

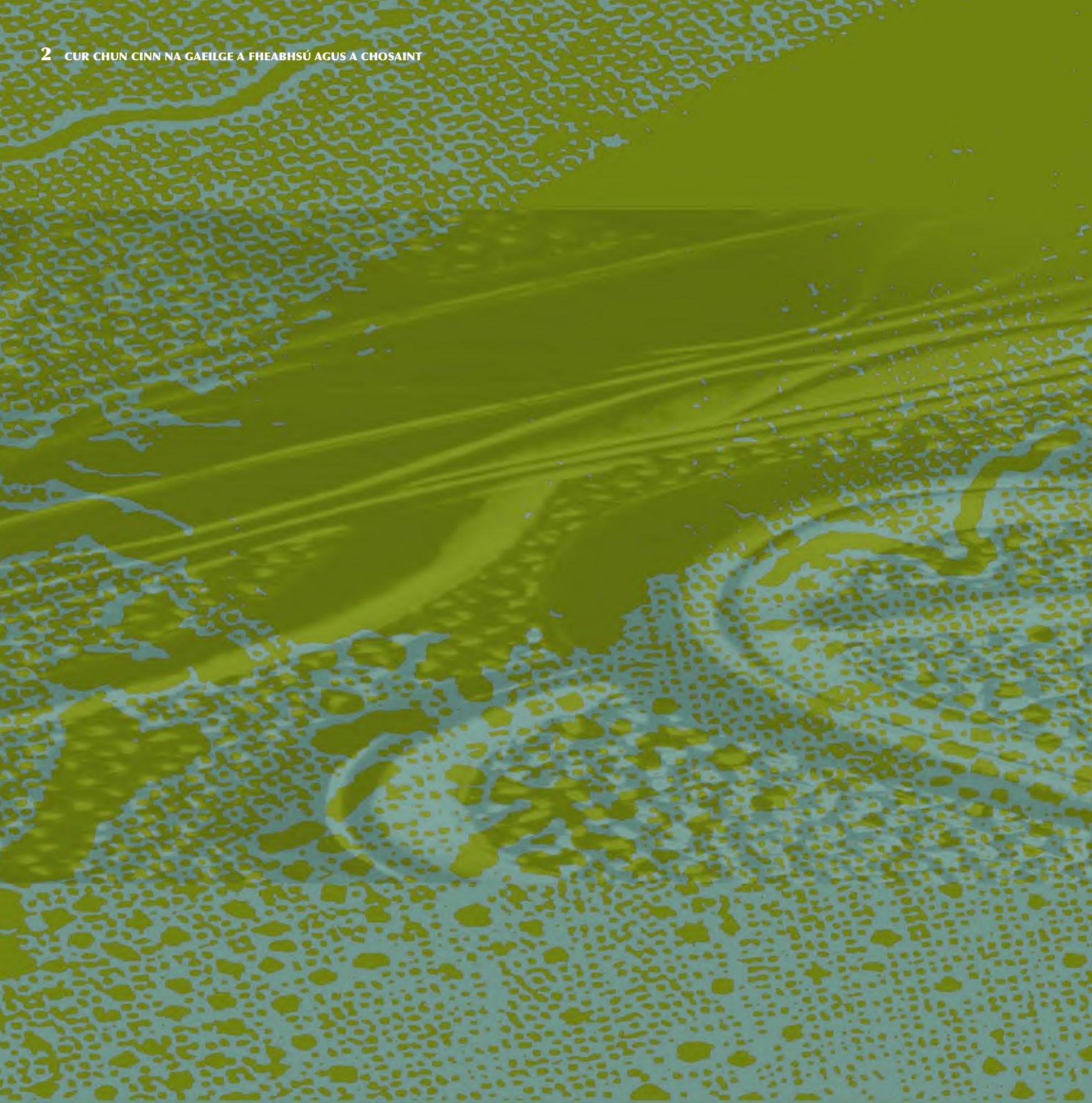
Ag forbairt polasaí cuimsitheach
agus straitéise le cur chun cinn na
Gaeilge a fheabhsú agus a chosaint
i dTuaisceart Éireann

Developing a comprehensive policy
and a strategy to enhance and
protect the development of the Irish
language in the North of Ireland

Comhdháil in Óstán an Europa, Béal Feirste 7 Márta 2008

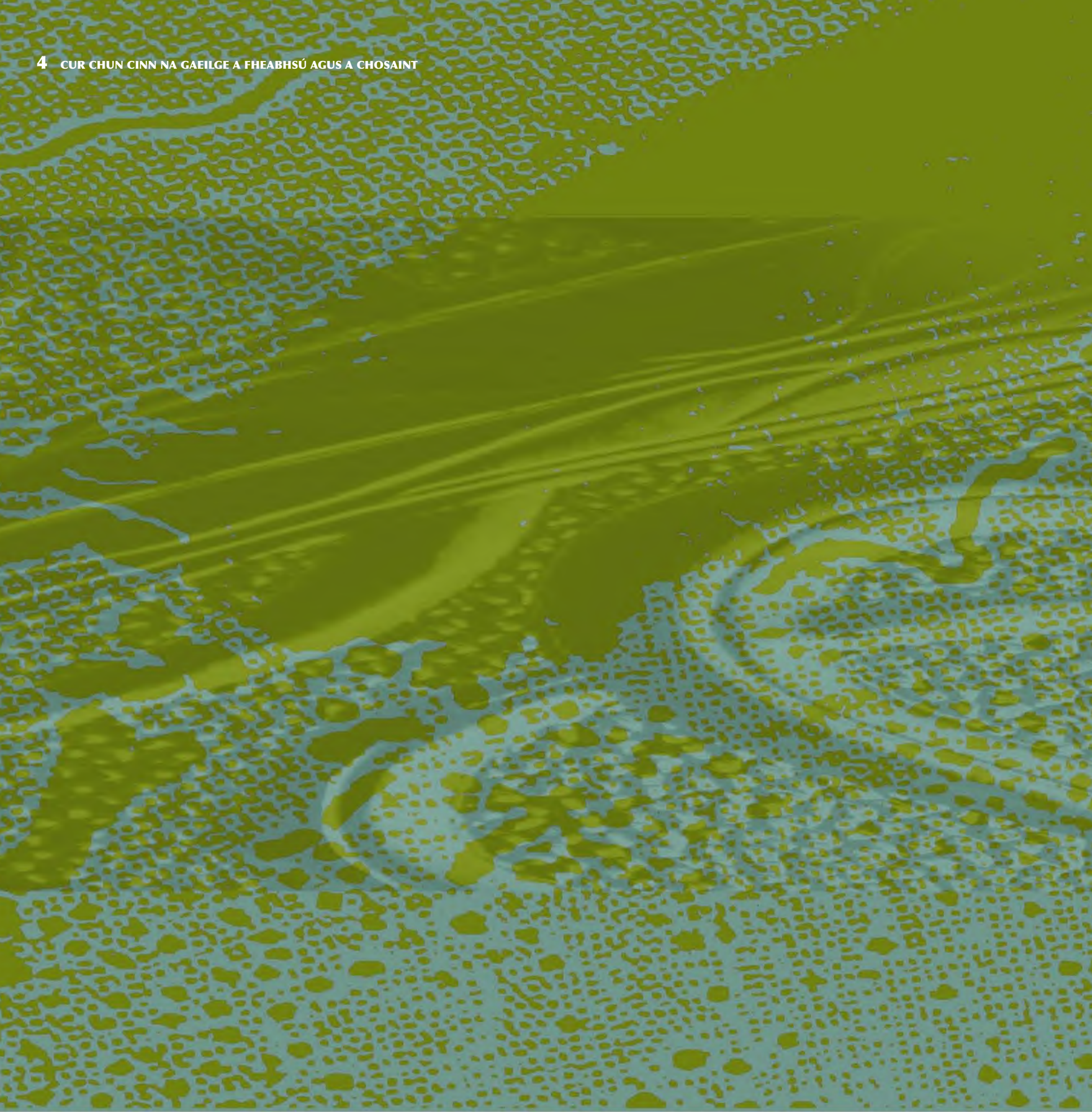
Conference in the Europa Hotel, Belfast 7th March 2008





“One point that I think is important is, with any government policy, it has to have some legislative base, in this case an international treaty, The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. That provides you with the opportunity to release resources in order to carry out actions.”

Sigve Gramstad



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Janet Muller Príomhfheidhmeannach, POBAL

Tá sé de bhua againn ag an chomhdháil seo, a bheith in ann tarraingt ar eochairthaithí na Breataine Bige agus na hAlban agus muid ag scrúdú an chur chuige is fearr chun polasaí cuimsitheach don Ghaeilge a fhorbairt, chomh maith le straitéis chun forbairt na Gaeilge a fheabhsú agus a chosaint. Fáiltíonn muid inniu roimh bheirt eochairchainteoirí, Meirion Prys Jones, Príomhfheidhmeannach Bhord na Breatnaise, agus Dòmhnall Màrtainn, Iar-Phríomhfheidhmeannach Chomunn na Gàidhlig in Albain, agus chomh maith leo siúd, fáiltíonn muid roimh Sigve Gramstad, Leas-Chathaoirleach Choiste na Saineolaithe ar Chairt na hEorpa do Theangacha Réigiúnda nó Mionlaigh de chuid Chomhairle na hEorpa. Is annamh go dtig le baill Choiste na Saineolaithe óráid a thabhairt ag leithéid na hócáide seo inniu, a thiteann idir dhá bhabhta monatóireachta ar an Chairt. Is comhartha é freastal an Uas. Gramstad anseo inniu ar shuim agus ar choimínt na Saineolaithe maidir le cur i gcrích na Cairte ó thuaidh agus maidir le saothar phobal na Gaeilge i dtaca le cosaint agus le cothú na teanga.

Faoi láthair, tá stádas na Gaeilge ó thuaidh faoi chosaint ag roinnt bearta reachtaíochta, Comhaontú Aoine an Chéasta, Cairt na hEorpa do Theangacha Réigiúnda nó Mionlaigh agus An Cabhailchoinbhinsiún um Chosaint na Mionlaigh Náisiúnta uilig san áireamh. Chomh maith leis seo, tá clásal amháin san Ord Oideachais 1998 a thugann aitheantas do thumoideachas na Gaeilge. Ar a bharr sin, i gComhaontú Chill Rímhinn, tugann rialtas na Breataine gealltanas oifigiúil Acht na Gaeilge a reachtú. Ag éirí as Comhaontú Chill Rímhinn chomh maith, tá reachtaíocht Westminster, Acht Chill Rímhinn 2006, a chuireann dualgas ar an Tionól glacadh le straitéis chun staid na Gaeilge a fheabhsú agus chun í a chosaint. Ó dheas, tá an Ghaeilge faoi chosaint bhunreachtúil agus faoi Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003. Ar ndóigh, tá an Ghaeilge anois mar theanga oifigiúil de chuid an Aontais Eorpaigh.

Maidir le pobal beo na Gaeilge ó thuaidh, pobal atá ag síorfhás, léiríonn Daonáireamh 2001 ardú 18% ar fhigiúirí 1991, sé sin, 167,000 duine le heolas ar an Ghaeilge. Níos mó ná 75,000 díobh siúd, tá scileanna acu i dtuigbheáil, i léamh, i labhairt agus i scríobh na Gaeilge. Tá na torthaí seo ar comhréir le figiúirí oifigiúla eile, NI Life and Times Survey 1999.

Janet Muller CEO, POBAL

We are fortunate to be able to draw on key experience from Wales and Scotland at this conference as we examine the best approach to developing a comprehensive policy for the Irish language as well as a strategy to develop and enhance the Irish language. In addition to our two key speakers, Meirion Prys Jones, Chief Executive of the Welsh Language Board and Dòmhnall Màrtainn, former CEO of Comunn na Gàidhlig in Scotland, we welcome Sigve Gramstad, Vice-chairperson of the Committee of Experts on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages at the Council of Europe. It is rare that members of the Committee of Experts are able to speak at events such as these in between Charter monitoring periods. Mr Gramstad's presence here today is a sign of the interest and commitment of the Experts' to the implementation of the Charter in the North and to the work of the Irish speaking community in its protection and promotion.

The status of the Irish language in the north is protected at present by a number of legislative measures, including the Good Friday Agreement, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Language and The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. There is also one clause in the Education Order 1998 that recognises Irish Medium education. In addition, in the 2006 The St Andrews' Agreement, the British government makes a formal commitment to introduce The Irish Language Act. Also arising from the St Andrews' Agreement is Westminster legislation, the St Andrews Act 2006, imposing a duty on the Assembly to 'adopt a strategy to enhance and protect the development of the Irish language.' In the south, Irish is under Constitutional protection as well as that of the Official Languages Act 2003. Of course, the Irish Language is now also an Official language of the European Union.

In terms of the living, growing community that speaks Irish in the north, the 2001 Census shows an increase of 18% in the 1991 Census figures for those with knowledge of Irish to a number in excess of 167,000 people. Over 75,000 of these have skills in reading, writing, speaking and understanding the language. These findings are consistent with those of other

Tá an t-ardú is mó i líon na nGael le sonrú i measc an aosa óig agus is comhartha eile é seo ar bheocht an phobail. Inniu, tá 80 scoil lán-Ghaeilge ó thuaidh, ag teagasc an churaclaim ar fad trí Ghaeilge do timpeall is 4,000 dalta. Is iomaí togra rathúil cultúrtha, ealaíon, sóisialta agus eacnamaíochta ag obair trí Ghaeilge atá anois faoi lán seoil i dTÉ. Níor tógadh oiread is togra amháin díobh siúd gan obair chrua, gan díograis agus gan streachailt leanúnach an phobail. Is féidir rian stair ársa teangeolaíochta na Gaeilge a aimsiú. Tá bailiúcháin litríochta scríofa sa teanga agus tacaíocht ó reachtaíocht agus ó chreatlach pholasaí ó dheas agus san Aontas Eorpach aici. Is mithid aitheantas iomlán a thabhairt don Ghaeilge i dtuaisceart na Éireann mar chuid dár saibhreas cultúrtha trí mhaoiniú agus trí thacaíocht don teanga; trí pholasaithe agus trí straitéisí cuí a fhorbairt agus trí reachtaíocht bhreise cheartbhunaithe a thabhairt isteach.

Inniu, tá muid ag díriú ar roinnt de na dualgais reachtaíochta atá ar Rialtas na Breataine agus ar an Tionól faoi láthair: an dualgas chun moltaí na Saineolaithe ag Comhairle na hEorpa a chomhlíonadh, agus an dualgas chun straitéis a fhorbairt don Ghaeilge. I bhfianaise an chomthéacs fhorbartha reatha seo, creideann muid go bhfuil gluaiseacht chun tosaigh riactanach, chomh maith le cosaint agus cothú níos fearr don Ghaeilge, cosaint agus cothú atá oiriúnach do chúinsí na Gaeilge ag an am i láthair.

Déanfaidh muid scrúdú ar thorthaí na Saineolaithe agus ar mholtaí Choiste na nAirí ag Comhairle na hEorpa. Tá siad siúd déanta i gcomhthéacs dearfach Chairt na hEorpa do Theangacha Réigiúnda nó Mionlaigh, atá ann le teangacha mionlaigh a chosaint agus a chur chun cinn. Ar na moltaí seo, tá forbairt polasaí chuimsithigh don Ghaeilge. Chomh maith leis an dualgas seo, faoi Acht Chill Rímhinn 2006, tá oibleagáidí reachtúla ar an Tionól glacadh le straitéis atá inchurtha le forbairt na Gaeilge a fheabhsú agus a chosaint.

Caithfear an próiseas atá bainteach le múnlú agus le dréachtú an pholasaí agus na straitéise seo a bheith dearfach, trédhearcach. Sa phróiseas pleanála teanga seo, tá ról ag Airí agus ag ranna rialtais, ag áisíneachtaí poiblí, ag eagraíochtaí neamhstáit agus ag gníomhaithe teanga. Caithfear na torthaí a bheith fréamhaithe sa dea-chleachtas idirnáisiúnta ar phleanáil, ar chothú agus ar chosaint teanga.

Sa chomthéacs seo, cuireann muid fáilte roimh an Aire Cultúir, Ealaíon agus Fóillíochta, Edwin Poots.

Official statistics, including the 1999 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey. The greatest increases are shown amongst the young, and this is a further recognised sign of community vitality. At present there are 80 Irish-Medium schools throughout the North teaching some 4,000 children the full curriculum through the medium of Irish. There are also numerous successful cultural, arts, social and economic projects all operating through the medium of Irish and located in both urban and rural areas. Not one of these schools and not one of these projects was created without many years of hard work, determination and constant struggle.

The Irish language has an ancient, traceable linguistic history. It has a body of literature written in the language and the support of a legislative and policy framework in the south of Ireland and in the European Union. It is time that Irish in the North was awarded full recognition as part of our shared cultural wealth, through adequate funding and support for the language; through appropriate policies and strategies and through additional rights-based legislation.

Today, we are focussing on some of the legislative duties that currently exist for the British government and for the Assembly: the duty to implement the proposals of the Council of Europe Experts, and the duty to develop a strategy for the Irish language. This we believe, is a developmental context that requires forward-movement and increased promotion and protection of Irish, in line with the circumstances of the language.

We shall look today at the proposals of the Committee of Experts and the Committee of Ministers at the Council of Europe. These are made in the positive context of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, which is intended to protect and promote minoritised languages. These proposals include the development of a comprehensive policy for the Irish language. In addition, under the St Andrews Act 2006 there is a legislative duty on the Assembly to adopt a strategy that is capable of enhancing and protecting the development of Irish.

