



An Coimisinéir Teanga



TUARASCÁIL BHLIANTÚIL 2005
ANNUAL REPORT 2005



Tuarascáil Bhliantúil 2005

Annual Report 2005

Don Aire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta

De réir Alt 30 d'Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003 tá an tuarascáil seo don bhliain 2005 á cur i láthair ag An Coimisinéir Teanga.

To the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs

In accordance with Section 30 of the Official Languages Act 2003, this report for the year 2005 is being presented by An Coimisinéir Teanga.



Seán Ó Cuirreáin

Seán Ó Cuirreáin
An Coimisinéir Teanga
Márta / March 2006

“

...Tá daonra na tíre ag athrú le blianta beaga anuas. Tá méadú suntasach tagtha ar líon na n-imirceach inár measc. Tá na teangacha úra agus na gnéithe cultúir nua ag saibhriú agus ag bláthú ár gcultúir féin. Tá muid ag éirí níos ilchultúrtha agus níos ilteangaí in aghaidh na bliana. Is cóir go mba chúis cheiliúrtha é sin – go háirithe nuair a chuidíonn sé linn meas a chothú ar ár dteanga féin.

Caithfidh muidne, mar phobal Gaeilge, déileáil leis na tionchair úra seo ar fad. Deir daoine nach miste don Ghaeilge dul i ngleic le saol an aonú haois is fiche, ach tá sé sin ag tarlú i ngan fhios dúinn...

...Is le gach aicme agus le gach grúpa de phobal na tíre seo an Ghaeilge – iad siúd sa Gaeltacht agus lasmuigh di, muintir na mbailte móra agus muintir na tuaithe, sliocht na n-imirceach agus an pobal seanbhunaithe.

”

Uachtarán na hÉireann, Máire Mhic Ghiolla Íosa ag oscailt go hoifigiúil Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga sa Spidéal, Co. na Gaillimhe ar an Máirt 13 Meán Fómhair 2005.



An tUachtarán Máire Mhic Giolla Íosa, An Dr. Martin McAleese, agus An Coimisinéir Teanga, Seán Ó Cuirreáin leis an Aire Éamon Ó Cuív, T.D. agus foireann Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga ag oscailt oifigiúil na hOifige, 13 Meán Fómhair 2005.

President Mary McAleese, Dr. Martin McAleese, and An Coimisinéir Teanga, Seán Ó Cuirreáin with Minister Éamon Ó Cuív, T.D. and the staff of Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga at the official opening of the Office, 13 September 2005.

Ar chúl ó chlé / Back row, from left: Damhnait Uí Mhaoldúin, Bainisteoir Oifige, Órla de Búrca, Laura Pathe, Cáit Uí Mhaoliríain, Ciarán Ó Ráighne.

“

The population of Ireland is changing in recent years. There is a significant increase in the number of immigrants in our midst. The new languages and new cultural features are enriching and enhancing our own culture. We are becoming more multicultural and more multilingual, year by year. This should be a matter of celebration – particularly when it helps us to value our own language.

We, as members of the Irish language community, must deal with these new influences. There are those who say that Irish must come to grips with life in the 21st century, but that is already happening even without our knowledge...

...the Irish language belongs to every class and every group in this society – those within the Gaeltacht and outside it, urban and rural dwellers, the descendants of immigrants and the long-established community.”

”

The President of Ireland, Mary McAleese officially opening the offices of An Coimisinéir Teanga in An Spidéal, Co. Galway on Tuesday 13 September 2005.

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Ráiteas Misin

Mission Statement

“Ag cosaint cearta teanga”

Seirbhís neamhspleách d'ardchaighdeán a chur ar fáil i gcomhlíonadh ár ndualgais reachtúil le cinntiú go ndéanann an státhóras beart de réir a bhriathair maidir le cearta teanga.

Cothrom na féinne a chinntiú do chách trí ghearáin maidir le deacrachtaí teacht ar sheirbhísí poiblí trí Ghaeilge a láimhseáil ar bhealach atá éifeachtach, gairmiúil agus neamhchlaonta.

Eolas soiléir, cruinn a chur ar fáil:

- don phobal maidir le cearta teanga, agus
- do chomhlachtaí poiblí maidir le dualgais teanga.

“Protecting Language Rights”

To provide an independent quality service whilst fulfilling our statutory obligations to ensure State compliance in relation to language rights.

To ensure fairness for all by dealing, in an efficient, professional and impartial manner, with complaints regarding difficulties accessing public services through the medium of Irish.

To provide clear and accurate information:

- to the public in relation to language rights, and
- to public bodies in relation to language obligations.

“ Bhí an tionchar a d'imir roinnt oifigeach ar Bhéarlóirí iad, leithéidí oifigigh phinsin, cléirigh dhúiche agus chomhairle chontae, oifigigh fóirithinte, bailitheoirí rátaí, dochtúirí, oifigigh Bhord na gCeantar Cúng agus Choimisiún na Talún, i ngan fhios dóibh féin, ar thuathánaigh bhochta, aineolacha, ar chainteoirí dúchasacha Gaeilge iad, ar an gcúis is mó le meath tapa na teanga. Ba mhinic a chuir na daoine a mbochtaineacht agus a n-ainnise féin i gcodarsnacht le cuma shócúlach na n-oifigeach agus is ar an nGaeilge nó ar easpa oideachas Béarla a chuireadar an locht as a mí-ádh féin. ”

An Canónach Munnely, Sagart Paróiste as Co. Mhaigh Eo, ag tabhairt fianaise do Choimisiún na Gaeltachta i 1926.

“ Tá an-áthas orm go bhfuil stádas oifigiúil agus oibre tugtha don Ghaeilge san Aontas Eorpach. Deimhníonn seo ag an leibhéal Eorpach meas agus stádas ár gcéad teanga oifigiúil. Is céim shuntasach phraiticiúil don Ghaeilge í seo, agus cuireann sé le mórpholasaí tacaíochta láidir don teanga sa bhaile...

...Cuirfidh an moladh go mór le stádas na Gaeilge san AE. Áirítear an Ghaeilge i measc teanga is fiche oibre is oifigiúil de chuid an Aontais. ”

An tAire Gnóthaí Eachtracha, Dermot Ahern, T.D. ag fáiltiú roimh chinneadh Airí Gnóthaí Eachtracha an Aontais Eorpaigh glacadh d'aonghuth le moladh Rialtas na hÉireann go dtabharfaí stádas oifigiúil agus oibre don Ghaeilge san Aontas Eorpach – 13 Meitheamh 2005.

“ The influence which a number of English-speaking officials such as pension officers, district and county council clerks, relieving officers, rate collectors, doctors, C.D. Board and Land Commission Officials, etc., unconsciously exerted on a poor and ignorant Irish-speaking peasantry was largely responsible for the rapid decay of the language. The people frequently contrasted their own poverty and misery with the comfortable appearance of the officials and attributed their own misfortune to the Irish language, or rather to their want of an English education. ”

Canon Munnely, Parish Priest from Mayo, giving evidence to Coimisiún na Gaeltachta in 1926.

“ I am very pleased that the Irish language has been accorded official and working status in the European Union. This affirms at European level the dignity and status of our first official language. This represents a particularly significant practical step for the Irish language, and complements the Government's wider policy of strong support for the language at home...

...The proposal results in a major enhancement of the status of the Irish language in the EU. It becomes the twenty-first official and working language of the Union. ”

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Dermot Ahern T.D. welcoming the decision by EU Foreign Ministers to unanimously approve the Irish Government's proposal to accord official and working status in the EU to the Irish language - 13 June 2005.

RÉAMHRÁ

Imeallach nó Lámach?

Tá súil in imeacht ama go gcabhróidh Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003 le háit na teanga i saol poiblí na tíre a bhogadh ón imeall go hionad lámach agus go neartófar an tuiscint in intinn an phobail gur gné thábhachtach agus luachmhar dár saol í an Ghaeilge – í ina sócmhainn seachas ina dliteanas.

Cé gur cuireadh tús leis an bpróiseas le hOifig an Choimisinéara Teanga a bhunú in earrach na bliana 2004, is féidir a rá gurbh í an bhliain 2005 an chéad bhliain iomlán i mbun feidhme don Oifig.

Is ceart a mheabhú, áfach, nach raibh i bhfeidhm le linn na bliana sin ach cuid d'fhorálacha Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003, mar go raibh sé leagtha amach ón tús gur de réir a chéile agus thar thréimhse ama a thabharfaí forálacha iomlána an Achta i bhfeidhm.

De bharr an struchtúir sin, bhí teorainn fós le réimse oibre agus le húdarás na hOifige sa thréimhse bliana seo. Ar an 14 Iúil 2006 – trí bliana ón uair a shínigh an tUachtarán an tAcht ina dhlí - a thiocfaidh gach foráil den reachtaíocht i bhfeidhm.

Is léir nach mbeidh tionchar iomlán agus éifeacht na reachtaíochta nua seo le sonrú go dtí go mbeidh:

- na forálacha ar fad i bhfeidhm,
- rialacháin déanta faoin Acht i dtaca le húsáid na Gaeilge i bhfógraíocht, comharthaíocht, stáiseanáireacht agus fógairtí béil agus
- go mbeidh bailiúchán mór scéimeanna teanga daingnithe le comhlachtaí poiblí faoin Acht.

Go deimhin, d'fhéadfaí a rá gur sna blianta a leanfaidh neadú agus daingniú dhualgais iomlána na reachtaíochta sa státchóras is féidir a bheith ag súil le fíorthorthaí, ó tharla gur próiseas seachas mórghníomhartha aonair atá mar chroílár ag cuid mhór de struchtúir an Achta.

FOREWORD

Marginal or Mainstream?

It is expected over time that the Official Languages Act 2003 will help bring the Irish language from the margins into the mainstream of public life in Ireland and help strengthen the public's understanding of the Irish language as an important and valuable facet of our lives – an asset not a liability.

Although the process of establishing the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga began in the spring of 2004, this past year - 2005 - was its first full year in operation.

However, only a limited number of the provisions of the Official Languages Act were in force during this time. The *modus operandi* is that the provisions of the Act are being introduced gradually over a period of time.

As a result of this arrangement, the remit and regulatory authority of this Office was limited during the year 2005. All provisions of the legislation will be in force on the 14 July 2006, three years after the signing of the Act into law by the President.

It is clear that the full effect and influence of the new legislation will not be fully apparent until such time as:

- all the provisions of the Act are in force,
- regulations are made under the Act in relation to the use of Irish in advertising, signage, stationery, and oral announcements and
- a substantial number of language schemes are confirmed with public bodies under the Act.

Since the Act is structured in such a way as to have at its core a process, rather than individual significant actions, it is only when the full provisions of the Act have become established and embedded in the State sector that its full benefits will be evident.

Gearáin

Tháinig glanmhéadú de 36% ar líon iomlán na ngearán, fadhbanna agus deacrachtaí a cuireadh i láthair na hOifige le linn na bliana i gcomparáid leis an gcéad tréimhse 10 mí d'fheidhmiú na hOifige in 2004. Is ionann é sin agus meánmhéadú de 14% ar bhonn bliana iomláine.

Le linn na bliana 2005 lean m'Oifig den straitéis eatramhach gur chóir, i gcásanna nach raibh dualgaí reachtúla fós i bhfeidhm, an oiread cabhrach agus ab fhéidir a sholáthar de réir "spiorad na reachtaíochta" do bhaill den phobal a chreid go raibh cúis gearáin acu de bharr deacrachtaí nó fadhbanna le seirbhísí trí Ghaeilge ón státchóras.

Fuair m'Oifig comhoibriú chuige seo ó chuid mhór de chomhlachtaí poiblí na tíre, fiú i gcásanna a bhí lasmuigh de na dualgaí dlíthiúla a bhí orthu faoin Acht agus ba mhór agam é seo.

Ón nGaeltacht a tháinig 34% de na gearáin le linn 2005 agus tháinig an 66% eile ó cheantair lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht.

Ba é Contae Bhaile Átha Cliath arís an contae is mó as a dtáinig gearáin (37%) agus Contae na Gaillimhe sa dara háit (17%).

Eolas

Leanadh de na hiarrachtaí le heolas a scaipeadh ar an bpobal faoi ról agus feidhmeanna na hOifige agus cearta teanga an phobail faoin Acht:

- trí léachtaí, seimineáir agus ócáidí poiblí eile (29 acu le linn na bliana 2005),
- trí agallaimh leis na meáin chumarsáide (85 acu le linn na bliana),
- trí fheachtais oideachais do dhaltai dara leibhéal,
- trí fhorbairt bhreise ar an suíomh gréasáin www.coimisineir.ie,
- trí fheachtas fógraíochta teilifíse, raidió agus nuachtáin agus
- trí chuairteanna réigiúnacha.

Le linn na bliana rinneadh teagmháil thar ceann comhlachtaí poiblí le m'Oifig ar 153 ócáid éagsúil le ceisteanna ar leith nó le léargas iomlán a fháil maidir le dualgaí teanga faoin Acht.

Complaints

The total number of complaints, problems and difficulties increased during the year by 36% compared to the first 10 month period of operation of my Office in 2004. This represents an increase of 14% on an annual basis.

In cases where statutory obligations were not yet in place, my Office continued during 2005 with the interim strategy of seeking to give as much help as possible within the "spirit of the legislation" to people who believed they had grounds for complaint because of difficulties or problems in accessing state services in Irish.

My Office received the cooperation of many public bodies throughout the country, even in those situations where strictly speaking no legal obligations were attached under the Act and I appreciated that approach.

One third of complaints (34%) came from Gaeltacht areas with the remaining 66% from non-Gaeltacht areas.

Co. Dublin was again the county which provided most complaints (37%) with Co. Galway in second place (17%).

Information

We continued to promote understanding of our role and functions – and the issue of language rights under the Act:

- through lectures, seminars and other public occasions (29 events during 2005),
- by media interviews (85 during the year),
- through an education campaign at second level,
- by further development of our website www.coimisineir.ie,
- by an awareness campaign on television, radio and newspapers and
- through regional visits.

During 2005, advice was sought from my Office on 153 occasions on behalf of public bodies in relation to specific obligations or general briefings on the provisions of the Official Languages Act.

RÉAMHRÁ

Lean m'Oifig freisin d'fheachtais mhonatóireachta le cinntiú go raibh comhlachtaí poiblí ag cloí le forálacha an Achta.

Bliain shuntasach

Níl aon amhras ann ach gur bliain shuntasach a bhí in 2005 i dtaca le cúrsaí na teanga go ginearálta.

Fógraíodh i Mí an Mheithimh go raibh glactha d'aonghuth le moladh Rialtas na hÉireann go dtabharfaí stádas oifigiúil agus oibre don Ghaeilge san Aontas Eorpach.

Leanadh le linn na bliana le díospóireacht rithábachtach – spreagtha ag Tuarascáil Tionscnaimh na hOifige seo – maidir le héifeacht an chórais oideachais le líofacht bhunúsach sa teanga a thabhairt do dhaltai scoile i bhfianaise na hinfheistíochta atá á déanamh i múineadh na Gaeilge. Is léir ón aisfhreagra a fuair m'Oifig le linn 2005 gur díospóireacht í seo nach gcíochnóidh go sásúil go mbeidh leasuithe i gceist a fhágfaidh líofacht bhunúsach sa teanga ag daltaí ar fhágáil an chórais oideachais dóibh.

Chinntigh an fás faoin gcóras gaelscolaíochta go raibh aitheantas tugtha in 2005 do ghaelscoileanna i ngach ceann de na 26 contae. Rinne na meáin Ghaeilge tuilleadh dul chun cinn i measc an phobail.

Sa Ghaeltacht, rinne an Bord Pleanála cinntí suntasacha le linn na bliana i dtaca le cúrsaí pleanála agus scéimeanna tithíochta agus d'fhógair Údarás na Gaeltachta beartas forbartha le straitéis nua teanga. D'fhoilsigh an Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta tuarascáil thábhachtach ar chúrsaí oideachais sa Ghaeltacht freisin.

An Ghaeilge i gcomórtais sa státseirbhís

Is cúis iontais agus díomá dom, áfach, ag tráth a bhfuil tús á chur le feidhmiú Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla an t-eolas atá á fhoilsiú sa tuarascáil seo maidir le creidiúint don Ghaeilge i gcomórtais áirithe sa státseirbhís (féach “Cásanna Roghnaithe”).

Cuireadh deireadh le “Gaeilge éigeantach” do phoist agus d'arduithe céime sa státchóras tríocha bliain ó shin.

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My Office continued with monitoring campaigns to ensure compliance by public bodies with the provisions of the Act.

A Significant Year

2005 was a significant year in terms of Irish language affairs in general.

The acceptance of the Government's proposal that Irish be given official and working status in the European Union was announced in June 2005.

An important public debate – inspired by the Inaugural Report of this Office – continued during the year in relation to the ineffectiveness of the education system in equipping students with a basic fluency in Irish. This lack of fluency occurs in spite of the significant investment made in teaching the language. The feedback to my Office during 2005 would suggest that this debate will not reach a successful conclusion until reform has taken place which will see students achieve basic fluency whilst in the education system.

The growth of Gaelscoileanna saw, for the first time, recognition being given to an Irish medium school in every one of the 26 counties. The Irish language media also made further progress during the year.

In the Gaeltacht, key decisions were made in relation to planning and housing schemes during 2005 by An Bord Pleanála. Údarás na Gaeltachta announced a new language-focused development strategy. An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta & Gaelscolaíochta published an important report on Gaeltacht education.

Irish in civil service competitions

It was a matter of some surprise and disappointment to me, as the provisions of the Official Languages Act are being introduced, to learn how the matter of credit for proficiency in Irish has been dealt with in certain civil service competitions – an issue on which information is published in this report (see “Selected Cases”).

Compulsory Irish for recruitment and promotions in the civil service ended thirty years ago.

There was a widely held belief that a system had been established – based on Government

RÉAMHRÁ

Ceapadh go forleathan go raibh córas i bhfeidhm ina áit, a thabharfadh marcanna breise d'iarrthóirí le leibhéal breise scile .i. cumas in dhá theanga oifigiúla an Stáit. Bhí an córas seo bunaithe ar chinntí agus ar chomhaontaithe Rialtais.

