

TUARASCÁIL BHLIANTÚIL 2020: AN COIMISINÉIR TEANGA

Bhain ceann as gach cúig ghearán a rinneadh leis an gCoimisinéir Teanga anuraidh le Covid.

Ba ghearáin maidir le Covid-19 a bhí in 20% de na gearáin a d'ardaigh an Coimisinéir Teanga le comhlachtaí poiblí anuraidh. Bhain formhór na gcásanna le modhanna éagsúla cumarsáide leis an bpobal a bhí i mBéarla amháin, ina measc leabhráin eolais, suíomhanna gréasáin agus fógraíocht. Ní fhéadfaí go leor de na gearáin a fhiosrú go foirmiúil mar gheall ar easpa soláthar seirbhísí trí Ghaeilge in Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla, dar leis an gCoimisinéir Teanga, Rónán Ó Domhnaill.

Dúirt an tUasal Ó Domhnaill: *“Léiríonn na figiúirí sa Tuarascáil Bhliantúil nuair ba thábhachtaí agus ba phráinní an tseirbhís nó an t-eolas ón Stát gur lú an seans go gcuirfí ar fáil as Gaeilge í. Bhraith go leor de na daoine a rinne teagmháil le m’Oifig go raibh imeallú á dhéanamh ar lucht labhartha na Gaeilge tráth ar ghá an pobal ar fad a thabhairt le chéile in iarracht chomónta. Níor cheart beagán a dhéanamh de na dúshláin ollmhóra atá roimh an Stát in aimsir Covid ach níor cheart go mbeadh coimhlint idir na gníomhartha tromchúiseacha náisiúnta atá idir lámha agus dualgais i dtaca le cearta teanga.”*

Dúirt Rónán Ó Domhnaill chomh maith: *“Léiríonn na gearáin a rinneadh leis an Oifig anuraidh arís eile an gá le hAcht Teanga neartaithe chun seirbhís níos fearr trí Ghaeilge a fháil ón Stát. Tá súil go dtosóidh an Bille Teanga leasaithe á dhéanamh sin ach é a bheith achtaithe.”*

Thug Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga ceithre imscrúdú fhoirmiúla chun críche le linn 2020. Bhain péire acu le Covid.

Léirigh imscrúdú amháin gur sháraigh an Roinn Oideachais an tAcht Oideachais nuair a chinn sí tairseach ar líne chun go gcláródh mic léinn do ghráid ríofa san Ardteist a chur ar fáil i mBéarla amháin.

Léirigh imscrúdú eile gur sháraigh Comhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla nuair a chuir an Chomhairle comharthaí i mBéarla amháin a bhain le Covid in airde ar fud na cathrach.

Ar an iomlán rinneadh 604 gearán leis an Oifig anuraidh – laghdú 14% ó 2019. Tháinig 33% de na gearáin ó Bhaile Átha Cliath agus 23% ó na ceantair Ghaeltachta.

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ANNUAL REPORT 2020: AN COIMISINÉIR TEANGA

One in every five complaints made to Language Commissioner last year were Covid-related.

20% of all complaints raised by An Coimisinéir Teanga with public bodies during 2020 pertained to Covid-19. The majority of these cases concerned various means of communication with the public in English only, including information booklets, websites and advertising. Many of the complaints could not be formally investigated due to a lack of provision for Irish language services in the Official Languages Act, according to An Coimisinéir Teanga, Rónán Ó Domhnaill.

Mr Ó Domhnaill said: *“The figures released in the annual report highlight that the more urgent and more important the service or information that the State is providing, the less likely it is that information will be provided in Irish. Many complainants who contacted my Office felt Irish speakers were being marginalised by the State at a time when bringing the public together in common purpose was required. The huge challenges facing the State in a time of Covid should not be underestimated but there should be no conflict between the grave national actions underway and obligations regarding language rights.”*

Rónán Ó Domhnaill added: *“The complaints we received last year demonstrate yet again that the Official Languages Act needs to be strengthened to ensure a greater level of service through Irish from the State. It is hoped that a revised Official Languages Bill will begin to do just that when enacted.”*

Four formal investigations were concluded by the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga in 2020, two of which were Covid-related.

An investigation found that the Department of Education breached the Education Act when it decided to provide an online portal to enable students register for calculated grades in the Leaving Cert in English only.

Another investigation found that Galway City Council breached the Official Languages Act when erecting a large number of signs in English only which were in relation to Covid.

A total of 604 complaints were made to the Office last year – a 14% reduction on 2019. 33% of complaints came from Dublin, with a further 23% from Gaeltacht regions.

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