It is important that the process involved in devising and drafting this policy and this strategy be a positive, transparent one. In this language planning process, there is a role for government Ministers and Departments, for public bodies, for non-governmental organisations and for language enthusiasts. The results must be based on the best international practice in language planning, promotion and protection.

It is in this context that we welcome the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure, Edwin Poots.



Edwin Poots Aire Cultúir, Ealaíon agus Fóilíochta Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. It's good to be here and thank you for the opportunity to come and address this conference this morning. It is a matter to which I and others have given a considerable amount of thought in relation to the Irish language since we took office on the return of devolution. On taking up office last May, I inherited a consultation on the introduction of an Irish language Act, and my department deliberated on those responses to the consultation which culminated in a statement to the House on 16th October 2007. I am currently considering the way forward with regard to developing a strategy for the Irish language and that makes this conference quite appropriate this morning and one of the reasons that I wanted to come and speak to you. And I hope to present to the Executive, together with discussion of my earlier statement to the Assembly, some issues relating to a strategy. However it is difficult to talk about planning for a comprehensive policy and strategy to enhance and protect the development of the Irish language without first touching briefly on the recent consultation exercises to the Irish language legislation.

As I indicated to the Assembly and later to the Culture, Arts and Leisure committee, having reviewed the responses to both the consultation exercises the department has undertaken, and having reflected carefully on all of the relevant issues, that I remained unpersuaded that there is a compelling case for bringing forward legislation at this time. The reasons have been well publicised and focus on, number one the potentially prohibitive costs of introducing legislation to support even a modest language scheme, insufficient community consensus and a real possibility that legislation could undermine good relations and in so doing prove to be counter productive. And rather than deploying a legislative route, I believe there are more effective ways of achieving the aims of the NI St Andrews' Act 2006. My preference is to develop a strategy underpinned by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages for the following reasons.

The Charter allows incremental growth, provision and protection which is commensurate with the use and proficiency in the language.

The introduction of a strategy will allow for space for growth that legislation could actually restrict. If we reflect on the introduction of legislation in Wales and in Scotland, the homes of two of my fellow speakers, their experience clearly shows that giving effect to linguistic policy needs to be advanced in a depoliticised manner capable of commanding broadly based community support. The two consultation processes to date on the proposals to introduce Irish language legislation and the ensuing public commentary clearly demonstrate a lack of community consensus on this issue. Furthermore, I am of the view that the legislative route would be counterproductive to the enhancement, protection and development of the Irish language given the sensitivities involved. Prematurely advancing legislation or policy which is unlikely to command sufficient consensus within the community at this time has the potential of damaging good relations, increasing polarisation and entrenching patterns of antipathy and suspicion. In my assessment, this could seriously undermine the efforts of those in the Irish language speaking community who genuinely want to see the language develop in a depoliticised and wholly inclusive manner. The Irish language should threaten no-one. Going back over the past years, the Irish language would have been a very popular language spoken particularly among the Presbyterian community and this is still the case in the Scottish highlands and therefore the politicisation of the Irish language as a vehicle to engage in the cultural war by some has done serious damage to the aspirations of the Irish Gaelic speaking community. This community has been used and abused by some to forward a political agenda. If I can make reference to one particular instance, just before the last Census, this particular article appeared in *The North Belfast News*. At the top, it says three Irish words, 'Tiocfaidh ár lá' it then goes on to explain to its readers that if you can read and you can understand those three words, you can read and understand Irish. I can read and understand those three words. It means 'our day will come'. It is three words that have been associated particularly with militant republicanism. Because I can read those three words, and understand them does not mean that I can read and understand the Irish language. If some of you today asked me something in Irish I couldn't respond because I don't have the ability to respond in Irish Gaelic.

And therefore, those people who encouraged individuals to respond to a Census on the basis that they could understand three words of Irish, I think did a great disservice to those genuine speakers of the Irish language who wish to promote and move forward the Irish language and to encourage people to engage in it.

Today we have another example, and it could not have been more badly timed, today in *The Irish News* we have an article indicating that a new Irish language group is being established and it is being named after a dead IRA member. Now if we are seeking to depoliticise the Irish language, and we are seeking to encourage people from other communities to engage in the Irish language, and perhaps seeking for people from a Presbyterian background who were speakers of the Irish language and have allowed it to fall away from their community, we are hardly going to achieve that by honouring those who terrorised that community. So those people who continue to politicise the Irish language and use it as a political tool, are doing a grave disservice to those genuine speakers and lovers of the Irish language. I think if we do not move away from that type of activity we are going to have the same problems in terms of achieving community consensus that I referred to earlier on in years to come than we currently have.

Currently discussions are underway to develop a direction of an Irish language strategy and where it should go. And it is likely to be supported by a range of programmes and policies at departmental level. And I am keen to ensure wide community support and to focus on our shared heritage and culture through the development of a strategy and I appeal to the Irish Gaelic speaking community to be to the fore in working with me to ensure that their interests are enhanced and protected from any other agendas. I have already indicated my support for the implementation of the current commitments under the Charter for protection of the Irish language and the Ulster Scots language, heritage and culture. And the spirit of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages is clearly expressed in the explanatory notes to the document. It is the spirit of protection rather than the letter of the Charter that concerns me.

Whilst I do acknowledge that the Welsh and Scottish languages are afforded more support under the Charter, I will emphasise that the spirit of the Charter is to ensure the development of the language beyond the capacity of the state both financially and in terms of community cohesion is not within the context of the Charter and would only serve potentially to cause further damage.

In developing the strategy, I will of course build upon the experiences of my colleagues in Scotland and Wales in developing the National Plan for Gaelic and a National Plan for a bilingual Wales. However, lessons taken from these jurisdictions will need to be carefully considered in the context of our own political and financial circumstances. The European Charter gives expression, development and purpose to the government's actions in relation to the Irish language in NI. We acknowledge the UK government in recognising the status of the language internationally through this ratification and equally for recognising Ulster Scots under Part II of this Charter. We recognise the role given to the non-governmental organisations by the Council of Europe of advising government as to the wishes of the community. In the context of competing demands on public expenditure, we will do what is possible to meet their suggestions within the resources available. However significant resources have been allocated to Foras na Gaeilge, the Irish language body for the next three years to carry on the work. In conclusion, it is my intention to bring forward a paper to the Executive setting out a strategy to meet our commitments in relation to the Irish language and the Ulster Scots language, heritage and culture. Thank you again for the opportunity to address this conference. I look forward to hearing a report of this event from the representatives of my Department who will be attending the workshops.

Janet Muller Príomhfheidhmeannach POBAL

Gabhaim buíochas leis an Aire as an óráid dhúshlánach sin a thabhairt ar an chéad ócáid Ghaeilge ar fhreastail sé uirthí ó ainmníodh é ina Aire Cultúir, Ealaíon agus Fóillíochta, naoi mí ó shin. Tá a fhios agam go bhfuil go leor daoine anseo nach n-aontaíonn le roinnt do na pointí a rinne sé. Ní raibh sé de rún againn béim rómhór a chur ar Acht na Gaeilge inniu, mar go bhfuil gnó eile le déanamh againn, ach feicim nach raibh leisce ar an Aire an t-ábhar a thógáil agus molaim é as an oscailteacht seo. Ach caithfidh mé freagra a thabhairt ar a ráiteas maidir leis an chomhairliúchán ar reachtaíocht Ghaeilge. Sa chéad chomhairliúchán, ar ndóigh, as 668 freagra substaintiúil a fuair an Roinn Cultúir, Ealaíon agus Fóillíochta, bhí 93% díobh ar son Acht na Gaeilge cuimsitheach, ceartbhunuithe. Thar dhá phróiseas comhairliúcháin, san iomlán, bhí 75% de na freagraí ar son na reachtaíochta.

Dar leis an Aire, ní raibh comhaontú maidir le hAcht na Gaeilge ann, ach is léir go raibh bunús mór na bhfreagraí ar son an Achta, de réir fhigiúirí Roinn an Aire féin. Bheinn amhrasach go reachtaíodh riamh dlíthe le comhaontú iomlán foirfe ón chomhphobal ach cibé, chomh maith le torthaí na gcomhairliúchán, ar ndóigh, bhí gealltanas tugtha fosta, i scríbhinn, ag rialtas na Breataine i gComhaontú Chill Rímhinn, go dtabharfaí Acht na Gaeilge isteach.

Ach, tá a fhios againn, cibé ar bith, go bhfuil easaontú ar an cheist seo idir muid féin agus an tAire agus a pháirtí. Mar sin féin, gabhaim buíochas leis as teacht inniu. Dírim anois ar ghnéithe dearfacha a óraíde. Orthu sin, dúirt sé go dtabharfadh sé aitheantas don dea-chleachtas idirnáisiúnta agus a Roinn i mbun polasaí agus straitéis a ullmhú don Ghaeilge, agus sílim gur pointe iontach tábhachtach é sin. Thug sé chomh maith aitheantas do thábhacht

Janet Muller Chief Executive, POBAL

I thank the Minister for giving this challenging speech at the first Irish language event he has attended since being named Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure, nine months ago. I know that there are many people here today who do not agree with some of the points made by him. It was not our intention to place great emphasis on the Irish Language Act today, since we have other business to do, but I see that the Minister has had no hesitation in raising the issue, and I commend his openness. I must, however, answer his statement in relation to the consultation on Irish Language legislation. In the first consultation, of course, of the 668 substantive responses received by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, 93% were in favour of a comprehensive, rights-based Irish Language Act. Over the two consultation processes, in total, 75% were in favour of the legislation.

According to the Minister, there was no consensus about the Irish Language Act, yet it is clear that the vast majority of the responses were in favour of the Act, based on the figures from the Minister's own Department. I would doubt that any laws were ever enacted with complete, absolute community agreement, but at any rate, in addition to the consultation results, of course, there was a commitment, in writing, giving by the British government in the St. Andrews Agreement that the Irish Language Act would be introduced. However, we all know, anyway, that there is disagreement between ourselves and the Minister and his party on this issue. Nonetheless, I thank him for coming today and I should like to focus on the positive aspects of his speech. Amongst these, he has said that he will recognise international good practice in the preparation by his Department of a policy and a strategy for the Irish language, and I think that this is a very important point. He has also given recognition to

ionchur phobal na Gaeilge sa phróiseas dréachtaithe, ionchur a thiocfaidh trí na heagraíochtaí neamhstáit, agus ár ndóigh, léiríonn sé féin tábhacht na reachtaíochta mar bhunuirilis chosanta teanga nuair a luann sé mar shampla an Chairt Eorpach atá i bhfheidhm cheana féin abhus. Tá muid ag teacht leis ar na pointí sin. Is cinnte nach bhfuil muid ag teacht leis ar phointí eile a rinne sé, ach iarraim oraibhse buíochas a ghabháil leis as a bheith linn inniu, agus déanfaidh mé féin amhlaidh.

D'éirigh daingniú Chairt na hEorpa do Theangacha Réigiúnda nó Mionlaigh as gealltanais a tugadh i gComhaontú Aoine an Chéasta.

Bhí sé sínithe in 2000 agus daingnithe go Cuid III don Ghaeilge in 2001 ag rialtas na Breataine. Bíonn cur i gcrích na Cairte faoi mhonatóireacht ag Coiste na Saineolaithe ag Comhairle na hEorpa. Cuirtear béim ar leith ar ionchur ó eagraíochtaí neamhrialtasacha mar go n-aithnítear a dtábhacht i dtaca le cur i gcrích éifeachtúil na Cairte. Is uirlis dlí idirnáisiúnta í an Chairt a bhfuil dlúthcheangal dlí lena cuid forálacha. Ós rud é, áfach, nár reachtaíodh paragraif Chuid III na Cairte, atá daingnithe don Ghaeilge sa dlí intíre, ní féidir forfheidhmiú na Cairte a chinntiú sna cúirteanna nó sna binsí abhus. Déanann POBAL mionmhonatóireacht réamhghníomhach ar chur i gcrích na Cairte. Ullmhaíonn muid tuairiscí mionsonracha ina bhfuil tagairtí ar leith don deachleachtas atá aimsithe againn, chomh maith le tagairtí don chleachtas nach bhfuil lán chomhhoiriúnach. Is é ár dtuairim go raibh chéad daingniú na Cairte i leith na Gaeilge cuíosach lag i gcomparáid le daingniú na Cairte don Bhreatnais sa Bhreatain Bheag agus don Ghàidhlig in Albain. Cuirtear le drochthionchar an lag-dhaingnithe seo i gcás na Gaeilge de bhrí go bhfuil cosaint na reachtaíochta intíre ar fáil don Bhreatnais agus don Ghàidhlig

the importance of input from the Irish speaking community in the drafting process, input through the non-governmental organisations, and, of course, he himself recognises the importance of legislation as the basic instrument for language protection when he mentions, for example, the European Charter which is already in force here. We agree with him on these points. It is certain, however, that we do not agree with him on other points that he has made, but I ask you all to show your appreciation for his attendance here today and I shall do the same.

The ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages stems from the commitment made in Good Friday Agreement. The Charter was signed in 2000 and ratified up to Part III for Irish in 2001. The implementation of the Charter is monitored by a Committee of Experts at the Council of Europe who recognise and emphasise the importance of the input of non-governmental organisations into the effective implementation of the Charter. The Charter is an international legal instrument and its provisions are binding in international law. However, since the Part III provisions for Irish contained within the Charter have not been adopted into UK law, they remain unenforceable through the courts. POBAL has been proactive in monitoring the Charter, carrying out detailed reporting and noting examples of good practice as well as examples of less appropriate measures. In our view, the original ratification of the Charter for Irish was rather weak in comparison with the ratification for Welsh in Wales and Gaelic in Scotland. This is particularly the case given that both of these languages are also subject to significant domestic legislative protections, which of course, Irish in the North is not. Irish is in an anomalous position in this respect since the North of Ireland is the only part of these islands where domestic legislative protections are not already in place for the primary indigenous

cheana féin, cosaint nach bhfuil ar fáil don Ghaeilge i dTÉ. Tá an Ghaeilge i dtuaisceart na hÉireann ag feidhmiú faoi chúinsí neamhréireacha ós rud é gurb é an tuaisceart an t-aon áit ar na hoileáin seo nach bhfuil cosaintí sa dlí intíre ar fáil don phríomhtheanga dhúchais. Tá sé riachtanach anois do rialtas na Breataine soláthar don Ghaeilge faoi Chuid III den Chairt a neartú, bunaithe ar fhorbairt agus ar bheocht an phobail Ghaelaigh agus ar fhás na Gaelscolaíochta. I mí Deireadh Fómhair 2007, d'fhoilsigh POBAL moltaí maidir le daingniú níos láidre na Cairte i leith na Gaeilge. Scaipeadh na moltaí go forleathan. Cuireadh cóipeanna chuig David Miliband, Státrúnaí Oifig Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus an Chomhlathais, agus ar ndóigh, chuig an Aire Edwin Poots, An Roinn Cultúir, Ealaíon agus Fóillíochta TÉ.

language. It is now necessary for the British government to strengthen its ratification of Part III of the Charter in respect of Irish, and to this effect, in October 2007, we published detailed proposals for an improved ratification of Part III for Irish, based on the dynamism and development of the community and the increasing number of Irish medium schools.

These proposals have been widely circulated and presented to the Secretary of State, Shaun Woodward, to David Miliband of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and of course, to the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure and his Department.



I mí an Mhárta 2007, d'eisigh Comhairle na hEorpa torthaí Choiste na Saineolaithe ar chur i gcrích na Cairte ag rialtas na Breataine idir 2002-5. I dtaca leis an Ghaeilge de, molann Coiste na nAirí gur chóir polasaí cuimsitheach Gaeilge a fhorbairt, le bearta chun an t-éileamh ar an Ghaelscolaíocht a shásamh, éileamh atá ag síorfhás. Chomh maith leis seo, moltar tógáil ar thacaíocht do na meáin chlóite Ghaeilge (in Albain agus i dTÉ).

Díreoidh ár gcéad aoichainteoir eile ar na moltaí seo.

In March 2007, the Council of Europe made public the findings of the Committee of Experts in the implementation of the Charter by the UK in the monitoring period 2002-5. The Committee of Ministers at the Council of Europe recommends in respect of Irish that a comprehensive Irish language policy be developed, including measures to meet the increasing demand for Irish-medium education. Furthermore, it calls for increased support for the printed media in both Scottish Gaelic and Irish.

Our next presentation will focus on these recommendations.



Sigve Gramstad **Leas-Chathaoirleach ar Choiste** **Neamhspleách Shaineolaithe na** **Cairte Eorpaí Do Theangacha** **Réigiúnda nó Mionlaigh**

Tá Sigve Gramstad ina Leas-Chathaoirleach ar Choiste Neamhspleách Shaineolaithe na Cairte Eorpaí Do Theangacha Réigiúnda nó Mionlaigh. Ball Iorúach é ar an Choiste ó thosaigh sé ag feidhmiú sa bhliain 1998, agus bhí sé ina Chathaoirleach ar Choiste na Saineolaithe go dtí 200. Lena chois sin, Cathaoirleach ar an Choiste ad hoc a bhí ann, freagrach as dréachtú na Cairte. Sular ceapadh é ina chartlannaí ag Cartlann Réigiúnach an Stáit in Stavanger, an Iorua, i dtús na bliana 2006, Stiúrthóir Údarás na Meán Iorúach a bhí ann.

Vice-Chairperson of the **Independent Committee of** **Experts of the European Charter** **for Regional or Minority** **Languages**

Sigve Gramstad is Vice-Chairperson of the independent Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Mr Gramstad has been the Norwegian member of the Committee since it began its activities in 1998, and was Chairman of the Committee of Experts until 2007. He was also Chairman of the Ad-hoc Committee responsible for drafting the Charter. Before taking up his work as an archivist at the Regional State Archives in Stavanger/ Norway in early 2006, Mr Gramstad was Director of the Norwegian Media Authority.

