bhfuil ar fáil go fóill trí Ghaeilge agus mar sin ba chóir go bhfuil treoir ar fáil dóibh.

Moladh 3:

Ba chóir oiliúint Gaeilge a chur ar fáil do státseirbhísí le cuidiú leo a gcuid dualgas a chomhlíonadh le cinntiú go mbeadh soláthar na seirbhísí seo ar chomhchéim i nGaeilge agus i mBéarla.

Scéimeanna Teanga

Moladh 1:

Moltar caighdeáin in ionad scéimeanna do chomhlachtaí mar atá sa Bhreatain Bheag, i. go mbeadh rangú déanta ar chomhlachtaí áirithe agus liosta de sheirbhísí Gaeilge comónta ar fáil i ngach ceann de na catagóir, m.sh. go mbeadh na hinstiúid tríú leibhéal ar fad rangaithe agus go mbeadh 10 seirbhís shoiléir ar fáil do mhic léinn, is cuma cén instiúid ina bhfuil siad

Moladh 2:

Ba chóir athbhreithniú a dhéanamh ar dul chun cinn sna comhlachtaí seo le linn an ama, le cinntiú gur féidir leo comhairle nó tuilleadh tacaíochta a fháil lena gcuid spriocanna a bhaint amach i.e. ní bheadh siad ag fanacht le measúnú ag deireadh na scéime le moltaí eile a fháil.

Moladh 3:

Ba chóir go mbeadh córas comhairleach ar fáil do chomhlachtaí poiblí atá praiticiúil agus úsáideach. Ní leor scéim a faomhadh nó caighdeáin a chur i bhfeidhm gan cuidiú leo na rudaí seo a bhaint amach, go háirithe ag tús na scéimeanna/cur i bhfeidhm na gcaighdeán úr. Ciallaíonn sé seo nach féidir le comhlachtaí poiblí leithscéalta a thabhairt, agus go mbeadh siad ag baint úsáid as na modhanna oibre is fearr leis na rudaí seo a dhéanamh.

Limistéir Gaeltachta

Moladh 1:

Tá sé iontach tábhachtach nach gcuireann 'limistéir' áirithe teorainn ar cheantar ar bith mar gheall ar áiteanna a suíonn díreach taobh amuigh de limistéir éigin. Is féidir 'hubs' nó aonaid Gaeilge a úsáid fosta mar bhealach leis an infheistíocht agus leis an aitheantas cuí a thabhairt isteach ar cheantar i léith in áit limistéir a tharraingt.

Moladh 2:

Ba choir go mbeidh céimeanna soiléire leagtha síos do cheantair ar mhaith leo an stádas seo a bhaint amach i.e. critéir soiléir – nach bhfuil dian – ach a chiallaíonn nach féidir le deacrachtaí a chur os comhair grúpa atá ag obair i dtreo an stádais seo a bhaint amach.

Moladh 3:

Ba chóir go mbeadh tacaíocht ar fáil le cuidiú le ceantair an stádas seo a bhaint amach, ar bharr na tacaíochta a bheas ar fáil nuair atá an stádas seo bainte amach.

Moladh 4:

Ba chóir go mbeadh an tacaíocht atá curtha ar fáil do na ceantair seo oiriúnach do na ceantair dhifriúla – seans maith nach mbeadh cibé tacaíocht atá de dhíth i gceantar amháin fóirsteanach do cheantar eile, go háirithe i dtaca le scoilt uirbeach/tuaithe.

Moladh 5:

Sa cheantar ina bhfuil limistéir Gaeltachta aitheanta, ní mór go ndéanadh na húdaráis chuí, comhairlí agus eile pleanáil ceantair atá oiriúnach do mhianta teangeolaíochta na gceantar seo, bíodh sin i dtaca le cúrsaí oideachais, cúram leanaí, fostaíocht nó eile.

Logainmneacha

Moladh 1:

Tá sé tábhachtach go n-oibreodh Royal Mail nó aon chomhlacht eile le cinntiú nach mbeadh aon mhoill ar sholáthar poist agus logainmneacha nó seoltaí Gaeilge in úsáid.

Moladh 2:

Ba chóir go nglacfadh comhlachtaí poiblí le seoltaí i nGaeilge, logainmneacha agus ainmneacha sráide san áireamh.

Moladh 3:

Ba chóir scéim feasachta a reáchtáil le tábhacht na logainmneacha dúchasacha a chur i mbéal an phobail, le go mbeadh gach duine sa phobal ar an eolas faoi. Ba chóir tacaíocht a lorg ón 'Tionscadal Logainmneacha' a bhí ar bun ag Ollscoil na Banríona le cinntiú go mbainfear úsáid as na leagain cearta de logainmneacha áitiúla.

Oideachas

Moladh 1:

Ba chóir an dualgas atá ar an Roinn Oideachais leis an Ghaeloideachas a 'spreagadh agus a éascú' a leathnú amach leis an Údarás Oideachais nua agus le comhlachtaí oideachais ar bith eile a chur san áireamh.

Moladh 2:

Ní mór go mbeadh soláthar ceart dírithe ar shainriachtanais na nGaelscoileanna, mar atá sna scoileanna Béarla. Ní mór go mbeadh Aona(i)d ina bhfuil páistí le sainriachtanais oideachasúla ón earnáil Gaeilge in inmhe tacaíocht shainiúil, dírithe a fháil, trí Ghaeilge.

Moladh 3:

Go n-aithneofaí tábhacht teangacha breise a fhoghlaim trí fhoghlaim teanga eile a dhéanamh riachtanach arís suas go leibhéal GCSE. Ar a bharr sin, go mbeadh scéim ar leith ann le tacú le foghlaim na Gaeilge ag leibhéal Bunscoile agus iarbhunscoile san earnáil Bhéarla – dóibh siúd ar suim leo í.

Measúnacht Thionchair Chomhionannais

Moladh 1:

Ní chuirfeadh an t-Acht seo isteach ar chearta dhuine ar bith ar bhealach ar bith.

Moladh 2:

Tá an t-Acht seo de dhíth go mór le cearta daoine a chosaint, mar atá déanta le reachtaíocht teanga fud fad an domhain.

Moladh 3:

Níor chóir go mbeadh ceist dea-chaidrimh bainte le ceist na Gaeilge i gcónaí. Is ceist eile í ceist na Gaeilge i dtaca le chomhionannas, agus ba chóir an cheist seo a phlé ar a buanna féin.

Ag guí gach rath ar an obair iontach seo i dtreo Bhille na Gaeilge,

Is mise le meas,

Frainc Mac Cionnaith

Bainisteoir Forbartha

frainc@glornangael.ie | 00353834429811

Glór na nGael

Gaeláras Mhic Ardghail, Cnocán Phádraig Naofa
6b Sráid an tSéipéil Uacht., Iúr Chinn Trá, BT34 2DS

Suíomh Ghréasáin: www.glornangael.ie

Facebook: www.facebook.com/glornangael

Twitter: www.twitter.com/GlornanGael





Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland

431-441 Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 1AQ (Temporary Premises until March 2015) • TELEPHONE: 028 9070 1122 •
E-mail: info@grandorangelodge.co.uk • Website: www.grandorangelodge.co.uk

Our Ref: DH/LT/DL/09042015

Response Co-ordinator
Irish Language Bill Consultation
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
Level 7
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG

Thursday 9th April 2015

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am pleased to forward the response of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland to the Irish Language Bill Consultation.

The response addresses the questions and will hopefully be clear enough in relation to the detail provided.

I take this opportunity to thank-you for your attention to this matter

With all good wishes.

Yours sincerely

Dr David Hume M.B.E.
DIRECTOR OF SERVICES



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E-mail: info@grandorangelodge.co.uk • Website: www.grandorangelodge.co.uk

In relation to the specific proposals and questions asked in the consultation we respond as follows:

Part 1 Official Status of the Irish Language

Question 1

- A) We do not agree with the Irish Language been given Official Status through Legislation
- B) We believe that this is too proscriptive a measure and that the Irish Language as a minority language should not be promoted legislatively any more than the Ulster Scots language, Polish, Lithuanian, Mandarin or any other language which currently exists through population prevalence in Northern Ireland

Part 2 Irish in the Courts

Question 1

We disagree with the right to speak the Irish language or any other language unless in Court proceedings.

We do not believe in giving as of right provision for Irish in any Court or Tribunal and in legal contexts

We believe that holding Tribunals in the official language as English covers the vast majority of the present population of Northern Ireland and that if there are additional expenses involved in providing translation for foreign nationals then this is a matter for the Court system to consider on an individual basis

We do not believe that the administration of Justice (Language) Act (Ireland) 1737 should be repealed

Question 2

We do not agree with the inclusion of provisions to allow Irish to be used in Court

It is our view that the official language to be used in Courts should be English as this is understood by the vast majority of people in Northern Ireland, whatever their backgrounds or Culture. We therefore do not accept that Irish should be officially catered for in the Courts.

If Irish is to be included in the way suggested by the Irish Language Act then it would in our view open the way for the official provision of other languages of minority linguistic communities in Northern Ireland to be included within legalisation. This would cost a considerable burden in terms of the available financial resources within our society. We believe that this would impact on the cost of legal proceedings and prevent the smooth operation of the system.



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Part 3 The Assembly

Question 1

We do not believe that Irish and English should be treated on the basis of Equality and the conduct of the proceedings of the Assembly

This and the other proscriptive measures would involve a considerable Public expense and we do not believe that it is justifiable either now at a time of austerity or indeed at any point.

We believe that the members of the legislative Assembly for the Nationalist Community do use Irish when making remarks in the Assembly and that other means of ensuring respect for the Irish Language should be explored which is non proscriptive.

Question 2

We do not agree with the inclusion of provisions to allow Irish to be used in the Assembly

We believe that when MLA's speak in Irish at the start or the close of their remarks in Assembly that this is sufficient providing that they provide an Interpretation

Part 4 The Irish Language Commissioner

Question 1

We do not believe in the provision of an Irish Language Commissioner, which would be added on this expense to the cost of local administration. The Irish Language Commissioner would effectively become a figure who would not be promoting good community relations because of the nature of the post and the proscriptive nature of the legislation and in our view this would negatively impact on community relations. We note the suggestion of very proscriptive powers that in the Irish language Commissioner would have.

Part 5 Public Bodies

Question 1

We do not feel that there should be official provision in terms of the Irish language for Public Bodies. Irish language enthusiasts may wish to consider how best they encourage respect for the language through non proscriptive measures. It is our belief that the proscriptive and legislative route would not lead to greater respect for the Irish language and would indeed prompt very negative views on it. We are sure that this is not the aim of the Minister in bringing forward the legislation but it would certainly be a fundamental foundation from by-product of that suggestion in our opinion.



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Part 6 Language Schemes

Question 1

In our view those who wish to learn the Irish language should have the opportunity to do so through language courses, which can be funded by DCAL separately and voluntarily signed up to by individuals interested in learning the language. The provision of proscriptive language schemes is not worthy in our opinion of the promotion of the Irish Language.

Part 7 Gaeltacht Areas

Question 1

The Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland remains to be convinced that the provision and establishment of Gaeltacht Areas is a useful, resourceful, or appropriate manner in which to highlight the Irish language and encourage respect for it.

Given that Gaeltacht Areas are not in our understanding without controversy in the Republic of Ireland (as has been witnessed, for example in the Dingle Peninsula) we do not feel that official Gaeltacht Areas designated under an Irish language Act are appropriate or workable.

Part 8 Place-Names

Question 1

The Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland views place-names as one of the common and shared aspects with which many people engage on a daily basis with the Irish language. Therefore the nature of place-names are of themselves non contentious. We would have no objection to the development of interpretation about place names which are historically Irish (just as we would have no issue over a similar situation in relation to Ulster Scots place-names). However we do not believe that there should be Bilingual Road signs to provide Irish content on a par with English. If this were to be the case then the Ulster Scots community for example could ask for their place names to be included in such signage and the cost and road safety implications would have to be considered in respect of such a measure.