Tá an chosúlacht ar chúrsaí go bhfuil cuid den chóras sin gan feidhmiú, ligthe le sruth nó curtha de dhroim seoil i leath na rann agus na n-oifigí Rialtais.

Creidim go bhfuil, ar an gcéad amharc, ceisteanna tromchúiseacha le freagairt faoin mbealach nár tugadh i gcásanna áirithe an chreidiúint chuí do dhaoine a bhí inniúil ar úsáid na Gaeilge agus a diúltaíodh arduithe céime dóibh dá réir. Tá ceisteanna ann freisin faoin léirmhíniú nua a rinne an Roinn Airgeadais le linn 2005 ar an socrú seo.

Na marcanna breise seo an t-aon chóras a ceapadh a bheith i bhfeidhm le daoine a spreagadh le hinniúlacht sa Ghaeilge a bhaint amach le go mbeadh céatadán áirithe d'fhostaithe an Stáit ar fáil le seirbhísí trí Ghaeilge a sholáthar ag leibhéal éagsúla sa státchóras. Cé nach raibh dualgas sainiúil chun seirbhís trí Ghaeilge a sholáthar ar dhaoine a gheobhadh na marcanna breise bhí an tuiscint ann go raibh a leithéid de chóras ina bhunriachtanas mura raibh an teanga le himeallú laistigh de sheirbhísí an Stáit.

Beidh daoine ann a dhéanfaidh an cás nár chóir aitheantas den chineál seo a thabhairt as an leibhéal breise scile a bhaineann le cumas sa Ghaeilge. Ach is argóint í sin nach mbaineann leis an gcás seo. Baineann croí na ceiste seo le feidhmiú an státchórais de réir pholasaithe agus chomhaontaithe an Rialtais, le cothromaíocht, oscailteacht agus eitic.

FOREWORD

decisions and agreements - which awarded additional marks to candidates with an extra level of skill, i.e. proficiency in both official languages of the State.

It now appears that part of that system was not enforced, or was abandoned or undermined in around half of Government departments and offices.

This serious situation leads me to believe, at first glance, that there are major questions to be answered as to why appropriate credit was not awarded in certain circumstances to those proficient in Irish; resulting in state employees losing out on promotions. In addition questions surround a new interpretation of this system given by the Department of Finance in 2005.

The provision of additional marks for Irish was the only system thought to be in place to encourage the achievement of proficiency in the language so as to ensure that a certain percentage of State employees could provide services through Irish at various levels in the civil service. Although a specific obligation to provide services through Irish was not a condition of the awarding of additional marks, it was understood that such a system was necessary if Irish was not be marginalised within State services.

There will be those who will argue that the additional skill of proficiency in Irish should not attract such recognition. That argument is not relevant, however, in this instance.

The core issue here concerns compliance with Government decisions and agreements, and with matters of fairness, openness and ethics in the civil service.

CÚLRA EOLAIS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Ba í an bhliain 2005 an chéad bhliain iomlán i mbun feidhme d'Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga.

Cheap an tUachtarán mé mar Choimisinéir Teanga go foirmiúil an 23 Feabhra 2004 ar chomhairle an Rialtais tar éis do Dháil Éireann agus do Sheanad Éireann rún a rith ag moladh an cheapacháin.

Cuireadh tús gan mhoill ina dhiaidh sin le bunú na hOifige agus tá tuairisc ar obair na chéad tréimhse 10 mí go deireadh na bliana 2004 ar fáil sa Tuarascáil Tionscnaimh 2004.

Oifig nua neamhspleách í Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga a bhfuil sé mar chúram uirthi monatóireacht a dhéanamh ar an mbealach a bhfuil forálacha Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003 á gcomhlíonadh ag comhlachtaí poiblí an Stáit, agus le gach beart riachtanach a dhéanamh chun a chinntiú go gcomhlíonfaidh comhlachtaí poiblí a ndualgais faoin Acht.

Fiosraíonn an Oifig gearáin ón bpobal i gcásanna ina gcreidtear go bhfuil teipthe ar chomhlachtaí poiblí a ndualgais a chomhlíonadh faoi Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003 nó faoi aon achtachán eile a bhaineann le stádas nó le húsáid na Gaeilge.

Cuireann an Oifig comhairle ar fáil don phobal maidir lena gcearta teanga agus comhairle ar na comhlachtaí poiblí maidir lena ndualgais teanga faoin Acht.

Tá sé mar chuspóir ag Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003 a chinntiú go soláthraíonn an tseirbhís phoiblí seirbhísí Gaeilge níos líonmhaire agus atá ar chaighdeán níos airde.

Tá an tAcht á thabhairt i bhfeidhm de réir a chéile, thar thréimhse ama, agus beidh gach foráil i bhfeidhm ar an 14 Iúil 2006 – trí bliana ón uair a shínigh an tUachtarán an tAcht ina dhlí ar 14 Iúil 2003. Cé is moite d'orduithe logainmneacha agus daingniú scéimeanna faoin Acht níor tugadh aon fhoráil bhreise den Acht i bhfeidhm le linn na bliana 2005.

Bheadh súil go mbeadh sé mar thoradh ar fheidhmiú an Achta go gcruthófaí spás nua don Ghaeilge i gcóras riaracháin phoiblí na tíre. Is léiriú é ar chuid amháin d'aidhm teanga an Stáit mar thaca leis na hiarrachtaí eile an teanga a chur chun cinn san oideachas, sa chraoltóireacht, sna healaíona, i saol na Gaeltachta agus i gcúrsaí an tsaoil go ginearálta.

2005 was the first full year in which the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga was operational.

The President formally appointed me as Coimisinéir Teanga on the 23 February 2004 on the advice of Government following a resolution passed by Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann recommending the appointment.

The process of establishing the new Office began soon afterwards and a report on the work done in this first ten month period until the end of 2004 is available in the Inaugural Report 2004.

The Office of the Coimisinéir Teanga is a new independent Office whose responsibility it is to monitor the manner in which the State's public bodies comply with the provisions of The Official Languages Act 2003, and to take all necessary measures to ensure that public bodies fulfil their obligations under the Act.

The Office investigates complaints from the public in cases where it is believed that public bodies may have failed to fulfil their obligations under the Official Languages Act 2003 or under any other enactment which deals with the use or status of Irish.

The Office provides advice to the public about their language rights and to public bodies about their obligations under the Act.

The primary objective of the Act is to ensure the provision of additional and higher quality services through Irish by the public service.

The Act is being implemented on a phased basis and every provision of the Act will be in force on the 14 July 2006 – three years from the date the President signed the Act into law on the 14 July 2003. Apart from placenames orders and schemes confirmed under the Act, no further provisions of the Act were brought into force during 2005.

It is expected that the implementation of the Act will create new space for the language within the public administration of the country. It forms one element of the State's support of the language, the main thrust of which is to promote Irish in education, broadcasting, the arts, Gaeltacht life and in public life generally.

OSCAILT OIFIGIÚIL NA hOIFIGE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE OFFICE



An tUachtarán Máire Mhic Ghiolla Íosa le daltaí rang 2, Scoil Éinne, an Spidéal ag oscailt oifigiúil Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga.

President Mary McAleese with pupils from 2nd class, Scoil Éinne, An Spidéal at the official opening of Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga.



An tUachtarán Máire Mhic Ghiolla Íosa agus An Coimisinéir Teanga Seán Ó Cuirreáin ag oscailt oifigiúil na hOifige.

President Mary McAleese and An Coimisinéir Teanga, Seán Ó Cuirreáin at the official opening of the Office.

Níl aon amhras ach go raibh oscailt oifigiúil na hOifige ag an Uachtarán, Máire Mhic Ghiolla Íosa, sa Spidéal, Co. na Gaillimhe ar an 13 Meán Fómhair 2005 ar cheann de bhuaicphointí na bliana.

I bhfoirgneamh nua de chuid Údarás na Gaeltachta, a bhfuil cuid de ar léas ag Oifig na nOibreacha Poiblí, atá an oifig lonnaithe.

D'fhreastail slua mór ar ócáid na hoscailte, ina measc, ionadaithe poiblí, feidhmeannaigh ó Ranna Rialtais agus ó eagraíochtaí eile stáit, ionadaithe ó eagraíochtaí Gaeilge agus Gaeltachta chomh maith le cuid de phobal an cheantair.

Bhí a fear céile, an Dr. Martin McAleese, i dteannta an Uachtaráin.

I measc na n-ionadaithe poiblí a bhí i láthair bhí an tAire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta, Éamon Ó Cuív T.D.

Bronnadh cuimhneachán ealaíne múnlaíthe as píosa de dhair dhubh phortaigh, a bhí os cionn trí mhíle bliain d'aois, ar an Uachtarán i gcuimhne na hócáide. Ba é Eric Byrne ó Cheardlann an Spidéil a rinne an píosa ealaíne.

The official opening of the Office by the President Mary McAleese on the 13 September 2005 was one of the highlights of the year.

The office of An Coimisinéir Teanga is located in a new Údarás na Gaeltachta owned facility, part of which is leased for that purpose by the Office of Public Works.

The official opening was attended by public representatives, officials from Government Departments and other State bodies and representatives from Irish language and Gaeltacht organisations as well as members of the local community.

The President's husband, Dr. Martin McAleese, accompanied her.

Public representatives included the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Éamon Ó Cuív T.D.

A commemorative souvenir sculpted from 3,000 year old bog oak by Eric Byrne, from the local craft centre, was presented to the President.

OSCAILT OIFIGIÚIL NA HOIFIGE

OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE OFFICE

Ag labhairt di ar an ócáid thagair an tUachtarán do na hathruithe móra atá ag tarlú in Éirinn na linne seo:

"...Is í an teanga s'againne an teanga scríofa is sine san Eoraip atá fós á labhairt mar theanga bheo phobail. "Beatha teanga í a labhairt" a deirtear, agus tá fírinne sa seanfhocal. Ach todhchaí teanga dea-thoil an phobail, agus níl amhras ar bith ann ach go bhfuil dearcadh dearfach i leith na Gaeilge ag mórán de phobal na tíre sa lá atá inniu ann. Murab ionann agus glúin ó shin, tá sé "cool" anois a bheith ábalta tú féin a chur in iúl trí Ghaeilge.

Agus, ar ndóigh, tá daonra na tíre ag athrú le blianta beaga anuas. Tá méadú suntasach tagtha ar líon na n-imirceach inár measc. Tá na teangacha úra agus na gnéithe cultúir nua ag saibhriú agus ag bláthú ár gcultúir féin. Tá muid ag éirí níos ilchultúrtha agus níos ilteangaí in aghaidh na bliana. Is cóir go mba chúis cheiliúrtha é sin – go háirithe nuair a chuidíonn sé linn meas a chothú ar ár dteanga féin.

Caithfidh muidne, mar phobal Gaeilge, déileáil leis na tionchair úra seo ar fad. Deir daoine nach miste don Ghaeilge dul i ngleic le saol an aonú haois is fiche, ach tá sé sin ag tarlú i ngan fhios dúinn...

...Is le gach aicme agus le gach grúpa de phobal na tíre seo an Ghaeilge – iad siúd sa Gaeltacht agus lasmuigh di, muintir na mbailte móra agus muintir na tuaithe, sliocht na n-imirceach agus an pobal seanbhunaithe."

Agus an Oifig oscailte go hoifigiúil tá sé mar dhúshlán anois tógáil ar an dúshraith agus a dheimhniú go mbeidh ról tairbheach agus fiúntach aici i gcónaí ag cinntiú go ndéanfaidh an státchóras beart de réir a bhriathair maidir le cearta teanga.

Speaking at the occasion the President referred to the significant changes currently happening in Ireland (*translation*):

"Our language is the oldest written language in Europe which is still spoken as a living community language. The saying "Beatha teanga í a labhairt" rings true. But the future of the language is dependent on public goodwill, and there is no doubt but many people today have a positive attitude towards Irish. It is now "cool" to be able to express yourself in Irish – in contrast to the situation a generation ago.

And of course, the population of Ireland is changing in recent years. There is a significant increase in the number of immigrants in our midst. The new languages and new cultural features are enriching and enhancing our own culture. We are becoming more multicultural and more multilingual, year by year. This should be a matter of celebration – particularly when it helps us to value our own language.

We, as members of the Irish language community, must deal with these new influences. There are those who say that Irish must come to grips with life in the 21st century, but that is already happening even without our knowledge...

...the Irish language belongs to every class and every group in this society – those within the Gaeltacht and outside it, urban and rural dwellers, the descendants of immigrants and the long-established community."

With the Office officially opened, the challenge ahead is to build on the foundation and ensure that it always has a positive and valuable role in guaranteeing State compliance in relation to language rights.

ÓRÁIDÍ, LÉACHTAÍ AGUS SEIMINEÁIR SPEECHES, LECTURES AND SEMINARS



Le linn na bliana labhair mé ag 29 ócáid phoiblí ar fud na tíre le heolas a scaipeadh faoi ról agus faoi fheidhmeanna na hOifige.

Ba mhaith liom buíochas a ghabháil leo siúd ar fad a thug cuireadh dom léachtaí a thabhairt nó a bheith páirteach i seimineáir nó in ócáidí eile.

Seo a leanas liosta de na príomhócáidí sin ina raibh mé páirteach le linn na bliana 2005:

ÓRÁIDÍ, LÉACHTAÍ AGUS SEIMINEÁIR

13 Eanáir 2005

Léacht: Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge, An Cheathrú Rua, Co. na Gaillimhe.

13 Eanáir 2005

Óráid ag ócáid seolta leabhair ag an club "Sult" i mBaile Átha Cliath.

17 Eanáir 2005

Óráid agus seisiún ceisteanna/freagraí ag seimineár do chomhlachtaí poiblí a bhí ag ullmhú scéimeanna teanga – Baile Átha Cliath.

15 Feabhra 2005

Óráid agus seisiún ceisteanna/freagraí ag cruinniú de Chomhairle Gaeilge an Rialtais Áitiúil, ag Áras an Chontae, Gaillimh.

28 Feabhra 2005

Óráid ag ócáid seolta fiseán staire ar Ghaeltacht Iar-Thuaisceart Dhún na nGall – An Fál Carrach.

15 Márta 2005

Léacht agus seisiún ceisteanna/freagraí do mhic léinn dlí in Óstaí an Rí, Baile Átha Cliath.

19 Márta 2005

Léacht phoiblí do Chumann Forbartha Chois Fharraige, Indreabhán, Co. na Gaillimhe.

SPEECHES, LECTURES AND SEMINARS

13 January 2005

Lecture: Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge, An Cheathrú Rua, Co. Galway.

13 January 2005

Address at book launch in Club Sult, Dublin.

17 January 2005

Address and questions/answers session at a seminar for public bodies preparing language schemes – Dublin.

15 February 2005

Address and question/answers session at meeting of Irish language Council for Local Government in County Buildings, Galway.

28 February 2005

Address at the launch of history video on the North-Western Gaeltacht of Donegal – An Fál Carrach.

15 March 2005

Lecture and questions/answers session for students of law, King's Inns, Dublin.

19 March 2005

Public lecture organised by Cumann Forbartha Chois Fharraige, Indreabhán, Co. Galway.

ÓRÁIDÍ, LÉACHTAÍ AGUS SEIMINEÁIR

SPEECHES, LECTURES AND SEMINARS

ÓRÁIDÍ, LÉACHTAÍ AGUS SEIMINEÁIR

23 Márta 2005

Seisiún ceisteanna/freagraí le daltaí ag Coláiste Eoin, Baile Átha Cliath.

5 Aibreán 2005

Léacht i dteannta le hAire Oideachais agus Foghlaim Fadsaoil Chomhthionóil Náisiúnta na Breataine Bige comheagraithe ag Coleg Sir Gâr agus Fiontar DCU, Baile Átha Cliath.

9 Aibreán 2005

Léacht ag seimineár idirnáisiúnta an Chumainn le Léann Ceanadach in Éirinn, Ambasad Ceanada, Baile Átha Cliath.

29 Aibreán 2005

Léacht agus seisiún ceisteanna/freagraí ag seimineár do chomhlachtaí poiblí eagraithe ag Feileastram Teo., Dún Chaoin, Co. Chiarraí.

4 Bealtaine 2005

Léacht agus seisiún ceisteanna/freagraí ag seimineár poiblí eagraithe ag Coláiste Ráithín, Bré, Co. Chill Mhantáin.

5 Bealtaine 2005

Óráid agus seisiún ceisteanna/freagraí ag cruinniú de bhord Chomhdháil Náisiúnta na Gaeilge, Baile Átha Cliath.

19 Bealtaine 2005

Léacht agus seisiún ceisteanna/freagraí ag comhdháil bhliantúil Chumann Chléirigh Bhaile na hÉireann – Cloich na Coillte, Co. Chorcaí.

31 Bealtaine 2005

Léacht agus seisiún ceisteanna/freagraí ag seimineár poiblí eagraithe ag An Clár le Gaeilge in Inis, Co. an Chláir.

13 Meitheamh 2005

Óráid do mhic léinn ag Coláiste (Samhraidh) Chamuis, Ros a' Mhíl, Co. na Gaillimhe.

13 Meitheamh 2005

Óráid do mhic léinn ag Coláiste (Samhraidh) Chonnacht, An Spidéal, Co. na Gaillimhe.

13 Meitheamh 2005

Óráid do mhic léinn ag Coláiste (Samhraidh) Lurgan, Indreabhán, Co. na Gaillimhe.

14 Meitheamh 2005

Óráid d'ábhar múinteoirí ag Coláiste (Samhraidh) Chiaráin, an Cheathrú Rua, Co. na Gaillimhe.

SPEECHES, LECTURES AND SEMINARS

23 March 2005

Questions/answers session with students at Coláiste Eoin, Dublin.

5 April 2005

Lecture with the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, Welsh National Assembly jointly organised by Coleg Sir Gâr and Fiontar DCU, Dublin.