Sigve Gramstad
Leas-Chathaoirleach ar Choiste
Neamhspleách Shaineolaithe na
Cairte Eorpaí Do Theangacha
Réigiúnda nó Mionlaigh
Vice-Chairperson of the
Independent Committee of
Experts of the European Charter
for Regional or Minority
Languages

I am delighted to be here. I must also mention that I was on the working group within the Experts' Committee on both the previous UK national reports, so this is actually my third visit to Belfast, although I haven't seen very much outside of meeting rooms in hotels and airports so far. I hope to remedy that in future.

Let me start by stating some reservations, as all good lawyers should do. I have of course no mandate from the Experts Committee to predict any responses or evaluations that the Experts Committee will make in relation to the forthcoming UK report on the implementation of the Charter for the period 2005-8. That will be our task when we have seen the report and started working on it. Let me also point out that our job in the Experts' Committee is to monitor concrete undertakings chosen by the UK in regard to Irish. The recommendations made by the Committee of Ministers are indeed recommendations on constructive ways to move forward with regard to the fulfillment of the undertaking chosen. There is no undertaking chosen in regard to Scottish Gaelic, Scots, Ulster Scots or Irish to take structured approaches or to make comprehensive language plans, but the Council of Europe through our work find that this is a very constructive way forward. As we shall see, the Council of Europe has made many recommendations similar to the one regarding Irish and the reason for this is that experience through these ten years since the inception of the Charter in Europe has shown us that a plan for protecting and promoting the languages is indeed the best way forward.

My intervention will be of a more general nature. It is not the Council of Europe who will draft, develop and adopt a plan for Irish. That will be up to the relevant authorities to do.

I have listed here the three recommendations made by the Committee of Ministers, directed towards the UK authorities. The first one, regarding Scots and Ulster Scots, is from the first monitoring round (2001-2) when the Committee of Ministers said, 'to create conditions for the use of Scots and Ulster Scots in public life through the adoption of a language policy and concrete measures in cooperation with the speakers.' The reason behind this was that although aims and objectives existed for supporting the Ulster Scots language, they were not operational; for the Scots language nothing of the kind existed at that time. The next two are from the second monitoring round (2002-5), the first one dealing with Scottish Gaelic, to elaborate or implement a comprehensive education policy for that language. At that time a national language plan had been made and although significant progress could be observed in regard to education, Scottish Gaelic medium education still remained unsatisfactory. Consequently the Committee of Ministers decided there was a need for a comprehensive Gaelic Language education policy. The last recommendation you of course know (March 2007). The full text of the recommendation is, 'to develop a comprehensive Irish Language policy, including measures to meet the increasing demand for Irish medium education'. I will come back to that in a minute.

I have listed some similar terms used in relation to other national reports by the Committee of Ministers. The first one, to develop a general national language policy directed towards the Netherlands was a specific one because it dealt with the way the Limburgish Anglo-Saxon Languages that cover various administrative regional areas were treated differently. The Committee felt that there was a need for a national policy to insure that the protection and promotion of these languages should be the same no matter in which territory they existed. The rest are just to show that the terms 'structured policy', 'coherent strategy', 'strategic structured approach'; the words may not be identical, but in the sense behind them, it's very much the same idea.

In order to protect and promote a language you need a language policy. A language policy in our experience, the way we have experienced it through these years, has to be comprehensive. A living language cannot be confined to certain areas of society. If it is, then the language, and I am talking about minority languages, will be in continuous danger of extinction. A living language has to be used in all spheres of life. This is, of course, especially important for bilingual communities because in these cases, everybody can speak the majority or national language. If the authorities in such instances do not create the conditions to facilitate the use of minority languages, the majority language will be used and the sheer weight of the majority language will press the minority language into the corners of public life. It will be reduced to a language within the family, in regard to placenames and an object of research. That is definitely not the development we want.

A comprehensive policy in regard to languages must be coherent, long term, proactive, containing a variety of measures and also having a monitoring system by which one can assess measures used and results achieved. A comprehensive policy also makes it easier to predict consequences of various measures or action taken. Let me take one example. In education, an isolated measure to introduce minority education in primary school will be, in all probability, futile if you do not assess the other areas of education, if you do not look at teacher training, production of teaching materials, provision of schools and classrooms, the whole range of issues that would be contained in a comprehensive education language plan. I cannot stress this enough because we see so many unsatisfactory situations throughout Europe where isolated measures have been employed and they have not been successful which, of course, has a negative effect on the language as such.

The success stories, which are also success stories in the sense of the protection and promotion of the different languages, are in almost all cases based on comprehensive language plans. Of course, if you want to protect and promote the language you have to have a long term perspective and the authorities have to be able to be proactive and not react to instances, incidents, events blown up in the media. They have to be proactive and to have a variety of measures based or linked to this general plan.

The findings of the Expert Committee in regard to Irish are as follows, and this is the finding of the Expert Committee which forms the basis of the recommendation by the Committee of Ministers. While commending the authorities for facilitating an increase in the number of Irish speakers by creating favourable conditions, the Committee of Experts gains the impression that the authorities do not sufficiently consider the consequences of this growth, for example, in the field of Irish medium education. Irish is still lacking a comprehensive language policy. If we look at other findings in the reports from the Expert Committee, it's really in a sense an expert summary, where the Committee sums up the impressions and the information gathered through the monitoring work. It says that the development of Irish medium education is promising, but concerns remain in regard to shortcomings in meeting the growing demand, especially in regard to teaching materials, teacher training and mentoring. The lack of continuity from primary to secondary education is of considerable concern to all Part III languages, for Irish as it is for Scottish Gaelic and Welsh. I should also mention that, also in the findings in regard to Irish, good practice guidance for civil servants on obligations deriving from the Charter was issued. Although certain administrative authorities accept submissions in Irish, the service is in need of improvement. With regard to the media, the shortcomings of Scottish Gaelic and Irish broadcasting is in the process of being overcome through, for example, the granting of a licence for the Irish Language private radio station. However more Government support needs to be directed towards the printed media for both Scottish Gaelic and Irish. So these are also the findings of the Committee from the previous monitoring round.

Another general view of the Committee, regarding Irish, is that a commendable effort is being made and there are some very good results. If we look at these 36 undertakings from the first monitoring round, 22 of them are considered fulfilled, 6 partly fulfilled, 7 no conclusion because of insufficient information and 1 not fulfilled. In the second monitoring round 27 were fulfilled, 4 were partly fulfilled, 5 no conclusion due to lack of information. So it has been indeed a positive development in regard to the undertakings chosen under the Charter. Many of these fulfilled cases have no strings attached to them, but in some cases the Committee of Experts have also some encouragement, some remark of concern or other issues.

I'll look at two areas. First in Education, and in relation to these undertakings that are considered to be fulfilled, it is said that the authorities should consider more flexible application of enrolment criteria for preschool, that there still are a number of shortcomings in regard to primary education and that measures should be taken to meet the growing demand for secondary education. If we also look at the area of administrative authorities, I should mention that there are two undertakings that are considered partly fulfilled and both are concerned with the voicemail service which at a previous monitoring round we assessed did not function satisfactorily. In relation to where the undertakings are fulfilled, on making the availability of Irish language versions of documents more widely known, the Committee found that a lot of the versions of Irish documents were produced, but were not publicly known. The Committee also asked for more information regarding possible problems in getting street signs in Irish and information regarding other possible problems, i.e. information we gathered through the on-the-spot visit, but it was not possible to investigate at the time and therefore we just refer to them and ask for more information. The second one is in regard to possible problems in the registration of Irish names, i.e. the Irish special stress character, the *síneadh fada*.

What is, I think, special about Irish is that there are a growing number of users. If we look at the census figures from 1991 to 2001 we see there is a growth from 142,000 to 167,000. We also observed through these two monitoring rounds a growing demand, which is especially evident in education. But based on experience from other countries, we suspect that when more people get educated in Irish there will also be a growing demand for services in Irish in other areas of society, and that is also, of course, an argument for making a comprehensive Irish Language plan.

As I mentioned from the outset, it is not up to the Expert Committee or the Council of Europe for that matter, to decide that there should be a comprehensive language policy for Irish in Northern Ireland. That decision lies with the competent authorities. If the competent authorities decide to develop such a policy or plan, they will also decide how it should be developed and what form it should take. There are no absolute rules on this among the states party to the Charter. Many of them developed a policy paper that was debated in Parliament as the first major step. I should also mention in this context that our experience is that the success of minority language policies seems to some extent to depend on the relations with the users of the languages. I visited Serbia a couple of weeks ago, as you may know there were two autonomous provinces or there were, and now there's one left, Vojvodina in the North of Serbia. There, there are seven minority languages with Part III status and a number of Part II languages as well.

Both the authorities and the representatives of the speakers told us that the constructive atmosphere and the good results achieved in spite of economic and other difficulties would not have been possible without the good cooperation between the authorities and users of the languages. We have also noted this, for example, in relation to Northern Ireland when the guidance was issued in 2004, when there was also a consultation process. This is the key to the success of languages policies, to have good and close cooperation between the authorities and the speakers. If the authorities decide to develop a comprehensive language policy for Irish, I would imagine that among others, these four elements would be considered: one, to create coherence between the various elements of education in / of Irish: Curriculum, Teacher training, Teaching materials, Enrolment criteria, Classrooms, school society links, etc., which are really the elements found in most education plans.

Second, I also imagine that an Irish Language plan would have to look into how to facilitate the use of Irish in other areas of society: administration, local government, the media and culture. I think that the point of departure is not, to put it mildly, hopeless, it's a good basis for both these two points.

The last two points I want to make are firstly, to promote respect understanding and tolerance in relation to Irish within the majority population. We see this coming to the forefront in many countries where we have had one, two or maybe three monitoring rounds, where much progress has been made and where the concern for the majority population is that the majority population itself should be aware of the languages, of the history of the languages, of the culture represented by the languages, etc. So this is a point that is hidden, somehow, in Article 7 – Part II of the Charter which has been more pronounced as the work has proceeded. The final point is to ensure that the promotion of Irish in cooperation with users of Irish contributes to the peaceful development of Northern Ireland.

Questions and Answers:

1. *I noticed from when you spoke about your visits that there were things that you never found out about, things that you didn't get information on. Was that because people were preventing you from accessing it or you didn't know where to look? What was the problem?*

Sigve Gramstad: The problem in this case, as it is in many cases, is that the authorities do not know because they haven't gathered the information. One would think that most European countries are well organised, but when you dive into it you see that there are a lot of lacunas so that is the reason why we cannot conclude, we haven't sufficient information. In the third monitoring round if we have already said that twice, we usually revert to non-fulfilment.

2. *You mentioned that there are success stories regarding comprehensive language plans. Where are they?*

Sigve Gramstad: Well, where should I start? I can start with my own country. In Norway, for example, there is a comprehensive language plan for Sami; in the Netherlands, a comprehensive plan for Friesian. We also have in the UK jurisdiction, Wales and Scotland as examples, although in Scotland the plan is so new that we will see whether or not it has been successful when we get the forthcoming UK report. We have it in Spain, in Croatia, in Serbia as I mentioned. It's the usual approach, so maybe they have started without a plan, as happened in Croatia, and gradually move into a plan over the years, Croatia being one of the first countries ratify.

3. *Is it possible to get further information on those success stories somewhere on the internet?*

Sigve Gramstad: Yes, if you go into the Council of Europe website you can either write to The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages or you can find it via the legal department. There you will find all the reports from the Committee of Experts, all the adopted recommendations from the Committee of Ministers and all national reports in English and French. There is a well of information there in this regard.

4. *I am interested in the process through which comprehensive policies and evidence based policies are created. You mentioned where we can see examples of the best practice in Europe of comprehensive language policies. Where can we get examples of best practice in the processes through which policies are created, or strategies are created?*

Sigve Gramstad: If you look at other countries in Europe, I would say the Education Planning Department in the Council of Europe probably has the best oversight in regard to education plans, but you also have a lot of good experience, especially in Wales, but also to some extent in Scotland. I think we will hear some interesting information from those two areas, also on how they have made their plans for taking forward the language later today from Dòmhnall Màrtainn and from Meirion Prys Jones.

5. *In terms of persuading the majority of people to allow the measures that you recommend for comprehensive policy, there are difficulties there. One of them is that if the language is not recognised as being a language of the country and is recognised not only within the country, but also in other countries as well, like for example if you go to the CoE website on the internet which is very good, it's supposed to be informative but is quite often erroneous, as you would expect, but how do you feel about the importance of having the language recognised as an official language of the country?*

Sigve Gramstad: To have the language recognised is important and, for example, in some former Eastern European countries they also have official status based on the percentage of speakers or the percentage of people belonging to language or ethnic minorities either in villages, in municipalities, etc. In Western Europe the definition of official language is often linked to the national language, so the term 'official' can mean a lot of things. In the first UK report the UK authorities said that they officially recognised Cornish which at that time was in question. So that type of recognition as we have for Welsh, Scottish Gaelic and Irish, being Part III languages, is necessary in order for Part III of the Charter to apply. That said, I think that most people in this business know that working for minority languages is a never ending story, you have to work continuously, you have to have a long term perspective and have to not be too defeated by things that are not going your way in the work of the day. That is unfortunately how it is.

6. *I was interested in your comment that isolated measures produce negative effects. In both North and South we have many community projects that produce positive effects for the language, but don't necessarily feed into a larger comprehensive plan. Maybe you could elaborate on what you meant by negative effects.*

Sigve Gramstad: Isolated measures will not always have negative effects, but isolated measures in an environment where they are linked to other issues and these if the other issues are not dealt with... I mentioned education which is a typical example because it's very difficult to take out one element, for example, Irish medium education in secondary education. It wouldn't work if you had nothing in primary education and no teaching materials. The negative effect is that if you have that type of instance then the authorities might say we have done something and it didn't work, so obviously why should we do something else when our efforts have proven to have no effect at all. So that is the danger with isolated measures, but that said, with some aspects of culture or local areas, for example, it might be different. Generally speaking, at least if you want to launch an action, it's always a good thing to think about the environment, does it link into other things? What should be done in other areas to support our action?

7. *You have placed an importance upon a comprehensive language strategy and language plan. Irish isn't, of course, just spoken in Northern Ireland; it's used throughout the island of Ireland. On many fronts now we are looking at comprehensive policy on an all-Ireland basis. Could you give us some examples of where language is crossing borders and where comprehensive language plans develop on a basis of crossing those borders so that we could have important lessons learnt?*

Sigve Gramstad: There are many examples of minority languages in one state being a majority or minority language in one or more other states. Usually it is felt that it is important that the language should reflect the culture, traditions, etc, in the territories where it is spoken. Especially in Central Europe we had so much migration due to the Ottoman and Hapsburg Empires, etc, you have a variety of languages with kin states and what often happens is that if the language is small they tend to get support from their kin states. They get

text books or, for example, in the Czech people in Serbia go to the Czech Republic to get educated as teachers and then come back to teach Czech medium education in their area, but everybody is of the opinion that it is best to develop teaching materials and educate teachers within the state where the minority languages are. In a variety of instances there will be help from kin states.

8. *You talked about various language strategies, but you didn't make a distinction between a language strategy for a particular region or country, such as the language strategy for Scotland and a language strategy for a particular language. They are two very different things. There is a comprehensive languages strategy being developed at present for Northern Ireland and it's being commissioned by the Department of Education, but I'm sure you would agree that there is no reason why a comprehensive languages strategies for regions and countries and comprehensive language strategies for particular languages should not be developed in parallel and indeed that they should be comprehensive, but they should also be complementary and working towards the same goals if possible. I wonder what your thoughts are on that?*

Sigve Gramstad: Yes I agree. The reason why I talked about Irish is, of course, due to the recommendation. We have language plans covering more than one language. There are a whole variety of examples because the linguistic situations differ so much, but it would be very counterproductive if the overarching languages plan and the individual Irish language plan were not in harmony, so to speak.

9. *I am interested to know what your thoughts are on monitoring reporting arrangements; we do have COMEX obviously who report on a three yearly basis, and what your thoughts are in relation to good practice in relation to monitoring and reporting in the interim period.*

Sigve Gramstad: Our experience is that monitoring is absolutely vital. In a sense it goes without saying. If you introduce a measure you would like to see the effects of it, and to see the effects you have to monitor. The Charter has this one undertaking about monitoring progress made and results achieved in regard to education, which is part of Article 8, but in general, I think, all ministries in all countries have some sort of monitoring of their policies. The balance is to monitor at the right stages which means that you cannot monitor all the time because then you spend too much time on it and you don't give the people doing the job time to do it because they have to report all the time. So the balance should be when should we ask for reports and at what intervals. I wouldn't dare say anything about the length of intervals, that would be individual to areas of policy, but I think you have to have some sort of monitoring in order to see if the measure has worked and if there has been some progress or should we go further. If it has failed, what should we do in addition or instead. Sorry, I can't be precise on that apart from restating the importance of monitoring.

10. *Do you make recommendations on self-assessment, as in do you come in and monitor, but in the meantime, in the interim, have you made any recommendation that self-valuation / self-assessment and the publishing of results should be made by the monitoring?*

Sigve Gramstad: We do that type of self-assessment in that we have this undertaking regarding education, where we say regular reports should be published. But since the national state report has to be sent to the Council of Europe every three years, that is a very short period and I think it would be unreasonable apart from some special cases to ask for any reports in the meantime. That would not be practical. So I think the three year period, in my personal opinion, is one year too short, but that's what the Charter says and we have to abide by it. Because the national report goes in, then the Expert Committee sends out a questionnaire, it goes on a visit, it produces a report which is gone through very carefully by the plenary of the committee. Then that adopted report is sent to the authorities in the country and they have a two / three month period to make their comments. Then everything is moved up to the Committee of Ministers who decide on any recommendations. Then, at that stage, the recommendations are sent to the country which gives the country a very short period of time to react. So I don't think the Expert Committee would ask for anything in between.