We do believe that the definition of place-names would be of interest to the entire community and therefore some consideration should be given to how to encourage understanding in relation to our shared Heritage in this matter as place-names are derived often from Irish, Norman, Scandinavian, Ulster Scots, Anglo Saxon, English or other language basis. However this does not mean that they should become officially and legislatively recognised and we believe that the proposal to do that in respect of Irish would be contentious and would cause division within our society.



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Part 9 Education

The Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland believes that it is appropriate to offer classes in different languages to pupils at all schools. This would include Irish. It would also include languages such as Spanish, German, French and so forth. We note recent provision of language classes in Chinese, for example, in at least one school, we feel that this latter is particularly worthy of note in the context of the Economic future of Trading with China, which will become the major trading partner for many Countries in the years ahead.

We do not however believe that there can be a right to education through the Medium of Irish any more than there can be for other languages.

Similarly language provisions should not be proscriptive in schools and although it is not suggested in the document we would be very much opposed to the idea that all pupils might end up having to learn a measure of Irish in school.

Question 10 - Equality impact assessment

The Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland believes that the Irish language Act does provide issues in relation to equality. We believe that if there is to be an Irish language Act then community relations would suffer as a consequence as clearly the Irish language is seen to belong more to one community than any other community. In the details provided by the department we note that Roman Catholics are more likely to have some knowledge of Irish than Protestants/ 22% in 2001 and declined to 21% in 2011 compared to 1% in 2001 and 2% in 2011 among Protestants. Therefore any measure attendant upon the Irish language is going to be seen as principally directed towards a section of the Roman Catholic community and in terms of census figures this shows quite a modest percentage (the highest in terms of knowledge of the language was 24% in 2011 among 12 to 15 year olds.)

Therefore we believe that there is an equality issue in terms of provision of language and legalisation in respect of it. It is noted in terms of the 1999 Northern Ireland Life and Times survey that 31% of those Nationalists surveyed are more likely to speak Irish than Unionists (a mere 2%). In our view therefore that the Irish language has a contentious aspect which should not be enforced in any way by legislation forcing its provision within the population.

We took issue with DCAL's view that "Establishing Irish language legislation will have a positive impact on Irish speakers and therefore indirectly on Catholics, Nationalists, single people, younger people, people without a disability, and people with dependants. In DCAL's view, there are no discriminatory or adverse impacts". The Grand Lodge of Ireland disagrees very strongly with this view and believe that it is erroneous and not grounded in reality.



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We also do not believe that the Irish language bill has the potential to improve good relations by giving the Irish language potentially a more accessible platform for all sections of the community as is stated in page 22 of the consultation.

The Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland would take this opportunity to point out that we do have Irish language speakers within our membership. But also refer the Department to the fact that one of the MOST prominent Irish language speakers in Belfast in the early years of the 20th Century, and indeed one of those had to preserve the Irish language, was a County Grand Master of the Grand Orange Lodge of Belfast the Rev Doctor Richard Rutledge Kane. The Rev Kane was originally from County Cavan and was a very prominent figure within the Irish language and Gaelic league community at that time. However where the Rev Dr Richard Rutledge Kane disagreed with others in the language movement at that time was in relation to the politicisation of the Irish language and the Gaelic League. We believe that we reflect his memory by taking a similar position; we respect the right of people to learn and speak the Irish language and we respect the Irish language as one of the indigenous languages of the British Isles. However we do not believe that there should be an Irish language Act as it is a very proscriptive measure. We also do not believe that the Act will succeed in its declared aim of encouraging respect for the Irish language as it will result in community division along religious and political lines. In the final analyses that will be detrimental to the Irish language and we believe that the department should look at non preclusive ways of promoting the Irish Language instead.

Yours sincerely

Dr David Hume M.B.E
DIRECTOR OF SERVICES

Jim Shannon MP

I write in response to the consultation document 'Proposals for an Irish Language Bill' and ask that my response is noted and taken into consideration before any decision is made.

Having carefully considered the proposals and the information contained within, I find that it is not something which I can support. The amount of money that this would cost to implement makes it simply not viable at this time. When the executive is being forced to find efficiency savings in every department, to spend this money on something which is not a priority for the huge majority of people in Northern Ireland - no matter their political affiliation - is reprehensible to say the least and in many eyes including my own, is foolishness.

There is no justification for this and whilst I am a supporter of ensuring that culture and heritage is preserved, this is more than a step too far - this is a marathon too far. It is not necessary and therefore I cannot lend my support and indeed urge the greatest caution to be used when determining the recommendation to the Assembly.

I trust that you have found this response of use.

Kind Regards

Jim Shannon



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Jonathan Craig MLA (Lagan Valley)

☎ 028 9266 8378
☎ 028 9267 1845
✉ jonathan.craig@laganvalleydup.co.uk

Reply to:
DUP Constituency Office
The Old Town Hall
29 Castle Street
LISBURN
Co Antrim
BT27 4DH

JC/KW/Misc/Irish Language Bill

2 April 2015

Response Co-ordinator
Irish Language Bill Consultation
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
Level 7
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
BELFAST
BT2 7EG

Dear Response Co-ordinator

I would like to register my objection in the strongest possible terms to the Proposal for an Irish Language Bill. It is very clear that the Minister is fully aware that this proposal will not have cross community support in the Assembly. The timing of this bill by this Minister is an attempt by herself and her party to, once again, politicise the Irish Language Act.

At a time of financial constraint and reduction in her own department with many groups facing stringent cuts it is ludicrous to contemplate spending vital resources on a bill that does not have cross community support.

Yours sincerely

JONATHAN CRAIG MLA
Lagan Valley

Don Té a Bhaineann Sé Leis
Comhairliúchán ar Dhréacht mholtaí faoi choinne Bille Gaeilge.

A chara,

Fáiltíonn muidne, a bhfuil ár n-ainmneacha anseo thíos roimh an chomhairliúchán reatha ar dhréacht mholtaí faoi choinne Bille Gaeilge don tuaisceart. Tá áirithe againn gealltanas Rialtas na Breataine i gComhaontú Cill Rímhinn (2006), Acht na Gaeilge a thabhairt isteach, agus torthaí Choiste um Cearta Eacnamaíochta, Sóisialta agus Cultúrtha de chuid na Náisiún Aontaithe, chomh maith le torthaí Choiste na Saineolaithe ar Chairt na hEorpa do Theangacha Réigiúnacha nó Mionlaigh (2010, 2014) agus torthaí an Choiste Comhairleach ar an Chreatchoinbhinsiún um Cosaint na Mionlach Náisiúnta (2007, 2011) de chuid Chomhairle na hEorpa. Éilítear sna torthaí seo comhlíonadh ghealltanas na Breataine.

Le linn dhá chomhairliúchán rialtais i 2006 agus 2007, léiríodh tacaíocht thar na bearta do mholtaí a chuir POBAL, eagrais abhcóideachta na Gaeilge chun tosaigh, eiseamláir reachtaíochta ceartbhunaithe. Rinneadh na moltaí cuimsitheacha, réasúnta seo a nuashonrú i 2012, i ndiaidh do POBAL comhairliúchán leathan a dhéanamh leis an phobal agus comhairle a fháil ó shaineolaithe idirnáisiúnta aitheanta i réimse na reachtaíochta teanga.

Creideann muid go bhfuil moltaí POBAL, Acht na Gaeilge Eisiúint 2, chun leasa go mór agus go tábhachtach don chomhairliúchán seo, agus gur chóir glacadh leis na moltaí mar bhunús Acht na Gaeilge as seo amach.

Sínithe,

An tOllamh Emeritus Dónall P. Ó Baoill, Ollscoil na Ríona, Béal Feirste

An Dochtúir Fionntán de Brún, Teanga agus Litríocht na Gaeilge, Ollscoil Uladh, Béal Feirste

An tOllamh Linda Cardinal, Ecole des etudes politiques, Ollscoil Ottawa, Ceanada

An Dochtúir Tony Crowley, Roinn an Bhéarla, Ollscoil Leeds

An tOllamh Robert Dunbar, Ceiltis agus Eolàs na h-Alba, Ollscoil Dhún Éideann

An tOllamh Conchúr Ó Giollagáin, Soillse agus Àrd-Ollamh Rannsachaidh na Gàidhlig, Ollscoil na nGarbhchríocha agus na nOileán, Oileán Sgitheanach

An tOllamh Wilson McLeod, Ceiltis agus Eolàs na h-Alba, Ollscoil Dhún Éideann, Dún Éideann

An Dochtúir Fernand de Varennes, Comhairleoir Eolaíochta, Observatoire international des droits linguistiques, Ollscoil Moncton, Ceanada

An tOllamh Colin H. Williams, Roinn na Breatnaise, Ollscoil Caerdydd

To Whom it May Concern
Consultation on Draft Proposals for an Irish Language Bill
A chara,

We, the undersigned, welcome current consultation on draft proposals for an Irish Language Bill for the North. We note the British government commitment in the St Andrews' Agreement (2006) to introduce the Irish language Act, and the findings of the United Nations Committee for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as well as the Council of Europe Committee of Experts on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (2010, 2014) and the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (2007, 2011) calling for the fulfilment of this commitment.

In 2006 and 2007, two government consultations on proposals for an act showed overwhelming support for the rights-based model being proposed by POBAL, the advocacy organisation for the Irish speaking community. These comprehensive and reasonable proposals were updated in 2012, following community consultation and advice from internationally renowned experts in language law.

We believe that the POBAL proposals The Irish Language Act Issue 2 provide a detailed and significant contribution to this consultation and should be adopted as the basis for the Irish language Act going forward.

Signed,
Emeritus Professor Dónall P. Ó Baoill, Irish and Celtic Studies, Queen's University, Belfast

Dr Fionntán de Brún, Irish Languages and Literature, University of Ulster, Belfast

Professor Linda Cardinal, School of Political Studies, University of Ottawa, Canada

Professor Tony Crowley, Department of English Language, University of Leeds

Professor Robert Dunbar, Celtic and Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh

Professor Conchúr Ó Giollagáin, Director of Soilse and Gaelic Research Professor, University of the Highlands and Islands, Skye

Professor Wilson McLeod, Celtic and Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh

Dr Fernand de Varennes, Scientific Advisor, Observatoire international des droits linguistiques, University of Moncton, Canada

Professor Colin H. Williams, Department of Welsh, Cardiff University

European Constituency Office
Unit 2, Spencer House
14-22 Spencer Road
DERRY
BT47 6QA

Tel: 02871 318 683

Oifig Toghlaiġ na hEorpa
Aonad 2, Teach Spencer
14-22 Bóthar Spencer
DOIRE
BT47 6QA

Tel: 02871 318 683



1st May 2015

A chara,

I am writing in regard to the Minister for Culture's consultation on Acht na Gaeilge.

I wish for my comments below to be included as a submission to this consultation.

Acht na Gaeilge is a key outstanding commitment of the St Andrew's Agreement.

Irish speakers and all those who cherish equality will welcome the long-awaited progress on this important issue.

The rights of Irish speakers need to be afforded official protection in legislation.

Gaelic speakers in Scotland, Wales and in the rest of Ireland are already afforded the protection of language acts.

We are looking for the same protection and rights for Irish speakers in the north of Ireland.

The Irish language should be afforded official status.

This should include the protection and provision for Irish to be used through the legal system.

It also should include the provision for Irish to be used through the Assembly.

A key element of this should be the appointment of an Irish Language Commissioner.

There should be provision made for Irish to be used by Public Bodies.

It is important that language schemes should be included and this should target the development of Gaeltacht areas.