9 April 2005

Lecture at the international seminar of the Association for Canadian Studies in Ireland, Canadian Embassy, Dublin.

29 April 2005

Lecture and questions/answers session at seminar for public bodies organised by Feileastram Teo., Dún Chaoin, Co. Kerry.

4 May 2005

Lecture and questions/answers session at public seminar organised by Coláiste Ráithín, Bray, Co. Wicklow.

5 May 2005

Address and questions/answers session at board meeting of Comhdháil Náisiúnta na Gaeilge, Dublin.

19 May 2005

Lecture and questions/answers session at Town Clerks' annual conference, Clonakilty, Co. Cork.

31 May 2005

Lecture and questions/answers session at public seminar organised by An Clár le Gaeilge, Ennis, Co. Clare.

13 June 2005

Address to students at Coláiste Chamuis (Summer College), Ros a' Mhíl, Co. Galway.

13 June 2005

Address to students at Coláiste Chonnacht (Summer College), An Spidéal, Co. Galway.

13 June 2005

Address to students at Coláiste Lurgan (Summer College), Indreabhán, Co. Galway.

14 June 2005

Address to trainee teachers at Coláiste Chiaráin (Summer College), An Cheathrú Rua, Co. Galway.

ÓRÁIDÍ, LÉACHTAÍ AGUS SEIMINEÁIR

SPEECHES, LECTURES AND SEMINARS

ÓRÁIDÍ, LÉACHTAÍ AGUS SEIMINEÁIR

26 Iúil 2005

Freastal ar phreasagallamh seolta 16 scéim teanga ag an Aire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta, Baile Átha Cliath.

3 Deireadh Fómhair 2005

Óráid agus seisiún ceisteanna/freagraí ag seimineár do chomhlachtaí poiblí a bhí ag ullmhú scéimeanna teanga, Baile Átha Cliath.

17 Deireadh Fómhair 2005

Léacht agus seisiún ceisteanna/freagraí ag Ollscoil Luimnigh.

18 Deireadh Fómhair 2005

Óráid ag ócáid seolta fillteán d'fhoirmeacha dátheangacha ag scéim pleanála teanga Chomharchumann Shailearna agus Cumas Teo., Co. na Gaillimhe.

3 Samhain 2005

Cathaoirleacht ar Sheimineár Chomhairle Gaeilge an Rialtais Áitiúil, Halla na Cathrach, Corcaigh.

12 Samhain 2005

Óráid agus seisiún ceisteanna/freagraí ag comhdháil bhliantúil Chomhchoiste Náisiúnta na gColáistí Samhraidh, Baile Átha Cliath.

16 Samhain 2005

Léacht agus seisiún ceisteanna/freagraí ag comhdháil bhliantúil Choimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit, Bóthar na Trá, Gaillimh.

19 Samhain 2005

Léacht agus seisiún ceisteanna/freagraí ag Ollscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh.

13 Nollaig 2005

Léacht agus seisiún ceisteanna/freagraí do chúrsa an Ard-Diplóma i nGaeilge Fheidhmeach agus Aistriúchán eagraithe ag Europus Teo., Institiúid Teicneolaíochta na Gaillimhe-Maigh Eo agus Údarás na Gaeltachta i gCarna, Co. na Gaillimhe.

15 Nollaig 2005

Óráid agus seisiún ceisteanna/freagraí ag cruinniú de bhord Údarás na Gaeltachta, Na Forbacha, Co. na Gaillimhe.

SPEECHES, LECTURES AND SEMINARS

26 July 2005

Attended press conference for launch of 16 language schemes by the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Dublin.

3 October 2005

Address and questions/answers session at seminar for public bodies preparing language schemes, Dublin.

17 October 2005

Lecture and questions/answers session in University of Limerick.

18 October 2005

Address at the launch of a folder of bilingual forms by Scéim Pleanála Teanga Chomharchumann Shailearna and Cumas Teo., Co. Galway.

3 November 2005

Chairperson at seminar organised by Local Government Irish Language Council, City Hall, Cork.

12 November 2005

Lecture and questions/answers session at annual conference of Comhchoiste Náisiúnta na gColáistí Samhraidh, Dublin.

16 November 2005

Address and questions/answers session at national conference of State Examinations Commission, Salthill, Galway.

19 November 2005

Lecture and questions/answers session at National University of Ireland, Galway.

13 December 2005

Lecture and questions/answers session for the Higher Diploma in Applied Irish and Translation course organised by Europus Teo., Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology and Údarás na Gaeltachta in Carna, Co. Galway.

15 December 2005

Address and questions/answers session at board meeting of Údarás na Gaeltachta, Na Forbacha, Co. Galway.

NA MEÁIN CHUMARSÁIDE

MEDIA

Léirigh na meáin chumarsáide cuid mhór spéise i gceisteanna a bhain le cúrsaí teanga in imeacht na bliana.

Rinne mé 85 agallamh ar fad le hiriseoirí le linn na bliana le léargas a thabhairt ar obair na hOifige, ar fheidhmiú Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla agus ar cheisteanna gaolmhara.

Ba leis na meáin chumarsáide Ghaeilge a bhí 53 de na hagallaimh sin agus an 32 eile leis na meáin Bhéarla, idir áitiúil, náisiúnta agus idimáisiúnta.

Ar na hábhair ba mhó spéis leis na meáin chumarsáide le linn na bliana bhí Tuarascáil Tionscnaimh na hOifige, conspóid na logainmneacha Gaeltachta, costais a bhaineann le feidhmiú Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla agus oscailt oifigiúil na hoifige.

Ar na meáin chumarsáide a rinne agallaimh liom nó a lorg faisnéis uaim le linn na bliana bhí :

Nuacht TG4, RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta, The Irish Times, Foinse, Irish Examiner, Irish Independent, Lá, RTÉ Radio 1, Nuacht RTÉ, Connacht Tribune, Galway Advertiser, Today FM, Raidió na Life, BBC World Service Radio, Deutschland Radio, Los Angeles Times, Campus Radio (Ollscoil Chorcaí), RTÉ 1, Newstalk 106, Sunday Times, Sunday Business Post, Galway Bay FM, NEAR FM, www.beo.ie, KCLR Radio, The Irish Sun, Cork 96 & 103 FM, Daily Ireland.

Ba mhaith liom buíochas a ghabháil leis na hiriseoirí ar fad a chuir an oiread sin suime in obair na hOifige le linn na bliana agus a chabhraigh le cur chun cinn na hoibre sin trína gcuid tuairisceoireachta i mBéarla agus i nGaeilge.

During the course of the year a lot of interest was shown by the Media in issues associated with the Irish language.

During the year I gave eighty-five interviews to journalists with regard to the work of this Office, the implementation of the Official Languages Act and related matters.

Fifty-three of these interviews were with the Irish language media and the other thirty-two were with the English language media, local, national and international.

The subjects which interested the media most during the year were, the Office's Inaugural Report, the controversy over Gaeltacht placenames, the cost of implementing the Official Languages Act and the official opening of the office.

The media outlets which conducted interviews with me or sought information from me during the year were:

Nuacht TG4, RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta, The Irish Times, Foinse, Irish Examiner, Irish Independent, Lá, RTÉ Radio 1, Nuacht RTÉ, Connacht Tribune, Galway Advertiser, Today FM, Raidió na Life, BBC World Service Radio, Deutschland Radio, Los Angeles Times, Campus Radio (Ollscoil Chorcaí), RTÉ 1, Newstalk 106, Sunday Times, Sunday Business Post, Galway Bay FM, NEAR FM, www.beo.ie, KCLR Radio, The Irish Sun, Cork 96 & 103 FM, Daily Ireland.

I would like to thank all the journalists who showed interest in the work of this Office during the year and who helped to further that work through their coverage in both English and Irish.

CUAIRTEANNA RÉIGIÚNACHA

REGIONAL VISITS

Mar Oifig náisiúnta atá lonnaithe i nGaeltacht na Gaillimhe, níl aon amhras ach go bhfuil sé tábhachtach go mbeadh fáil ar bhaill den fhoireann ó thráth go chéile le casadh leis an bpobal trí chuairteanna réigiúnacha a thabhairt ar cheantair eile ar fud na tíre.

Tugann cuairteanna den chineál sin deis do bhaill den phobal ceisteanna a tharraingt anuas linn faoi chearta teanga, nó gearáin a dhéanamh linn faoi dheacrachtaí le seirbhísí i nGaeilge.

Bheartaíomar cuid de na hócáidí sin a cheangal le mórócáidí i bhféilire na Gaeilge ar a mbeadh sluaite de phobal na Gaeilge ag freastal.

Mar seo a leanas a bhí na cuairteanna réigiúnacha a eagraíodh le linn na bliana 2005:

Leitir Ceanainn, Co. Dhún na nGall:
12-15 Bealtaine 2005

– le linn Oireachtas na Bealtaine.

Cathair Chorcaí: 15-16 Aibreán 2005

– le linn Ard-Fheis Chonradh na Gaeilge.

Cathair Bhaile Átha Cliath: 10 Samhain

– i gcomhar le seimineár ar an dátheangachas ag Comhdháil Náisiúnta na Gaeilge.

Cathair Chorcaí: 3-6 Samhain 2005

ag Féile an Oireachtais 2005.

As a national Office that is situated in the Galway Gaeltacht, there is little doubt but that it is important that members of staff should be available, from time to time, to meet the public through regional visits to other areas around the country.

Visits of this nature give members of the public the opportunity to raise issues about language rights or to discuss difficulties in obtaining services through Irish.

We decided to arrange these visits to coincide with significant events in the Irish language calendar which would be attended by significant numbers from the Irish speaking community.

The following are the regional visits which were organised during 2005:

Letterkenny, Co. Donegal:
12-15 May 2005

– during Oireachtas na Bealtaine.

Cork City: 15-16 April 2005

– during Ard-Fheis Chonradh na Gaeilge.

Dublin City: 10 November 2005

– in conjunction with a seminar on bilingualism organised by Comhdháil Náisiúnta na Gaeilge

Cork City: 3-6 November 2005

– at Féile an Oireachtais 2005

Bhí seastán eolais ag an oifig freisin mar chuid de mhórócáid trí Ghaeilge a d'eagraigh Coláiste na hOllscoile, Corcaigh ar 14 Nollaig 2005.

The Office also had an information stand at an Irish language function organised by University College, Cork on 14 December 2005.

AN POBAL AGUS AN ÓIGE PUBLIC AND YOUTH



Ciarán Ó Ráighne, Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga, ag labhairt le daltaí faoi Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla.

Ciarán Ó Ráighne, Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga, speaking to pupils about the Official Languages Act.

Tá sé ar cheann d'fheidhmeanna Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga comhairle nó cúnamh a sholáthar don phobal maidir lena gcearta teanga faoin Acht.

Tá sé mar straitéis ag an Oifig an fheidhm seo faoi Alt 21(d) den Acht a chomhlíonadh trí léachtaí agus seimineáir éagsúla, trí fheachtas fógraíochta, trí agallaimh leis na meáin chumarsáide, trí fhorbairt an tsuímh ghréasáin dhátheangaigh www.coimisineir.ie, agus trí fhoilsiú agus scaipeadh pacáistí eolais.

De réir nádúir, is ar dhaoine fásta a bhfuil spéis agus cumas sa teanga acu – sa Ghaeltacht agus ar fud na tíre – a bhíonn formhór na hoibre seo dírithe.

Ach tá sé tábhachtach freisin iarracht a dhéanamh an pobal óg a chur ar an eolas faoina gcearta teanga, lena spreagadh i dtús a saoil leis an nGaeilge a roghnú mar theanga chaidrimh leis an státchóras aon uair nó áit is féidir é sin a dhéanamh.

Tá seans ann go bhfuil sé níos deacra daoine fásta a bhraith roimhe sin nach raibh sé furasta acu i gcónaí a ngnó a dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge leis an státchóras a mhealladh chun iarrachta eile ná mar a bheadh sé daoine óga a spreagadh sa treo chéanna sin i dtús a saoil.

Dá dtuigfeadh daoine óga go soiléir go raibh sé de cheart acu agus go raibh an deis acu an leagan Gaeilge dá n-ainm a úsáid dá mba mhian leo é, clárú leis na Coimisinéirí loncaim trí Ghaeilge, ceadúnas tiomána a fháil trí Ghaeilge ón údarás áitiúil nó iliomad seirbhísí eile trí Ghaeilge a fháil ón státchóras

It is one of the functions of this Office to provide advice or help to the public about their language rights under the Act.

This is done primarily through lectures and seminars, an advertising campaign, interviews with the media, the development of a bilingual website www.coimisineir.ie and through the publication and distribution of information packs.

Naturally, the majority of this work is aimed at adults in the Gaeltacht and throughout the country who have an interest and proficiency in the language.

It is, however, also important to educate young people about their language rights in order to encourage them to choose Irish as their language of communication with the State whenever or wherever possible.

It is perhaps more difficult to persuade adults, who have previously not always found it easy to conduct their business with the State through Irish, to try again than it is to similarly encourage young people.

If young people were to understand that it is their right to use the Irish version of their name if they wish, to register with the Revenue Commissioners through Irish, to get their driving licence through Irish from Local Authorities or to obtain any number of other services from the public service through Irish, over time, it would help create a new standing for the language in the public administration of the country.

AN POBAL AGUS AN ÓIGE PUBLIC AND YOUTH

in imeacht ama, chabhródh sé le deis agus spás nua a chruthú don teanga i riarachán poiblí na tíre.

Chuige sin, le linn na bliana 2005, bheartaigh m'Oifig tús a chur le feachtas oideachais i measc na glúine óige a bhí ag freastal ar Choláistí Samhraidh sa Ghaeltacht, ar iar-bhunscoileanna Gaeltachta agus ar Ghaelscoileanna ar fud na tíre le tuilleadh eolais a thabhairt dóibh ar Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla agus ar chearta teanga go ginearálta.

Ullmhaíodh bróisiúr eolais ar leith – i gcomhar le daoine óga – agus thug baill foirne de chuid na hOifige cuairt ar 38 cúrsa i gColáistí Samhraidh agus ar 11 iar-bhunscoil lánGhaeilge ó thús an tsamhraidh go deireadh na bliana. Tugadh cainteanna gearra ag gach ionad, dáileadh cóipeanna den bhróisiúr eolais agus freagraíodh ceisteanna na ndaltaí. Bhí an feachtas dírithe den chuid is mó ar an óige ó aois na hidirbhliana go dtí aois na hArdteistiméireachta.

Is mór agam an cúnamh agus an comhoibriú a fuair foireann na hOifige ó údaráis na gcoláistí éagsúla, ó mhúinteoirí agus ó na daltaí féin le linn an tionscnaimh seo.

Therefore my Office initiated an awareness campaign during 2005 amongst the younger generation attending Irish Language summer colleges and post-primary schools in the Gaeltacht and in Gaelscoileanna throughout the country, in order to provide them with information on the Official Languages Act and on language rights in general.

We published a brochure specifically for young people, and members of staff of the Office visited 38 courses in Irish Language summer colleges and 11 Irish-speaking post-primary schools from the start of the summer to the end of the year. A short talk was given at each location, copies of the brochure were distributed and the pupils' questions were answered. This campaign was aimed for the most part at pupils from transition year to Leaving Certificate.

I greatly appreciate the help and cooperation this Office received from the authorities of the various colleges and schools, the teachers and from the pupils themselves throughout this campaign.

AN POBAL AGUS AN ÓIGE PUBLIC AND YOUTH

Liosta - Cúrsaí agus Coláistí

Gaillimh

Coláiste Chonnacht, An Spidéal, Coláiste Lurgan, Indreabhán, Coláiste Chamuis, Ros a' Mhíl, Coláiste Chiaráin, An Cheathrú Rua, Coláiste Spleodar, Camus, Coláiste na bhFiann, Ros Muc, Coláiste Gaeilge Sheosaimh, Cill Chiaráin, Coláiste Ó Direáin, Inis Mór, Árainn, Coláiste Laichtín Naofa, Inis Oírr, Árainn, Coláiste Chroí Mhuire Gan Smál, An Spidéal, Coláiste Cholmcille, Indreabhán, Scoil Chuimsitheach Chiaráin, An Cheathrú Rua, Gairmscoil na bPiarsach, Ros Muc.

Dún na nGall

Coláiste Cholmcille, Doirí Beaga, Coláiste Mhachaire Rabhartaigh, Gort an Chiorce, Coláiste Cholmcille, Mín a' Chladaigh, Coláiste Árainn Mhóir (Thiar), Coláiste Bhríde, Rann na Feirste, Coláiste na Rosann, Anagaire, Coláiste Ailigh, Leitir Ceanainn, Pobalscoil Ghaoth Dobhair, Na Doirí Beaga, Gairmscoil Chú Uladh, Béal an Átha Móir.

Ciarraí

Coláiste Bhréanainn, Baile an Bhuineánaigh, Coláiste Mhinaird, Abhainn an Scáil, Coláiste Íde, An Daingean, Coláiste Cheann Trá, Ceann Trá, Coláiste Chill Mhic a' Domhnaigh, Coláiste Bhaile an Fheirtéaraigh, Coláiste na Muirí, Baile na nGall, Coláiste na Feothanaí, Baile na nGall.

Corcaigh

Coláiste Chiaráin, Oileán Chléire, Coláiste Phobail Chléire, Oileán Chléire, Coláiste na Mumhan, Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh, An Nua-Choláiste Samhraidh, Gleann Maghair, Coláiste an Phiarsaigh, Gleann Maghair, Coláiste Daibhéid, Corcaigh.

Maigh Eo

Coláiste UISCE, Cuan Éilí, O.P. Clochar, Béal an Átha, Coláiste Riocaird Bairéid, An Eachléim.

Sligeach

Coláiste na bhFiann, Scoil Ghramadach Shligigh, Sligeach.

Baile Átha Cliath

Scoil Chaitríona, Bóthar Mobhí, BÁC. 9, Coláiste Cois Lí, Leamhcán, Co. Bhaile Átha Cliath.