Janet Muller Príomhfheidhmeannach, POBAL

In 2006, reachtaíodh Acht Chill Rímhinn ag Westminster. Cruthaíonn sé dualgas don Tionól glacadh le straitéis 'le forbairt na Gaeilge a fheabhsú agus a chosaint'. Déanfaidh Seán Ó Coinn, Príomhfheidhmeannach Chomhairle na Gaelscolaíochta, intreoir anois roimh an chéad chuid eile den chomhdháil seo.



Seán Ó Coinn Príomhfheidhmeannach, Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta

Ní rún domsa sibh a choinneáil rófhada ag cur tús leis an tseisiún seo nó sílim gur mhaith linne uilig cluinstitín cén méid a bheas le rá ag Meirion Prys Jones agus ag Dòmhnall Màrtainn. Go díreach, tá suim ar leith agamsa sa phróiseas déanta straitéisí agus sílim, i ndiaidh na gcainteoirí ar maidin a chluinstitín, gur chóir dúinn sna ceardlanna tamall a chaitheamh ag déanamh machnaimh ar an cheist sin, an dóigh le theacht aníos le straitéis agus le polasaí cuimsitheach agus fianaise bhunaithe, nó *evidence based*. Sílim go bhfuil roinnt rudaí atá an-tábhachtach sa phróiseas sin. Luaigh an t Aire sa chaint a thug sé dúinn ar ball beag ansin an tábhacht a bhí le cleachtas idirnáisiúnta agus chuala muid ansin caint ón chainteoir dheireanach, Sigve Gramstad, ar an eiseamláir mhaith atá ar fáil ar fud phobal na hEorpa anois, eiseamláir de pholasaithe atá cuimsitheach agus de straitéisí, go háirithe le mionteangacha a fheabhsú. Caithfidh an polasaí agus an straitéis bheith bunaithe san fhianaise atá ar fáil go hidirnáisiúnta. Caithfidh polasaithe agus straitéisí úsáid a bhaint as a bhfuil de thaighde ar fáil againn leis an phróiseas sin a stiúradh. Is dóigh liom go gcaithfidh polasaithe agus straitéisí tacaíocht a bheith acu ón phobal. Caithfidh siad, is dócha, bheith ina gcomhréiteach idir rialtas agus pobal, agus ar ndóighe, beidh muid ag brath ar an rialtas lenár bpolasaithe agus lenár straitéisí a chur i bhfeidhm, ach caithfidh siad tacaíocht an phobail a bheith acu fosta. Dá réir sin, beidh sé an-tábhachtach, cibé straitéis a bheas againn, cibé polasaí a bheas againn, go mbeidh comhairliúchán mar is ceart déanta leis an phobail agus tá bealaí éagsúla leis sin a dhéanamh.

Janet Muller CEO, POBAL

In 2006, the St Andrews Act 2006 was passed at Westminster. It places a duty upon the NI Assembly Executive to adopt a strategy 'to enhance and protect the development of the Irish language.' Seán Ó Coinn, CEO, The Council for Irish Medium Education will now give an introduction to the following section of the conference.

Seán Ó Coinn CEO, The Council for Irish Medium Education

I don't intend to keep you too long in opening this session for I think we would like to hear what Meirion Prys Jones and Dòmhnall Màrtainn have to say. Of course, I am particularly interested in the process of developing a strategy and I think that in the workshops after the speakers this morning we should spend time thinking about that question, on how to devise a comprehensive policy and strategy that is evidence-based. I think that there are a lot of very important things involved in that process. In his talk to us earlier, the Minister mentioned the importance of international practice and the last speaker, Sigve Gramstad, spoke of the good examples of comprehensive policies and strategies, particularly to promote minority languages, which are now found throughout Europe. The policy and strategy must be based on evidence that is available internationally and must make use of all available research to steer the process. I think that policies and strategies must have community support. They probably have to be based upon compromise between government and community, and of course, we shall be expecting that government will put its own policy and strategy in place, but these must be supported also by the community. It is therefore very important that, whatever policy and whatever strategy we have, we have a proper consultation with the community and that can be done in a number of ways.

At the present time the Department of Education here in the North, is formulating a strategy and formulating a policy for Irish medium education in response to the last report from the Committee of Experts and it would seem that they are following good practice in this respect.

San am i láthair, tá an Roinn Oideachais ó thuaidh anseo ag ceapadh straitéise don ghaelscolaíocht agus ag ceapadh polasaí don ghaelscolaíocht, ag freagairt don tuairisc dheireanach a rinne Coiste na Saineolaithe agus is dóigh liom go bhfuil siadsan ag leanstan an dea-chleachtais i dtaca leis sin de. Tá súil agam go leanann an Roinn Ealaíon, Cultúir agus Fóillíochta an dea-chleachtas céanna sin. Is dóigh liom go mbeidh dhá ghné an-tábhachtach agus muidne ag smaointiú ar an pholasaí agus ar an straitéis. Tá a fhios againne uilig iad ach is fiú iad a lua arís. Tá cosaint agus feabhsú i gceist agus ní fiú ceann amháin gan an ceann eile. Caithfidh muid bheith ag bogadh chun cinn, caithfidh muid bheith ag feabhsú na teanga agus staid na Gaeilge sa todhchaí anseo, ach caithfidh muid cosaint a thabhairt fosta do lucht úsáide na teanga.

I hope that the Department of Arts, Culture and Leisure follow on with that good practice. I think that we should look at two important aspects when we think about policy and strategy, we all know them, but they are worth mentioning again, protection and progression. One is no use without the other. We need to progress, we must enhance the language and its position here for the future, but we must also protect the users of the language themselves.



Meirion Prys Jones Príomhfheidmeannach Bhord na Breatnaise

Chaith Meirion Prys Jones tamall mar Cheannasaí na Breatnaise ag Ardscoil Castell Alun agus ag Meánscoil Glan Clwyd sular ceapadh é mar Chomhairleoir Oideachais na Breatnaise ag Comhairle Contae Morgannwg (Glamorgan) Thiar agus mar Cheannasaí Sheirbhís Comhairleach na Breatnaise. Tá Meirion ina Chigire Cláraithe Scoile ó 1993.

Ceapadh é, sa bhliain 1994, mar Phríomhoifigeach na Rannóige Oideachais agus Traenála ag Bord na Breatnaise, mar Cheannasaí na Foirne Pleanála Teanga sa bhliain 2001 agus mar Leas-Phríomhfheidhmeannach an Bhoird i mí an Mhárta 2003.

Sa bhliain 2004, ceapadh é mar Phríomhfheidhmeannach an Bhoird. Urraithe ag an Rialtas, is eagraíocht ar bhun reachtúil é, Bord na Breatnaise, bunaithe ag Acht na Breatnaise (1993). Tá foireann de 75 ag an Bhord agus buiséad bliantiúil £13 milliún aige.

Meirion Prys Jones CEO, Welsh Language Board

Meirion Prys Jones was Head of Welsh at Castell Alun High School and Glan Clwyd Secondary School in the former county of Clwyd, before moving to work for West Glamorgan County Council as an Education Advisor for Welsh and Head of the Welsh Advisory Service. Since 1993 Meirion has been a Registered Inspector of Schools.

In 1994 he was appointed Chief Officer of the Education and Training Department at the Welsh Language, and Leader of the Language Planning Team in 2001 and Deputy Chief Executive of the Board in March 2003.

In 2004 he became the Chief Executive of the Board. The Welsh Language Board is a Government sponsored, statutory based organisation, established by the Welsh Language Act (1993) The Board has 75 members of staff and a yearly budget of £13 million.

Forbairt agus cur i gcrích polasaí agus straitéis teanga sa Breatain Bheag
Development and Implementation of Language Policy and Strategy in Wales

Meirion Prys Jones Príomhfheidmeannach Bhord na Breatnaise

Meirion Prys Jones CEO, Welsh Language Board

Bore da. Mae'n bleser bod yma heddiw. Good morning. It's a pleasure to be here this morning to be a part of the discussion on the future of the promotion of the Irish Language in Northern Ireland. Can I just start with a health warning. Whatever I tell you about what we do, you don't have to do the same thing. We've followed a certain path ourselves. We've learned from that experience and we're happy to share that experience with you but it's not necessarily an answer for you and I think you have to listen to what I say, take from that what you think is interesting, put the rest in the bin and then do what you need to do. I think that's an important lesson for each language community. The other health warning is that in terms of language planning, it's accepted by now that we work on a 30 year horizon. It's a long time, but that doesn't mean you don't do anything now. You may do something now, but it may not have a dramatic effect for 30 years, therefore you need an element of patience and also, you don't need to go too quickly because if you go too quickly you get beyond yourself and you can't actually service what you've provided or tried to provide. Again, growing and developing, making sure you have the capacity is an important part of language planning. What we understand now about language planning is that, although each linguistic community is in a different place in terms of development, most of the elements are the same, in terms of what you have to put in place. It's the same for Irish, the same for Welsh, the same for Swedish in Finland, they're all the same elements, but we're all at different points on that axis of development and we have to recognise what those points are.

In Wales, we're not in the same position as you politically or linguistically, but there are some common points in terms of where we started from, where we're at at present, where we need to go in the future, which may be of use. The first thing from our point of view is that the important people are not politicians, not language planners. The important people are families, children involved in language transmission. Unless whatever we do works there, in the home, then there's no point. Their language, any language will never survive.

Our work has to have an impact on what people do, at a very personal level, within their own home and it's a very difficult point to get to. Equally as difficult is how you get those who use a minority language to use it with one another.

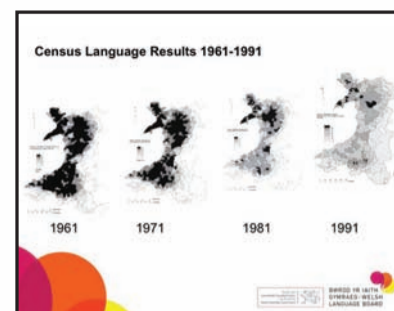
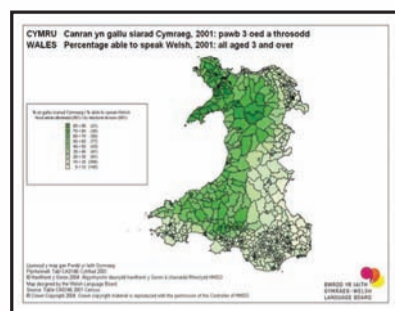
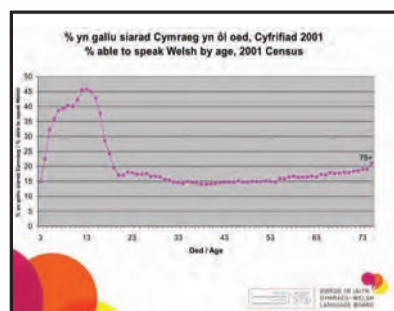
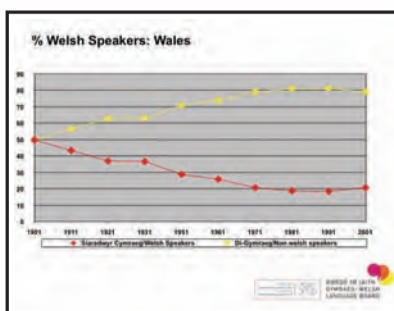
All the evidence shows that young people tend to go naturally towards majority languages. Therefore you have to work in that context with young people. Again, how do you get people in the broader community to choose to use services in the minority language? Will they go up to a counter and ask for something in Irish of their own accord? That element of putting the language in that context is quite an important one because it is about choice, which I think is the reality we need to emphasise.

A statement made by our First Minister in 2003 referred to taking a step forward.

"From the inception of the National Assembly for Wales, the Assembly Government has been committed to the cause of reviving and revitalising the Welsh Language...we will do all we can to create the right conditions in which the Welsh Language can grow and flourish in all aspects of Welsh life".

Iaith Pawb, Rhodri Morgan, First Minister, Welsh Assembly Government

It was about having policy, of having a plan for the first time ever in the context of Wales, with the Assembly, about how we need to promote the concept of a bi-lingual nation. So we have the policy coming from the Assembly and the documentation that goes with that, but that element of choice, the individual choice, is really important. To get to that point you need to have a planning process because we know that families, young people, the population in general need support to use minority languages, therefore you need to have a planning process which is then actioned, which is then supported at the individual level, at the state level, at the community level, you need all of those to integrate to ensure that individuals choose to use a language. At the end of the day, as I have said, language is very much a matter of personal choice. If you are bi-lingual you can choose and you need to influence that process of choice. So our policy in Wales is based on how you get to the point where somebody makes that choice. Everybody in Wales is bi-lingual. A certain part of the population speak Welsh at home, have learned Welsh at home and have the range of facilities a first language speaker has, but increasingly speakers of Welsh are people who have learned Welsh in school, have learned Welsh since they were three years upwards. From our research it shows that they have a different linguistic competence to people who have learned Welsh in the home and the concept then of people choosing to use their second language, as opposed to their first language, is even more complicated.



Therefore you need to work on those areas to make sure people feel that they want to use the language. Just to give you an idea in terms of what has happened in Wales; at the beginning of the last century about half the population spoke Welsh. That declined very sharply during the first half of the last century and bottomed out somewhere in the middle of the sixties when we started to see signs that an increasing number of children were starting to learn and to speak Welsh. With the last census we saw the first upturn in terms of the numbers and percentage of people speaking Welsh. That came from a change in the eighties and nineties where it was seen that children between 5 and 15 in increasing numbers are speaking Welsh, but with the whole population by now going from 18.7% to 20.8% of the population speaking the language. So there has been a certain influence. However, I was referring to the issue of a 30 year timescale for visible change, and probably one of the most influential dates in relation to this increase then was somewhere in the sixties or seventies. If we pinpoint one date, it would be 1971, when an official organization was established to promote pre-school education in Welsh. From there you see quite a dramatic change happening over a period of time.

In terms of where geographically Welsh is spoken, (See slides above) if you go back 50 years and track that through the census results you can see that Welsh is spoken mainly in the west and north of Wales. But you can also see a decrease over that period. By this time, we see a demographic shift in terms of the fact that in 80% of the electoral regions of Wales, 10% say they speak Welsh. That's a shift eastwards and into the cities. So in dealing with the Welsh population, they are changing where they live and how they behave. If you look at the profile in more detail you can see that in terms of the figures the main bulk of the speakers is in the early years range. This I think, is similar or Irish in Northern Ireland.

That's the influence of the education system of course. Maybe it's not politically correct to say this, but lot of people in Wales say one thing and do another when it comes to filling in the census. So if your child says 'bore da' you click the box that says 'Welsh speaker'. There's an element of exaggeration there, but as you can see, in terms of the impact of education, planning for education is vital in terms of regeneration of a language.

The challenge is then how you get that to continue because if you look at the figures; the figures at the age of three are not that dissimilar to the age of twenty three, so you get this big bulge and then it comes back down again because people don't choose to use the language. They have the skill, but they don't actually choose to use. So what do we do in terms of supporting the language? Obviously we have a Welsh Language Act which was passed in 1993. This is the basis for much of the action that has been taken since, but it's only basis. A lot of the action that we've taken has not been based on legislation. At present we have a document produced by the government called 'One Wales' which outlines its strategy for the language. It includes a very definite statement about planning for the future.

We also have the Welsh Language Corporate plan which outlines for three years what actions we need to take in terms of working on as many aspects of language promotion as we can. But I think that one of the important messages is about partnerships. I think that is one area that certainly we've developed over the past ten years. How you maximise the resource you have, how do you use anything to do with legislation, anything to do with funding, and money in many ways is more important than legislation. Money gives you the ability to do many things. We don't have enough, but that's another issue. Working in partnership, working with people has been an important aspect of the work we have done.

Over the life of the Welsh Language Board, we have placed a lot of emphasis on producing short documents which outline what are the principles and what are the strategic aims of the Board. But more importantly, they outline what we need to do in terms of promoting the language. We produced the first document in 1996, the second in 1999 which was more detailed and had specific targets, both in terms of time and finance, to present to the government. That document had a great influence on the government's present document which is called 'Iaith Pawb – Everybody's language' which is an Action Plan for a bi-lingual Wales. The 1999 document is reflected right through the 2003 Assembly document I mentioned earlier. As I also said, we have this document in 2007 which adds to the 2003 one and builds on that strategy document. Looking back to 1996 I think we put in place the four most important elements in terms of a strategy, which were,

- **Changing habits of language use, which brings us back to this element of choice**
- **Encouraging people to take advantage of the opportunities available to them, and that's a challenge. Looking at providing new opportunities for people to use the language. If you've been to immersion school, where do you use the language after that?**
- **The third one deals with education in terms of acquisition planning.**
- **Increasing the numbers of people who speak the language. Unless you have that machine at work then your numbers keep decreasing. Therefore strengthening Welsh as a community language is important.**

So all our work since 1996 has been based on those four principles, we've developed them, but keep coming back to them as the main elements. Then in 2003 or 2004, we produced a more detailed plan looking at the different issues, looking at the whole areas. You can't do language planning and choose some areas; you need to look at the whole range of aspects that people deal with in their daily lives. This document looks at certain areas we need to work on. Language transmission in the family is one of the most important elements that we deal with and we have a big project employing a team who deal with health workers and address them speaking to parents before a child is born about the advantages of bi-lingualism. The age between 0 and 7 has a major impact on language usage. This document looks at this and then develops within each area what kind of strategy we should employ and what kind of targets we should look at. Another element is the development of the use of language in the workspace which has come through very recently as a very strong strand. Unless you can get people to use the language in the workspace we're not going to make sure the language appears in all domains. So those basically, looking at the four principles and looking at these areas, are the ones that we have concentrated on.