It is vital that provision is made for the official and legal recognition of place names.

In regard to education the number of students studying through Irish at third level has increased and this encompasses a diverse range of subjects.

European Constituency Office
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The number of parents choosing to send their children to be educated through the medium of Irish is steadily rising, evident through the growth of the sector with the steady rise of Irish-language preschool and primary education

Those who wish to learn and speak this native language should be afforded the protection to do so, whether that be through the education system, the legal system, the political system or in other reasonable ways through their daily lives.

I wish to fully support the call for Acht na Gaeilge and strongly believe that it is necessary to fulfil all elements of the St Andrew's Agreement in order to improve equality and inclusivity in our society and to enhance the cultural richness of Ireland.

Is mise le meas

Martina Anderson, MEP

Mentrau Iaith Cymru

Annwyl Carál Ní Chuilín, y Gweinidog dros Dreftadaeth, y Celfyddydau a Hamdden,

Ar ran Mentrau Iaith Cymru, ysgrifennaf i gefnogi'r egwyddorion a amlinellwyd ar gyfer Bil yr Iaith Wyddeleg.

Fel grŵp o fudiadau sydd yn hyrwyddo'r defnydd o'r Gymraeg credwn fod y Gymraeg yn perthyn i bawb yng Nghymru a thu hwnt, boed yn ddysgwyr neu siaradwyr rhugl. Credwn hefyd fod y Gymraeg yn cyfoethogi ein gwlad yn ddiwylliannol, yn gymdeithasol ac yn economaidd ac mae yna dystiolaeth ryngwladol sy'n cefnogi hyn. Yn fwyaf pwysig, credwn yn gryf fod amlieithrwydd a'r defnydd a ffyniant o ieithoedd lleiafrifol a rhanbarthol yn arwydd o gymdeithas a chymunedau amrywiol ac iach lle mae pobl yn medru byw eu bywydau trwy gyfrwng yr iaith o'u dewis. Credwn fod yr uchod i gyd yr un mor wir am yr iaith Wyddeleg.

I'r perwyl hwnnw cytunwn ei fod yn amserol ac angenrheidiol i osod hawliau i'r iaith Wyddeleg mewn statud, a hynny thrwy basio'r cynigion a amlinellir yn y Bil drafft y dylid:

- Rhoi statws swyddogol i'r Wyddeleg
- Rhoi hawl i ddefnyddio'r Wyddeleg mewn llys
- Rhoi hawl i ddefnyddio'r Wyddeleg yn y Senedd
- Creu'r rôl Comisiynydd a safonau mewn perthynas â'r Wyddeleg
- Rhoi dyletswydd ar gyrf ff cyhoeddus i ddarparu gwasanaethau trwy gyfrwng yr Wyddeleg
- Cydnabod yn llawn enwau lleoedd yn yr Wyddeleg
- Rhoi hawl i blant dderbyn eu haddysg yn yr Wyddeleg lle bynnag maent yn byw

Mae'r hawliau uchod wedi hir sefydlu gyda ni yng Nghymru, a thrwy eu gosod mewn statud rydym ni wedi gweld y gwahaniaeth sydd wedi bod i'r defnydd o'r Gymraeg, a'r gwahaniaeth ar fywydau pobl sydd am fyw ei bywydau trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg yn ogystal â'r rheini sydd am ddysgu'r iaith a chynyddu eu defnydd ohoni.

Mae dal llawer o waith o'n blaenau ni yng Nghymru, ac ym mhob gwlad lle mae yna ieithoedd lleiafrifol sydd yn byw ochr yn ochr ag ieithoedd pwerus. Ond credwn y byddai pasio'r Bil yn gam hanesyddol a hollbwysig y gellid ei wneud i ddiogelu, hyrwyddo a hybu eich iaith yn y dyfodol.

Yr eiddoch yn gywir,



Meirion Ll Davies

Cadeirydd

Mentrau Iaith Cymru

www.mentrauaith.cymru

post@mentrauaith.org

Mentrau

laith

Cymru

Dear Carál Ní Chuilín, Minister for Heritage, the Arts and Leisure,

I write on behalf of Mentrau Iaith Cymru to support the principles outlined for the Irish Language Bill.

As a group of organisations who promote the use of the Welsh language, we believe that the language belongs to everyone in Wales and beyond, whether learners or fluent speakers. We also believe that the Welsh language enhances our country culturally, socially and economically, and there is international research which supports this. Most importantly, we strongly believe that multilingualism, along with the wider use and prosperity of minority and regional languages, is a sign of vibrant, diverse and healthy societies and communities where people can live their lives through the language of their choice. We believe that all of the above is also true of the Irish language.

We therefore agree that it is timely and necessary to establish statutory rights for the Irish language by passing the proposals outlined in the draft Bill, that:

- The Irish language is given official status
- People will have the right to use Irish in court
- People will have the right to use Irish in the Assembly
- Creates the role of the Commissioner, and standards relating to the Irish language
- Places a duty on public bodies to provide services through the medium of Irish
- Fully recognises Irish place names
- Gives children a right to Irish medium education wherever they live

The rights outlined above have already been established in Wales, and through their establishment we have seen the difference they have made to the use of the language, and to the lives of those who wish to live through the medium of Welsh, and also those who are learning the language and wish to increase their use of it.

We still have a lot of work ahead of us in Wales, and indeed in every country where there are minority languages co-existing with other, more powerful languages. But we believe that passing the Irish language Bill would be an historic and important step towards safeguarding and promoting your language in the future.

Yr eiddoch yn gywir,



Meirion Ll Davies
Cadeirydd / Chairperson
Mentrau Iaith Cymru
www.mentrauaith.cymru
post@mentrauaith.org

Mountjoy Faith Defenders

L.O.L. 750

Secretary:

Brother. Nigel Henry

Worshipful Master:

Worshipful Brother. Stanley Wilson

Response Co-ordinator
Irish Language Bill Consultation
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
Level 7
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG

20th April 2015

Ref: Response to the Proposed Irish Language Bill

Dear Sir/Madam

The Worshipful Master, officers and Brethren of the above named lodge, of which there are ninety seven members would like to strongly object in the most possible terms to the possibility of the Irish Language being given Official status through Legislation.

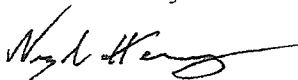
This is a language that is being used less and less in its own country of origin with an ever-decreasing demand. There is simply very little need for it in everyday life so why bring attempt to introduce a culture into this country that is totally alien and indeed in a lot of cases - offensive to the vast majority of the population. We are not against languages being taught in schools, in fact we fully support the teaching of languages including Irish where there is a demand for it. We now live in in an increasing multi-racial society and there is now a range of languages being taught like never before, all without requiring nor requesting Official Status through legislation. It is a sad reality that certain individuals want nothing more than to score "political points" and try to create a culture where one does not exist.

The English language in the dominant language in the Western world and is the universal language of business and attempting to bring the Irish language into local government, the Assembly, street names and other publications simply serves absolutely no purpose but to alienate and discriminate the Protestant population and non-Irish speaking Roman Catholics never mind our increasing migrant population.

We believe that the Irish language is adequately financed and provided for in Northern Ireland and Sinn Fein's persistence for an official language bill is nothing more than a vain attempt to create a culture of "Irishness" where one does not exist. Like I previously stated, it is a diminishing language in the Republic of Ireland and apart from a few areas, likewise in Northern Ireland, it is a luxury we cannot afford and certainly don't need.

I trust you will treat this objection with the seriousness it deserves.

Yours faithfully


Nigel Henry, Secretary

"God Save The Queen"

Oifigeach Náisiúnta Gaeilge, Sinn Féin

Aighneacht Shinn Féin ar Acht na Gaeilge do thuaisceart na hÉireann

Intreoir

Dearbhaíonn Sinn Féin gur í an Ghaeilge teanga náisiúnta na hÉireann agus creideann muid gur iad athbhunú na Gaeilge ina teanga labhartha ag tromlach in Éirinn agus cruthú sochaí fhíordhátheangach, an bealach chun an cineál Éireann atá á iarraidh againn a bhaint amach.

Tacaíonn muid le obair phobal na Gaeilge, lena eagrais agus lena ghníomhaireachtaí ionadaíochta mar phríomh-mhodh na h-oibre seo.

Tá muintir Shinn Féin ina cuid den phobal Gaeilge sin.

Tá ceist an chomhionannais ag croí ár dtiomantais agus sa chomhthéacs faoi leith seo baineann sé le comhionannas de réir an dlí. Is í fírinne an scéil nach mbeidh comhionannas ar bith ann gan a leithéid de ráthaíochtaí dlíthiúla, mar atá molta. Caithfidh Rialtas na Breataine an gealltanais a tugadh ag Cill Rímhinn a chomhlíonadh agus Acht Gaeilge a thabhairt isteach. Mar ráthóir de Chomhaontú Chill Rímhinn caithfidh an Rialtas i mBaile Átha Cliath a chinntiú go bhfíoraítear an t-acht sin. Tá leithcheal Rialtas na Breataine idir theangacha follasach, tá a n-acht teanga féin ag Albain agus an Bhreatain Bheag. Tá an scéal céanna ann i ndeisceart na hÉireann, áit a bhfuil roinnt achtanna teanga tugtha isteach leis na blianta anuas, cé nach bhfuil Rialtas BÁC inníoch faoin diúltú do Acht Gaeilge ó thuaidh.

Braitheann cosaint agus forbairt leanúnach na Gaeilge ó thuaidh ar thabhairt isteach acht cuí Gaeilge don tuaisceart. Is mar gheall ar seo go bhfuil moltaí do Acht Gaeilge tugtha ar aghaidh ag an Aire Cultúir, Ealaíon agus Fóillíochta Sinn Féineach, Carál Ní Chuilín.

Bíodh siad ina nGaeilgeoirí nó ná bíodh, tugann na moltaí seo deis don phobal go léir saibhriú agus éagsúlacht chultúrtha a chur chun cinn agus cuirfidh siad leis an mheon caoinfhulaingthe i leith na h-éagsúlachta cultúrtha sin.

Mír 1 Stádas Oifigiúil na Gaeilge

C1 (a) Aontaíonn Sinn Féin go daingean leis an mholadh an Ghaeilge a shainmhíniú mar theanga oifigiúil sa tuaisceart trí reachtaíocht ar bhealach go gcinnteofar seirbhísí trí Ghaeilge ar an leibhéal céanna leis an Bhéarla.

C1 (b) Bhunódh sé go soiléir stádas cothrom na teanga, d'fheabhsódh sé an mheas agus an gradam uirthi agus i ndeireadh na dála chuirfeadh sé lena forbairt agus lena cur chun cinn.

Sa stát seo a bhfuil earnáil suntasach phoiblí ann, chuirfeadh sé dualgas ar an earnáil sin teacht ar bhealaigh chun go n-áirítear an teanga ina chuid gnó agus oibríochtaí.

Cuirfidh a leithéid sin de stádas oifigiúil reachtúil go mór le leathnú amach sholáthar seirbhísí i nGaeilge do lucht na Gaeilge.

Mír 2 An Ghaeilge sna cúirteanna

C2 (a) Aontaíonn Sinn Féin go daingean leis na forálacha a cheadaíonn úsáid na Gaeilge sna cúirteanna.

(b) Tá an ceart do theanga féin a labhairt nó a úsáid in imeachtaí dlí, sna cúirteanna, os comhair binsí agus i gcomhthéacsanna dlíthiúla eile, ina cheart bunúsach nár chóir ligean do stát ná eagraíocht phoiblí ar bith diúltú dó. Ba cheart go mbeadh sé mar an gcéanna ó thaobh úsáid na teanga de sa tuaisceart. Ina theannta sin caithfear tacú leis an cheart sin le forálacha, ateangaireacht san áireamh, a chumasódh do dhaoine an Ghaeilge a úsáid gan mhíchaoithiúlacht ná costais. Gan na forálacha sin bheadh míbhuntáiste ar lucht na Gaeilge os comhair an dlí.