List – Courses and Colleges

Galway

Coláiste Chonnacht, An Spidéal, Coláiste Lurgan, Indreabhán, Coláiste Chamais, Ros a' Mhíl, Coláiste Chiaráin, An Cheathrú Rua, Coláiste Spleodar, Camus, Coláiste na bhFiann, Ros Muc, Coláiste Gaeilge Sheosaimh, Cill Chiaráin, Coláiste Ó Direáin, Inis Mór, Árainn, Coláiste Laichtín Naofa, Inis Oírr, Árainn, Coláiste Chroí Mhuire Gan Smál, An Spidéal, Coláiste Cholmcille, Indreabhán, Scoil Chuimsitheach Chiaráin, An Cheathrú Rua, Gairmscoil na bPiarsach, Ros Muc.

Donegal

Coláiste Cholmcille, Doirí Beaga, Coláiste Mhachaire Rabhartaigh, Gort an Chiorce, Coláiste Cholmcille, Mín a' Chladaigh, Coláiste Árainn Mhóir (Thiar), Coláiste Bhríde, Rann na Feirste, Coláiste na Rosann, Anagaire, Coláiste Ailigh, Letterkenny, Pobalscoil Ghaoth Dobhair, Na Doirí Beaga, Gairmscoil Chú Uladh, Béal an Átha Móir.

Kerry

Coláiste Bhréanainn, Baile an Bhuineánaigh, Coláiste Mhinaird, Abhainn an Scáil, Coláiste Íde, An Daingean, Coláiste Cheann Trá, Ceann Trá, Coláiste Chill Mhic a' Domhnaigh, Coláiste Bhaile an Fheirtéaraigh, Coláiste na Muirí, Baile na nGall, Coláiste na Feothanaí, Baile na nGall.

Cork

Coláiste Chiaráin, Oileán Chléire, Coláiste Phobail Chléire, Oileán Chléire, Coláiste na Mumhan, Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh, An Nua-Choláiste Samhraidh, Glanmire, Coláiste an Phiarsaigh, Glanmire, Coláiste Daibhéid, Cork.

Mayo

Coláiste UISCE, Cuan Éilí, Clochar Post Office, Ballina, Coláiste Riocaird Bairéid, An Eachléim.

Sligo

Coláiste na bhFiann, Sligo Grammar School, Sligo.

Dublin

Scoil Chaitríona, Mobhí Road, Dublin 9, Coláiste Cois Lí, Lucan, Co. Dublin.

SUÍOMH GRÉASÁIN WEBSITE



Leanadh den fhorbairt le linn na bliana ar an suíomh gréasáin dátheangach, www.coimisineir.ie le cinntiú go mbeadh sé i gcónaí iomlán cruinn agus ceart ó thaobh an eolais is deireanaí i dtaca le gach gné den reachtaíocht agus d'obair na hOifige.

Feidhmíonn an suíomh gréasáin mar ionad ilfhreastail, nó mar ionad lámach eolais do gach a mbaineann le hAcht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003 agus le hOifig an Choimisinéara Teanga.

Sa tréimhse bliana ó thús Eanáir 2005 go deireadh Mhí na Nollag 2005 bhí 278,012 “buille” ina n-iomláine ar an suíomh.

Tháinig méadú suntasach ar chuairteanna ar an suíomh ó dháta foilsithe Thuarascáil Tionscnaimh na hOifige (14 Márta 2005) ar aghaidh agus sa choicís ón dáta sin go deireadh mhí an Mhárta rinne 1,191 duine íoslódáil ar an Thuarascáil Tionscnaimh ón suíomh gréasáin, sa bhreis ar chóipeanna a dáileadh ar CD-ROM ar chomhlachtaí poiblí, ar bhaill den Oireachtas agus ar na meáin chumarsáide.

Ba léir freisin i míonna deiridh na bliana tionchar oscailt oifigiúil na hOifige agus an fheachtais fógraíochta teilifíse don Oifig ar líon na ndaoine a mealladh i dtreo an tsuímh ghréasáin.

Our bilingual website www.coimisineir.ie was further developed during the year to ensure that it always carries accurate and up to date information on every aspect of the legislation and the work of the Office.

The website serves as a “one stop shop” or central information point in relation to everything that pertains to the Official Languages Act 2003 and to the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga.

From the period starting January 2005 to the end of December 2005 a total of 278,012 “hits” were made on the site.

A substantial increase in visits to the site came with the publication of our Inaugural Report on the 14 March 2005 and in the two weeks following that date 1,191 people downloaded the Inaugural Report from our website, in addition to copies distributed on CD Rom to public bodies, members of the Oireachtas and the media.

The official opening of the Office and the advertising campaign also attracted an increased number of visits to the website in the final few months of the year.

FEACHTAS EOLAIS AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Thug an Oifig faoi fheachtas eolais le linn na bliana 2005 a raibh sé mar aidhmeanna aige:

- tuiscint an phobail a mhéadú ar ról agus ar fheidhmeanna na hOifige,
- an pobal a chur ar an eolas faoi fheidhmiú fhorálacha Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla, agus
- an pobal a spreagadh le leas agus buntáiste a bhaint as seirbhísí breise trí Ghaeilge ó chomhlachtaí poiblí de réir mar a bheidh fáil orthu.

Bhí ceithre chuid san fheachtas:

- teilifís
- raidió áitiúil
- nuachtáin réigiúnacha
- nuachtáin Ghaeilge.

This Office undertook an awareness campaign during 2005 the aims of which were to:

- increase the public's understanding of the role and function of the Office,
- inform the public on the implementation of provisions of the Official Languages Act, and
- encourage the public to use the additional services provided by public bodies as they become available.

The awareness campaign was fourfold:

- television
- local radio
- regional newspapers
- Irish language newspapers



Teilifís

Mar thoradh ar phróiseas tairisceana roghnaíodh comhlacht fise le fógra Gaeilge teilifíse a léiriú don Oifig. An bhunteachtaireacht a bhí san fhógra go mbeadh méadú ag teacht de réir a chéile ar na seirbhísí trí Ghaeilge ón státchóras agus go mbeadh deiseanna breise ag an bpobal tuilleadh dá ngnó a dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge le comhlachtaí poiblí an Stáit in imeacht ama. Tugadh seoladh shuíomh gréasáin na hOifige (www.coimisineir.ie) agus uimhir theileafóin ar chostas glao áitiúil (1890-504006) mar fhoinsí eolais agus teagmhála.

Television

Following a tendering process, a video production company was selected to produce an Irish language television advertisement for the Office. The principal message of this advertisement was to inform people that over time, more and more public services would become available through Irish and that this would lead to increased opportunities for the public to conduct more of their business with the State through Irish. The Office website address (www.coimisineir.ie) and the Office lo-call number (1890-504006) were given as contact points for further information.

FEACHTAS EOLAIS AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Craoladh an fógra go príomha le linn chlársceideal Gaeilge TG4 ach rinneadh líon teoranta craoltaí le linn cláir Ghaeilge ar RTÉ 1 agus RTÉ 2 freisin.

Níl aon amhras ach gur chabhraigh an fógra le spéis phobal na Gaeilge a mhéadú in obair na hOifige agus le daoine a mhealladh i dtreo an tsuímh ghréasáin i míonna deiridh na bliana.

Raidió

Ullmhaíodh fógra raidió 30 soicind bunaithe ar theachtaireacht an fhógra teilifíse le craoladh ar stáisiúin raidió áitiúla éagsúla ar fud na tíre. Craoladh an fógra mar chuid d'fheachtas teoranta ar 16 stáisiún raidió ó cheann ceann na tíre.

Nuachtáin Réigiúnacha

Foilsíodh sraith d'fhógraí faisnéise in ocht gcinn de nuachtáin réigiúnacha ar fud na tíre mar thaca leis an iarracht tuiscint an phobail a mhéadú ar ról agus ar fheidhmeanna na hOifige. Bhí na fógraí seo i nGaeilge dírithe cuid mhaith ar nuachtáin atá ag freastail ar chontaetha ina bhfuil limistéir Gaeltachta.

Nuachtáin Ghaeilge

Tá dhá nuachtán i nGaeilge a fheastalaíonn ar phobal na Gaeilge sa Gaeltacht agus ar fud na tíre – an nuachtán laethúil *Lá* agus an nuachtán seachtainiúil *Foinse*. Foilsíodh sraith d'fhógraí faisnéise i ngach ceann de na nuachtáin seo le heolas faoin Oifig a scaipeadh i measc an phobail agus le daoine a spreagadh le leas agus buntáiste a bhaint as seirbhísí breise trí Ghaeilge ó chomhlachtaí poiblí de réir mar a bheidh fáil orthu.

The advertisement was broadcast primarily during TG4's Irish language programme schedule and, to a limited extent, during Irish language programmes on RTÉ 1 and RTÉ 2.

This advertisement helped increase the interest of the Irish-speaking community in our work and encouraged more people to visit our website in the final few months of the year.

Radio

A thirty second radio advertisement with a message similar to that in the television campaign was broadcast on local radio stations. The advertisement was transmitted on a total of 16 local radio stations nationwide.

Regional Newspapers

A series of information advertisements were published in eight regional newspapers around the country to help further inform the public of the role and functions of this Office. These Irish language advertisements were aimed for the most part at newspapers serving counties in which there are Gaeltacht areas.

Irish Language Newspapers

There are two Irish language newspapers which serve the Irish-speaking population in the Gaeltacht and nationwide – the daily newspaper *Lá* and the weekly newspaper *Foinse*. A series of information advertisements were published in both newspapers in order to provide information about the Office and to encourage people to use the additional services through Irish provided by public bodies as they become available.

COMHAIRLE DO CHOMHLACHTAÍ POIBLÍ

ADVICE TO PUBLIC COMPANIES

Tá sé ar cheann d'fheidhmeanna Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga comhairle nó cúnamh eile a sholáthar do chomhlachtaí poiblí a thagann faoi scáth na reachtaíochta maidir lena ndualgais faoin Acht.

Dá mhéad comhairle agus eolais shoiléir chruinn a chuirtear ar fáil do chomhlachtaí poiblí faoina ndualgais faoin Acht is ea is fearr is féidir a chinntiú go gcoífeáir le forálacha an Aichta.

Tá sé mar straitéis ag an Oifig an fheidhm seo faoi Alt 21(e) den Acht a chomhlíonadh trí léachtaí agus seimineáir éagsúla, trí na meáin chumarsáide, trí fhorbairt an tsuímh ghréasáin dhátheangaigh www.coimisineir.ie, agus trí fhoilsiú agus scaipeadh pacáistí eolais.

Sa bhreis air sin, bíonn fáilte i gcónaí roimh theagmhálacha ó ionadaithe ó chomhlachtaí poiblí a bhíonn ar thóir eolais, comhairle nó soiléirithe ar a ndualgais faoin Acht.

Le linn na bliana 2005 rinneadh teagmháil thar ceann comhlachtaí poiblí leis an oifig ar 153 ócáid éagsúil le ceisteanna sonracha nó le léargas cuimsitheach a fháil ar dhualgais teanga faoin Acht.

Bliain	2004	2005
Líon na gcásanna le linn na bliana inár lorg comhlacht poiblí comhairle maidir lena ndualgais teanga faoin Acht	113	153

It is one of the functions of the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga to provide advice or other assistance to public bodies, who come within the scope of the legislation with regard to their obligations under the Act.

The more advice and clear accurate information that is provided to public bodies regarding their obligations under the Act the easier it will be to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Act.

It is part of the strategy of this Office to fulfil this advisory function under Section 21(d) of the Act through the delivery of lectures and seminars, through the media, through the development of a bilingual internet site www.coimisineir.ie and through the publication and distribution of information packs.

In addition, contact from public bodies seeking information, advice or clarification in relation to their obligations under the Act is always welcome.

During 2005 this Office was contacted on behalf of public bodies on 153 different occasions by officials with specific questions or seeking comprehensive briefings on their obligations under the Act.

Year	2004	2005
Number of cases during the year where public bodies requested advice about their obligations under the Act.	113	153

COMHOIBRIÚ AGUS IDIRCHADREAMH

COOPERATION AND LIAISON

Lean m'Oifig le linn na bliana ar fhorbairt an chaidrimh le hiliomad eagraíochtaí eile, ina measc eagraíochtaí stáit agus eagraíochtaí teanga sa bhaile agus i gcéin.

Bhí an Roinn Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta ina taca láidir againn le linn na bliana agus is mór agam comhoibriú an Aire agus fhoireann na Roinne sin.

Neartaíomar ár gcaidreamh le cuid mhór eagraíochtaí eile atá gafa le cur chun cinn na teanga sa Ghaeltacht agus ar fud na tíre.

Lean ár gcaidreamh dearfach le hOifig Choimisinéir na dTeangacha Oifigiúla i gCeanada agus is mór agam spreagadh agus tacaíocht an Choimisinéara, an Dr. Dyane Adam.

D'fhorbair m'Oifig caidreamh freisin le Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg – foras teanga na Breataine Bige – agus chas mé le Cathaoirleach agus le Príomhfheidhmeannach an Bhoird ar roinnt ócáidí le linn na bliana.

Thug Comhdháil Náisiúnta na Gaeilge – lárchomhairle na n-eagraíochtaí deonacha Gaeilge – cuireadh dom labhairt ag cruinniú de bhaill bhord na heagraíochta i Mí na Bealtaine agus thug bord Údarás na Gaeltachta cuireadh den chineál céanna dom i Mí na Nollag.

Bhí eagraíochtaí stáit eile agus cuid mhór daoine aonair fial flaithiúil lena gcomhairle agus lena gcúnamh le linn na bliana agus táim buíoch díobh.

During the year my Office continued to develop relations with many other organisations, including public bodies and language organisations, at home and abroad.

The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs was supportive throughout the year and I greatly appreciate the cooperation of the Minister and the staff of his Department.

We developed further our relationship with many other organisations involved in the promotion of the language in the Gaeltacht and throughout the country.

We built on our positive relationship with the Office of the Official Languages Commissioner in Canada and I greatly appreciate the encouragement and support given by the Commissioner, Dr. Dyane Adam.

My Office also developed a relationship with Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg – The Welsh Language Board – and I met the Chairperson and Chief Executive of the Board on several occasions during the year.

I accepted an invitation from Comhdháil Náisiúnta na Gaeilge – the central council for voluntary Irish language organisations – to speak at a meeting of its board members in May. A similar opportunity to address the board of Údarás na Gaeltachta was accepted in December.

Other state organisations and many individuals were generous with advice and assistance during the year and I am grateful to them.

FORÁLACHA DÍREACHA AN ACHTA

DIRECT PROVISIONS OF THE ACT

Ní raibh i bhfeidhm, go praiticiúil, le linn na bliana 2005 ach líon beag forálacha de chuid Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla a chuir dualgais dhíreacha ar gach ceann de na comhlachtaí poiblí a thagann faoi scáth na reachtaíochta – dualgais a bhain le freagairt cumarsáide i scríbhinn sa teanga ina bhfuarthas í agus dualgas foilsithe go comhuaineach ar líon teoranta de dhoiciméid i ngach ceann de na teangacha oifigiúla.

Freagairt Cumarsáide i Scríbhinn.

Éilíonn Alt 9(2) den Acht gur i nGaeilge a fhreagróidh comhlacht poiblí aon chumarsáid a fhaightear i scríbhinn nó leis an bpost leictreonach i nGaeilge:

"I gcás ina ndéanfaidh duine cumarsáid i dteanga oifigiúil le comhlacht poiblí, i scríbhinn nó leis an bpost leictreonach, freagróidh an comhlacht poiblí sa teanga chéanna."

Bhain an cúigiú cuid de na gearáin le m'Oifig le linn na bliana le sárú ar an bhforáil seo. I ngach cás lorg m'Oifig míniú ar an sárú sin ón gcomhlacht poiblí a bhí i gceist agus d'iarr dearbhú go raibh córas i bhfeidhm acu le cinntiú go mbeifí ábalta déileáil go héifeachtach le cumarsáid scríofa trí Ghaeilge as sin amach.

Botúin dhaonna, míthuiscintí, easpa cúraim nó brú oibre an míniú a bhí ar fhorhóir gach cás dá leithéid agus bhíodar den chuid is mó fíal ag glacadh leithscéalta as a mbotúin.

Níl aon fhianaise ar chor ar bith agam gur sáraíodh an fhoráil seo den reachtaíocht d'aon ghnó nó le drochmheas agus creidim go bhfuil méadú ag teacht ar dhoimhneacht na tuisceana sa státchóras go n-éilíonn cumarsáid i scríbhinn i nGaeilge freagra sa teanga chéanna sin i gcónaí.

Is trí mhéadú ar an tuisceant go bhfuil an chothromaíocht chéanna ar fáil do chumarsáid i scríbhinn in aon cheann de na teangacha oifigiúla gur féidir muinín an phobail a spreagadh le go nglacfar leis gan cheist go bhfuil sé de cheart ag daoine, más rogha leo é, a gcuid comhfhreagrais a dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge leis an státchóras.

During 2005, only a small number of the provisions of the Official Languages Act which place direct obligations on public bodies who come within the scope of the legislation were in force. These obligations related to answering written correspondence in the language in which it is received and the obligation to publish a limited number of documents simultaneously in each of the official languages.

Answering Written Correspondence

Section 9(2) of the Act stipulates that public bodies answer in Irish any correspondence received in writing or by electronic mail in Irish:

"Where a person communicates in writing or by electronic mail in an official language with a public body, the public body shall reply in the same language."

Around one fifth of the complaints made to my Office during the year related to the non-compliance with this requirement. In every case this Office sought an explanation for the contravention from the public body in question and requested a declaration that a system was in place to ensure that in future written correspondence in Irish could be dealt with effectively.

Human errors, misunderstandings, carelessness or work pressure were the explanations given in the majority of cases of this kind and the public bodies in question were for the most part unreservedly apologetic for their mistakes.

I have no evidence at all to suggest that these infringements of the legislation were carried out deliberately or with ill intention and I believe there is an increase in the depth of understanding in the public service that written communications in Irish always demand a response in the same language.