Hand in hand with that, what we've seen over the past one hundred years / fifty years has been a change of attitude towards the language, with quite a dramatic change of attitude during the last twenty years. It was not popular and not attractive to speak the language until about twenty years ago. For some reason, and I shall chart some of the things that have happened during that period, as the feeling of identity in Wales has grown, people's desire, certainly for their children to learn Welsh, has grown. So it goes hand in hand with a shift, with a buy-in from the community. People want to see the language surviving and are willing to invest in that, but we also recognise that people invest in that through their children, not through themselves.

If I can give a quick plug for the Board which was established in 1993 and which has been running continuously since then, by now we have seventy five members of staff, but for many years we were around twenty five with a much smaller budget and working from one office. So it has been a somewhat slow progress over the last fifteen years to have something that we think has an impact. The Board's main remit is to agree language schemes with each public body in Wales. By now we have between 350 and 450 language schemes running although the public, in general, don't think they are very good. But if you go back 10 / 15 years and look at the difference between then and now you can see that the language schemes have had a major impact, both in terms of the visual landscape and also in terms of choice of service. You can go into a public body and be served in Welsh. Another element of the Board's work, as it says in the Act, is to do anything to promote the use of the Welsh Language. A huge remit which we try to deal with as liberally as possible, but it does mean we can look at every aspect of life to see how we can have an influence on that. As I mentioned, all public bodies have a scheme, but also the Act says that we can ask a public body or part of a public body to produce a scheme. So we took advantage of that. Education is run by local authorities so we asked each local authority to provide a specific scheme for education, to see how they actually developed this within their local authority. We're about now to go into a different phase where for the first time the government has agreed that there will be a national plan built on those 22 plans outlining exactly what will be their progress over the next 10 years in terms of education. That is a shift in terms of policy. If you look at developing an education system and getting pre-school provision in, having immersion at pre-school does make a huge difference, because what we've seen is that parents are very happy to put their children at the age of 6 months or two and a half into community based groups that provide care and language training for the children. It gets more difficult the older they get when parents are less likely to invest in Welsh education the older the children get. But certainly if you can catch them early, then that makes a huge difference. I think that one of the aspects that we'll be trying to work on over the coming years is to try to understand better that process of immersion education and what makes people more anxious to invest in that. If you look at the Basque experience at the moment, they've had a huge change over the past ten years where, looking at the young children in the Basque medium sector, 80% of the children go there. When I first went to the Basque country it was around 20%, the same as us. So there's been a dramatic increase and we're looking in that direction and saying, can we learn from that? What have you done right? What kind of influence have you had? Because we see that that investment in the early years makes a big difference.

Our other issue at the moment, in terms of planning, is to look at this issue of developing capacity. As mentioned earlier, you have to walk before you can run and to do that you have to develop the linguistic capacity within the communities to be able to provide services, to be able to hold a community which is outside the home. There are issues there in terms of vocational training, issues we still need to grapple with. How do you get people with those skills to deal with the public, where you can provide the language? Also, not only do you need to provide services, that is one step, but what I think everybody finds difficult is to get speakers to use the services. So it's getting that balance right that is certainly going to be a major challenge for us. But you can see that in terms of strategy, what we do is we keep on building. We know where the blocks are, but we keep assessing all the time where we are, what we need to do next and how we actually plan for that process.

I mentioned earlier this concept of working together in partnership, all the bodies that deal with the language meet at least three times a year and have a discussion about what each of us is doing, how do we invest and how do we work best together to get the maximum result. That's a partnership in terms of the media, print; education and community based initiatives which we feel actually work for us. That knitting together of all these people who want to promote the language both on a personal and community and on a professional level makes a big difference. That element of community work is being developed, not just by us, but before the Board came into existence. We have language based community initiatives, 23 of them. They have funding from us, but they have grass roots organisation. So they say what can we do to promote the language in this area, and they are right across Wales. So we have elements of grassroots coming from the bottom up. But it can be difficult then to work with that approach in areas where there is insufficient push from those communities. Then we look at areas where there is linguistic shift and here we put in similar ventures to work in towns, so if we see language shift taking place in towns we use our own staff to run projects in those towns to promote the language. So it's trying to bring all those elements together to make sure the stronger communities can promote the language, but also that the weaker communities have that facility as well. That element of partnership goes further than just working in Wales, the Welsh Language Board has the Chair and the Secretariat for the network that have just formed on a European level to promote linguistic diversity. We've had a grant from the European Commission to do that, and we also have the Secretariat for the British / Irish Cultural Strand that looks at minority languages across the jurisdictions of Britain and Ireland. So it's a way of working that we believe very strongly in, in actually bringing people together and getting them to plan,

and also what examining works and what is best practice; in terms of the remits of those two groups, what works and sharing good practice so that we are not reinventing the wheel all of the time.

I mentioned young people earlier and it's such an important facet of minority languages that unless you get young people to use minority languages you're going nowhere. Therefore we invest in two specific areas, sport and music, just to link the language very closely with those activities which are outside the structured system, but in which we can have some kind of input. Ideally we would like to open a chain of pubs, but we haven't quite got to that point yet. There's no legislation covering the private sector in Wales, but increasingly because of a shift in attitude and because all public bodies have a bilingual front face at least, people are expecting to see bilingual signage and are expecting to be able to receive information in both languages. So the private sector are responding slowly to that. Most probably we'll be moving in the next couple of years to put better legislation in place. But where you get some companies to use the language, then you know that a lot of other people will follow that. Everybody follows the market leader. So even though there is no legislation and they don't have to do it and no minister at present will tell them they have to do it, because they can have that kind of influence, they still do it.

New technology is another area where you can invest without legislation. Microsoft has worked closely with us in terms of the production of Office 2003 and then a couple of weeks back we launched a Welsh version of Vista at no cost to us. They just wanted to be part of that. Perhaps they saw it as important because they want to gain friends at the moment, because they want increased popularity. So they worked with us and they are happy to work with all linguistic communities. They are also working with us on the new base for mobile phones in the future that has the capacity to hold all kinds of languages. They don't have the capacity at the moment, so you can't get a Nokia phone with Welsh on it, for instance. We have to work with all these companies and try to persuade them of the advantage. Usually it's the PR benefits, not financial benefits to them, of using the language in their product that brings them on board.

Money is really important because without money you find it really difficult to do things. You get funding from Government; regional or local governments, from community development funding, from projects such as Interreg, from Heritage Lottery funding.

The European Union, in terms of minority languages scrapped the funding line for minority languages, and said the whole package is now open. So we saw that as an opportunity and that's why we put the network together for the promotion of linguistic diversity, because it's a challenge that we need to go after. It's not easy, but there is money there.

So to draw to a conclusion I think, most importantly, this is about the art of the possible. You get to 'the possible' in a process of planning. You see it as you assess the situation, and as you move forward you can see what is possible through working in partnerships on a statutory and non-statutory basis. One thing I have not mentioned and which has made a dramatic difference to our work over the last two to three years, has been the collection of data and research. We have more emphasis on data than research, and we've been fortunate to have an excellent statistician. He can tell us more or less who speaks Welsh in any street in Wales, where they are, how you get hold of them, what the movement of the population is. That does make a difference, having that base information to plan on. For the first thirteen years of our existence we planned on the basis of, 'that sounds like a good idea', but we've moved on.

So the research and the information have made a big, big difference. We can, for example, see a huge correlation between how fluent you feel and how much language you use. In Wales, if people feel just below that level of fluency they don't use they language at all. If they feel on that line or above, 89% use Welsh every day. That's a huge difference, but we didn't know that before. So there in particular, research has made a huge difference in the knowledge base which you then build your strategy on.

Discussion is important as well, about where we go next and what are the important partnerships. So we are working towards a bilingual society with a growth in the number of speakers, with a special emphasis on that age range from minus 9 months to 7 years as well as on that critical age range between 15 and 35. After that you can forget them really, but up to age 35 the research shows people are willing to be lectured or to be told to use the language. After 35 they don't accept it. So that's something that's interesting to know. It's that age range, in terms of language planning that makes the difference and education plays such a vital role, both inside and outside the classroom. Then it's persuading individuals to use the language. That is our goal. We can have the infrastructure, all the bells and whistles, but unless people between the age of 15 and 35 choose to use the language, then we're going nowhere.

Questions and Answers

1. *In 2002, Wales produced a strategy towards the learning of modern foreign languages. I'm just wondering to what extent did the experience of the Welsh Language inform recommendations towards learning French or Italian?*

Meirion Prys Jones: That's a continuous problem. We say to people who are teaching or learning foreign languages, please look at our experience, but we usually find that it's very difficult to get them to do that. But the minister at the time did introduce the teaching of French into primary school, so that children at the age of ten were taught French. We also said that that model didn't work very well, but it's not an easy dialogue. One of the debates we've had with the European Commission, in terms of our input into their multi-lingualism strategy is to say that minority languages teach language very well. We do it extremely well, but you seem to teach modern foreign languages very badly generally, so are there places there where we could learn from one another, and they say 'yes', so you then look at immersion education, you look at CLIL which teaches language through other subjects. So I think there is certainly an element of influence starting to take place, but it's never an easy debate, unfortunately.

2. *Could I just ask you, obviously from an historical legacy, we're left now with a state in which there are no native speakers really, we're mostly second language users. You indicated that the most important place is the home, can I ask you can you use a comparative area in Wales where Welsh medium education has actually brought Welsh to the fireside and to the home as a medium within the home?*

Meirion Prys Jones: That's a difficult one. I think that happens mainly in areas where you have native Welsh Language speakers anyway. I don't think we've got to the point yet where, for example, two parents who have been through Welsh medium education have then brought up their children in Welsh, speaking the language in the home. There are some examples, but I think that's a very difficult area. I know that Basques have been working on that issue, but to make people who go through immersion education and come out the other end at the age of 16 and then want to continue to use the language in the home and to pass that on to their children is a major challenge. If you look at as we develop, the pattern has always been that you start again.



The parents who have been in Welsh medium education want their children to get that education themselves, but won't speak Welsh with their children at home and the children start in school with very little Welsh. It's one of those issues that as we progress we need to tackle more and I think one of the issues we've talked about recently is that we need to have a better discussion with children at the age of 16 about their attitudes towards the language. What has happened is that schools have been very sensitive about not dealing with that and have not asked children 'What do you feel about the Welsh Language? You've had 10 – 12 years of immersion education; what do you now feel and how can we improve that?' and I think we do need to have that discussion. I can't really answer your question in a very satisfactory way, it's on this axis of development that this is there as a next step, about how you get non-native speakers to transmit the language in the home. It's not easy.

3. I noticed that when you spoke about your partnership with public bodies you talked about schemes, about developing schemes. Is that something that is beyond policy, therefore you mean a policy, a strategy, an implementation plan and working documents and action plans or is it just a policy?

Meirion Prys Jones: A scheme is required by law from each public body so it's a statutory scheme. It's more than a policy. It's something they have to produce and report on yearly and it has to be reviewed every 3 – 5 years. It's more a duty than just a policy, but they do work quite well and most of the organisations that we deal with, in terms of schemes, develop that partnership with us. So it is a dialogue. We don't try to hit them with a big stick, we do a lot of talking, we do a lot of redrafting with them and we develop something that suits that organisation. So it is an organic development. It has some elements that are similar to policy, but they know that we still have a big stick behind our back if they don't play the game. We have to admit that having the legislation in your back pocket does make a big difference.



Dòmhnall Màrtainn Iar-Phríomhfheidhmeannach, Comunn na Gàidhlig Iar-Rúnaí Choiste na Breataine Móire den Bhiúró Eorpach do Theangacha Neamhforleathana

Ceapadh Dòmhnall Màrtainn in 1975 mar Phríomhchúntóir Riaracháin leis an ghrúpa nuabhunaithe, Comhairle nan Eilean, údarás áitiúil ilchuspóireach a raibh sé mar aidhm aige riar ar na hOileáin Siar mar aon aonad rialtais áitiúil amháin den chéad uair.

Ceapadh mar Leas-Stiúrthóir na Comhairle é sa bhliain 1978 agus lean sé leis sa phost céanna go 1997 nuair a ceapadh é mar Stiúrthóir Fhorbairt Pobail Chomunn na Gàidhlig (CnaG). Bhunaigh sé oifig CnaG in Steòrnabhagh sa bhliain 1998 agus i ndiaidh bliana go leith mar Phríomhfheidhmeannach Gníomhach CnaG, ceapadh é ina Phríomhfheidhmeannach sa bhliain 2003.

Rinne sé fónamh le roinnt blianta mar Rúnaí Choiste na Breataine Móire den Bhiúró Eorpach do Theangacha Neamhforleathana. Le linn a fhostaíochta ag CnaG, ba é Rúnaí Ghrúpa Traspháirtí Rialtas na hAlban é maidir leis an Ghàidhlig.

Dòmhnall Màrtainn Former CEO, Comunn na Gàidhlig Former Secretary of UK Committee of the European Union for Lesser Used Languages

Dòmhnall Màrtainn was appointed in 1975 to the post of Principal Administrative Assistant with the newly created Comhairle nan Eilean, the multi-purpose local authority which brought together the Western Isles under the one local government unit for the first time. Appointed the Comhairle's Deputy Director of Administration in 1978, he held this post until 1997 when he joined Comunn na Gàidhlig as Director of Community Development. He established CnaG's office in Stornoway in 1998 and following eighteen months as Acting Chief Executive of CnaG he was appointed Chief Executive in 2003.

He served for several years as Secretary of the UK Committee of the European Bureau of Lesser Used Languages. During his employment with CnaG he was also Secretary of the Scottish Parliament's Cross-Party Group on Gaelic.

Dòmhnall Màrtainn **Polasaí agus Pleanáil Teanga** **don Gàidhlig in Albain** **Gaelic Language Policy and** **Planning in Scotland**

Madainn mhath duibh a chàirdean agus tha e na abhar thoileachas dhomhsa bhi còmhla ribh an seo aon uair eile. Chan e seo a chiad turas agamsa Bheal Feirste tha mi air a bhi ann iomadach uair ma tha agus tha am fàilte a tha mi faighinn bhuaibh cho blàth agus cho coibhneil sa bha i riamh.

Good morning ladies and gentlemen, and can I first of all thank Janet and POBAL for inviting me here to Belfast. This is not my first time here in Belfast, or indeed my first time here in Northern Ireland. I have been here on a number of occasions in the past, and every time I come the welcome gets warmer and better. Can I also pay tribute to POBAL and in particular Janet for the work she has done. In my previous employment with Comunn na Gàidhlig we worked very closely together, and one of the last things we set up before I left was an exchange of graduates. We had graduate placement schemes in Scotland, and two or three of these graduates came over to work in the Cultúrlann with POBAL and other Irish language organisations, and they found it extremely helpful and it is something we are going to continue.

I will have to start by re-iterating the health warning that Meirion Prys Jones mentioned at the very beginning, in relation to taking what is best of what happens elsewhere. We did that, and incidentally it took us thirty years. The title of my presentation is 'From Policy to Strategy', and it took thirty years for us, from a first official policy that was adopted by the Western Isles Council in 1975, on the establishment of the Council, to the formal strategy in terms of the National Plan for Gàidhlig. And over those thirty years, we visited a lot of places and we got a lot of information.

At the end of the day, and as you will see, the support structure for the language in Scotland is very similar to the Welsh, in terms of the fact that we have an Act, and we have a statutory board.

And we have plans, not schemes I don't know why we didn't follow your example – maybe we wanted to be different – but the plans that we had are very similar to the schemes of the Welsh have adopted in relation to the public bodies.

This slide shows you the structure and the various policies and strategies that are now in place. We have had the Scottish parliament since devolution in 1999. The parliament was responsible for approving the Gàidhlig (2005) Language Act, which went through a number of hurdles regarding consultation. There were two or three consultation papers, there were two separate task forces, simply because the recommendations from the first task force were not satisfactory to the then minister, so he decided to cast them aside and set up another task force, and eventually that task force came up with the recommendations which the minister wanted in the first place. Out of that came the Gàidhlig Language Bill, which was scrutinised by the parliament and eventually went out to consultation and was approved by the Scottish parliament. I have to say that we were fortunate in Scotland in that we have always had cross-party support for the promotion of the Gàidhlig language and culture. Mind you, on the other hand, we have always had cross-party opposition, where down in Central Scotland members of all parties take the view that they should not be funding Gaelic because they have so few Gaelic speakers in their areas. So that has been a bit of a problem, trying to persuade politicians down in the Central Belt that Gaelic is not just a Western Isles issue, it's not just a Highlands and Islands issue, it is a Scottish issue, it is part of the National Identity, it is part of the national culture of Scotland.

Public bodies, they have the responsibility for preparing and implementing their language plans, which are required under the National Plan for Gaelic, produced by Bord na Gàidhlig, because one of the functions required of the Bord, in terms of the Act, is to produce the National Gaelic Plan. The Plan contains guidelines, targets and action points for the public bodies in order to enable them to prepare their language plans. There is also, accompanying it, the guidance on the development of the Gaelic language plans – guidance to the public bodies, and there are various sections and headings and categories which they need to take into account in preparing their plans.

And it is against the criteria in this document that individual plans are measured and assessed. There is also, within the plan, a national education strategy, which local authorities responsible for delivering education have to observe.