Tá tagairt déanta ag COMEX don Administration of Justice (Language) Act (Ireland) 1737 mar

'an unjustified prohibition on the Irish language...contrary to the spirit and objectives of the Charter '

Ina theannta sin tá gealltanais ann faoin Chairt

'...to eliminate any unjustified distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference relating to the use ofa language'

Tá aisghairm an ailt chuí den Administration of Justice (Language) Act (Ireland) 1737 riachtanach, mar a rinneadh cheana i Sasana, in Albain agus sa Bhreatain Bheag in 1879.

Mír 3 An Tionól

C3 (a) Aontaíonn Sinn Féin go daingean leis na forálacha a cheadaíonn úsáid na gaeilge sa Tionól.

(b) Tá muid den bharúil go gcaithfear plé leis an Ghaeilge ar aon bhonn in imeachtaí an Tionóil agus a chuid structúr bainteach. Ciallaíonn sé seo go mbeidh seirbhísí ateangaireachta de dhíth agus go bhfoilseofaí Billí agus Achtanna i nGaeilge agus i mBéarla go comhuaineach.

Tá 10% de CTRéanna ina nGaeilgeoirí agus caithfear a gcearta, agus cearta daoine a fhaigheann cuirí le teacht os comhair coistí, a aithint.

Tá riachtanas soiléir le bearta chun meas ar an teanga a chinntiú.

Mír 4 An Coimisinéir Gaeilge

C4 (a) Aontaíonn Sinn Féin go daingean leis na forálacha chun post Choimisinéir Gaeilge a chruthú.

(b) Tá muid den bharúil go bhfuil ní hamháin Acht Gaeilge riachtanach ach Coimisinéir Gaeilge fosta. Is trí Choimisinéir Teanga, amháin, a bheifear in ann soláthar do chur i bhfeidhm an chomhionannais i leith na Gaeilge agus coinneáil leis go h-éifeachtach.

(d) Tá na feidhmeanna coimisinéara luaite ann ann, chun go mbeidh an t-acht agus scéim ar bith tugtha isteach faoi curtha i bhfeidhm. Tá siad riachtanach mar gheall ar an naimhdeas leis an Ghaeilge ó roinnt daoine.

Ina theannta sin, tá na feidhmeanna comhairle, imscrúduithe agus molta tábhachtach chun coigeartuithe a dhéanamh sa phleanáil agus sa chleachtas teanga chomh maith le conclúidí a bhaint.

Tá an scrúdan agus an chuntasacht daonlathach curtha chun tosaigh i bhforálacha 4(b) agus (g) (viii).

(e) Tá na cumhachtaí atá molta don choimisinéir riachtanach chun a c(h)uid feidhmeanna a chomhlíonadh agus do rath a c(h)uid cúraimí. Clúdaíonn na cumhachtaí a f(h)eidhmeanna uile, ní hamháin na scéimeanna teanga a d'fhéadfadh a bheith i gceist. Baineadh tairbhe an-teoranta as na scéimeanna teanga mar uirlis phleanáil teanga sa Bhreatain Bheag agus i ndeisceart na hÉireann, den chuid is mó mar gheall ar an easpa cumhachtaí éifeachtacha a cuireadh ar fáil don choimisinéir. Ceartaíonn moltaí an Aire an staid sin ach go háirithe na cumhachtaí imscrúduithe, iallaigh, agus ionchúisimh, chomh maith leis an fhéidearthacht cúitimh.

Mír 5 Comhlachtaí poiblí

C5 (a) Aontaíonn Sinn Féin go daingean go n-áirítear forálacha do chomhlachtaí poiblí.

(b) Tá páirt na gcomhlachtaí poiblí, i gcur chun cinn na Gaeilge trí chur i bhfeidhm stádais oifigiúil na Gaeilge agus na nGaeltachtaí, riachtanach do chosaint, feabhsú agus forbairt na teanga i dtuaisceart na hÉireann.

Is gné ríthábhachtach ar fad í an fhoráil idirdhealaithe dearfaí, más cuí, i leith lucht na Gaeilge nuair atá comhlachtaí poiblí agus iad ag earcú foirne. Ríthábhachtach fosta atá an riachtanas ar chomhlachtaí poiblí comhoibriú a dhéanamh leis an choimisinéir agus é/í ag comhlíonadh a c(h)uid feidhmeanna.

(d) Ar leibhéal bunúsach tá an riachtanas ar Chomhlachtaí Poiblí comhfhreagras i nGaeilge a fhreagairt i nGaeilge, an-fhiúntach. Mar an gcéanna le soláthar eolais dátheangach don phobal i gcoitinne agus foilsiú doiciméad cosúil le tuarascálacha bliantúla go dátheangach.

Is uirlis é an riachtanas comhairliúcháin a dhéantar leis an phobal ar scéimeanna teanga agus na scéimeanna sin a chomhaontú leis an choimisinéir teanga, .i. uirlisí le húsáid i gcosaint, i bhfeabhsú agus i bhforbairt na seirbhísí trí Ghaeilge atá ar fáil ó Chomhlachtaí Poiblí.

Mír 6 Scéimeanna teanga

C6 (a) Tá Sinn Féin go daingean i bhfách le Scéimeanna Teanga ar choinníoll go bhfuil siad tacaíthe le cumhachtaí reachtúla a chinntíonn a gcur i bhfeidhm i gceart, macasamhail na moltaí sa doiciméad comhairliúcháin seo.

(b) Curtha san áireamh sna moltaí tá meicníocht tionscanta agus dréachtaithe i leith scéimeanna teanga. Tharla go bhfuil siad dírithe ar an chustaiméir ciallaíonn sé sin go mbeidh siad an-fhóirsteanach agus freagrúil do chliantacht Gaeltachta agus Galltachta.

Tá luach ag Scéimeanna Teanga mar leagann siad amach go soiléir cad é a bheidh déanta , cá huair agus ar cén dóigh. Má tá siad aontaithe agus faofa ag an Choimisinéir Teanga beidh siad ina n-uirlisí éifeachtacha do sholáthar seirbhísí trí Ghaeilge.

Mír 7 Ceantair Ghaeltachta

C7 (a) Aontaíonn Sinn Féin go daingean le forálacha don Ghaeltacht a bheith curtha san áireamh.

(b) Is cuid riachtanach iad na forálacha a bhaineann le sainmhíniú ar an Ghaeltacht, lena stádas, lena teorainneacha agus lena liostú i sceideal, is é sin le rá, riachtanach do chosaint na Gaeltachta reatha agus riachtanach do chruthú Gaeltachtaí úra amach anseo. Gan an t-aitheantas foirmiúil seo i reachtaíocht ní fhreastalódh na gníomhaireachtaí oifigiúla/comhlachtaí poiblí go hiomlán ar riachtanais na Gaeltachta.

Mír 8 Logainmneacha

C8 (a) Aontaíonn Sinn Féin go daingean le forálacha i leith logainmneacha a bheith curtha san áireamh.

(b) Tá an fhreagracht as logainmneacha lonnaithe in Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga cé go bhfuil an dealramh air go mbeidh an taighde speisialta bainte leo curtha amach ar chonradh. Beidh an t-údarás chun logainmneacha a shainmhíniú agus iad a aithint go hoifigiúil is go dlíthiúil, curtha ar bhonn reachtaíochta. Tabharfaidh na forálacha eile an t-údarás dlíthiúil do na Seirbhísí Talaimh agus Réadmhaoine na logainmneacha Gaeilge seo a úsáid ina gcuid léarscáileanna agus foilseachán. Fós éascófar úsáid na leaganacha Gaeilge ar chomharthaí bóithre [Tá an chumhacht ann cheana féin do ainmchláir sráide dátheangacha sa Local Government (Misc) Order 1995]

Cuirfidh sé seo uilig go mór le infheictheacht phoiblí na Gaeilge, le h-éileamh ar logainmneacha Gaeilge agus le suim sa stair áitiúil, i ngnéithe fisiciúla agus sa topagrafaíocht.

Mír 9 Oideachas

C9 (a) Aontaíonn Sinn Féin go daingean le foráil a chur san áireamh a bhaineann leis an cheart ar oideachas trí Ghaeilge.

(b) Tá réimse an oideachais an-leathan agus tá sé clúdaithe ag reachtaíocht eile fosta. Tá sé mar chuspóir ag an fhoráil seo an t-oideachas trí Ghaeilge a bhunú mar cheart , agus mar phrionsabal a leathfadh ar fud an chóras oideachais ina hiomlán.

MTC

C10 (a) Ní chreideann Sinn Féin go mbeidh aon tionchar ag Acht an Gaeilge ar na grúpaí clúdaithe ag Mír 75.

Sinn Féin submission on the Acht Gaeilge for the north of Ireland

Introduction

Sinn Féin asserts that the Irish language is the national language of Ireland, and we believe that only the restoration of the Irish language as the spoken language among the majority of people in

Ireland and the creation of a truly bilingual society will deliver the Ireland for which we strive.

We support the work of the Irish Language community, its representative agencies and organisations, as the main vehicle for this work.

We in Sinn Féin see ourselves as part of that Irish language community.

Central to our drive is the issue of equality. In this particular context equality for Irish speakers before the law. The reality is that there will be no equality without such legal guarantees as proposed. The British Government must honour the commitment entered into at St Andrews to introduce an Irish Language Act and the Dublin Government must as guarantor of that agreement see to it that the act is made a reality.

The discrimination being practised by the British Government between languages is clear, Scotland and Wales have their Language Acts. The same applies to the south of Ireland where they have had down the years several Language Acts, but the Dublin Government are not concerned by the denial of an act to the north.

The protection and continued development of the Irish language in the north is dependent on the enacting of an appropriate Acht Gaeilge for the north. For this reason the Sinn Féin Minister of Culture Arts and Leisure, Carál Ní Chuilín has brought forward proposals for an Acht Gaeilge.

For the whole community in the north whether they be Irish speakers or not, these proposals offer an opportunity for the promotion of cultural diversity and enrichment and will contribute to a attitude of tolerance of that cultural diversity

Part 1 Official Status of the Irish Language

Q1 (a) Sinn Féin strongly agrees with the proposal to define Irish as an Official Language in the north through legislation in such a way as to guarantee services through Irish on a par with those available through English.

Q1 (b) It would establish clearly the equal status of the language, enhance respect and esteem for it and ultimately contribute to its development and advancement.

In a state which has a significant public sector it would put an onus on that sector to come up with ways of including the language in its business and operations

The accordance of such status to the Irish language in the north by means of legislation will greatly contribute to the provision of services in Irish to Irish speakers.

Part 2 Irish in the Courts

Q2 (a) Sinn Féin strongly agrees with the inclusion of provisions to allow Irish to be used in the courts.

(b) The right to speak or use your own language in legal proceedings and in the courts, in tribunals, and in other legal contexts is a basic right which no state or public body should be allowed to deny, and so it should be for the right to use the Irish language in the north. Further that right must be supported by provisions including interpretation, which would enable the use of Irish without any inconvenience or expense, as not to do so would be to leave Irish speakers at a disadvantage before the law.

COMEX has already referred to the Administration of Justice (Language) Act (Ireland) 1977 as 'an unjustified prohibition on the Irish language.....contrary to the spirit and objectives of the Charter'

Further under the Charter there is an undertaking '...to eliminate any unjustified distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference relating to the use of...a language'

The repeal of the relevant section of the Administration of Justice (Language) Act (Ireland) 1977 is imperative, as has already been done in England, Scotland and Wales in 1979.