Increased understanding and acceptance that parity must be accorded to written correspondence in either of the official languages will bolster the public's confidence that it will be accepted that they have a right, if they so wish, to carry on their correspondence with public bodies in Irish.

FORÁLACHA DÍREACHA AN ACHTA

DIRECT PROVISIONS OF THE ACT

Foilsíú Doiciméad go Comhuaineach

Éilíonn Alt 10 den Acht go gcinnteoidh gach comhlacht poiblí a thagann faoi scáth na reachtaíochta go bhfoilseofar líon áirithe teoranta de dhoiciméid thábhachtacha, a dhéanfaidh sé nó a dhéanfar faoina údarás, go comhuaineach i ngach ceann de na teangacha oifigiúla.

Cé gur tugadh le tuiscint go míchruinn ó am go chéile i gcodanna de na meáin chumarsáide go raibh dualgas ar chomhlachtaí poiblí gach doiciméad nó gach blúire páipéarachais a fhoilsiú go dátheangach, is léir ó Alt 10 den Acht gur líon teoranta doiciméad atá sainithe san fhoráil seo.

Líon beag gearán a rinneadh le m'Oifig le linn na bliana 2005 maidir le sárú an ailt seo den Acht. Tá léargas tugtha ar shampla de na gearáin sin sa chuid sin den tuarascáil bhliantúil a bhaineann le "cásanna roghnaithe".

Thug m'oifig – mar chuid dár bhfeidhmeanna faoi Alt 21(a) den Acht i dtaca le faireachán a dhéanamh ar chomhlíonadh fhorálacha an Achte – faoi roinnt tionscnaimh le linn na bliana 2005 le hiniúchadh a dhéanamh le cinntiú go raibh an dualgas foilsithe go comhuaineach a chomhlíonadh go sásúil.

Ón eolas atá faighte agam ag an bpointe seo de thoradh an faireacháin sin, agus óna laghad gearán atá déanta liom ina thaobh, níl aon chúis agam a creidiúint nach bhfuil comhlachtaí poiblí, den chuid is mó, ag cloí ar bhealach atá sásúil go leor leis an bhforáil seo ag tráth nach bhfuil an dualgas seo ach nuabhunaithe sa reachtaíocht.

Sa líon fíorbheag de chásanna a tháinig chun suntais ina raibh moill ar fhoilsiú leagan Gaeilge de thuarascáil bhliantúil, fuair m'Oifig míniú ar an scéal agus dearbhú nach dtarlódh an fhadhb chéanna arís. Níor bhraith mé go raibh aon chás a tháinig chun solais dúinn le linn na bliana gur gá, ag an tráth seo, céimeanna breise a thógáil ina thaobh.

Simultaneous Publication of Documents

Paragraph 10 of the Act stipulates that public bodies who come under the terms of the Act must ensure that a limited number of important documents published by them or under their authority are provided simultaneously in each of the official languages.

Although it was sometimes mistakenly suggested in the media that public bodies were obliged to publish every document or scrap of text bilingually it is clear from Paragraph 10 that it is a limited number of documents that are specified in this provision of the Act.

A small number of complaints were made to my Office during 2005 regarding contraventions of this paragraph of the Act. Reference is made to these complaints in the section of this annual report that deals with "selected cases".

As part of our functions under paragraph 21(a) to monitor compliance with the Act, my Office undertook some projects during 2005 to confirm that public bodies were abiding satisfactorily with their duty in relation to simultaneous publication.

From the information currently available to me as a result of these investigations and from the small number of complaints received, it appears to me that public bodies are generally complying in a satisfactory manner with this newly established legislative provision.

In the very small number of cases which came to my attention where the publication of the Irish version was delayed, my Office received an explanation and a guarantee that there would not be a repeat of this contravention. In light of this, I felt that none of these cases warranted further action at this stage.

FORÁLACHA DÍREACHA AN ACHTA

DIRECT PROVISIONS OF THE ACT

Córas Creidiúnaithe

Braitheann comhlachtaí poiblí cuid mhór ar sheirbhísí aistriúcháin le cabhrú leo a ndualgais a chomhlíonadh i dtaca le foilsiú doiciméad go dátheangach.

Thug mé suntas i dTuarascáil Tionscnaimh 2004 don riachtanas a bhí ann do straitéis forbartha don eamáil aistriúcháin, le gur féidir an próiseas foilsitheoireachta comhuainí a éascú do chomhlachtaí poiblí. Dúirt mé an méid seo:

“Tá gá ach go háirithe aghaidh a thabhairt ar cheisteanna oiliúna, áiseanna, agus deimhniú cáilíochtaí. Tá forbairt ar chóras foirfe creidiúnaithe d’aistritheoirí ina bhunriachtanas le muinín na gcomhlachtaí poiblí san eamáil aistriúcháin a threisiú.”

Tuigim go bhfuil córas creidiúnaithe d’aistritheoirí Gaeilge/Béarla á fhorbairt ag Foras na Gaeilge ar iarratas ón Aire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta.

Dheimhnigh Foras na Gaeilge le linn na bliana 2005 go mbeadh séala creidiúnaithe á bhronnadh ar aistritheoirí a bhaineann caighdeán sárchumais amach.

Fógraíodh le linn 2005 go raibh sé i gceist chuige sin, go mbeadh scrúduithe ar siúl go luath in 2006 agus ar bhonn tráthrialta ina dhiaidh sin agus go gcruthófaí painéal d’aistritheoirí creidiúnaithe.

“Beidh an chéad leagan den phainéal ar fáil do na hearnálacha poiblí agus príobháideacha i mí Aibreáin, 2006. Próiseas leanúnach a bheidh sa chóras creidiúnaithe seo agus tabharfar tacaíocht do dhaoine chun cuidiú leo an séala a bhaint amach. Is chun leasa aistritheoirí aonair agus cuideachtaí aistriúcháin an córas seo, agus beidh an séala creidiúnaithe ina chosaint ag aistritheoirí cumasacha”

dar le Foras na Gaeilge.

Cuirim fáilte mhór roimh an dul chun cinn suntasach seo.

System of Accreditation

Public bodies depend to a large extent on translation services to help them fulfil their obligations in respect of the bilingual publication of documents.

I mentioned in our annual report of 2004 the need for a developmental strategy in the translation sector, to simplify the simultaneous publication process for public bodies. I said the following:

“There is need especially to address issues such as education and training, resources and the certification of qualifications. The development of a proper system of accreditation for translators is a basic requirement so that the confidence of public bodies in the translation sector can be enhanced.”

I understand Foras na Gaeilge is developing a system of accreditation at the behest of the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

Foras na Gaeilge confirmed during 2005 that a seal of accreditation would be awarded to those translators who satisfied this standard of excellence.

It was announced during 2005 that examinations would take place in early 2006, and thereafter on a regular basis, in order to establish a panel of accredited translators.

“A panel of accredited translators will be thus established, which will be available to the public and private sectors by April, 2006. This accreditation system will be a continuous process and support will be offered to people seeking to achieve accreditation. This system is for the benefit of individual translators and translation agencies, and the certificate of accreditation will safeguard the reputation of competent translators”

according to Foras na Gaeilge.

I very much welcome this essential development.

SCÉIMEANNA TEANGA FAOIN ACHT

LANGUAGE SCHEMES UNDER THE ACT

Scéimeanna

Tá córas le scéimeanna teanga a ullmhú, a dhaingniú agus a fheidhmiú mar chroílár ag Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003. Faoin gcóras seo, is féidir le comhlachtaí poiblí na tosaíochtaí a bheadh acu maidir le feabhas a chur ar a gcuid seirbhísí trí Ghaeilge a aithint agus a eagrú.

Pleananna reachtúla teanga atá sna scéimeanna faoin Acht a mhéadóidh ar líon agus ar chaighdeán na seirbhísí a chuirfear ar fáil trí Ghaeilge, ar bhealach eagraithe tomhaiste thar thréimhse ama.

Scéim reachtúil teanga amháin a bhí i bhfeidhm faoi Alt 11 den Acht i dtús na bliana 2005 – scéim na Roinne Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta féin. Bhí an scéim sin i bhfeidhm ón 30 Meán Fómhair 2004 agus rinne m'Oifig iniúchadh ar fheidhmiú na scéime sin tar éis a céad bhliana chun dearbhú go rabhtas ag cloí leis na forálacha agus chun iarracht a dhéanamh cabhrú leis an gcomhlacht poiblí a bhí i gceist aon deacrachtaí nó fadhbanna a bhí le feidhmiú na scéime a aithint agus a réiteach.

Le linn na bliana dhaingnigh an tAire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta 21 scéim teanga bhreise faoin Acht a chlúdaigh móriomlán de 34 comhlacht poiblí eile.

Ainm na gComhlachtaí Poiblí	Dáta Tosaithe na Scéime
Oifig an Uachtaráin	28/04/2005
Oifig an Choimisiúin um Cheapacháin Seirbhíse Poiblí	30/05/2005
Oifig an Ombudsman agus Oifig an Choimisinéara Faisnéise	01/07/2005
An Roinn Ealaíon, Spóirt agus Turasóireachta	01/07/2005
An Chomhairle Ealaíon	01/07/2005
Coiste Gairmoideachais Chontae Dhún na nGall	01/07/2005
Oifig an Stiúrthóra Ionchúiseamh Poiblí	01/07/2005
Údarás Áitiúla Chontae Chiarraí	26/07/2005
An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna	31/07/2005

Schemes

The system to prepare, confirm and implement language schemes is central to the Official Languages Act 2003. Under this system public bodies may identify and organise their priorities for the improvement of services through Irish.

Schemes under the Act are statutory language plans aimed at increasing the number and standard of services available through Irish in a organized and measured way over a period of time.

At the beginning of 2005 there was only one statutory language plan in force under Paragraph 11 of the Act, that of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs itself. That scheme was in force from the 30 September 2004 and this Office conducted an audit on the implementation of this scheme after one year to ensure it complied with provisions of the scheme and to attempt to help the public body in question identify and solve any difficulties or problems with its implementation.

During the year the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs confirmed 21 additional language schemes under the Act covering a total of 34 other public bodies.

Name of Public Body	Commencement Date of the scheme
Office of the President	28/04/2005
Office of the Commission for Public Service Appointments	30/05/2005
Office of the Ombudsman and Office of the Information Commissioner	01/07/2005
The Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism	01/07/2005
The Arts Council	01/07/2005
County Donegal Vocational Education Committee	01/07/2005
Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions	01/07/2005
County Kerry Local Authorities	26/07/2005
The Courts Service	31/07/2005

SCÉIMEANNA TEANGA FAOIN ACHT

LANGUAGE SCHEMES UNDER THE ACT

Údaráis Áitiúla Chontae Phort Láirge	01/08/2005
An Roinn Comhshaoil, Oidhreacht agus Rialtais Áitiúil	15/08/2005
Údaráis Áitiúla Chontae na Gaillimhe	23/08/2005
Roinn an Taoisigh	01/09/2005
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte, Limistéar an Iarthair	01/09/2005
Ollscoil na hÉireann, Má Nuad	19/09/2005
Institiúid Teicneolaíochta na Gaillimhe-Maigh Eo	28/09/2005
Oifig na gCoimisinéirí Ioncaim	01/10/2005
Ollscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh	01/10/2005
Údaráis Áitiúla Chontae Dhún na nGall	01/10/2005
An tSeirbhís um Cheapacháin Phoiblí	03/10/2005
An Coimisiún Reifrinn	ón dáta a bhunófar an chéad Choimisiún eile.

Tugann scéim Údaráis Áitiúla Chontae Chiarraí na comhlachtaí poiblí seo a leanas san áireamh: Comhairle Contae Chiarraí agus Comhairlí Baile Chill Airne, Lios Tuathail agus Thrá Lí.

Tugann scéim Údaráis Áitiúla Phort Láirge na comhlachtaí poiblí seo a leanas san áireamh: Comhairle Contae Phort Láirge, agus Comhairlí Baile Dhún Garbhán, Leasa Móire agus Thrá Mhór.

Tugann scéim Údaráis Áitiúla Chontae na Gaillimhe na comhlachtaí poiblí seo a leanas san áireamh: Comhairle Contae na Gaillimhe, agus Comhairlí Baile Bhéal Átha na Sluaighe, Bhaile Locha Riach agus Thuama.

Tugann scéim Údaráis Áitiúla Chontae Dhún na nGall na comhlachtaí poiblí seo a leanas san áireamh: Comhairle Contae Dhún na nGall, agus Comhairlí Baile Bhéal Átha Seanaidh, Bhun Cranncha, Bhun Dobhráin agus Leitir Ceanainn.

Fágann sin go raibh scéimeanna a chlúdaigh 35 comhlacht poiblí ar fad daingnithe agus i bhfeidhm faoi dheireadh na bliana 2005 agus dualgas ar m'Oifig monatóireacht a dhéanamh orthu le cinntiú go rabhthas ag cloí le forálacha na scéimeanna sin.

County Waterford Local Authorities	01/08/2005
The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government	15/08/2005
County Galway Local Authorities	23/08/2005
Department of the Taoiseach	01/09/2005
Health Service Executive, Western Area	01/09/2005
National University of Ireland, Maynooth	19/09/2005
Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology	28/09/2005
Office of the Revenue Commissioners	01/10/2005
National University of Ireland, Galway	01/10/2005
County Donegal Local Authorities	01/10/2005
The Public Appointments Service	03/10/2005
The Referendum Commission	From the date on which the next Referendum Commission is established.

County Kerry Local Authorities' scheme incorporates the following public bodies: Kerry County Council, Killarney, Listowel and Tralee Town Councils.

Waterford County Local Authorities' scheme incorporates the following public bodies: Waterford County Council and Dungarvan, Lismore and Tramore Town Councils.

County Galway Local Authorities' scheme incorporates the following public bodies: Galway County Council, Ballinasloe, Loughrea and Tuam Town Councils.

County Donegal Local Authorities' scheme incorporates the following public bodies: Donegal County Council, Ballyshannon, Buncrana, Bundoran and Letterkenny Town Councils.

By the end of 2005 schemes were confirmed and in force covering in total 35 public bodies and it was this Office's duty to monitor them to ensure compliance with their provisions.

SCÉIMEANNA TEANGA FAOIN ACHT

LANGUAGE SCHEMES UNDER THE ACT

Dréachtscéimeanna

Bhí dréachtscéimeanna le cur ar fáil chun daingnithe ag an Aire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta ag 25 comhlacht poiblí eile le linn nó faoi dheireadh na bliana 2005, mar seo a leanas:

- An Roinn Airgeadais
- An Roinn Gnóthaí Sóisialacha agus Teaghlaigh
- An Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta
- An Roinn Talmhaíochta agus Bia
- Bord Sláinte an Iar-Thuaiscirt
- Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath
- An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt, Comhionannais agus Athchóirithe Dlí*
- An Roinn Cumarsáide, Mara agus Acmhainní Náúúrtha
- Comhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe
- Údarás Áitiúla Chontae na Mí**
- Comhairle Cathrach Bhaile Átha Cliath
- Coiste Gairmoideachais Chontae na Gaillimhe
- Seirbhís Oideachais Chontae Chiarraí
- Clárann na Talún agus Clárann na nGníomhas
- Ollscoil na hÉireann, Corcaigh
- Ollscoil Luimnigh

*Bhí na comhlachtaí poiblí eile seo le bheith san áireamh i ndrúachtscéim na Roinne Dlí agus Cirt, Comhionannais agus Athchóirithe Dlí:

- An Bord Achomhairc um Chinsireacht Scannán
- An Bord um Chinsireacht Foilseachán
- An Bord Achomhairc um Chinsireacht Foilseachán
- An Binse Cúitimh i leith Díobhálaíochta Coiriúla
- An tSaotharlann Dlí-Eolaíochta
- An tSeirbhís Paiteolaíochta Stáit

** Bhí na comhlachtaí poiblí seo a leanas le bheith san áireamh i ndrúachtscéim Údarás Áitiúla Chontae na Mí: Comhairle Contae na Mí agus Comhairlí Baile na hUaimhe, Cheannanus Mór agus Bhaile Átha Troim.

Staitisticí – scéimeanna:

Bliain	Scéimeanna	Comhlachtaí Poiblí san áireamh
2004	1	1
2005	21	34

Staitisticí – dréachtscéimeanna:

Bliain	Dréachtscéimeanna	Comhlachtaí Poiblí san áireamh
2005	16	25

Draft Schemes

25 other public bodies were required to submit draft schemes for confirmation by the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs during or by the end of 2005, as follows:

- The Department of Finance
- The Department of Social and Family Affairs
- The Department of Education and Science
- The Department of Agriculture and Food
- The Northwestern Health Board
- Dublin City University
- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform*
- Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources
- Galway City Council
- County Meath Local Authorities**
- Dublin City Council
- County Galway Vocational Education Committee
- Kerry Education Service
- Land Registry and Registry of Deeds
- University of Ireland, Cork
- University of Limerick

*The following public bodies were included in the draft scheme of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform:

- The Censorship of Films Appeals Board
- The Censorship of Publications Board
- The Censorship of Publications Appeals Board
- The Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal
- The Forensic Science Laboratory
- The State Pathology Service

** The following public bodies were included in the draft scheme of County Meath Local Authorities: Meath County Council and the town councils of Navan, Kells and Trim.

Statistics – schemes:

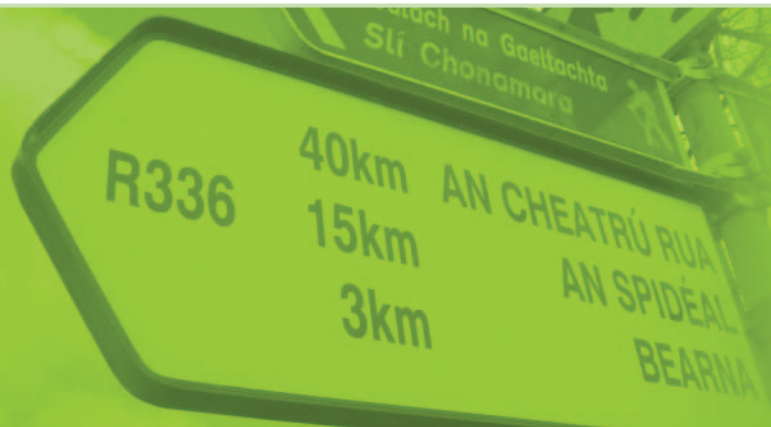
Year	Schemes	Public Bodies Included
2004	1	1
2005	21	34

Statistics – draft schemes:

Year	Draft Schemes	Public Bodies Included
2005	16	25

LOGAINMNEACHA GAELTACHTA

GAELTACHT PLACENAMES



Ón uair a tháinig Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003 i bhfeidhm go dtí deireadh na bliana 2005 rinne an tAire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta 10 gcinn d'Orduithe Logainmneacha faoi réir chuid 5 den Acht sin.