Broadcasting is something of a problem. Broadcasting is a reserved matter for the Westminster government. Unfortunately the funding for Gaelic broadcasting has been devolved to the Edinburgh government, and it means that there have been a lot of arguments between London and Edinburgh over the past two or three years discussing the development of a Gaelic television channel. London were saying they had no responsibility to fund it, because they are only responsible for the legislation, and Edinburgh were saying they weren't responsible for the legislation, so they can't fund it. But at the end of the day they came to some arrangement, around two or three months ago, and the Gaelic channel will hopefully be on the air within the next ten to twelve months.

Also, when they were looking at the contents of the Gaelic Language (2005) Act, they took account of the Council of Europe Charter for Regional and Minority Languages and the two COMEX reports that have been produced so far.

As to communities and individual Gaelic speakers, as Meirion said, if you don't get the communities and the families and the individuals to speak the language, then all the policies and the strategies in the world will mean nothing, and as you can see from the subsequent slides, that is a key issue for us as well – how do we ensure that families are speaking the language between generations? It's a real challenge. Briefly, the Language Act's main aim is to secure the status of Gaelic in Scotland by promoting its use in Scottish public life, by granting equal respect for Gaelic. These words were not the words we wanted to see in the Act, because we felt they were a bit weak – we wanted equal validity with English, but the lawyers and solicitors in the Scottish Office felt that that was a bit dangerous, and one of the things that they pointed out to us was 'Well, we don't have a statement that gives equal validity to English, so if you're going to get something in an Act saying you are giving equal validity to Gaelic, then you could have problems later on.' So, that is the main aim of the Act, to promote the Gaelic language and culture in Scottish public life. Again, we have no legislation to compel or ask the Private Sector to provide opportunities for the use of the Gaelic language; that is simply done by encouragement and volunteering assistance and support.

Encouraging the increased use of Gaelic in the home, in the community, in the place of learning – the likes of the schools, the pre-schools, the colleges and the universities – and the workplace – each individual section is contained within the Act.

The plan itself is a strategic approach to the promotion of the Gaelic language in Scotland. It is supported and endorsed by ministers, and that is a statement they have indicated on a number of occasions. The plans, before they went to the minister for approval, went through a process of consultation and the submissions received had to be submitted to the minister, so that they had plenty of information in front of them so that they could be satisfied that it had widespread community support.

Providing direction to Bord na Gàidhlig and public bodies in relation to their language plans – it helps to focus resources in key areas of activity. You never have enough funding to allow you to do what you would like to do, and it's always a bit of a battle trying to get increased budgets at a time when you are meant to expand the development of the language. And there is no doubt at all about it, the adoption of plans by public bodies will result in additional resources. And a lot of the local authorities down in Central Scotland were of the view that they couldn't possibly channel their resources from the deprived area budget – social work, housing – without additional funding being made available. So, for the first three years, the Scottish Government has provided a development fund to Bord na Gàidhlig to help new public bodies implement their language plans. And it identifies projects and agreed priorities within the programme. In summary, it is a tool, to bring the language forward. The framework of the plan – at the end of the day we are hoping that these plans will increase the numbers of Gaelic speakers, encourage the use of Gaelic, provide the opportunities for Gaelic to be used. For example, since the first two or three public bodies were asked to submit their plans, they have encouraged their officers to make more use of Gaelic in dealing with Gaelic speakers, and also, more and more public bodies are using simultaneous translation facilities at their meetings, something that was unheard of prior to the Act, or prior to the National Plan for Gaelic.

Increasing the opportunities and circumstances in which to use Gaelic underlies the principle of equal respect and engaging actively with the public at large. This is very important, because the Gaelic speaking public and communities have to have input and a feeling of ownership of the plan before you can then go out and try and implement it within the communities as you must.

Language status is one of the key areas. Language status, language acquisition, language usage and language corpus-planning – are the four main strands of the national plan. The intention is that the language will have more visibility, especially in public places, through signage; recognition, of the rights of Gaelic speakers to ask for services to be provided; audibility also, hence the present option of simultaneous translation at meetings of these public bodies. And there is also the question of the monitoring aspect of the Charter, because we still have to ensure that the recommendations that have been made by the Committee of Experts are looked at and are monitored and are assessed so that they are ‘fed –in’ to the plan. Corpus-language planning is all about standardisation; consistency and translation. As far as translation is concerned, translation is something which was never developed until now, and we’re now at the stage where we’re considering the possibility of preparing courses for translators at Lews Castle. We have visited Dublin and Galway and found out how their courses are structured and framed. I have no doubt at all in future that there will be a course run on Translation for Translators, produced by the UHI – the University of the Highlands and Islands – Sabhal Mór Ostaig, and Lews Castle College. Another recommendation of the National Plan for Gaelic is to establish a language academy, a body that will look after the standardisation and the consistency of the language, and draw together the various dictionaries and phrasebooks that are currently in existence.

Where are we with the Gaelic language plans? Well, Bord na Gàidhlig was set up in 2005, the Act was passed in 2005, the first plan was prepared and produced a year after that, and for the first year, the Bord invited six public bodies to prepare their language plans. And the six public bodies were the three local authorities who were mainly involved in the Gaelic speaking areas – the Western Isles Council; the Highland Council; Argyll and Bute. The three other bodies were the Highlands and Islands Enterprise, which is the main government development agency, which is operating in the Highlands and Islands; the Scottish Parliament; and the Scottish Executive. They were all asked to produce their plans by October 2007. As normally happens with public bodies, where you have long consultation exercises, only one of the public bodies was able to supply their plan by the deadline. That was the Highland Council. The rest were given an extension, and since then the Bord has received four plans. Significantly, the two that have not submitted their plans, after another extension, are the Scottish parliament and the Scottish government. The plans had to be the subject of widespread public consultation within the areas and the communities served by the plans – Highlands Council had a very detailed consultation process – they went out and had public meetings within their respective communities. They had huge response to these meetings and very good written responses as well. Plans obviously have to be based on the principles of the Act, and the guidelines which I referred to earlier on. Once the plans have been prepared by the bodies, they then go to the Bord to be approved by the Bord. If the Bord is not satisfied with what the plans contain, they go back to the body, and if the body is not happy with that, the body can ask for the matter to be passed to the minister for adjudication. Of course it hasn’t come to that yet, because we’re at too early a stage with our language plans.

And the final requirement in the legislation is that the plans have to be reviewed every five years. As an example of the structure of a plan, the Western Isles plan has got four main aims: – To strengthen Gaelic as a language in the community; to strengthen it as a language in the family; to increase the number of Gaelic speakers in the area served, in this case the Western Isles; and the final aim places emphasis on Partnership, Co-ordination and Co-operation. Obviously, a local authority where they want to see a comprehensive plan developed for their area cannot on its own implement everything that is in their plan for the language. It has to have the support and co-operation of other public bodies, voluntary organisations, and in many cases, the private sector. In the case of the Western Isles, there are twelve separate strategies identified in the plan. There's Image and Confidence – that's the image of the language and the confidence of the people in using the language. Language Learning, at pre-school, primary school, secondary school and university level. Further categories are educational and childcare facilities, heritage and local history, culture and arts. There is also a strand called 'Welcome' – that's a reference to a proposal that there will be a bilingual welcome pack, made available to people enquiring about jobs, enquiring about accommodation, thinking of moving to the Western Isles. It will also be available to tourists coming to the area, to make them aware of the fact that it is a bilingual community, and what assistance and opportunities they are able to take advantage of. Meirion referred to the importance of ensuring that young people are able to be encouraged to use the language in all situations, not just occasionally when they meet together, but through sport, through music, and what have you. In addition, the media are important. Although local authorities of course are not responsible for the broadcasting side of media, they are, or may be, responsible for supporting the printed matter, the printed material, and we have a Gaelic newspaper 'An Gaidheal Úr', which is supported by local authorities and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. There is reference in the council's plans to the newspaper. Island Organisations – community organisations, councils of social service, and various other community organisations, and the value to them of promoting bilingualism in their day to day work. And finally, research and Language Development, which, as I mentioned, is something Lews Castle College and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the Gaelic College, are particularly keen on developing, under the banner of the University of the Highlands and Islands.

In relation to the statistical trends in Gaelic speakers, you could call this the issue of reality and challenges. You will see that compared to your own figures here in Ireland, we're at the very bottom of the league. If you take the figure for 2001, 59,000 Gaelic speakers are in Scotland, 1.2% of the population. And you can see, from 1891, where we had over a quarter of a million, 7% of the population – it has been a downward trend all the way. There was a bit of a blip in 1970-71, when the returns showed an extra 8,000 speakers, and since then it has been quite gradual. But, the challenge is the 27,000 potentially fluent Gaelic speakers that were included in the census. Now, the 59,000 are the ones who are returned as Gaelic speakers – the 27,000 are those who said they understood the language – they could read it, they could write it, but they did not have the confidence to indicate themselves as fluent Gaelic speakers. The challenge is to convert them into fluent Gaelic speakers for the next census in 2011.

So, some final thoughts. Policies, plans and strategies on their own will not save the language. They help, and they provide official recognition by public bodies. They provide opportunities, but on their own, they won't save the language. There needs to be a concerted effort to persuade families and communities to use and transfer the language between generations. Now, I have yet to come across, and it is interesting that they have started this in Wales, I have yet to come across where they have a piece of legislation for example, a plan, or a strategy, that enforces the family to use the language in their homes. One of the problems of course is that there are so many outside influences – if you are watching television, 9 times out of 10 it's in English, it's an English programme, and if you are discussing it afterwards, it will be in the language in which it was transmitted. Confidence and pride need to be restored in order to make Gaelic a living language in the living rooms of our homes. That's a very ambitious and key aim.

I have taken this extract from one of the taskforce reports, which reported prior to the adoption of the Gaelic Language (2005) Act – 'Ultimately, the issue of Gaelic is not just a language issue. It is an issue of Human Rights, of belonging and of justice', and I think that is true of any language and is certainly true of the situation here in Northern Ireland.

Questions and Answers

1. *Just as you were talking about potential speakers of Gaelic, it struck me that you have the unique situation where you have a Scots Gaelic speaking populace in Canada. And we don't have that, though we do have somebody who recently founded an Irish language Gaeltacht in Canada. I think that is indicative of the International Irish speaking community, which I think is becoming more and more important, particularly with technological advancements and the way that we can be in contact simultaneously and so on. In our situation, I think we can learn a lot in terms of how Gaelic speaking Scotland interacts with Gaelic speaking Canada.*

Dòmhnall Màrtainn – Yes, it is a point I didn't make there, because the Gaelic Language Act doesn't extend to Canada, not yet anyway. There is a significant number there, and we have got strong links between the Gaelic speaking communities in Canada and in the Highlands and Islands. For example, I mentioned Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. There is a Gaelic college in Nova Scotia, and they are always sending students between Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and their own college. We have examples of groups going over there. There's the famous 'Mod' in Nova Scotia, where choirs from the islands go over there whenever they can afford it – it's a very expensive provision of course. But it is an expanding community, and it's not just in Canada. We also have pockets elsewhere – in Australia for example, and more recently in New Zealand. So it is a very significant community that we can't afford to overlook.

2. *Are you, or any of your supporters, especially those unfortunate enough to be in politics, ever accused of politicising the Scottish Gaelic language?*

Dòmhnall Màrtainn – No. It is not an issue. As I mentioned earlier on, we have had tremendous cross-party support for the language over the years, and in fact, it's very interesting that the party that have provided more over the years in terms of funding, and initiatives for the Gaelic language has been the Conservative Party. Nobody knows why, because there was no way Mrs. Thatcher was going to get an extra vote in the Western Isles or in the Highlands for providing public funding for some Gaelic project.

We just couldn't understand why there was this interest from the Conservative Party. The Labour Party, when they came into power in Edinburgh, were the ones who started off the Act, and that was continued and strengthened by the Scottish National Party. So it hasn't been a problem at all, thankfully.

3. *I just noticed in the twelve categories that you mentioned as part of the Western Isles strategy, I noticed that Economy and Employment weren't mentioned there. I was just wondering if there was some reason for that?*

Dòmhnall Màrtainn – The intention is that the local authority in the Western isles have adopted a policy whereby their Gaelic policy is going to straddle across all departments, so they felt there was no need to single out the Economy. And this is a very important issue, because, you see, in the Western Isles, which is the heartland of the Gaelic language, where it is still a community language, sadly. The statistics are against us because the population is declining, we're losing more old people, through natural wastage then there are young people being born, and even if every one of them was a Gaelic speaker by the time they were five, they still would not make up for the numbers we have lost. That is why we have to rely, for the purpose of the statistics, on the increasing numbers of families who may have had connections with the Western Isles, but are now living in places like Edinburgh and Glasgow, Inverness and Aberdeen. And that's why you have got, in the past four or five years, an interest in the development of Gaelic medium education in the cities. For example, Glasgow has got the only Gaelic purpose-built primary and secondary school in Scotland, followed by, more recently, a new Gaelic primary school opened in Inverness. So the council's policy is to ensure that the Gaelic strategy flows down through all departments of the council, be it Social Work, be it Housing, be it Education, Economic Development or what have you.



Aiseolas ó na Ceardlanna

Pointí ginearálta

- Tá na comhthéacsanna stairiúla agus reatha naimhdeach don teanga Ghaeilge agus is gá aghaidh a thabhairt air seo
- Is iad na Gaeilgeoirí atá thíos le cailleadh na teanga agus séanadh ceart, ach tá pobal fuinniúil againn a chuireann le comhshaibhreas, tógáil muiníne agus atá dírithe ar thodhchaí dhearfach
- Tá gá le cláir atá ‘frith-chlaonta’ a thabharfadh aghaidh ar an doicheall agus ar an easpa feasachta agus a gríosódh daoine le ceart Gaeilgeoirí ar úsáid na Gaeilge sa saol poiblí a ghlacadh agus a aithint
- Is cosúil go bhfuil an Ghaeilge á húsáid mar ‘proxy’ sa Tionól agus ní haon bhuntáiste sin dár bpobal ná don mhórshochaí araon
- Ceist chomhionannais í feicseanacht na Gaeilge sa saol poiblí agus is éigean bearta tógáil muiníne a dhéanamh go luath air seo, go háirithe i dtaca le hainmneacha sráide agus áite, ainmneacha pearsanta agus comharthaíocht
- Ionstraimí ceart daonna fosta a chruthaíonn an comhthéacs reatha polaitiúil, Comhaontú Aoine an Chéasta, An tAcht um Chearta Daonna, An Chairt Eorpach do Theangacha Réigiúnacha nó Mionlach, An Creat-Choinbhinsiún ar Mhionlaigh Náisiúnta, An tOrdú Oideachais, Acht Chill Rímhinn agus Comhaontú Chill Rímhinn
- Ní thig neamhiontas a dhéanamh de cheist na reachtaíochta agus caithfear aird a thabhairt ar ghealltanais chun reachtaíochta Chill Rímhinn
- Páirt bharrthábhachtach atá ag an reachtaíocht do theangacha mionlaigh, rud is léir sa Bhreatain Bheag, in Albain agus sa deisceart agus is féidir go mbeidh gá le reachtaíocht nó le hathruithe reachtacha le codanna áirithe den straitéis a thabhairt chun tosaigh
- Caithfear cearta chainteoirí Gaeilge a dhearbú mar chuid den chlár oibre Comhionannais nó is minic nuair a éilítear cearta, go gcuirtear frithbhrú le iad a shéanadh
- Tá ráite ag an aire reatha gurb í an Chairt Eorpach do Theangacha Réigiúnacha nó Mionlach a bheas mar bhuntaca faoi bheartas agus straitéis
- Éilíonn an Chairt go ndéanfaí gníomh oiriúnach do gach teanga de réir a riachtanas. Leagann Cuid III dualgais is sainiúla, mionsonraithe agus is troime ar an rialtas ná Cuid II

Feedback from the Workshops

General points

- The historical and current contexts are hostile to the Irish language and this must be addressed
- Irish speakers are victims in the situation of language loss and denial of rights, but we have a vibrant community contributing to shared wealth, confidence building and are focussed on moving into a positive future
- There is a need for sustained ‘anti-prejudice’ programmes to address hostility and lack of awareness and to encourage acceptance and recognition of the right to use the Irish language in public life
- The Irish language appears to be in use as a ‘proxy’ within the Assembly at present and this is disadvantageous to both our community and to the wider society
- The visibility of the Irish language in public life is an equality issue and confidence building measures should be taken quickly on this, particularly in respect of street and placenames, personal names and signage
- The current political context is also formed by human rights instruments, the Good Friday Agreement, the Human Rights Act, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, The Framework Convention on National Minorities, The Education Order, the St. Andrews’ Act and the St Andrews’ Agreement
- The issue of legislation cannot be ignored and the St Andrews commitment to legislate must be respected.
- The role of legislation for minority languages is a key one as seen in Wales, Scotland and the south and legislation or legislative changes may be needed to take forward some parts of the strategy
- The rights of Irish speakers must be assured as part of the Equality agenda since often where there are demands for rights, there is a counter pressure to deny them
- The current minister has said that the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages will underpin the policy and strategy
- The Charter requires that there be appropriate action taken for each language according to its needs. Part III places more specific, detailed and onerous duties upon government than Part II

I dtaca leis na dualgais ar Westminster agus ar an Tionól, tá gá le

- beartas cuimsitheach a leagfaidh amach an t-ardán d'fhorbairt mhéadaithe na Gaeilge a bhfuiltear ag díriú uirthi. Ba chóir an beartas cuimsitheach bheith soiléir, comhchoiteann, go dtabharfaidh sé faoi éagsúlacht gníomhartha ar a mbeidh gnáthaimh tomhais, faireacháin agus forfheidhmithe
- ceapadh agus feidhmiú straitéise do chur chun cinn agus do chosaint na Gaeilge. Ba chóir go gcuirfeadh an stratéis ar fáil an dóigh leis an fhorbairt mhéadaithe a bhaint amach
- acmhainniú d'fheidhmiú a bheas sásúil agus a thiocfas ó rialtas Westminster agus áitiúil araon.