Part 3 The Assembly

Q3(a) Sinn Féin strongly agrees with the inclusion of provisions to allow Irish to be used in the Assembly

(b) It's our view that the the Irish language must be treated equally in proceedings of the Assembly and its related bodies and that this requires interpretation services and the publication of Bills and Acts in Irish and English simultaneously.

10% of MLAs are Irish speakers and their rights as well as the rights of those invited to appear before committees must be respected.

There is a clear need for measures to ensure respect for the language.

Part 4 The Irish Language Commissioner

Q4 (a) Sinn Féin strongly agrees with the inclusion of provisions to create the position of an Irish Language Commissioner

(b) It is our view that not only is an Irish Language Act essential but also an Irish Language Commissioner. Only through a Language Commissioner can the implementation of equality in respect of Irish be provided for and effectively pursued.

(d) The language commissioner functions included are all intended to ensure that the act and any schemes introduced under it are put into effect and they are necessary given the hostility to the Irish language from some.

In addition, the advice, investigation and recommendation roles are important in making adjustments to language practice and planning and the making of findings.

Democratic scrutiny and accountability are also to the fore in sections 4 (b) and (g) (vii).

(e) The proposed powers of the commissioner are essential to the carrying out of his/her functions and the success of his remit. They cover his/her entire functions and not only any possible language schemes. The experience of language schemes as an instrument of language planning has been of very limited satisfaction in Wales and the south of Ireland, in no small part due to the lack of effective powers at the disposal of the commissioner. The Minister's proposals redress that situation especially the proposed powers of enquiry, compulsion, initiation of prosecution and the possibility of compensation.

Part 5 Public Bodies

Q5 (a) Sinn Féin strongly agrees with the inclusion of provisions for Public Bodies

(b) The role of public bodies in the promotion of Irish through the application of the official status of the language and that of the Gaeltacht areas is essential to the protection, enhancement and development of the language in the north of Ireland.

An extremely important element in all of this is the provision for affirmative action, where appropriate, in favour of Irish speakers in recruitment by Public Bodies and the restatement of the requirement on Public Bodies to cooperate with the language commissioner in the performance of his/her functions.

(d) The duty on Public Bodies to reply to Irish language correspondence in Irish, the provision of information bilingually to the general public and the publication of documents such as annual reports bilingually, are all very worthwhile at a basic level.

The requirement to consult with the public on language schemes and to agree such statutory schemes with the language commissioner is a tool for use in the protection, enhancement and development of Irish language services available from Public Bodies.

Part 6 Language Schemes

Q6 (a) Sinn Féin is strongly in favour of Language Schemes, provided they are accompanied by statutory powers which ensure their proper implementation, such as those proposed in this consultation document.

(b) The proposals contain mechanisms for the initiation and drafting of Language Schemes. Their customer driven orientation will make them particularly appropriate and responsive to a Gaeltacht as well as a Gaeltacht based clientele.

The value of Language Schemes is that they spell out what will be done and when and how. If they are agreed and approved by the Language Commissioner then they will be effective tools for the provision of services through Irish.

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Q7 (a) Sinn Féin strongly agrees with the inclusion of provisions for Gaeltacht areas.

(b) The provisions relating to the definition of a Gaeltacht, their status, boundaries, and their listing by schedule are essential elements in the protection and expansion of existing ones, and the creation of new ones. Without this formal recognition in legislation their particular needs would not be wholly served by official agencies/public bodies.

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All of which will contribute greatly to increased public visibility of the Irish language, popularisation of Irish language place-names and the encouragement of interest in local history, features and topography.

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Q9 (a) Sinn Féin strongly agrees with the inclusion of a provision concerning the right to education through Irish

(b) The area of education is quite broad and is also covered by other legislation. This provision seeks to establish education through the medium of Irish as a right, and as a principle informing the whole education system.

EQIA

Q10 (a) Sinn Féin does not believe that the introduction of an Irish Language Act will have any effect on the groups covered by Section 75.



Rosie McCorley, MLA
Sinn Féin

*Upper Falls Constituency Office
Teach Uí Chonghaile/ Connolly House
147 Andersonstown Road
Belfast, BT11 9BW
Email: rosiemccorley@gmail.com
T: 028 9080 8404*

31ú Márta 2015

Cáral a chara

I would like to congratulate you on bringing forward proposals for an Irish Language Act. I have studied your proposals and feel they would form the basis of robust legislation.

I strongly agree with the proposal to define Irish as an Official Language in the north through legislation in such a way as to guarantee services through Irish on a par with those available through English. I feel it would establish the equal status of the Irish language, enhance respect and esteem for it and ultimately contribute to its development and advancement.

In my view, it would be important to see the repeal of the Administration of Justice Act 1737, particularly as it has already been repealed in England, Scotland and Wales. COMEX has already referred to the Administration of Justice (Language) Act (Ireland) 1737 as 'an unjustified prohibition on the Irish language.....contrary to the spirit and objectives of the Charter'.

Provision for MLAs to conduct their business in Irish, within the chamber or committee, is a welcomed step. 10% of current MLAs are Irish speakers and should have the right to do their business through Irish, on an equal footing to English.

The Irish Language Commissioner is a vital strand to your proposals. Oversight and implementation of the Act is fundamental to its success. The appointment of a commissioner with a clear remit and accountability would ensure the Irish language, and the rights of Irish speakers are protected and dealt with on an equal basis.

The role of public bodies in the promotion of Irish through the application of the official status of the language and that of the Gaeltacht areas is essential to the protection, enhancement and development of the language. Affirmative action, where appropriate, in favour of Irish speakers in recruitment by public bodies is an important strand of this legislation. If used properly, this would ensure a streamlined approach to language issues and help avoid duplication.

Is mise le meas

Rosie Mc Corley, MLA

One Person Can Make a Difference
To join Sinn Féin text "JOIN" followed by your name & address to 60060

Sinn Féin

Sinn Féin submission on the Acht Gaeilge for the north of Ireland

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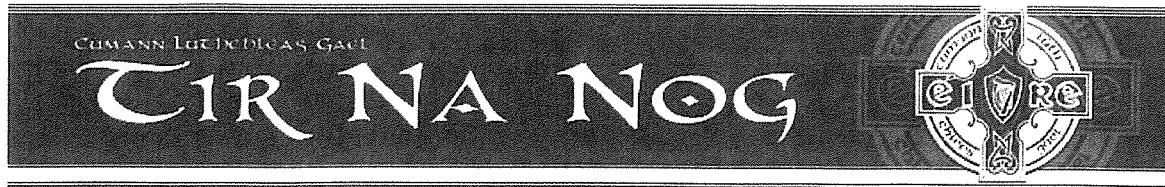
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Port an Dúnáin
Contae Ard Mhacha

Portadown
CoArmagh

Response Co-ordinator
Irish Language Bill Consultation
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
Level 7
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG

A Chara

On the behalf of the committee and members of Tír-na-nÓg C.L.G I wish to register our support for the proposed Irish Language Bill. The Gaelic Athletic Association has always held the Irish language as central to our national identity, and the Irish language and culture is enshrined in the constitution and ethos of the Association. The Irish language has seen a remarkable revival in the North over recent generations, as evidenced by the thousands of children going through Irish-medium education and the increasing number of people who indicate knowledge of the language in census forms. We feel it is vital that the rights and opportunities of those who wish to use the Irish language in their daily lives, in the public sphere and in their dealings with official bodies, be protected by legislation.
Is mise le meas,

Léan Bean Mhic Eóin

Rúnaí

Trevor Clarke MLA

I am writing in response to the consultation on the Irish language Bill.

I find this Bill to be pointless and dictatorial and therefore firmly oppose to the Irish Language Act launched by Sinn Fein.

The Bill and also the consultation is a pointless exercise as there will not be cross-community support for this piece of legislation. Northern Ireland is a part of Britain and will continue to be so, therefore introducing another language is not required or wanted.

It's a dead language. Other than people using it for interest purposes which I have no objection to. I believe people who want to use this language or any other language should fund it themselves.

Regards
Trevor Clarke

Tullintrain Purple Star Loyal Orange Lodge No. 1969

CONSULTATION ON THE IRISH LANGUAGE ACT

REPOSENSE FROM TULLINTRAIN PURPLE STAR LOYAL ORANGE LODGE No. 1969

CITY OF LONDONDERRY

Part 1: Official Status of the Irish Language

Question 1

a] It is the view of the above Lodge that the Irish Language should not have official status.

B] We believe that as the Irish Language is a minority language this would be too proscriptive a measure and that the language should not be promoted through legislation any more than other languages such as Lithuanian, Polish, Mandarin, Ulster-Scots or other languages that are extensively used by immigrants now resident in Northern Ireland.

Part 2: Irish in the Courts

Question 1

We believe that English should be the official and only language used in the Courts. Where foreigners without the language are in Court, then interpreters should be employed as is currently the case.

It is our view that there should be no rights for Irish in any Court or Tribunal.

Any Court / Tribunal within Northern Ireland should only use the language that all except those foreign persons can understand English and no other language should be given equal provision, as it is totally unnecessary.

We believe that the Administration of Justice [Language] Act [Ireland] 1737 should not be repealed.

Question 2

It is our view that Irish should not be provided for within the Northern Ireland Courts system.

As the vast / overwhelming majority of people within Northern Ireland, irrespective of their background, culture and religion, are fluent English speakers, we believe there is no requirement for any language other than English to be used. We do not accept that there is any requirement for Irish to be used in the Courts in Northern Ireland.

If the suggestion within the Irish Language Act were to be enshrined in legislation, it is our view that other minority languages would seek official provision, which would only lead to

problems within the system. The cost would be considerable and it is our belief that these costs would increase the provision of legal proceedings and the courts system would become clogged up and unworkable.

Part 3: The Assembly

Question 1

It isn't our belief that Irish should be given the same status as English on a supposed basis of equality in the course of Assembly proceedings.

Give Irish an equal status would only add proscriptive measures and additional expense to the public purse and it is not our belief that this is necessary as all MLAs are fluent in English.

Nationalist and Republicans currently use Irish when addressing the Speaker and ending their contribution to debate within the Assembly and other non-proscriptive ways should be sought that can give respect to the Irish Language.

Question 2

We are of the view that Irish should not be given special provision to be used in the Assembly

The current use of Irish by a number of MLAs is in our opinion sufficient, providing they interpret what they say in the English language immediately afterwards.

Part 4: The Irish Language Commissioner

Question 1

We question why there should be a need for a Commissioner, something that would only add considerable costs to the already stretched public purse. To have such a position would not be conducive to providing good community relations due to the nature of the post and the proscriptive nature of the proposed legislation. It is our view that he / she would have a negative impact on good community relations due to the envisaged powers that would be given to the post-holder.

Part 5: Public Bodies

Question 1

We firmly believe that NO official provisions should be made for the use of the Irish Language in Public Bodies within Northern Ireland. Those who wish to promote the Irish Language should encourage respect for the language rather than through proscriptive measures, which currently is not encouraging such respect, but rather giving negative views of the language.

Part 6: Language Schemes

This organisation is of the view that those who wish to learn Irish should have every

opportunity to do so. DCAL could fund such courses along with like courses in other languages and a proscriptive language scheme is not, in our view a good way of promoting the Irish language.

Part 7: Gaeltacht Areas

Question 1

This Lodge does not support the creation of such areas at public expense and such areas would not in our opinion gain any respect for the Irish Language. As such areas within the Republic of Ireland, where the language is the first but least used language, there has been much controversy, especially within the Dingle Peninsula and we don't believe that creating such areas are appropriate or workable within Northern Ireland.