Baineann naoi gcinn de na horduithe logainmneacha le ceantair lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht:

An tOrdú Logainmneacha (Cúigí agus Contaetha)
IR 519 de 2003

An tOrdú Logainmneacha (Contae Chill Chainnigh)
IR 520 de 2003

An tOrdú Logainmneacha (Contae Lú)
IR 521 de 2003

An tOrdú Logainmneacha (Contae Luimnigh)
IR 522 de 2003

An tOrdú Logainmneacha (Contae Mhuineacháin)
IR 523 de 2003

An tOrdú Logainmneacha (Contae Phort Láirge)
IR 524 de 2003

An tOrdú Logainmneacha (Contae Uíbh Fháilí)
IR 525 de 2003

An tOrdú Logainmneacha
(Lárionaid Daonra agus Dúichí)
IR 59 de 2005

An tOrdú Logainmneacha (Contae Thiobraid Árann)
IR 847 de 2005

Agus baineann ceann amháin leis na limistéir Ghaeltachta:

An tOrdú Logainmneacha (Ceantair Ghaeltachta) 2004.
IR 872 de 2004.

From the time the Official Languages Act 2003 came into force until the end of 2005 the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs made 10 Placenames Orders under Section 5 of the Act.

Nine of these Placenames Orders relate to areas outside of the Gaeltacht:

Placenames Order (Provinces and Counties)
SI 519 of 2003

Placenames Order (Co. Kilkenny)
SI 520 of 2003

Placenames Order (Co. Louth)
SI 521 of 2003

Placenames Order (Co. Limerick)
SI 522 of 2003

Placenames Order (Co. Monaghan)
SI 523 of 2003

Placenames Order (Co. Waterford)
SI 524 of 2003

Placenames Order (Co. Offaly)
SI 525 of 2003

Placenames Order
(Centres of population and districts)
SI 59 of 2005

Placenames Order (Co. Tipperary)
IR 847 of 2005

And one relates to Gaeltacht areas:

Placenames Order (Ceantair Ghaeltachta) 2004.
SI 872 of 2004

LOGAINMNEACHA GAELTACHTA

GAELTACTH PLACENAMES

Nuair atá a leithéid d'ordú reachtúil déanta i leith aon logainm áirithe in aon limistéar lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht, is é éifeacht na reachtaíochta nua go mbíonn comhstádas agus comhfheidhm dhlíthiúil ag leaganacha Gaeilge agus Béarla an logainm.

Nuair atá a leithéid d'ordú reachtúil déanta i leith logainm i limistéar Gaeltachta, níl feidhm ná éifeacht a thuilleadh leis an leagan Béarla den logainm sin, cé go bhfuil láncheart agus lánchead é a úsáid i ngach gné den saol, cé is moite de roinnt bheag eisceachtaí mar a leanas: ní cheadaítear feasta an leagan Béarla den logainm sin

- in Achtanna an Oireachtais nó in Ionstraim Reachtúla, nó
- ar chomharthaí bóthair nó sráide de chuid údarás áitiúil, nó
- ar léarscáileanna áirithe de chuid na Suirbhéireachta Ordanáis.

Mar sin, cé go bhfuil aitheantas oifigiúil ag an leagan Gaeilge den logainm agus gan feidhm nó éifeacht feasta ag an leagan Béarla, tá seo gan dochar d'aon úsáid phríobháideach agus d'fhormhór úsáidí poiblí an leagan Bhéarla.

Tháinig an tOrdú Logainmneacha (Ceantair Ghaeltachta) 2004 i bhfeidhm ar 28 Márta 2004 agus tá dearbhú déanta ann ar an leagan oifigiúil Gaeilge de 2,319 logainm i limistéir Ghaeltachta uile na tíre.

Go praiticiúil, bhí dualgas reachtúil ón mbliain 1970 ar údarais áitiúla i limistéir Ghaeltachta a chinntiú gur i nGaeilge amháin a bhí logainmneacha Gaeltachta ar a gcuid comharthaí bóthair a bhí suite sa Ghaeltacht. Tá an dualgas sin de réir treoracha, ciorclán agus lámhleabhar atá eisiithe faoi na hAchtanna um Thrácht ar Bhóithre.

Chiallaigh an t-Ordú Logainmneacha (Ceantair Ghaeltachta) 2004 go mbeadh leasuithe le déanamh ar líon áirithe de chomharthaí bóthair ar a raibh logainmneacha Gaeltachta ach a bhí suite lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht, agus ar aon chomhartha sa Ghaeltacht féin a bhí ag teacht salach ar an gcóras a bhí i bhfeidhm go hoifigiúil le 35 bliain.

In the case where a statutory order is made in respect of a particular placename in regions outside the Gaeltacht, the effect of the new legislation is to ensure that the Irish and English placenames have equal status and legal effect.

In the case where a statutory order is made in respect of a particular placename in a Gaeltacht region, the English version of the placename no longer has any force and effect although its use is permitted in every aspect of daily life with some limited exceptions. The English language version of such a placename is no longer permitted

- in any Act of the Oireachtas or statutory instrument, or
- on any local authority road or street signs, or
- in certain Ordnance Survey maps.

Therefore, although the Irish language version of such a placename has official recognition and the English language version no longer has force and effect, this is without prejudice to the private or, in the majority of cases, the public use of the English language version.

The Placenames Order (Ceantair Ghaeltachta) Order 2004 came into effect on 28 March 2004 and a declaration has been made on the official Irish language version of 2,319 placenames in Gaeltacht regions throughout the country.

In fact, there has been a statutory obligation since 1970 on local authorities to ensure that local authority road signs in Gaeltacht areas were in the Irish language only. This obligation is outlined in the guidelines, circulars and handbooks issued under Road Traffic Acts.

The introduction of the Placenames (Ceantair Ghaeltachta) Order 2004 meant that changes were required to a certain number of road signs with Gaeltacht placenames located outside the Gaeltacht, and to any signs within the Gaeltacht which did not comply with the system which had been in place for thirty-five years.

LOGAINMNEACHA GAELTACHTA

GAELTACHT PLACENAMES

Rinne m'Oifig teagmháil le linn na bliana roinnt uaireanta leis na húdaráis áitiúla cuí ar fad a raibh limistéir Ghaeltachta faoina gcúram le comhairle a chur orthu i dtaca le brí agus éifeacht an ordaithe agus le cinntiú go raibh céimeanna á nglacadh acu le forálacha an ordaithe a chomhlíonadh.

Le linn na bliana fuair m'Oifig dearbhaithe ó chuid de na húdaráis áitiúla sin a raibh a gcuid comharthaí leasuithe acu cheana féin, nó a raibh straitéis acu leis sin a dhéanamh sa ghearthéarma. Leasuithe eatramhacha a rinne cuid acu le cinntiú nach raibh siad ag sárú an ordaithe. Bhí tuilleadh a raibh suirbhé nó staidéar le déanamh acu le líon na gcomharthaí a bhí le leasú a aithint agus airgead le sainiú acu don obair.

Tá mé sásta go bhfuil an chosúlacht ar chúrsaí go bhfuil na céimeanna cuí á nglacadh ag na húdaráis áitiúla agus bheinn ag súil go bhféadfainn a thuairisciú sa chéad tuarascáil bhliantúil eile go raibh an tionscnamh áirithe seo tugtha go ceann scríbe.

During the year my Office was in contact on a number of occasions with all the relevant local authorities with Gaeltacht areas to advise them of the requirements of the placenames orders and to seek confirmation of compliance with the provisions of the order.

During 2005 my Office received confirmation from a number of local authorities that their signs had been amended already or that they had a strategy in place to do so shortly. Some of the authorities made interim amendments to ensure they were not in breach of the placenames orders. Others were conducting surveys or studies to determine the number of signs that needed amendment and costs arising.

I am satisfied that the necessary steps are being taken by local authorities and I would expect to be able to report in my next annual report that this particular project has been completed.

GEARÁIN: DEACRACHTAÍ AGUS FADHBANNA - STAITISTICÍ

COMPLAINTS: DIFFICULTIES AND PROBLEMS – STATISTICS

415 Gearán Nua in 2005

Le linn na bliana 2005, cuireadh 415 cás nua i láthair m'Oifige inar chreid baill den phobal go raibh cúis gearáin acu de bharr deacrachta nó faidhbe le seirbhís trí Ghaeilge ón státhóras.

Cuireadh comhairle ar leith ar fáil don ghearánaí maidir le 176 cás acu sin agus maidir le 274 cás eile (san áireamh 35 cás ón mbliain 2004) tógadh céimeanna le hiarrachtaí a dhéanamh cúis an ghearáin a réiteach – go minic de réir “spiorad na reachtaíochta” seachas de bharr dualgas de réir fhorálacha an Achta. Tugadh 246 de na cásanna sin chun críche le linn na bliana, agus tugadh 28 acu chun cinn go dtí an bhliain 2006.

Ar na gearáin ba choitianta bhí: freagraí i mBéarla ar chumarsáid i nGaeilge (21%), fadhb le hainm agus/nó seoladh i nGaeilge (14%), bileoga nó clórláin i mBéarla amháin (13%), foirmeacha i mBéarla amháin (10%), easpa Gaeilge i gcomharthaíocht/bhfógraíocht (6%), easpa Gaeilge ar chomharthaí bóthair (4%), cártaí aitheantais oifigiúla i mBéarla amháin (4%), foilseacháin i mBéarla amháin (4%) agus easpa Gaeilge ar shuíomh ghréasáin (3%).

As Co. Bhaile Átha Cliath a tháinig os cionn an tríú cuid de na gearáin (36%) agus tháinig 46% eile de na gearáin as ocht gcontae le chéile – Gaillimh (17%), Ciarraí (9%), Corcaigh (6%), Dún na nGall (4%), An Mhí (3%), An Cabhán (3%), An Clár (2%) agus Port Láirge (2%).

Ón nGaeltacht a tháinig an tríú cuid de na gearáin (34%) agus as ceantair lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht an chuid eile (66%).

Tá Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003 á thabhairt i bhfeidhm thar thréimhse ama agus é mar phríomhchuspóir aige cur le líon agus le caighdeán na seirbhísí trí Ghaeilge a chuireann an státhóras ar fáil. Bhí teorainn le scóip agus le húdarás na hOifige le linn na bliana 2005 de bharr fhorálacha an Achta a bheith á dtabhairt i bhfeidhm thar thréimhse 3 bliana, go dtí 14 Iúil 2006.

Dá bharr sin, leanadh leis an straitéis gur chóir an oiread cabhrach agus ab fhéidir a sholáthar de réir “spiorad na reachtaíochta” dóibh siúd a chreid go raibh cúis gearáin acu, ach ba mar chóras gearrthéarmach, eatramhach amháin a tugadh faoin mhodh oibre seo. Ní bheidh aon bhrí ná bunús leis an modh oibre seo nuair a bheidh an tAcht ina iomláine i bhfeidhm agus cuid mhór scéimeanna teanga daingnithe.

415 New Complaints in 2005

During the year 2005 my Office dealt with 415 cases in which members of the public considered they had reason to complain because of difficulties or problems associated with getting service through Irish from public bodies.

In 176 of cases, specific advice was given by my Office to the complainant. In a further 274 cases (including 35 cases from 2004) steps were taken to try and resolve the cause of the complaint – often based on “the spirit of the legislation” rather than on the basis of actual obligations arising from the provisions of the Act. Some 246 of these cases were finalised during the year, leaving 28 others to be brought forward to 2006.

Amongst the most common complaints were: replies in English to correspondence in Irish (21%), difficulty with the use of name or address in Irish (14%), leaflets or circulars in English only (13%), forms in English only (10%), lack of Irish on signage or advertisements (6%), lack of Irish on road signs (4%), official identity cards in English only (4%), publications in English only (4%), and the absence of Irish on websites (3%).

More than a third of the complaints came from Co. Dublin (36%) and another 46% came from the following eight counties – Galway (17%), Kerry (9%), Cork (6%), Donegal (4%), Meath (3%), Cavan (3%), Clare (2%) and Waterford (2%).

A third of the complaints came from the Gaeltacht (34%) and the remaining complaints came from areas outside the Gaeltacht (66%).

The primary aim of the Official Languages Act 2003 is to improve the range and standard of services available through Irish from public bodies. The Act and its provisions are being implemented on a phased basis, over a period of three years up to 14 July 2006. This fact restricted the remit and authority of my Office during the year 2005.

It was therefore decided to continue with our strategy of supplying as much help as possible within “the spirit of the legislation” to people who believed they had grounds for complaint. This approach was undertaken as an interim measure. There would be little sense in continuing with this strategy in future when the Act is fully in force and a large proportion of language schemes are confirmed.

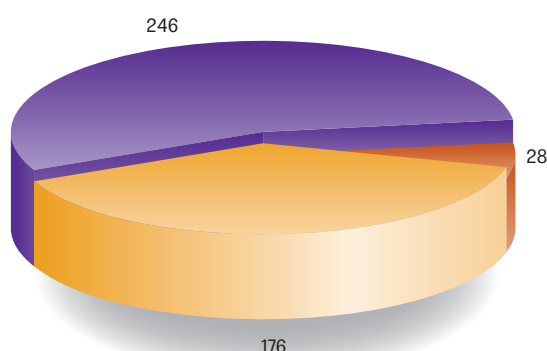
GEARÁIN: DEACRACHTAÍ AGUS FADHBANNA - STAITISTICÍ

COMPLAINTS: DIFFICULTIES AND PROBLEMS – STATISTICS

Gearáin le linn 2005 / Complaints in 2005

Gearáin nua 2005 / New complaints 2005	415
Gearáin tugtha ar aghaidh ó 2004 / Complaints brought forward from 2004	35
Móiriomlán gearán - fadhbanna agus deacrachtaí / Total complaints - problems and difficulties	450

	2004	2005
Comhairle tugtha maidir le gearáin / Advice provided in relation to complaints	93	176
Gearáin fiosraithe agus críochnaithe / Complaints examined and resolved	176	246
Gearáin tugtha ar aghaidh go dtí 2006 / Complaints brought forward to 2006	35	28
IOMLÁN / TOTAL	304	450

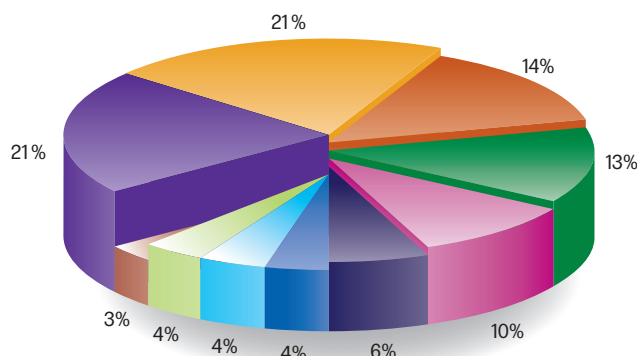


Tá anailís ar na cásanna éagsúla sna staitisticí agus sna léaráidí seo a leanas:

An analysis of the various cases is provided in the statistics and illustrations which follow:

Céatadán Gearán de réir Cineáil / Percentage of Complaints by Type

	2004	2005
Freagraí i mBéarla ar chumarsáid i nGaeilge / Replies in English to correspondence in Irish	13%	21%
Fadhb le hainm agus/nó seoladh i nGaeilge / Problem with use of name and/or address in Irish	7%	14%
Bileoga nó ciorcláin i mBéarla amháin / Leaflets or circulars in English only	6%	13%
Foirmeacha i mBéarla amháin / Forms in English only	16%	10%
Easpa Gaeilge i gcomharthaíocht/i bhfógraíocht / Lack of Irish on signage/advertisements	9%	6%
Easpa Gaeilge ar chomharthaí bóthair / Lack of Irish on road signs	9%	4%
Cártaí aitheantais oifigiúla i mBéarla amháin / Official identity cards in English only	8%	4%
Foilseacháin i mBéarla amháin / Publications in English only	–	4%
Gan Ghaeilge ar shuíomh gréasáin / Absence of Irish on website	2%	3%
Eile (cúiseanna aonair) / Other (individual issues)	30%	21%
IOMLÁN / TOTAL	100%	100%



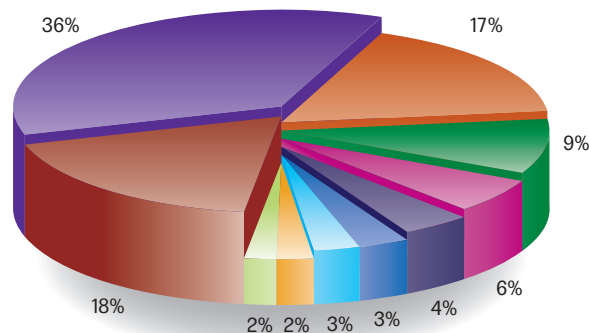
GEARÁIN: DEACRACHTAÍ AGUS FADHBANNA - STAITISTICÍ

COMPLAINTS: DIFFICULTIES AND PROBLEMS – STATISTICS

Gearáin de réir Contae

Complaints by County

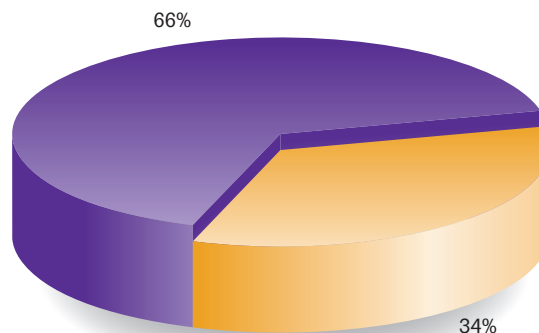
	2004	2005
Baile Átha Cliath / Dublin	35%	36%
Gaillimh / Galway	15%	17%
Ciarraí / Kerry	7%	9%
Corcaigh / Cork	7%	6%
Dún na nGall / Donegal	5%	4%
An Mhí / Meath	–	3%
An Cabhán / Cavan	–	3%
An Clár / Clare	4%	2%
Port Láirge / Waterford	3%	2%
Eile / Others	24%	18%
IOMLÁN / TOTAL	100%	100%