Amscála

- Ba chóir go n-aithneodh amscála na straitéise, agus go n-éascódh sé, fuinneamh foráis an phobail agus na hamscálaí éagsúla i bpleanáil an rialtais. D'fhéadfadh straitéisí roinne bheith bunaithe ar fhorbairt bliana, trí bliana agus ar fhorbairt tréimhse is faide. Fís fadtréimhse a theastaíos don phleanáil teangach, ach thig seo a roinnt ina straitéisí tréimhsí is giorra a chinnteos solúbthacht agus freagracht is airde na straitéise. Bheadh straitéis trí bliana de réir thréimhse fhaireacháin CETRM.

Fís

Chaithfeadh réamhrá an bheartais an méid a leanas a aithint

an leatrom a imríodh le fada ar an Ghaeilge agus ar phobal na Gaeilge
 áit lárnach na Gaeilge sa todhchaí úr
 go gcaithfidh beartas agus straitéis araon bheith fréamhaithe sa chleachtas idirnáisiúnta is fearr, agus aird acu ar an Bhreatain Bheag agus ar Albain chomh maith le Ceanada, Tír na mBascach srl stádas na Gaeilge
 dála an lae inniu. Teastaíonn ráiteas a aithníonn gurbh fhéidir nach mbeadh sa chéad iarracht seo le beartas a dhréachtú ach 'céim linbh' ach gur ionstraim bheofhuinniúil í CETRM agus gurb é an dualgas atá uirthi 'forbairt na Gaeilge a mhéadú agus a chosaint' agus beartas cuimsitheach a chur i bhfearas
 ceangal feasta le hobair forbartha don teanga Ghaeilge.

In respect of the duties on Westminster and the Assembly, there must be

- a comprehensive policy which sets out the stage of enhanced development for the Irish language that is being aimed for. The comprehensive policy should be coherent, collective, taking a variety of actions and incorporating measuring, monitoring and enforcement procedures.
- a strategy for the enhancement and protection of the Irish language must be devised and implemented. The strategy should provide the way to achieve the enhanced development
- resourcing for implementation must be adequate and must come from both Westminster and local government

Timescale

- The time scale of the strategy should recognise and facilitate the forward dynamic of the community and the different time scales in government planning. Departmental strategies can be based on one-year, three year and longer term development. For language planning a long-term vision is needed, but this can be broken down into shorter term strategies to ensure maximum flexibility and responsiveness of the strategy. A three year strategy is in line with the ECRML monitoring period

Vision

The introduction to the policy must contain a statement of recognition of

the past discrimination against the Irish language and its community
 the central place of Irish in the building of a new future
 the need for both policy and strategy to be grounded in best international practice, drawing on Wales and Scotland as well as Canada, the Basque Country etc
 the status of the Irish language
 the current climate. There should be a statement recognising that this first attempt to draft a policy and strategy may represent 'a baby step' but that the ECRML is a dynamic instrument and the duty is 'to enhance and protect the development of the Irish language' and put into place a comprehensive policy
 an engagement to future developmental work for the Irish language

Modheolaíocht

- an lárpháirt atá ag ionchur phobal na Gaeilge ar gach leibhéal d'fhorbairt phróiseas forfheidhmithe
- miondealú mionraithe ar phróiseas trédhearcach le hionchur agus béim ar phleanáil ón bhun aníos a éascú

Cur i nGníomh, Tomhas agus Forfheidhmiú

- Is gnách le beartas agus straitéis gan bun reachtúil sa dlí intíre bheith míshoiléir agus caithfear tabhairt faoi seo trí bhun reachtúil a chur ar fáil
- Caithfidh solúbthacht bheith ionsuite chun forbairt phobal na Gaeilge a cheadú fad atá an straitéis ag dul in éifeacht
- Caithfidh an straitéis gan bheith ina cúis cnaptha san fhorbairt feasta nó ar thionscnamh agus ar fheidhmiú smaointe úra agus tosaíochtaí
- Caithfidh réimse maoinithe suntasach agus comhlachtaí acmhainnithe bheith ar fáil ag an phobal labhartha Gaeilge
- Caithfidh gach sprioc / gníomh sa straitéis bheith intomhaiste
- Ba chóir meastóireacht inmheánach na straitéise, le hionchur suntasach ón phobal labhartha Gaeilge, a dhéanamh taobh istigh de 3 mhí óna deireadh

Limistéir Ábhair don Straitéis Molann Cuid III den Chairt cuid de na limistéir ina gcaithfidh an Beartas agus an Straitéis dul i bhfeidhm.

I ngach limistéar ábhair ba chóir go socródh an straitéis conas a thabharfar faoi na ceisteanna a leanas:

- Sealbhú teanga
- Úsáid teanga
- Forbairt phobal na Gaeilge
- Stádas na teanga
- Pleanáil corpais

Methology

- the central role of input of the Irish speaking community at all levels of developing and implementation process
- detailed breakdown of a transparent process to facilitate input and emphasis on bottom-up planning

Implementation, Measuring and Enforcement

- Policy and strategy without a statutory basis in domestic law tend to create a lack of clarity and this must be addressed through provision of a statutory basis
- Flexibility must be inbuilt to allow for the development of the Irish speaking community as the strategy takes effect
- The strategy must not act as a restricting factor on future development or on the introduction and implementation of new ideas and priorities
- A range of significant funding and resourcing bodies must be available to the Irish speaking community
- Each separate target / action in the strategy must be measurable
- External evaluation should be carried out, with considerable input from the Irish speaking community, of the strategy within 3 months of its end

Subject Areas for the Strategy

The structure of Part III of the Charter suggests some of the areas in which the Policy and Strategy must impact.

In each subject area the strategy should determine how the following issues will be addressed:

- Language acquisition
- Language usage
- Development of the Irish speaking community
- Status of the language
- Corpus planning

"If you base the strategy on the Charter, you have also to bear in mind that the charter is a dynamic instrument... So, if the language grows stronger, for example, then the undertakings also may become stronger."

Oideachas

- Caithfear Oideachas trí Mheán na Gaeilge ar gach leibhéal a chur ar fáil ar dhóigh níos leithne, le hathruithe sa reachtaíocht, sa bheartas agus sa chleachtadh reatha nuair is gá le seo a éascú
- Caithfear leanúnas oideachais a fheabhsú, ón bhunleibhéal go dtí an dara leibhéal oideachais
- Is tábhachtach go mbeadh na páistí i dtimpeallacht thumoideachais ‘scoile uile’
- Ba chóir tábhacht an Ghaeloideachais mar chuid de shamhail tumoideachais idirnáisiúnta a mhíniú trí chlár Feasachta do státseirbhísigh, do sholáthraithe sláinte agus oideachais, do thuismitheoirí srl
- Ba chóir béim a leagan ar cháilíocht shíormhéadaitheach shealbhú teanga sa Ghaeloideachas, ar gach leibhéal, le hacmhainniú, le hoiliúint agus nuair is oiriunach, le bearta breise (ms do pháistí ar a bhfuil sainriachtanais oideachasúla)
- Ba chóir clár trasteorann trí bliana meantóireachta, oiliúna agus tacaíochta do mhúinteoirí sa Ghaeloideachas a cheapadh agus a fheidhmiú le deisceart na hÉireann agus béim ar leith ar cheantair Ghaeltachta i dTír Chonaill

An Ghaeilge mar ábhar

- Tá ceist chearta tuistí agus páistí in eisiámh sruchtúrtha na Gaeilge i gcraclam na scoileanna Béarla. Caithfear tabhairt faoi seo trí reachtaíocht agus chlár dhearfacha gníomhaithe leis an teanga a thairiscint i scoileanna rialaithe agus faoi chothabháil araon
- Ba chóir clár thionscnaimh do mhúineadh teanga i scoileanna (agus béim ar an Ghaeilge mar theanga dhúchais) a mhéadú

Education

- Irish Medium Education at all levels must be made more widely available with changes to current legislation, policy and practice where necessary to facilitate this
- Continuity of education, particularly from primary to secondary level education must be improved
- The importance of children being in a ‘whole-school’ immersion atmosphere is important
- The importance of Irish Medium education as part of an international immersion education model should be explained through an Awareness programme for civil servants, health and education providers, parents etc
- Emphasis should be placed on the constantly improving the quality of language acquisition in Irish Medium Education, at all levels, with resourcing, training and where appropriate, additional measures (eg for children experiencing special educational needs)
- A transfrontier three year programme of mentoring, training and support for teachers in Irish Medium should be devised and implemented with the south of Ireland and particular emphasis on Gaeltacht areas in Donegal

Irish as a subject

- There is a parental and children’s rights issue in the structural exclusion of the Irish language in the curriculum of English-medium schools. This must be addressed through legislation and positive action programmes to offer the language in both controlled and maintained schools.
- Positive promotional programmes for language teaching in schools (with emphasis on Irish as an indigenous language) should be enhanced

“The St. Andrew's Treaty is an international agreement, there is a commitment by the state party to introduce legislation, and that commitment stands.”

An sealbhú aosach

- Tá an soláthar láithreach míshásúil agus mí-oiriúnach nó caitheann an curaclam leis an Ghaeilge mar a chaitheann sé le Fraincis, Spáinnis srl
- Déanfaidh rochtain níos fearr ar ranganna Gaeilge agus deiseanna feabhsaithe i dtreo na líofachta an teanga a dhítharcaisniú. Tá an taighde ón Bhreatain Bheag a luadh i láithriú an lae inniu tábhachtach
- Caithfear curaclam agus modh teagasc nua a thaighde agus a acmhainniú; d'fhéadfaí caighdeán a fháil i samhlacha i dTír na mBascach
- Caithfear athruithe reachtacha a dhéanamh más gá le teagasc na Gaeilge do dhaoine fásta, ar dhóigh níos leithne agus níos inaimsithe, a éascú; ms tacú le soláthar ranganna do líon níos lú mac léinn le hinfhaighteacht agus cáilíocht an teagaisc a fheabhsú
- Caithfear costas foghlama teanga agus druidim le líofacht níos airde, a dheonú
- Caithfear tumchúrsaí malartaithe / teanga sa Ghaeltacht do dhaoine atá ag obair in achair oideachais na Gaeilge, aistriúcháin srl a phríomhshruthú

Oiliúint agus Breisoideachas agus Ardoideachas

- Caithfidh réimse iomlán oiliúna acadúla, proifisiúnta agus gairme tríd an Ghaeilge bheith ar fáil agus bheith dírithe ar riachtanais
 - fhágáilithe scoile labhartha Gaeilge
 - fhorbairt acmhainne
- Ba chóir tionscnaimh reatha a fhorbairt agus a leoracmhainniú, agus an gá atá le forbairt acmhainne i gcuid de limistéir shaol an phobail a thabhairt san áireamh
- Ba chóir oiliúint feasachta ar Ghaeloideachas / dhátheangachas a chuimsiú i gcúrsaí Tríú leibhéal d'éagsúlacht gairmeacha (sláinte, urbhainistíocht, srl)
- Ba chóir oiliúint ghairmiúil inseirbhíse agus as-seirbhíse a nascadh le hiniúchadh scileanna Gaeilge i gcomhlachtaí poiblí agus sa státseirbhís

Adult acquisition

- Current provision is inadequate and inappropriate because the curriculum treats Irish in the same way as French, Spanish etc.
- Better access to Irish classes and to improved opportunities to increase fluency will de-stigmatise the language. The research from Wales mentioned in today's presentation regarding how fluency affects usage is important.
- A new curriculum and teaching method must be researched and resourced, models from the Basque country could provide a standard
- Legislative changes must be made if necessary to facilitate the wider and more accessible teaching of Irish to adults; ie supporting the provision of classes to smaller numbers of students to improve availability and quality of learning
- Costs of learning the language and of progression to greater fluency must be subsidised
- Exchange / language immersion courses in the Gaeltacht for those working in Irish language fields of education, translation etc must be mainstreamed

Training and Higher and Further Education

- Full range of academic, professional and vocational training through Irish must be available and targeted towards the needs
 - of Irish speaking school leavers
 - capacity building
- Current initiatives should be developed and adequately resourced, taking into account the need to build capacity in some areas of public life and service provision
- Awareness training of Irish Medium Education / bilingualism should be included in Third level courses for a variety of careers (health, front-line, etc)
- Professional in-service and out-service training should be linked to an audit of Irish language skills within public bodies and the civil service

"I see that the way people have of networking is specific to their age group...I think that, in terms of acquisition and usage and keeping the opportunities for the use of language alive, we're going to have to be scientific about that and really harness all the information we have."

Úsáid

- Ní thig teagasc agus úsáid na Gaeilge a fhágáil san earnáil oideachas amháin
- Caithfear gníomhaíochtaí caidrimh d'éagsúlacht aoisphrúpaí a fhorbairt agus a acmhainniú agus na tograí agus na heagrais atá ann cheana ag fáil tacaíochta le cláir a fhorbairt
- Ba chóir cineálacha éagsúla líonraithe sóisialta d'éagsúlacht aoisghrúpaí a thaighde agus a fhorbairt trí obair chorpais agus phleanála ar TE srl

Úsáid na Gaeilge sna Cúirteanna

- Caithfear Acht Riartha an Cheartais (Éire) 1737 a aisghairm
- Caithfear úsáid na Gaeilge sna cúirteanna a éascú trí aistriú cháipéisí dlíthiúla agus reachtaíochta, oiliúint teanga, oiliúint dhlíthiúil agus tacaíocht téarmaíochta do chléirigh dlí, aturnaetha, abhcóidí, agus d'fhostaithe seirbhís chúirte
- Úsáid ateangaireachta comhuainí san áit ar gá

Usage

- The teaching and use of Irish cannot be left in the education sector alone
- Social activities for a variety of age groups must be developed and resourced, with existing projects and organisations receiving support to develop programmes
- Different forms of social networking for different age groups should be researched and developed through corpus and planning work on IT etc

The use of Irish in the Courts

- The 1737 Administration of Justice (Ireland) Act must be repealed
- The use of Irish in the courts must be facilitated through translation of legal documents and legislation, language training, legal training and terminological support for legal clerks, solicitors, barristers, and court service employees
- The use where necessary of simultaneous interpreting

"We need to create the mechanisms whereby we have local strategies for local areas which are tailored, and which fit and which have the buy-in of the local people on the ground – that's the most perfect way forward for the institutions."

Forais Pholaitiúla

- Is eochaircheist í feiceanacht na Gaeilge i ngach cineál comharthaíochta agus caithfear í a chur chun cinn go mear
- Caithfear úsáid ainmneacha sráide agus áite agus pearsanta a éascú trí chlár réigiúnach le hathrú mear a éascú
- Tá leanúnas comharthaíochta ar bhonn trasteorann tábhachtach agus ba chóir go n-éascódh an straitéis corprú chúrsaí Gaeilge i limistéir a bhfuil beartas nó cleachtas uile-oileáin ann cheana féin
- Teastaíonn gníomhú le hatmaisféar neodrach don Ghaeilge a spreagadh a éascóidh díospóireacht ar thosaíochtaí i dtaca le soláthar seirbhíse. Níl sé sin ann fá láthair mar gheall ar easpa soiléire agus mionsonra reachtaigh agus mar nár cuimsíodh an Ghaeilge i gclár oibre an chomhionannais
- Ar na buntáistí dearfacha a bhaineann le fógairt post agus seirbhísí i nGaeilge tá feicseanacht mhéadaithe agus tacaíocht do na meáin Ghaeilge
- Caithfidh an Coimisiún Comhionannais, comhlachtaí poiblí agus ranna rialtais cuimsiú scileanna Gaeilge i bpost-tuairiscí agus i gcritéir do phoist a éascú. Ba chóir reachtaíocht a ghabháil más gá
- Ba chóir liosta d'fhoirmeacha a úsáidtear go minic a thabhairt le chéile agus leaganacha Gaeilge / dátheangacha a sholáthar i gcónaí ar aon chéim le leaganacha Béarla
- Ba chóir iniúchadh na ndaoine le scileanna Gaeilge sa státseirbhís agus i gcomhlachtaí poiblí a dhéanamh
- Ba chóir plean thrí bliana le cláir dhírithé oiliúna agus tacaíochta, dírithe ar fhorbairt acmhainne, a chur in áit don státseirbhís agus do chomhlachtaí poiblí
- Sna hathruithe i dtorainneacha Chomhairlí áitiúla atá molta, caithfidh soláthar soiléir bheith ann a chinnteoidh go méadófar seirbhísí Gaeilge
- In áit chóras glórphoist i ranna Comhairlí áitiúla agus rialtais, ba chóir seirbhís thiomnaithe ar nós ionad glaonna a bhunú nó baill foirne le Gaeilge a cheapadh
- Ba chóir aistriúchán comhuaineach do gach ball a sholáthar sa Tionól mar atá i bhfeidhm sa Bhreatain Bheag agus in áiteanna eile

Political Institutions

- The visibility of Irish in signage of all kinds is a key issue and must be rapidly progressed
- Use of street and place names and personal names must be facilitated through a regional programme to facilitate rapid change
- The continuity of signage on a transfrontier basis is important and the strategy should facilitate the incorporation of Irish language concerns into areas where there is already an all-island policy or practice in place
- Action is needed to encourage a neutral climate to the Irish language which will facilitate discussion on priorities in terms of service provision. At present this does not exist because of the lack of legislative clarity and detail and the failure to include Irish in the equality agenda
- Advertising of posts and services in Irish has a number of positive benefits including increased visibility and support for the Irish language media
- The Equality Commission, public bodies and government departments must facilitate the inclusion of Irish language skills in job descriptions and criterion for posts. Legislation should be adopted if necessary
- A list of commonly used forms should be drawn together and Irish language versions / bilingual versions provided as a matter of course on a par with English language versions
- An audit of those with Irish language skills in the civil service and public bodies should be carried out
- A three year plan with targeted training and support programmes provided geared towards capacity building should be put in place for the civil service and public bodies
- Within the proposed changes in the local Council boundaries, there must be clear provision to ensure that Irish language services are increased
- The use of a voice-mail system in local Councils and government departments should be replaced with a dedicated call-centre type service or the appointment of Irish speaking staff members
- Simultaneous translation for all members should be provided in the Assembly as is the practice in Wales and elsewhere

“There is a huge job around basic awareness, to be done, because within the public administration sector, you have huge levels of disengagement, which are based upon lack of awareness. Now, everything happens with public administration if it has got legislative requirement. If it doesn't have legislative requirement, then it's unlikely to happen.”