Part 8: Place Names

Question 1

We believe that place-names is one area in which all within Northern Ireland can have common ground and are therefore non-contentious. For that reason we see no reason to object to the furtherance of place-names in Irish and in Ulster-Scots being encouraged on signs. However, this does not mean that we support dual signs in Irish and English. The overwhelming number of residents of Northern Ireland speak English as their first language and to go down the road of both Irish and English on road signs would only lead to other language enthusiasts, such as Ulster-Scots demanding the same and to have a plethora of names on a road sign would do nothing to help road safety, as well as being an additional and unnecessary cost during these austere times.

Place-name definitions would be of interest to many in all communities but it is our view that any such work should not be enshrined in legislation such as in an Irish Language Act, as many of such names derive from other languages such as Ulster-Scots, Anglo-Saxon, English, Norman and Scandinavian. To enshrine such provision in an official and legislative Act in respect of Irish would be contentious and a cause of division with our society.

Part 9: Education

It is our view that various Languages should be taught in Schools from Primary level upwards, including Irish. We believe that giving special privileges to Irish in respect of legislation would be wrong. German, French, Spanish and as some Schools have introduced, Mandarin will equip children to progress in the world much more so than Irish. We don't believe that there should be a right to the teaching of all subjects through the medium of Irish anymore than through any other of the languages mentioned above.

We would totally opposed any suggestion that it should be mandatory for all school-children in Northern Ireland to learn Irish.

Question 10: Equality Impact Assessment

This Lodge believes that the provision of an Irish Language Act would raise questions of equality, considering that Irish is well-recognised as belonging to the Roman Catholic community much more so than the Protestant community and that community relations

would suffer if the Act ever became law.

DCAL figures show that Roman Catholics are more likely to have some knowledge of Irish than Protestants with 22% in 2001, reduced to 21% in 2011 compared to 1% in 2001 and 2% in 2011 amongst Protestants. Any Irish Language Act will therefore be seen as purely for the RC community and due to the figures of those with knowledge it shows a very minor increase in knowledge.

It is our view that the equality issue in terms of providing provision of language and legislation in respect of it and we believe that an Irish Language Act would have a contentious aspect, which should not be enforced by way of legislation forcing it on the population.

We most definitely do not share the Department's view that, '..establishing Irish language legislation will have a positive impact on Irish speakers and therefore indirectly on Catholics [sic], single people, younger people, people without a disability and people with dependants' Where is there any evidence to suggest such a view? Absolutely none !

Furthermore, the Department suggests that there are '...no discriminatory or adverse impacts'. Again no evidence.... We would totally disagree with this statement and believe it is totally wrong and is the view of a person or persons not living in the real world.

We don't for a moment believe that the proposed Bill would have the potential of improving community relations. In fact, our view is that it would have an opposite effect and would lead to a deterioration in good community relations.

Whilst this Lodge does not have Irish speakers within their ranks, the author did a short Irish language course during his Law studies in Dublin. We are aware of the historical facts of Irish speakers holding high office within our Order and of minutes of meetings being written in Irish. Dr. Richard Rutledge Kane, a native of Co. Cavan held both high office in the Orange Order and the Gaelic League. His main complaint about the language during that time was the politicisation of both the Language and the Gaelic League, something we have similar complaint with, due the abrasive in your face use of it by Republicans in the Assembly and elsewhere.

In conclusion, our wish is to respect the rights of those who wish to learn and speak the Irish Language, which we acknowledge as one of the indigenous languages of the British Isles. However, we do not believe that an Act will be successful in the its aim of encouraging respect due to its proscriptive nature and it is our view that it will only add to community division along religious and political lines. This would, in our opinion be detrimental to the language and we would implore the Minister to seek a less proscriptive way of encouraging the Irish language, rather than the manner in which is set out in the proposed Act.

Signed: *Ernest McCay* [Worshipful Master]

William Houston [Deputy Master]

Alan Lindsay [Secretary]



Turas welcomes the opportunity to make the Irish language an official language of the United Kingdom. This will bring Irish in line with its sister languages Scottish Gaelic and Welsh.

It has been our experience that attitudes to the language can be more positive and nuanced at the community level than at the level of political leadership, and that political instability can be detrimental to the language. For this reason we believe that the language needs a level of protection independent of the political sphere. The lack of implementation of the provisions of Irish in the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages is an example of the difficulties encountered by the language at the political and administrative level. We support the proposal for a Commissioner for the Irish language who would be recruited using the public appointment process and be as independent of politics as possible.

Given that Irish would be made an official language, it follows that permission for the language to be used should be granted in court and in our political assemblies. Individuals should have the right to communicate with the authorities in Irish and receive a reply in that language at no inconvenience to themselves. We do not feel it is as important to translate all acts and public documents in Irish; it would suffice to provide Irish versions of important documents related to language and culture. We agree to the process of language schemes for public bodies, with a particular focus on the departments dealing with Irish language matters, that is, those dealing with culture and education.

We agree to the official recognition of place-names in the Irish language. We also support the provision of bilingual road signs where the majority wishes it, as well as the acknowledgement of such signs on maps produced by Land and Property Services. We propose that a greater attempt be made to explain the Irish language sources of many of our place-names, which would lead to their greater acceptance in the community.

Regarding the proposal for Gaeltacht areas in Northern Ireland, while such designated areas would provide additional linguistic services for those within them, we envisage them to be outward-looking, engaging the community at large in Northern Ireland. They could 'showcase' the language to a wider audience as well as demonstrate the potential of the language revival to other Irish speakers.





We would emphasise the importance of education in the Act. Irish-medium education should be protected and fully integrated into shared and extended school schemes. Children with special educational needs should have the same opportunities and support in the Irish-medium sector as the English-medium one. Every child should have the opportunity to learn about the Irish language. We believe that the Commissioner for Irish should have an educative role, in explaining the benefits of official status to the community at large. Our suggestions are underpinned by our strong belief in the need for a co-ordinated cross-community strategy for Irish.

If the myths about Irish are to be dispelled and everyone is made aware of its relevance to them, there will be greater acceptance of the language in Northern Ireland. To enable this we need to move beyond the pious aspirations of official announcements about our shared future, and create genuine opportunities for everyone in the community to engage with the language.



Ulster Place-Name Society

TOGRAÍ FAOI CHOINNE BILLE GAEILGE PROPOSALS FOR AN IRISH LANGUAGE ACT

MÍR / PART 8 LOGAINMNEACHA / PLACE-NAMES

Tá an fhreagairt seo ar an cháipéis comhairleacháin um Thogra Faoi Choinne Bille Gaeilge á scríobh agam mar chathaoirleach ar Chumann Logainmneacha Chúige Uladh. Tá sé mar chúram ag an Chumann taighde a thionscnamh ar logainmneacha na naoi gcondae i gCúige Uladh agus sa cheantar máguaird. Ó tharla gurb é an t-aon chumann logainmneacha in Éirinn é, tá sé mar chúram aige, chomh maith, suim a spreagadh i logainmneacha na tíre ar fad agus foilsíonn sé iris acadúil, AINM, a chuireann taighde ar logainmneacha is ar ainmneacha pearsanta i gcló. Is é Roinn na Gaeilge in Ollscoil na Banríona atá ag cothú an Chumainn ó bunaíodh é agus tá daoine as gach cearn d'Éirinn agus as áiteacha thar lear le háireamh ar bhail an Chumainn.

I'm responding specifically to this section of the consultation document as chair of the Ulster Place-Name Society which is concerned with the promotion of the study of place-names in all nine counties of Ulster and its environs. As the only place-names society in the whole of Ireland, it also promotes interest in Irish place-names in general and publishes a journal, AINM, which is devoted to research on place and personal names. It has been supported and sustained throughout its existence by the Department of Irish in Queen's University, Belfast and draws its membership from all parts of Ireland and abroad.

(As our Society includes among its membership people who are not speakers of Irish, I will respond to this consultation in English for the purposes of our records.)

An tOllamh Mícheál Ó Mainnín,
Cathaoirleach, Cumann Logainmneacha Chúige Uladh/
Chair, Ulster Place-Name Society
An Ghaeilge & an Léann Ceilteach/
Irish & Celtic Studies
Scoil na Nuatheangacha/
School of Modern Languages,
Ollscoil na Banríona/QUB

MÍR / PART 8.

(a)

Sainmhíniú ar "logainm". / Definition of "place-name".

(b)

Foráil a bhunóidh freagracht as logainmneacha in Oifig an Choimisinéara Gaeilge. / Provision locating responsibility for place-names, in the Irish Language Commissioner's Office.

(c)

Foráil le go mbeidh aitheantas dlíthiúil oifigiúil ag logainmneacha Gaeilge. / Provision for place-names in Irish to be given official and legal recognition.

(d)

Foráil lena gcuirfead ceangal ar Sheirbhísí Talaimh & Réadmhaoine/Land & Property Services a thabhairt do logainmneacha Gaeilge ina gcuid léarscálleanna, foilseachán, srl. / Provision obliging Land & Property Services to give recognition to Irish language place-names in its maps, publications, etc.

(e)

Foráil faoi choinne comharthaí bóthair dátheangacha ar a mbeidh an Ghaeilge ar comhchéim leis an Bhéarla. / Provision for bilingual road signs to have the Irish content on a par with English.

CEIST 8 / QUESTION 8

(a)

An bhfuil tú i bhfách le forálacha a bheith san áireamh do Logainmneacha? / Do you agree with the inclusion of provisions for place-names?

Yes. Provisions for place-names are included in legislation for the protection and promotion of minoritised languages in other jurisdictions.

(b)

Iarrtar ort trácht a dhéanamh ar na forálacha maidir le Logainmneacha. / Please provide your comments on the provisions relating to Place-names.

The Society would agree with the spirit of provisions (c), (d) and (e). In the case of (d), it should be noted that Land & Property Services has an agreement with the Northern Ireland Place-Name Project (NIPNP), a research unit located in the Department of Irish in QUB, which commits it to provide up to three days per annum in technical support for the maintenance of the Project's database (www.placenamesni.org). It does not provide any funding for staffing (see below).

The Society would support Provision (b) if what is intended is that the Irish Language Commissioner's Office would monitor the implementation of any place-names provisions in terms of the legal requirements of the Act. However, responsibility for the determination and provision of official forms of Irish-language place-names for publication, and/or for reproduction on maps or in official signage, would have to rest with the Northern Ireland Place-Name Project which has been engaged in work of this kind since its inception in 1987 (and which has a large body of research in its archives which has yet to be exploited and published). There is no other body or organisation on the island of Ireland which has the resources to do this at this present time. NIPNP is also supported in this role by our society and its membership which includes people from across the whole community and from a variety of cultural, linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds.

(c)

Iarrtar ort liosta a dhéanamh d'fhorálacha ar bith eile ba cheart a chur san áireamh. / Please list any other provisions that should be included.

Provision should be included to find a mechanism to staff the Northern Ireland Place-Name Project in order to allow it to continue and complete its work on the six

Northern counties. Work on the 26 Southern counties is funded fully and permanently by the Dublin government. However, while the Place-Names Branch of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is extremely keen to support the aims of NIPNP (and the two groups co-operate fully as evidenced in the recent link-up of our two online databases), it cannot take on the work required on the Northern counties because of its legal commitment to provide official Irish forms for names in the South only (and the implications of this for staffing). Only NIPNP is in the position of being able to take on this role; in collaboration with our society, UPNS, it has done so in the past in providing Irish forms of street and road names for areas where there is a demand for this (see <http://www.ulsterplacenames.org>).

A further and extremely important consideration is that NIPNP was set up specifically to deal with place-names issues and to conduct research in a society in which language is highly contentious; this has required some crucial differences of approach and methodology which distinguishes it from the Place-Names Branch in Dublin. In particular, NIPNP has to make its research accessible to a population in which the majority have little or no knowledge of Irish; in these circumstances, there is a broader cross-community imperative in terms of demonstrating shared cultural inheritance and shared languages: Irish, Ulster-Scots and English. The work of UPNS and NIPNP has always included an extremely strong programme of community outreach and includes fieldwork and the recording of our place-names heritage in whatever language (including Ulster-Scots). In this we also support the broader remit of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure.