Gearáin: Gaeltacht agus Lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht

Complaints: Gaeltacht and Non-Gaeltacht

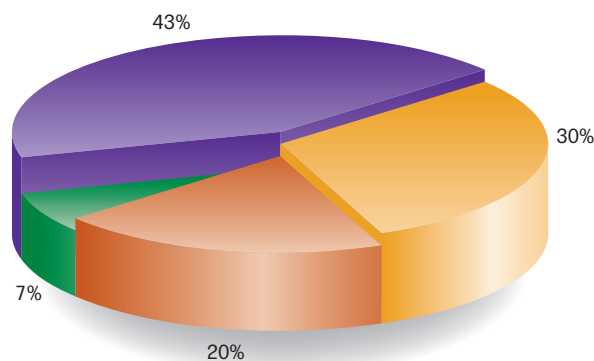
	2004	2005
Gaeltacht	26%	34%
Lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht / Non-Gaeltacht	74%	66%
IOMLÁN / TOTAL	100%	100%



Gearáin de réir Cineál Comhlachta Phoiblí

Complaints by Type of Public Body

	2004	2005
Ranna Rialtais / Government Departments	26%	30%
Údaráis Áitiúla / Local Authorities	23%	20%
Údaráis Sláinte / Health Authorities	75%	7%
Eagraíochtaí eile Stáit / Other State Organisations	43.5%	43%
IOMLÁN / TOTAL	100%	100%



ACHOIMRE AR CHÁSANNA ROGHNAITHE

SUMMARY OF SELECTED CASES

Creidiúint as inniúlacht sa Ghaeilge agus sa Bhéarla

An bhfuil an t-aon chóras a ceapadh a bheith curtha in áit na Gaeilge éigeantaí fágtha ar leataobh ar fad i réimsí ar leith den státseirbhís? An bhfuil an bonn bainte ag leath na rann agus oifigí rialtais de pholasaí agus comhaontuithe Rialtais i dtaca le creidiúint a thabhairt d'inniúlacht sa Ghaeilge? Ar fágadh daoine le cumas sa Ghaeilge faoi mhíbhuntáiste mar nár ceadaíodh marcanna breise dóibh a bhí dlite dóibh agus ar diúltaíodh deiseanna ar arduithe céime dóibh dá thoradh seo?

Rinne státseirbhíseach teagmháil le m'Oifig i dtaca le deimhniú a bhí faighte aige nár ceadaíodh marcanna breise dó as inniúlacht sa Ghaeilge agus sa Bhéarla i gcomórtas inmheánach d'ardú céime.

Cainteoir dúchais Gaeilge ón nGaeltacht, a bhfuil céim sa Ghaeilge aige, an té a bhí i gceist agus bhain an roinn ina raibh sé fostaithe – An Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta – úsáid rialta in imeacht na mblianta fada, dar leis, as a shaineolas ar chúrsaí Gaeilge mar thaca d'obair na Roinne sin, go minic lasmuigh de ghnáthchúraimí a phoist féin.

Léirigh *curriculum vitae* an té a bhí i gceist ardchaighdeán cumais i raon leathan oibre, san áireamh taithí a bhain go lárnach le cúraimí éagsúla teanga sa roinn sin.

Ba é cás an ghearánaí gur ceapadh córas le marcanna breise a cheadú as inniúlacht sa Ghaeilge agus sa Bhéarla i gcomórtais sa státseirbhís nuair a cuireadh deireadh leis an riail faoi Ghaeilge éigeantach breis agus tríocha bliain ó shin, agus sa chás is nár ceadaíodh na marcanna seo dó féin, go raibh éagóir, leatrom agus dochar mór déanta dó mar gur ceileadh deiseanna ar arduithe céime air.

Bhí sé ar an eolas de bharr a ionaid ar phainéil d'arduithe céime go mbeadh éirithe leis arduithe céime a fháil roimhe sin dá mbeadh na marcanna breise faighte aige.

Bheartaigh mé tuilleadh eolais a lorg faoin gcás.

Proficiency in Irish and English

Has the system which was thought to have replaced compulsory Irish been set aside in sections of the civil service? Have half of Government departments and offices undermined Government policy and agreements in relation to giving credit for proficiency in Irish? Were those who were proficient in Irish disadvantaged by a refusal to grant them the credit they were entitled to and did they lose out on promotional opportunities as a result?

A civil servant contacted my Office to complain that he had not been awarded additional marks for proficiency in both Irish and English in an internal competition for promotion.

This native Irish speaker from the Gaeltacht has a degree in Irish and explained that the department in which he is employed – the Department of Education and Science – had made regular use over the years of his expertise in Irish language affairs, often outside the normal duties of his own position.

His *curriculum vitae* displayed high levels of achievement in a wide range of duties, including some which were central to the performance of the language functions of that department.

His case was that a system was introduced to reward competency in both Irish and English in civil service appointment competitions when compulsory Irish ended thirty years ago, and that it was unfair, unjust and harmful to his career that he should lose out on promotional opportunities as a result of a refusal to grant him the credits to which he was entitled.

He was aware that, due to his position on promotional panels, he would have been promoted had he received the additional credits.

I sought further information on the issue.

ACHOIMRE AR CHÁSANNA ROGHNAITHE

SUMMARY OF SELECTED CASES

Ciorcláin

Is cosúil, ón uair a cuireadh deireadh le “Gaeilge éigeantach” do cheapacháin agus d’arduithe céime sa státseirbhís de bharr cinneadh Rialtais i 1974, gur eisigh an Roinn Airgeadais ceithre cinn de chiorcláin ag leagan amach malairt córais a threoraigh go mbeadh marcanna breise le ceadú as inniúlacht sa Ghaeilge agus sa Bhéarla.

Is léir gurb é an córas marcanna breise seo a bhí mar bhunchloch ag polasaí an Stáit le cinntiú go mbeadh dóthain foirne inniúil ar an nGaeilge ag leibhéil éagsúla den státseirbhís.

Is iad seo a leanas na ciorcláin chuí: 43/1975, 17/1976, 17/1981 agus 30/1990.

Threoraigh an chéad chiorclán sa bhliain 1975 – a bhí bunaithe ar chinneadh Rialtais – gurbh í an chreidiúint a thabharfaí as ucht inniúlacht sa Ghaeilge agus sa Bhéarla araon ná 10% de na marcanna go hiomlán a mbeadh fáil orthu thairis sin.

Threoraigh ciorclán na bliana 1990 de bharr comhaontaithe leis na ceardchumann – ar a dtugtar go hoifigiúil *moladh comhshocraithe na hArd-Chomhairle faoin scéim Idir-réitigh agus Eadrána (an Phríomh-Scéim)* – go laghdófaí na marcanna breise ó 10% go dtí 6% (agus go 3% i gcásanna áirithe).

Oideachas

Tharraing mé an cás anuas leis an Aire Oideachais agus Eolaíochta i Mí na Bealtaine 2005, ag rá gur chreid mé, ar an gcéad amharc, go mbeadh leatrom agus éagóir á ndéanamh ar dhuine a bhí inniúil sa Ghaeilge agus sa Bhéarla dá gceilfí na marcanna breise ar an duine sin – rud a bheadh ina ghníomh tromchúiseach.

Dúirt mé freisin go mbeadh an scéal níos measa fós mura raibh daoine ar an eolas in imeacht na mblianta nach raibh na marcanna breise á gceadú dóibh agus gur obair in aisce a bheadh ann dóibh inniúlacht sa teanga a bhaint amach mar chabhair chun arduithe céime a fháil.

Thagair mé freisin don toradh a bheadh ar neamhaird a dhéanamh d’inniúlacht sa Ghaeilge ar chumas na Roinne sin seirbhís shásúil a sholáthar trí Ghaeilge don phobal. Thug mé le fios

Circulars

It appears that, in the period since the Government’s decision to end compulsory Irish for posts and promotions in the civil service in 1974, four circulars on the matter have been issued by the Department of Finance. These circulars directed that additional marks for competency in both Irish and English be awarded as an alternative to the requirement of compulsory Irish.

It is clear that this system of additional marks was the cornerstone of State policy to ensure that a sufficient number of people competent to provide services in Irish would be available at various levels of the civil service.

The relevant circulars are: 43/1975, 17/1976, 17/1981 and 30/1990.

The first circular in 1975 – which was based on a Government decision – directed that the credit for proficiency in both Irish and English would be 10% of the total marks available otherwise.

The 1990 circular directed, based on an agreement between Government and trade unions – officially described as an “*agreed recommendation of the General Council, under the scheme of Conciliation and Arbitration (Main Scheme)*” – that the additional marks should be reduced from 10% to 6% (and to 3% in specific circumstances).

Education

I brought the matter to the attention of the Minister for Education and Science in May 2005, explaining that I believed, on the face of it, that it would be a serious issue – unfair and unjust to a person competent in both Irish and English – if that person were to be refused the additional marks.

I suggested also that the matter would be more serious if people were unaware throughout the years that they were not being granted the additional marks and that achieving proficiency in Irish was of no help whatsoever in gaining promotion.

I also referred to the consequences for the ability of the Department to provide a satisfactory level of service in Irish if proficiency in the language were to be ignored. I suggested that not alone should

ACHOIMRE AR CHÁSANNA ROGHNAITHE

SUMMARY OF SELECTED CASES

go raibh mé den bharúil nach amháin gur chóir na marcanna breise a cheadú ach gur chóir córas a cheapadh le haon duine a d'fhulaing éagóir nó leatrom roimhe seo a aithint agus a chúiteamh.

Freagra

Dheimhnigh an tAire Oideachais agus Eolaíochta, i bhfreagra chugam i Mí Iúil 2005, go raibh an Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta ar cheann de na Ranna/Oifigí Rialtais nár chuir Ciorclán 30/90 i bhfeidhm i gcomórtais inmheánacha ardú céime. Dúirt sí an méid seo freisin:

"...tá sé de chleachtas ag an Roinn teacht ar chomhaontú roimh réidh leis na cumainn ionadaíochta foime inmheánacha cuí, maidir leis an mbunús do chomórtais inmheánacha ardú céime, agus an fhoclaíocht d'Fhógraí Oifige cuí, ag lorg iarratas ó iarthóirí incháilithe. Toisc nach raibh aon chomhaontú ann le brainse áitiúil ar bith de chumainn ionadaíochta foime maidir le marcanna breise a thabhairt do chumas sa Ghaeilge agus sa Bhéarla araon, níor bronnadh na marcanna seo ar iarthóirí incháilithe i gcomórtais inmheánacha go dtí seo. Bhí trédhearcacht sa chleachtas seo, ó tharla nár deineadh tagairt ar bith do mharcanna breise sna Fógraí Oifige cuí.

Phléigh Rannóg Pearsanra na Roinne cur i bhfeidhm na marcanna breise seo le cumainn ionadaíochta foime inmheánacha, níos luaithe i mbliana. Agus an t-ábhar seo pléite, fuarthas deimhniú i Mí an Mheithimh go bhfuil glactha ag na cumainn ionadaíochta foime áitiúla ar fad le cur i bhfeidhm chiorclán 30/90 i gcomórtais inmheánach ardú céime as seo amach, ach amháin do ghrúpa amháin, a ghlacann leis ar bhonn ad interim. Ó deineadh an comhaontú seo, eisíodh trí Fhógraí Oifige ag fógaire chomórtais inmheánacha ardú céime don fhoireann, agus coinníoll i ngach ceann acu le marcanna breise a bhronnadh do chumas sa Ghaeilge agus Béarla.

Ní féidir marcanna breise a bhronnadh go cúlghabhálach do chomórtais roimhe seo, toisc nach bhfuil a leithéid ag cloí le téarmaí na bhFógraí Oifige a haontaíodh ag an am le

the additional marks be granted but that a system should be put in place to identify and compensate anyone who had suffered unfairly or unjustly in this matter.

Reply

The Minister for Education and Science confirmed in her reply to me in July that the Department of Education and Science was one of a number of Government Departments/Offices that did not apply Circular 30/1990 in internal promotion competitions. She added (translation):

"...it is the Department's practice to agree in advance with the relevant internal staff representative associations the basis for internal promotion competitions and the wording of the appropriate Office Notices requesting applications from eligible candidates. As there were no agreements with any local branches of staff representative organisations in relation to the application of bonus marks for proficiency in both Irish and English, these marks have not been awarded to eligible candidates in internal competitions to date. There was transparency in this practice since no reference was made in the appropriate Office Notices to the application of bonus marks.

The Personnel Division of this Department discussed the application of bonus marks with internal staff representative organisations earlier this year. Following discussion of the issue, confirmation was received in June that all internal staff representative organisations agreed to the implementation of circular 30/90 in future internal promotion competitions with the exception of one group which has agreed to its implementation on an ad interim basis. Since this agreement was reached three Office Notices have been issued announcing internal staff promotion competitions with the condition included in each that bonus marks would be awarded for proficiency in both Irish and English.

Bonus marks can not be awarded retrospectively for previous competitions, since this would not be in compliance with the terms

ACHOIMRE AR CHÁSANNA ROGHNAITHE

SUMMARY OF SELECTED CASES

cumainn ionadaíochta foirne inmheánacha agus a bhí i bhfeidhm nuair a reáchtáíodh na comórtais sin. Chun riaradh na gcomórtais a choinneáil cóir, tá sé riachtanach go gcaithfí go comhréireach le gach iarthóir, faoi réir na gcoinníollacha sna Fógraí Oifige atá comhaontaithe. Ina theannta sin, dá mbeadh sé de chleachtas ag an am marcanna den tsórt sin a bhronnadh i gcomórtais inmheánacha, tá gach seans go mbeadh tuilleadh oifigigh i dteideal na marcanna sin a fháil.”

Thug an tAire le fios freisin go leanfaí den chleachtas nua i dtaca le marcanna breise a cheadú do chumas sa Ghaeilge agus sa Bhéarla i gcomórtais inmheánacha d'ardú céime na Roinne sin.

Tuilleadh Ceisteanna

Cé gur fháiltigh mé roimh dhearbhuí an Aire go raibh forálacha an chiorcláin á bhfeidhmiú anois, thug mé le fios di go raibh cuid mhór ceisteanna gan fhreagairt agus go bhfeadfaí an cás a dhéanamh go raibh éagóir déanta ar dhaoine in imeacht na mblianta.

Bhí mé an-bhuartha faoi dheimhniú an Aire nár cuireadh forálacha an chiorcláin i bhfeidhm ar feadh tréimhse beagnach 15 bliana tar éis an treoir a bheith eisithe ag an Roinn Airgeadais agus faoin eolas breise uatha nach raibh an Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta ach “ar cheann” de na Ranna/Oifigí Rialtais nár chuir an chiorclán i bhfeidhm.

Mheas mé freisin go mbeadh go leor den bharúil go raibh an cleachtas sa chás seo dochosanta – go raibh sé éagórach, claonta agus go hiomlán míchuí go háirithe i gcás an Ranna Rialtais sin a bhfuil cuid mhór de chúram na Gaeilge uirthi.

Cheap mé go raibh tionchar an chleachtais seo le haithint i bhfreagraí a bhí faighte ag m'Oifig ó Ard-Rúnaí na Roinne Oideachais agus Eolaíochta roimhe sin ina ndúirt sí mar mhíniú ar ghearáin eile nach bhfuil “ach 3% d'fhoireann riaracháin na Roinne ábalta seirbhís a sheachadadh trí Ghaeilge i láthair na huaire”. Chiallaigh sin nach raibh 97% de fhoireann riaracháin na Roinne ábalta seirbhís a sheachadadh trí Ghaeilge.

of the Office Notices which were agreed at the time with the internal staff representative organisations and which were in force when the competitions were organised. In order to ensure fairness in the administration of these competitions, it is necessary that all candidates be treated equally in accordance with the agreed Office Notices. In addition, if the practice at the time had been to award marks of this kind in internal competitions there is every chance that additional officials would be entitled to those marks.”

The Minister indicated that the new practice of awarding bonus marks for proficiency in both Irish and English would continue in internal promotions competitions in the Department.

More Queries

Although I welcomed the Minister's confirmation that the provisions of the circular were now being implemented, I informed her that a number of questions remained unanswered, and that the case could be made that individuals had been unjustly treated over the years.

I was very concerned by the Minister's confirmation that the provisions of the circular had not been implemented for nearly 15 years after the direction had been issued by the Department of Finance and by the additional information that the Department of Education and Science was “just one” of the Government Departments/Offices that did not apply Circular 30/1990.

It appeared to me that many would feel that this practice was indefensible – that it was unfair, and wholly inappropriate, especially in the case of a Government Department with a significant remit in relation to the Irish language.

I suspected that the consequences of this practice were evident in replies which my Office had received from the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science in which she explained in relation to other complaints that “at present only 3% of the administrative staff of the Department are able to provide services through Irish.” This suggested that 97% of the administrative staff of the Department were unable to provide services in Irish.

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B'ábhar iontais freisin dom gur cheap an Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta go raibh údarás aici mar Roinn neamhaird a dhéanamh de threoir fhoirmiúil ón Roinn Airgeadais a bhí comhaontaithe le ceardchumann an státhórais. Ba dheacair dom a thuiscint ach an oiread cén buntáiste a ceapadh a bheith ann don Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta cinneadh a dhéanamh gan forálacha an chiorcláin seo a chur i bhfeidhm.