Na Meáin

- Teastaíonn leorthacaíocht rialtais do na meáin chlóite Ghaeilge
- Ba chóir díriú ar an bheartas fógraíochta poiblí le nuachtá(i)n laethúil Gaeilge a chuimsiú
- Deimhníonn na meáin meas agus stádas na Gaeilge agus tá eochairpháirt ansin ag an chraoltóireacht
- Caithfidh reachtaíocht Westminster tabhairt faoin easpa tagairtí don Ghaeilge in Acht Cumarsáide 2003 agus i gCairt BBC 2005 agus na héagothroidimí i maoiniú do chraoltóireacht sa Bhreatain agus sa Ghàidhlig i gcomparáid leis an chraoltóireacht Ghaeilge sa tuaisceart
- Caithfear an bhearna idir an soláthar uaireanta craoltóireachta don Ghaeilge agus don Bhreatain a dhreidim go mór le méadú breisíoch i gcráoltóireacht teilifíse thar trí bliana, ag tosú le 200 uair sa bhliain ó 2009 ar BBC agus le forbairt sheirbhísí digiteachta agus idirlín. Ba chóir go mbeadh na cláir i nGaeilge, agus ní fán Ghaeilge amháin.
- Caithfear seirbhísí oideachasúla tríd an Ghaeilge a fhorbairt
- Caithfear maoiniú don Chiste Craoltóireachta Gaeilge a mhéadú agus a leathnú ar feadh cúig bliana eile ó mhí an Mhárta 2009
- Teastóidh rochtain shaor uilíoch ar TG4 san aistriú digiteach
- Tá tacaíocht agus acmhainniú breise a dhíth do raidió pobail na Gaeilge, chomh maith le bunú seirbhíse raidió Gaeilge níos cuimsithí

The Media

- Adequate governmental support is needed for the Irish language print media
- Policy on public advertising should be addressed to include the Irish language daily newspaper/s
- The media validates the respect and status of the Irish language and broadcasting has a key role
- Westminster legislation must address the lack of references to Irish in the 2003 Communications Act and 2005 BBC Charter and the disparities in funding for Welsh language and Gàidhlig broadcasting in comparison with Irish language broadcasting in the north
- The gap between broadcasting hours provision for Irish and for Welsh must be substantially closed with an incremental increase in television broadcasting over three years, starting with 200 hours per annum from 2009 on the BBC and the development of digital and internet services. Programming should be through Irish, and not solely about Irish.
- Educational services through Irish must be developed
- The funding for the Irish Language Broadcasting Fund must be increased and extended for a further five years from March 2009
- Free universal access to TG4 will be required in the digital switchover
- Additional support and resourcing is needed for Irish language community radio, as well as the establishment of a more comprehensive Irish language radio service

“There’s always been this strong relationship with Donegal and sometimes I think that we neglect that relationship, in a very practical way for example, students who are trainee teachers for Irish medium education can’t do teaching practise in Donegal, in the Gaeltacht where they could be improving their skills as teachers and their linguistic skills. That’s something that the Irish medium education review is looking at, but it’s things like that that we can’t neglect, our relationship with the Gaeltacht, it’s central to where we’ve arrived at.”

Cultúir, Ealaíona

- Ba chóir cláir eile ealaíon trí mheán na Gaeilge a fhorbairt chun cuidiú le rochtain na n-ealaíon agus fosta le réimse leathan suíomh sóisialta a chruthú ina dtiocfadh an teanga a úsáid
- Ba chóir tithe foilsitheoireachta d'ábhair Ghaeilge do pháistí agus d'aoisghrúpaí eile a chur suas
- Ba chóir cláir sa scríbhneoireacht chruthaitheach do gach aoisghrúpa agus aistriúcháin téacsanna i dteangacha eile a spreagadh
- Chuideodh cláir ealaíon do scoileanna sa scríbhneoireacht chruthaitheach (i nGaeilge), agus tionscail ilmheán agus cruthaitheacha, le fáinne úsáide a chruthú
- Ba chóir timpeallachtaí dátheangacha i leabharlanna a fhorbairt
- Ba chóir tabhairt faoi Phlean Forbartha Ealaíon cuimsitheach, i gcomhar le Tír Chonail, do naoi gcontae Chúige Uladh
- Caithfear an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn in iomlán na dtionscnamh turasóireachta agus cultúrtha thar lear
- Ba chóir ciste a bhunú chun cuidiú le tógáil turasóireachta Gaeilge, agus ceangail chultúrtha agus teanga le Gaeilgeoirí i gcodanna eile den domhan
- Ba chóir tabhairt faoi iniúchtaí turasóireachta i gceantair áitiúla i gcomhar le heagrais Ghaeilge chun indéantacht fhorbairt rianta turasóireachta, tograí áitainm srl tríd an Ghaeilge a scrúdú

Culture, Arts

- Further arts programmes should be developed through the medium of Irish to help access to the arts and also to create a wide range of social settings where the language can be used
- Publishing houses for Irish language materials for children and other age groups should be set up
- Encouragement of both creative writing programmes for all age groups and of translations of texts in other languages
- Arts programmes for schools in creative writing (in Irish), multi-media and creative industries to create a circle of usage
- Bilingual environments in libraries should be developed
- A comprehensive Artistic Development plan for the nine counties of Ulster should be undertaken in conjunction with Donegal
- The Irish language must be promoted in all tourism and cultural initiatives abroad
- A fund should be established to help build Irish language tourism, cultural and language links with Irish speakers in other parts of the world
- Tourism audits should be undertaken in local areas in conjunction with Irish language organisations to examine the feasibility of developing tourism trails, place name projects etc through Irish

When it comes to resources, there's something like £50 million next year that will be put from the Irish economy into roads infrastructure in the North as part of that comprehensive all-Ireland approach to the economy, so why would there not be the same sort of flows over a common issue like the Irish Language?

An bheatha shóisialta agus gheilleagrach

- Fíordheis gheilleagair í an Ghaeilge mar theanga oibre den 21ú haois san AE
- Oiliúint dár bhfórsa oibre trí rochain chúrsaí aistrithe agus ateangaireachta
- Atreorú gairmeacha i dtreo na Gaeilge ar bhonn infhostaíochta
- Teastaíonn leathanréimse scileanna do dhaoine óga agus dóibh sin in athoiliúint leis na poist is fearr a aimsiú. Ba chóir nach cumas labhartha Gaeilge amháin an t-aon scil a iarrfar agus a riarfar uirthi
- Fócas agus feacht ar na scileanna cognaíocha a thagann le foghlaim teanga eile
- Cuireann teanga mionlaigh agus margáí méadaithe agus úsáid in SAM agus i gCeanada margadh eile ar fáil
- Reachtaíocht a ligfeadh úsáid dhlíthiúil conarthaí srl i nGaeilge, agus baincéireacht, cuntasóireacht srl
- Reachtaíocht a shoiléireodh an ceart le Gaeilge a úsáid san áit oibre
- An Ghaeilge a ghríosú mar chritéar riachtanach i bpost-tuairiscí srl nuair is cuí
- Folúntais / Fógraí sna meáin Ghaeilge
- Tacaíocht dhírithe do 5 ghnólacht gheilleagair shóisialta nó gnólachtaí agus tograí Gaeilge gach bliain. Ag obair fá láthair in aghaidh an easa

Trasteorann

- Cuid de bheophobal í an teanga Ghaeilge ar an oileán iomlán agus níos faide amach agus caithfear seo a léiriú sa bheartas agus sa straitéis

Social and economic life

- Real economic opportunity, Irish as a 21st century working language in EU
- Train up our labour force through access to translation and interpretation courses
- Re-orientate careers towards Irish on basis of employability
- Broad range of skills training needed for young people and those retraining to access best posts. Ability to speak Irish should not be the only skill sought or provided for
- Focus and awareness on the cognitive skills that come with learning another language
- Minority language and increasing markets and usage in US and Canada provide another market
- Legislation to allow for legal use of contracts etc in Irish and banking, accountancy etc
- Legislation to clarify the right to use the Irish language in the workplace.
- Encouragement of Irish as an essential criteria in job descriptions etc where appropriate
- Vacancies / Advertisements in Irish language media
- Targeted support for 5 social economy and other Irish language businesses and projects per year. Currently working against the odds.

Transfrontier

- The Irish language is part of a living community on the whole island and further afield and this must be reflected in the policy and strategy

I think we need to internationalise our situation. Events like this are great where you have the Welsh experience and the Scots Gàidhlig experience and so on. Like immersion education. We didn't invent it, but we're participating in it as hundreds of other languages are participating in it internationally and the more we make that point, the better.

Janet Muller**Príomhfheidhmeannach, POBAL**

Sula mbogann muid chun chabhsúr na hócáide, tugaim deis do Bhriain Smart, Ceannaire, Aonad Feidhmiúcháin Teangeolaíochta, RCEF deis labhartha.

Janet Muller**CEO, POBAL**

Just before we move to the closing section, I should like to offer the chance to Brian Smart, Head of Linguistic Operations in DCAL to say a few words.

Brian Smart**Ceannaire, Aonad Feidhmiúcháin****Teangeolaíochta, RCEF****Head of Linguistic Operations, DCAL**

I welcome the opportunity to be here and listen, obviously, and you know that Janet Muller has in the past addressed the Interdepartmental Charter Implementation Group which is made up of the 11 Assembly departments together with the Whitehall Departments who have a presence here in NI and who are subject to the Charter as well and we will continue with this dialogue. I think it is important that the dialogue continues. We also have got feedback obviously from a range of different organisations by way of the consultations that previously took place. The Minister has clearly indicated that he wants to move forward with a strategy based around Charter and the current provisions and obviously we will be looking to put that together. It is his intention, obviously that he will bring that to the Executive for approval in the near future and I just want to say that I have enjoyed being here with you and in the workshops as well as listening to the various speakers. As we move forward to preparing our report to the third periodical report on behalf of all of the devolved administrations, within England, Scotland and Wales, through the Foreign Office back to COMEX and clearly they will be coming to visit us next year and it will be interesting to see what they have got to say in the report, probably to be published in 2009. So, I welcome the opportunity to continue with the dialogue, and thanks for the opportunity of saying a few words.

Bealach chun tosaigh **The Way Forward** **Sigve Gramstad:**

Thank you for a very interesting day, I have learned a lot. Of course, what I bring with me is the possibility that, at least, the Minister's recommendation concerning a comprehensive Irish Language policy will, if it may not be finalised in the forthcoming round, at least it will be fairly advanced and I would just add that I think it's important for the NGOs to contribute to the ministry so that they also have input from you in their work.

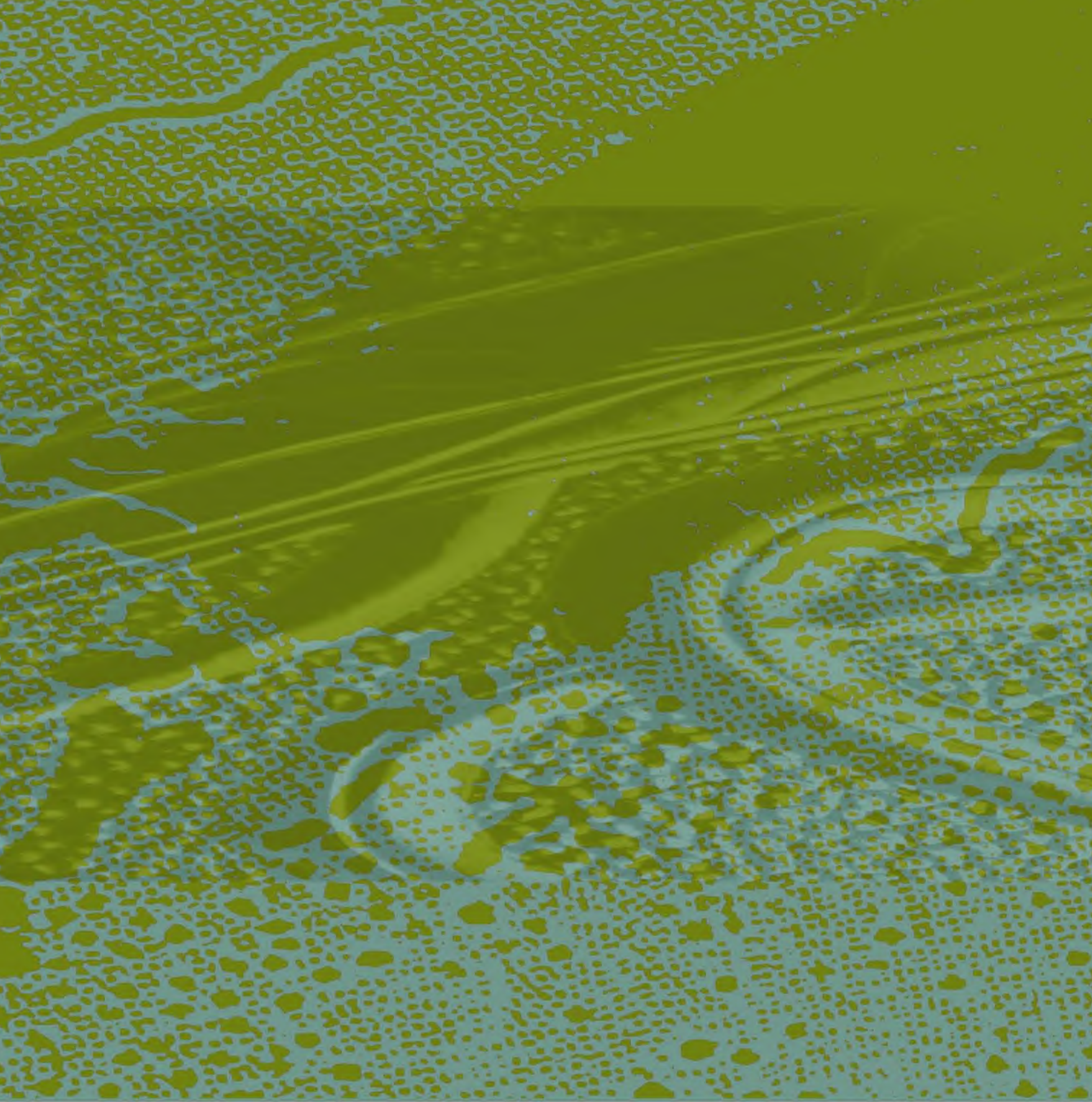
Meirion Prys Jones:

I don't want to tell you what to do. You know what you need to do, but when a door closes somebody usually opens the window, so you need to climb in through the window and the way you do it in this context is by saying 'how can we help?', because you have the expertise, you have the knowledge, you have the information. Over to you.

Dòmhnall Màrtainn:

Tapadh leat. This reminds me very much of the situation we were in ourselves in 1982 when, at a similar event in Sabhal Mòr Ostaig in Skye, the then Secretary of State George Younger came along and in response to our question as to whether the Government would be granting us a Gàidhlig Act, he said that he was not persuaded that it was the Government's task to provide a Gàidhlig Act; he said that the blueprint for the development of the Gàidhlig Language should come from the community itself and as a result of that we then went on and spent some

ten years consulting, finding out what other countries were doing and finally preparing a draft bill for a Gàidhlig Language Act. The then Secretary of State didn't accept it, but then we had had three or four Secretaries of State, it wasn't the same one that came in 1982. He set it aside and then, a couple of years later, the first task force was set up and the recommendations of that task force were not accepted by the then Minister. Another was set up and, low and behold, they came up with the right recommendations and as a result of that we got the bill and then we got the Act. Now going back to what we heard today, the strong message we heard from the Minister was that any progress or any development in relation to Irish would have to be done within the framework of the Charter and I think that that is, obviously, the way forward. You need to prepare your strategy within the framework of the Charter. I understand that from the discussions we had at the working group that I was at that the Department is already in the process of writing a strategy for the language, so the first step should be to find out what exactly the Department have in mind and how the Department see you helping them. You wouldn't want to be in the situation that we were in where after many years of hard work our bill was cast aside. I'm not saying that, at the end of the day, a number of points in our bill were not taken into account and were not accepted. If they had have accepted it when it was submitted by us then we could have had an Act and a Board eight years earlier that we actually did. Another thing is consultations with the community at all levels. And finally, it's very important, obviously, to have the support of the Minister at the time, but don't forget that ministers come and go like the tide, but civil servants or the Civil Service remain permanent and it's very important to establish good working relationships with the civil servants who are involved in drafting the piece of legislation you have in mind. That is certainly the way forward from my point of view, based on our experiences, and I wish you all the best in the future and if there's any way that we can help then we are more than happy to do so.



216 Bóthar na bhFál, Béal Feirste, BT12 6AH
Fón: 028 9043 8132 Facs: 028 9024 8667

R-phost: eolas@pobal.org Líonláithreán: www.pobal.org