Response by the Ulster Unionist Party

Proposals for an Irish Language Bill

Introduction and Overview

The Ulster Unionist Party has a number of comments to make regarding these proposals

Regrettably the Irish language has become a contentious issue as a result of the politicisation of the language by those who have historically claimed to champion it and respect it.

It is important that we build a society here which is tolerant and welcoming and which celebrates diversity.

It is quite right that the Irish language and culture should receive the respect which it is due.

Indeed we would argue that those who have sought to politicise the language and use it as a cultural weapon are showing the language extreme disrespect.

We recognise the importance that all political discourse should be carried out in a manner that shows sensitivity to the sincerely held beliefs and cultural background of others.

Historically

It is a fact that many people from the protestant community or from mainly unionist areas can look at old census records and see that ancestors actually spoke Irish, particularly at the dawn of the 20th Century.

Political developments in the 20th Century saw great upheaval on the island of Ireland and certainly post partition, there was a conscious effort on both sides of the Border to redefine concepts of Britishness and Irishness. As a result of this the Northern Ireland state sought to emphasise its interpretation of all things British, whilst the Republic followed the course set by De Valera to a mythical catholic, Gaelic Ireland.

As a result unionism denied its Irish identity and nationalism denied the place of Ireland in the British Isles and the links and the links which had existed for centuries between the peoples of the United Kingdom and the contribution which people from the island of Ireland made to the development of the British Empire.

Many Unionists may not realise that the Royal Irish motto of Faugh a Ballagh is in fact Irish for 'clear the way' and dates from the Battle of Waterloo.

The situation today

We fully agree that those who wish to learn and speak Irish should be free to do so. But we do not agree that Northern Ireland should begin some kind of transition to some form of bilingual society and we take this view for a number of reasons.

As Enda Kenny himself said on BBC's the View on Thursday 26 March 2015,

"We are an English speaking island. We have been a landing point to Europe on many occasions over the last 40 years."

In other words, not only does the Prime Minister of the Republic of Ireland accept that English is the common language of Ireland north and south, he also acknowledges that it is the widespread use of the English language which has enabled the island of Ireland to attract FDI, especially from the USA. Proficiency in Irish is no draw for jobs and overseas investment, English is.

Furthermore, given the scale and extent of educational under-achievement - including poor verbal and reasoning skills – we would advise that any additional funding should be directed at ensuring schoolchildren can develop their English skills before we attempt to introduce them to the Irish language.

Languages are important. We should surely be focussed on ensuring our children and young people are prepared for an increasingly globalised workplace. With that in mind, it would surely make more sense to implement a language strategy which taught them French, German, Spanish or Italian in order that they may take up positions within the EU or companies that trade with Europe.

Indeed given the rise of China's economic power and the position which it now enjoys in the new global marketplace, it would make logical sense to promote Chinese in schools in order to take advantage of trade and business opportunities which can only increase especially as we should seek to take advantage of the Confucius Institute at the Ulster University.

It is for this reason that we deeply regret the recent decision by the Sinn Fein Education Minister John O'Dowd to cease funding for the primary modern language programme earlier this year in a bid to save £750,000. Yet strangely enough, money was no object when it came to

establishing an Irish medium school in Dungiven with over £1 million made available to accommodate an initial intake of 14 pupils. .

The present and future

Firstly we would point out that any obligations from the Belfast Agreement have been honoured and are in place.

The Belfast Agreement explicitly does NOT include an Irish Language Act.

The Belfast Agreement commitment is to “facilitate and encourage the use of the language in speech and writing in public and private life “**where there is appropriate demand.**”

Given that a relatively small number of people in Northern Ireland can actually speak the Irish language to any reasonable level, and an even smaller number of people are unable to understand English, we are not satisfied that **appropriate demand** exists or that people are being disadvantaged as a result.

Secondly, with regard to any changes we have to ask two basic questions.

- 1- Do we need it?
- 2- Can we afford it?

Given the current economic climate it is essential that scarce resources are channelled to areas where they can have the greatest impact on the lives of citizens and do the most good for society.

Even if there was support to adopt wider use of Irish – or any other language or that matter – there would need to be an extremely robust business case to decide that such a course of action was the best way to utilise ratepayers money and scarce resources, particularly in the current age of austerity.

We are not persuaded that this would be achieved by the State promoting a language which is not understood by the vast majority of people in the Irish Republic - which has supported and promoted it with limited success for almost a century - let alone Northern Ireland.

We certainly detect no appetite – save for a small, active and vociferous lobby – to introduce wholesale changes in the operation of the Assembly, the court system or public bodies and see no need for the costs involved and duplication of effort that would result from simultaneous publication of public documents in Irish and English.

We also strongly oppose any attempt to suggest affirmative action in favour of Irish speakers to the civil service.

Conclusion

Enda Kenny stated that “**We are an English speaking island**” and the Ulster Unionist Party contends that Northern Ireland is the most heavily English speaking part of that island.

We have no quarrel with the Irish language or culture. Many thousands of Unionists have ancestors who spoke that language and to this day many unionists retain an interest in the language and culture.

It is simply the case that in the Northern Ireland of 2015, we are not convinced that spending a large amount of scarce resources to give a little spoken and little understood language the same status as the English language is an appropriate or sensible approach.

We are not persuaded that anyone in Northern Ireland is disadvantaged due to any lack of the Irish language in common usage. English is the language of trade and it is a major reason why so many American companies choose to invest here. It is spoken by virtually everyone on the island of Ireland and indeed English is the chosen second language of many thousands of people who have come from outside Northern Ireland to make their home here and contribute to our society.

If we are really serious about using language in a positive way then I suggest that we look to foster the economic well-being of our children and young people by promoting skills in modern European languages to take advantage of job opportunities within the European Union and farther afield in an increasingly globalised world.

Leslie Cree MLA

Ulster Unionist Party

Question 1

Official Status of the Irish Language

We do not agree with the Irish language being given official status through legislation.

The Belfast Agreement explicitly does NOT include an Irish Language Act. Its commitment is to “facilitate and encourage the use of the language in speech and writing in public and private life **“where there is appropriate demand.”**”

Given that a relatively small number of people in Northern Ireland can actually speak the Irish language to any reasonable level, and an even smaller number of people are unable to understand English, we are not satisfied that **appropriate demand** exists or that people are being disadvantaged as a result.

Given the lack of demand, we consider there is no need for Irish to be given official status nor is there any justification for the expense such a move would entail, given that so few people are unable to understand English.

Question 2

The Courts

We do not agree with provisions that the Irish language should be used in courts

Given that a relatively small number of people in Northern Ireland can actually speak the Irish language to any reasonable level, and an even smaller number of people are unable to understand English, we are not satisfied that appropriate demand exists or that people are being disadvantaged as a result of court cases being conducted in English.

At present, if the situation arises where someone cannot understand or communicate in English, then the court appoints an interpreter in that person’s language of choosing. That applies to Irish as equally as it applies to any other language.

The financial cost of adapting an already over-burdened legal system to enable cases to be routinely conducted in Irish would far outweigh any benefit and we cannot support it.

Question 3

The Assembly

We do not agree with provisions that the Irish language should be used in the Assembly

There is simply not the demand in the Assembly for measures such as simultaneous translation. At present it is clear that very few MLAs who are Irish language enthusiasts can speak the Irish language to any proficient level. A few words in Irish as part of a stock phrase at the beginning or end of a speech hardly provides us with compelling evidence that there is a large cadre of people who are unable to follow Assembly proceedings in English.

Indeed the Dail, Parliament of the Republic of Ireland which has been actively promoting the Irish language for the past 90 years, conducts the vast majority of its proceedings in English.

We are therefore not persuaded that the Northern Ireland Assembly requires simultaneous interpretation measures more appropriate to the European Parliament, or a state such as Belgium where there are two distinct linguistic groups, Flemish and French.

The cost factor is also a major issue here as it is in our opposition to the proposal to publish all Assembly Acts and Bills simultaneously in Irish and English. The cost of this to satisfy a very small number of people who cannot understand English is simply not justified by the demand.

The use of the English language unites the people of Northern Ireland and its politicians and we therefore see no need to change the situation vis a vis the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Question 4

Irish Language Commissioner

We do not agree with provisions to create the position of an Irish Language Commissioner.

We do not consider that the position and the powers proposed are appropriate or necessary. In particular we do not agree with the proposed function to ensure '*that the Irish language is treated no less favourably than the English language*' given the huge disparity in the usage of the two languages.

We also take issue with the power to '*compel a person to attend before*' the commissioner and such a person being entitled to '*the same immunities and privileges as if he or she were a witness before the High Court.*'

Nor we do support the power to "*initiate prosecutions for a newly created summary offence of refusing or failing to co-operate with the work of the language Commissioner.*"

We consider these proposals to be completely excessive, reminiscent of 1984 and more than hinting at an attempt to force groups, bodies and individuals to comply with an unaccountable Commissioner.

Question 5

Public Bodies

We strongly disagree with the proposals as they relate to public bodies. There is simply no demand to go to the trouble and expense of requiring "*all state and semi-state bodies, organisations, institutions, local authorities, private finance initiatives, Assembly and bodies/committees thereof, the courts, the police service to promote Irish by recognising and putting into effect the official status of Irish and the official Gaeltacht status of any so designated areas.*"

This is totally excessive in its scope and accompanying costs, bearing in mind the few people who are unable to communicate perfectly well in English.

We also strongly disagree with the provision for affirmative action in favour of Irish speakers in recruitment to the Civil Service and public bodies. There is no need for this and to do so would breach equality legislation given that one section of the community promotes Irish and the other has very little real knowledge of it.

Cost implications and lack of demand mean we cannot support placing a duty on public bodies to "publish simultaneously in Irish and English documents setting out public policy appraisals, annual reports, audited accounts or financial statements etc."

We believe that we have more chance of building a shared future if we focussed on the English language which is spoken by everyone, rather than seeking to exclude or divide society by emphasising difference.

Question 6

Language Schemes

We do not agree with provisions to create Irish Language Schemes as outlined in the Consultation document.

We have already met all our commitments under the Belfast Agreement, which we have reproduced below.

We would point out that any obligations from the Belfast Agreement have been honoured and are in place.

*4. In the context of active consideration currently being given to the UK signing the Council of Europe Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the British Government will in particular in relation to the Irish language, **where appropriate and where people so desire it:***

- take resolute action to promote the language;*
- facilitate and encourage the use of the language in speech and writing in public and private life **where there is appropriate demand;***
- seek to remove, where possible, restrictions which would discourage or work against the maintenance or development of the language;*
- make provision for liaising with the Irish language community, representing their views to public authorities and investigating complaints;*
- place a statutory duty on the Department of Education to encourage and facilitate Irish medium education in line with current provision for integrated education;*
- explore urgently with the relevant British authorities, and in co-operation with the Irish broadcasting authorities, the scope for achieving more widespread availability of Teilifis na Gaeilge in Northern Ireland;*

- *seek more effective ways to encourage and provide financial support for Irish language film and television production in Northern Ireland; and*
- *encourage the parties to secure agreement that this commitment will be sustained by a new Assembly in a way which takes account of the desires and sensitivities of the community.*

The Belfast Agreement explicitly does NOT include an Irish Language Act.

It does place a number of commitments on “the British Government *in particular in relation to the Irish language, **where appropriate and where people so desire it:***”

This includes to “*facilitate and encourage the use of the language in speech and writing in public and private life **“where there is appropriate demand.”***”

Given that a relatively small number of people in Northern Ireland can actually speak the Irish language to any reasonable level, and an even smaller number of people are unable to understand English, we are not satisfied that ‘**appropriate demand**’ exists or that enough people “**so desire it.**” Nor do we believe that people are being disadvantaged as a result.

This Consultation wants provision “*that all public bodies be required to produce schemes, which set out how Irish language services will be provided*” and that these schemes “*will be agreed and approved by the Irish Language Commissioner.*”

We believe that these proposals go too far and that the costs involved and changes involved are far in excess of what is required to meet the needs of a relatively small number of Irish speakers, all of whom can communicate perfectly well in English.

Question 7

Gaeltacht areas

We have no objection per se to Gaeltacht areas, as long as they are implemented with the full consent and agreement of the local community.

However, we are very conscious that in the past the language has been very politicised and used as a means to separate communities and exclude a section of society.

The proposals as constituted go too far and seem to us to place a great deal of power into the hands of the ‘appropriate Minister’ who would have the power to ‘@fix the boundaries of a Gaeltacht area’ and have the power to designate ‘further or new Gaeltacht areas.’

In any Gaeltacht area we would want to be very certain that the rights of non-Irish speakers were respected and that they were not excluded or made to feel like strangers in their own streets or towns. We have concerned that the use of Gaeltacht area status would be used by some to politicise the language and mark out territory.

Until this aspect of the use of the Irish language has been resolved we would not support the Consultation document's proposals with regard to Gaeltacht areas.

Question 8

Place names

We recognise that this has been a controversial area in the past and indeed continues to remain so.

As with Gaeltacht areas the erection of any place names in Irish must be done with the full consent and agreement of the local community.

Previous attempts to politicise the Irish language and use it as a means to separate communities and exclude a section of society have not been forgotten.

The proposals as constituted go too far, in particular the proviso to oblige Land & Property Services '*to give recognition to Irish language place-names in its maps, publications etc*' and the provision '*for bilingual roadsigns to have the Irish content on a par with English.*'

We therefore cannot support the proposals for place names as currently constituted.

Question 9

Education

We cannot agree with 'provision to guarantee education through the medium of Irish.'

Such an unfettered guarantee of a 'right;' to be educated through the medium of Irish is neither reasonable, nor affordable.

The development of Irish Medium education must be based on a sensible, evidence based strategy. The recent Ministerial Advisory Group cast doubt on the desirability of stand-alone schools, specifically at secondary level. In terms of sustainability and curriculum deliverability,

the statutory requirements of 24 courses at Key Stage 4 is almost impossible to deliver in an Irish Medium school, as opposed to a school containing a special Irish Language Unit.

Notwithstanding the statutory duty to promote Irish language and integrated education post the Belfast Agreement, there are other statutory duties which need to be taken into consideration. For example there is a statutory duty under Article 44 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 and under Managing Public Money to ensure effective and efficient use of public funds.

Signed on behalf of Leslie Cree MLA

Stephen Barr

Ulster Unionist Press & Policy Office

Room 214 Parliament Buildings
Stormont
Belfast
BT4 3XX

Freagairt don Chomhairliúchán maidir le Tograí faoi choinne Bille Gaeilge Response to Consultation on Proposals for an Irish Language Bill (Translation)

Pádraig Ó Laighin, PhD, MA

Ionad Taighde na hEolaíochta Comhdhaonnaí
Social Science Research Centre
An Coláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath
University College Dublin

5 Bealtaine 2015

Buntéacs

Seo a leanas mo sheasamh maidir le fíricí, na bunphri-
onsabail atá i gceist, agus cur i bhfeidhm:

1. Gheall Rialtas na Breataine i gComhaontú Chill Rímhinn 2006 sa chéad áit go dtabharfadh sé acht teanga Gaeilge isteach, ag cur san áireamh taithí na Breataine Bige agus na hÉireann, agus sa dara háit go n-oibreodh sé leis an bhFeidhmeannas chun forbairt na Gaeilge a chosaint agus a chur chun cinn.
2. Aistríodh an dara gealltanas go sonrach go dtí an Feidhmeannas faoin Acht um Thuaisceart Éireann (Cill Rímhinn) 2006, agus leagadh oibleagáid ar an bhFeidhmeannas glacadh le straitéis chun forbairt na Gaeilge a chosaint agus a chur chun cinn. Tacaím leis na Tograí seo faoi choinne Bille Gaeilge mar thús den phróiseas trína gcomhlíonfar an dara gealltanas sin a leagadh mar dhualgas ar an bhFeidhmeannas.
3. Maidir leis an gcéad ghealltanas, go dtabharfaí acht teanga Gaeilge isteach, de réir ghluais téarmaíochta na Parlaiminte, agus faoi mar a mhínigh Aire Gnóthaí Eachtracha na hÉireann, Dermot Ahern TD, i nDáil Éireann ag an am (6 Nollaig 2006), bhí “gealltanas ar leith tugtha go leagfaí faoi bhráid na Parlaiminte Acht Teanga do Thuaisceart Éireann”.
4. Faoin bprionsabal *Pacta sunt servanda*, tá oibleagáid shoiléir ar Rialtas na Breataine faoin dlí idirnáisiúnta acht teanga don Ghaeilge a thabhairt isteach sa Pharlaimint i Westminster. Dlí simplí a d’fhéadfadh a bheith ann a dhéanadh teanga oifigiúil den Ghaeilge i dTuaisceart Éireann, agus a d’aisghairfeadh an tAcht um Riar an Chirt (Teanga) (Éire) 1737.
5. Nuair a bheidh Acht Teanga achtaithe sa Pharlaimint, agus straitéis chun forbairt na Gaeilge a chosaint agus a chur chun cinn glactha ag an bhFeidhmeannas, beidh an cheist sa dlí idirnáisiúnta socraithe.
6. Aontaím go ginearálta leis na Tograí atá foilsithe faoi choinne Bille Gaeilge mar straitéis faoin dara gealltanas chun forbairt na Gaeilge a chosaint agus a chur chun cinn.

Translation

The following is my position concerning the facts, the underlying principles, and implementation:

1. The British Government promised in the Saint Andrews Agreement 2006 that it would introduce an Irish Language Act reflecting the experience of Wales and Ireland and work with the incoming Executive to enhance and protect the development of the Irish language.
2. The Northern Ireland (St Andrews Agreement) Act 2006 transferred the second promise to the Executive, and imposed an obligation on the Executive Committee to adopt a strategy setting out how it would propose to enhance and protect the development of the Irish language. I support these proposals for an Irish Language Bill as the start of a process whereby the second promise which was imposed as an obligation on the Executive might be fulfilled.
3. Concerning the first promise, the introduction of an Irish Language Act, in accordance with the glossary of Parliament, and as explained by the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dermot Ahern TD, in Dáil Éireann at the time (6 December 2006), “a specific promise was given that a Language Act for Northern Ireland would be introduced in Parliament” (my translation).
4. In accordance with the principle *Pacta sunt servanda*, there is a clear obligation on the British Government under international law to introduce an Irish language act into Parliament in Westminster. Such a law could be a simple one which would make Irish an official language in Northern Ireland, and which would repeal the Administration of Justice (Language) Act (Ireland) 1737.
5. When a Language Act has been enacted by Parliament, and a strategy to enhance and protect the development of the Irish language has been adopted by the Executive, the international law issue will have been resolved.
6. I agree in general with the published proposals for an Irish Language Bill as a strategy in accordance with the second promise to enhance and protect the development of the Irish language.

7. Go sonrach:
- i. Táim i bhfách le Stádas Oifigiúil a thabhairt don Ghaeilge trí reachtaíocht.
 - ii. Táim i bhfách le forálacha a bheith san áireamh a cheadódh úsáid na Gaeilge in imeachtaí cúirte.
 - iii. Táim i bhfách le forálacha a bheith san áireamh a cheadódh úsáid na Gaeilge sa Tionól.
 - iv. Táim i bhfách le forálacha a bheith san áireamh le post an Choimisinéara Gaeilge a chruthú.
 - v. Táim i bhfách le forálacha a bheith san áireamh do Chomhlachtaí Poiblí.
 - vi. Táim i bhfách le forálacha a bheith san áireamh do Scéimeanna Teanga, ar an gcoinníoll go leagfaí síos bunchritéir a bheadh i bhfeidhm sna Scéimeanna Teanga ar fad, sa tslí is go mbeadh a fhios ag baill an phobail cad iad na bunchearta teanga a bheadh acu agus iad ag déileáil le haon chomhlacht poiblí ar leith. Chuimseodh na critéir sin ceart cumarsáide béil agus scríofa i nGaeilge leis na comhlachtaí ar fad, agus go an oibleagáid go mbeadh suíomhanna gréasáin na gcomhlachtaí ar fad dátheangach i nGaeilge agus Béarla.
 - vii. Táim i bhfách le forálacha a bheith san áireamh do na limistéir Ghaeltachta.
 - viii. Táim i bhfách le forálacha a bheith san áireamh do Logainmneacha.
 - ix. Táim i bhfách le forálacha a bheith san áireamh d'Oideachas.
 - x. Ní dóigh liom go sáródh na Tograí do Bhille Gaeilge aon chearta chun combhionannais. A mhálairt ar fad, chabhródh na Tograí chun combhionannas a chur ar fáil do phobal na Gaeilge, agus chun méid an idirdhealaithe ina choinne ag leibhéal an chórais phoiblí a ísliú.

8. Tá tugtha faoi deara nach dtagraíonn na Tograí do na cumhachtaí saineúla atá déabhlóidithe faoin Acht um Thuaisceart Éireann (Cill Rímhinn) 2006, agus go dteipeann ar na Tograí a shoiléiriú go bhfuil oibleagáid faoin dlí idirnáisiúnta ar Ri-altas na Breataine acht teanga don Ghaeilge a thabhairt isteach sa Pharlaimint i Westminster.

Is mise, le meas,
Pádraig Ó Laighin, PhD, MA
padraig.olaighin@ucd.ie

7. Specifically:
- i. I agree with the Irish language being given Official Status through legislation.
 - ii. I agree with the inclusion of provisions to allow Irish to be used in the Courts.
 - iii. I agree with the inclusion of provisions to allow Irish to be used in the Assembly.
 - iv. I agree with the inclusion of provisions to create the position of an Irish Language Commissioner.
 - v. I agree with the inclusion of provisions for Public Bodies.
 - vi. I agree with the inclusion of provisions for Language Schemes, on condition that they establish basic criteria to be implemented in all of the Language Schemes, in order that members of the public would know what basic language rights they would have in their dealings with any particular public body. These criteria would include the right of oral and written communication in Irish with all of the bodies, and the requirement that the websites of all of the public bodies would be bilingual in Irish and English.
 - vii. I agree with the inclusion of provisions for Gaeltacht areas.
 - viii. I agree with the inclusion of provisions for Place-names.
 - ix. I agree with the inclusion of a provision for Education.
 - x. I do not believe that the Proposals for an Irish Language Bill would violate any equality rights. On the contrary, the Proposals would go some way to enhancing the equality of members of the Irish-language community, and to reducing discrimination against it at the level of the public service.

8. The absence of reference in the Proposals to the specific powers devolved by the Northern Ireland (Saint Andrews Agreement) Act 2006 is noted, as is the failure of the Proposals to clarify that the British Government is obliged under international law to introduce an Irish language act into Parliament at Westminster.

Yours sincerely,
Pádraig Ó Laighin, PhD, MA
padraig.olaighin@ucd.ie

Consultation on
Proposals for an Irish Language Bill

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG

Comhairliúchán ar
Thograí faoi choinne Bille Gaeilge

An Roinn Cultúir, Ealaíon agus Fóillíochta
Malartán an Chabhsa
1-7 Sráid Bedford
Béal Feirste
BT2 7EG