Easpa Treorach

Mar fhreagra ar an méid sin, i litir eile i ndeireadh Mhí na Samhna thar ceann an Aire Oideachais agus Eolaíochta dhiúltaigh Ard-Rúnaí na Roinne sin go hiomlán don tuairim go raibh an cleachtas seanbhunaithe maidir le comórtais inmheánacha d'ardú céime éagórach, claonta nó míchuí ar bhealach ar bith. Dúirt sí an méid seo:

"Measann an Roinn seo go mbaineann an riachtanas seo chun marcanna breise a bhronnadh le comórtais idir-ranna agus ní le comórtais inmheánacha ar chor ar bith. Déantar na comórtais inmheánacha seo a rialú ag socruithe atá comhaontaithe ag an Roinn agus a cumainn ionadaíochta foime. Ba chóir dom a rá freisin go dtacaíonn an Roinn Airgeadais leis an dearcadh againne nach bhfuil aon ordú nó treoir lárnach ann a éilíonn bronnadh de mharcanna breise i gcomórtais inmheánacha d'ardú céime.

Mar a luadh cheana, bhí sé de chleachtas againn, go dtí le déanaí, gan creidiúint a thabhairt i bhfoirm marcanna do chumas sa Ghaeilge agus sa Bhéarla araon inár gcomórtais inmheánacha d'ardú céime. Bhí an cleachtas seo ar eolas go maith ag na cumainn ionadaíochta foime agus, cinnte, d'aontaigh na cumainn seo go rialta le coinníollacha na bhFógraí Oifige a rialaigh comórtais inmheánacha d'ardú céime. Ba cheart dom a rá freisin gur mar thoradh ar an ábhar seo a phlé le cumainn ionadaíochta foime ag comhairle na Roinne a tháinig an cinneadh le déanaí chun creidiúint a thabhairt do Ghaeilge agus Béarla i gcomórtais inmheánacha.

Níor mhiste a lua go bhfuil an cur chuige céanna i bhfeidhm i Ranna eile – is é sin, go bpléitear na critéir atá le cur i bhfeidhm i gcomórtais

I was also surprised that the Department of Education and Science felt it had the authority to disregard a formal direction from the Department of Finance which had been agreed with the unions representing staff in the civil service. I also found it difficult to understand what the perceived advantage was to the Department of Education and Science to decide not to implement the provisions of this circular.

No Directive

In a written reply in late November on behalf of the Minister for Education and Science, the Secretary General of that Department, rejected completely the assertion that the established practice in relation to internal promotion competitions was in any way unfair, biased or inappropriate. She said (*translation*):

"This Department believes that the requirement to award additional marks applies only to interdepartmental competitions and not at all to internal competitions. Internal competitions are regulated by agreements between the Department and its staff representative organisations. I should also say that the Department of Finance agrees with our view that there is no central order or directive which requires the awarding of additional marks in internal promotion competitions.

As mentioned previously, it was our practice until recently not to award marks for proficiency in both Irish and English in internal promotion competitions. This practice was well known to our staff representative organisations, and certainly, those associations regularly agreed to the conditions contained in Office Notices which governed internal promotion competitions. I should also say that it was as a result of discussions on this subject with staff representative organisations at Departmental Council that the recent decision was made to award credit for proficiency in both Irish and English in internal promotion competitions.

It should be noted that the same approach is adopted in other departments – that is, that the criteria for internal promotion competitions are discussed with staff organisations and that different approaches can be adopted

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inmheánacha le heagraíochtaí foime agus gur féidir cur chuige éagsúil a ghlacadh ag brath ar choinníollacha, go háirithe na riachtanais atá ag poist éagsúla. Tá sé cinntithe agam leis an Roinn Airgeadais gurb í seo an tuiscint atá acu féin ar an scéal."

Sa litir sin a fuair mise an chéad léargas go raibh idirdhealú á dhéanamh idir comórtais "inmheánacha" agus comórtais "idir-ranna". Tuigim gur trí chomórtais inmheánacha seachas comórtais idir-ranna a tharlaíonn tromlach d'arduithe céime na státseirbhíse.

Litir na Roinne Airgeadais

Tháinig sé chun solais dom gan mhoill ina dhiaidh sin go raibh litir seolta i dtús mhí na Samhna ag an Roinn Airgeadais chuig Oifigí Pearsanra na rann stáit éagsúil, de thoradh ar fhiosruithe ó roinnt rann. Bhain an litir seo le ceist an riachtanais marcanna breise a thabhairt d'inniúlacht sa Ghaeilge i gcomórtais inmheánacha d'arduithe céime. Bhí an méid seo ráite sa litir sin (aistriúchán):

"Tar éis na ciorcláin chuí (43/75 agus 30/90) a mheas, is é léimhíniú na Roinne seo nach bhfuil éifeacht treorach leo le ceangal a chur marcanna breise a thabhairt don Ghaeilge i gcomórtais inmheánacha d'ardú céime – mar mhalairt ar threoir shoiléir a bheith iontu i gcás comórtais idir-ranna.

Fágтар cuid mhaith discréide ag Ranna i dtaca le socruithe do chomórtais inmheánacha d'ardú céime agus aontaítear na nósanna imeachta leis na cumainn ionadaíochta foime ag Comhairlí Rannacha. Tá critéir éagsúla glactha ag Ranna éagsúla, i gcomhairle le cumainn foime, ag brath ar a gcúinsí sonracha féin. Dá thoradh seo, tá cuid mhaith nósanna agus cleachtais ann i dtaca le gach gné d'arduithe céime inmheánacha, agus orthu seo tá, mar shampla, scéimeanna marcála agus deonú marcanna breise d'inniúlacht sa Ghaeilge. Tá sé seo deimhnithe ag suirbhé a rinne an Rannóg Pearsanra agus Íocaíochtaí tamall ó shin a léirigh go gceadaíonn timpeall ar leath na Rann na marcanna seo ina gcuid comórtais inmheánacha d'ardú céime."

depending on conditions, particularly the requirements of specific posts. I have confirmed with the Department of Finance that this is also their understanding of the issue."

This correspondence was the first indication I received that a distinction was being made between "internal" and "interdepartmental" competitions. I understand that the majority of civil service promotions are by way of internal competition.

Department of Finance letter

It came to light shortly afterwards that a letter had been issued in early November from the Department of Finance to the Personnel Officers of the various government departments – as a result of queries from a number of departments – in relation to the requirement to award additional marks for proficiency in Irish in internal promotion competitions. The letter stated:

"Following consideration of the relevant Circulars (43/75 and 30/90), it is the interpretation of this Department that these do not have directive effect in requiring bonus marks for Irish to be applied in internal promotion competitions – in contrast to clearly doing so in the case of inter-Departmental competitions.

A large degree of discretion is left with Departments in relation to the arrangements for internal promotion competitions, and procedures are agreed with the individual staff sides at Departmental Councils. Departments have adopted different criteria, in consultation with staff sides, and in the light of their particular circumstances. This has led to considerable custom and practice covering all aspects of internal promotion including, for instance, marking schemes, and the application of marks for proficiency in Irish. This is borne out in a survey carried out some time ago by Personnel and Remuneration Division which found that about half of Departments gave such marks in their internal promotion competitions."

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Ba dhíol spéise dom nach raibh aon iarracht déanta sa litir seo le léargas nó míniúchán a thabhairt ar an gcás ar son “léirmhíniú” na Roinne Airgeadais ach go raibh sin bunaithe ar na ciorcláin chuí a mheas. Ba dhíol imní dom an t-eolas go raibh timpeall ar leath na Rann ag ceadú na marcanna breise, agus dá bhrí sin, leath eile nach raibh. Bhí imní orm freisin go raibh brí úmua á baint as na ciorcláin mar chosaint ar nósanna agus cleachtais a bhí tagtha chun cinn i ranna ar leith.

Dá ngéillfí do léirmhíniú na Roinne Airgeadais i leith comórtas inmheánach d'arduithe céime bheadh an chosúlacht ar chúrsaí gur bogadh ó chóras ina raibh Gaeilge éigeantach tráth, chuig córas a ceapadh a thug marcanna breise d'inniúlacht sa Ghaeilge agus sa Bhéarla araon, chuig córas anois a d'fhág nach raibh aon treoir lámach i bhfeidhm ach a d'fhág cúrsaí faoi dhiscreíd na Rann éagsúil.

Reachtaíocht

Tugann Alt 21(f) d'Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003 mar fheidhm do m'Oifig imscrúdú a dhéanamh chun a fháil amach “an amhlaidh nach raibh nó nach bhfuil aon fhoráil d'aon achtachán eile a bhaineann le stádas nó le húsáid teanga oifigiúla á chomhlíonadh”.

Tá sainmhíniú tugtha ar achtachán mar “reacht nó ionstraim ama déanamh faoi chumhacht a thugtar le reacht”.

Cé go dtuigtear dom go bhfuil na ciorcláin chuí eisithe faoi Alt 17 d'Acht Rialuithe na Státseirbhíse 1956, ní achtacháin (reacht nó ionstraim) iontu féin iad. Ní chreidim, dá bhrí sin, go mbeadh dlínse ag m'Oifig imscrúdú oifigiúil a dhéanamh sa chás seo.

Bheartaigh mé gur chóir an t-eolas a bhí bailithe ag m'Oifig a chur i láthair an Choimisiúin um Cheapacháin Seirbhíse Poiblí a bunaíodh faoin Acht um Bainistíocht na Seirbhíse Poiblí (Earcaíocht agus Ceapacháin) 2004. Tá sé i measc feidhmeanna an Choimisiúin caighdeáin a bhunú maidir le roghnúireacht agus le hearcaíocht chun na státseirbhíse agus na caighdeáin sin a chosaint trí mhonatóireacht rialta agus iniúchadh

No attempt had been made in this letter to give an insight into, or an explanation of the Department of Finance's “interpretation” apart from the fact that it was as a result of consideration of the relevant circulars. It was a matter of concern to me to learn that half of the Departments were awarding the additional marks, and consequently, that the other half were not. I was also concerned that the circulars were being given a whole new interpretation which might justify the custom and practice which had become established in certain departments.

If the Department of Finance's interpretation was accepted in relation to internal promotion competitions it would appear that we had moved from a system where Irish was once compulsory, via one which was thought to reward proficiency in both Irish and English with additional marks, to one where no central directive applied but where matters were left to the discretion of individual departments.

Legislation

Section 21 (f) of the Official Languages Act 2003 includes as a function of my Office the authority to carry out an investigation, “to ascertain whether any provision of any other enactment relating to the status or use of an official language was not or is not being complied with”.

The definition of enactment is given as a “statute or an instrument made under a power conferred by a statute”.

Although I understand that the appropriate circulars were issued under Section 17 of the Civil Service Regulation Act 1956, they are not enactments (statutes or instruments) in their own right. I do not believe, therefore, that my Office has the authority to undertake an official investigation in these circumstances.

I decided that the information compiled by my Office should be forwarded to the Commission for Public Service Appointments established under the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act 2004. The functions of the Commission includes the setting of standards for recruitment and selection to the civil service and the safeguarding of those standards through

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rialta a dhéanamh ar na gníomhaíochtaí roghnóireachta agus earcaíochta.

Chuir mé an t-eolas i láthair an Aire Airgeadais freisin de bharr an chúraim atá air i leith na státseirbhíse faoi Acht Rialuithe na Státseirbhíse 1956.

regular monitoring and auditing of recruitment and selection activities.

I also submitted the information to the Minister for Finance because of his responsibilities in relation to the civil service under the Civil Service Regulation Act 1956.

Rialacha an Bhóthair i nGaeilge

Rinneadh gearáin le m'Oifig le linn na bliana nach raibh fáil ag daoine ar chóipeanna i nGaeilge de Rialacha an Bhóthair.

Tugadh le fios dóibh siúd a chuaigh ar thóir leagan Gaeilge nó dátheangach de na rialacha nach raibh fáil ar a leithéid de bharr iad a bheith as cló.

Tugann an Roinn lompair le fios gur féidir le daoine a rogha teanga - Béarla nó Gaeilge - a úsáid don teist tiomána agus iad ar thóir ceadúnas tiomána. Ach, ar ndóigh, is deacracht bhreise d'aon duine tabhairt faoin scrúdú trí Ghaeilge más i mBéarla amháin atá staidéar déanta acu ar *Rialacha an Bhóthair*.

Cuireann Alt 10 d'Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla dualgas ar chomhlachtaí poiblí doiciméid áirithe a fhoilsiú go comhuaineach i ngach ceann de na teangacha oifigiúla ach is liosta teoranta doiciméad atá i gceist agus ní thiocfadh *Rialacha an Bhóthair* faoin bhforáil sin.

Ní raibh aon scéim teanga daingnithe faoin Acht i gcás na Roinne lompair a thabharfadh an t-ábhar seo san áireamh ach an oiread, agus a thabharfadh údarás oifigiúil dom gníomhú sa chás seo.

Dá bhrí sin, tharraing m'Oifig an cheist anuas de réir "spiorad na reachtaíochta" leis an Roinn lompair.

Mhínigh an Roinn sin gur foilsíodh *Rialacha an Bhóthair* i nGaeilge agus i mBéarla sa bhliain 1993, agus gur foilsíodh leagan i mBéarla amháin sa bhliain 1995 agus gur athfhoilsíodh an leagan céanna sin ó shin, ach arís, i mBéarla amháin.

Níor cuireadh aon leagan i nGaeilge ar fáil, mar sin, le 12 bhliain.

Irish Version of Rules of the Road

A number of complaints were made to my Office during the year that the Rules of the Road were unavailable in Irish.

Those who sought an Irish language or bilingual version were told that these were out of print and unavailable.

The Department of Transport offers the option of undertaking the driving test in either official language – Irish or English when seeking a driver's licence. However, it is obvious that an additional burden is added for anyone opting to take the test in Irish if the *Rules of the Road* are available in English only.

Section 10 of the Official Languages Act requires public bodies to publish certain key documents simultaneously in each of the official languages, but the list of documents is limited and does not include publications such as the *Rules of the Road*.

In addition, no scheme under the Act had been confirmed with the Department of Transport which would cover this issue or which would give authority to my Office in this matter.

Consequently, my Office brought the matter to the attention of the Department of Transport under the "spirit of the legislation".

The Department explained that the *Rules of the Road* were published in Irish and in English in 1993, that an English only version was published in 1995 and was subsequently republished, again in English only.

No Irish language version had been published in the past 12 years.

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Mhínigh an Roinn lompair “go mbeadh leagan Gaeilge nó dátheangach de *Rialacha an Bhóthair* ar fáil i mbliana, uair éigin sa samhradh” (2005).

“Idir an dá linn, tá daoine in ann an teist a dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge, cé nach bhfuil aon leabhrán ar fáil trí Ghaeilge go fóill,” a dúirt an Roinn.

Ba léir nach socrú sásúil a bhí anseo agus mhínigh mé don Roinn go bhfágfadh an easpa seo an chuid sin de phobal na tíre agus na Gaeltachta ar mhian leo an Ghaeilge a roghnú go mór faoi mhíbhuntáiste agus go raibh an baol ann go mbraithfidís nach raibh de rogha acu ach a gcearta agus mianta a fhágáil ar leataobh agus tabhairt faoin teist a dhéanamh i mBéarla.

D’fhiafraigh mé den Roinn an bhféadfáidís, go dtí go mbeadh fáil ar an leagan Gaeilge nó dátheangach, cóip den seanleagan a chur ar fáil le híoslódáil on suíomh gréasáin nó socrú a dhéanamh go gcuirfí fótachóipeanna nó cóipeanna ar bhealach saorga eile ar fáil do bhaill den phobal.

Arís dúirt an Roinn gur chúis aiféala dóibh go raibh an seanleagan i nGaeilge as cló ach leis na hathruithe a bhí tagtha ar rialacha an bhóthair le gairid roimhe sin nach raibh mórán bainte ag an seanleagan leis na rialacha nua. Dúradh gur tionscnamh mór é an leagan nua de na rialacha a chur ar fáil agus go rabhthas ag obair i dtreo spriocdháta i mí Lúnasa 2005.

Nuair nach raibh fáil ar an leagan Gaeilge nó dátheangach faoi dheireadh na bliana 2005 rinne m’Oifig teagmháil arís leis an Roinn lompair agus tugadh le fios gur i bhfómhar na bliana 2006 a bheadh fáil anois ar na rialacha nua.

The Department explained that it intended to publish “an Irish language or bilingual version during the year, sometime in summer” (2005).

“In the meantime, people can undertake the test in Irish, although the booklet in Irish is not available yet,” the Department said.

This did not appear to me to be a satisfactory solution and I explained to the Department that those who would choose to use Irish in the Gaeltacht or throughout the country would be left at a serious disadvantage and might feel that they had no alternative but to leave aside their rights and preferences and to take the test in English.

I suggested to the Department, as an interim solution, until the Irish or bilingual version became available, that they might provide access to the older Irish language version for downloading from their website, or by arranging its supply by photocopying or other means.

The Department again expressed regret that the Irish language version was out of print but suggested that because of recent changes to the rules of the road the old Irish language version was now out of date. I was informed that the production of a new version of the *Rules of the Road* was a major project and that the end of August was envisaged as the deadline.

When neither an Irish language or bilingual version was available by the end of the year my Office once again raised the matter with the Department of Transport and was informed that publication was now scheduled for the autumn of 2006.

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“Cead” tugtha an reachtaíocht a shárú

Rinne duine gearán le m’Oifig gur lorg siad cóip i nGaeilge de Thuarascáil Bhliantúil An Post don bhliain 2004 a foilsíodh le linn na bliana 2005 ach nach raibh le fáil ag an tráth sin ach an leagan Béarla. Bhí moill ar fhoilsiú an leagain Ghaeilge, a dúradh leis.

Bhí an gearánaí míshásta agus tharraing sé an cheist anuas leis an Roinn Cumarsáide, Mara agus Acmhainní Nádurtha. Bhí an méid seo le rá ag an Roinn sin leis:

“Comhlíonann an Roinn feidhmeanna Rialachais Corparáidigh maidir leis An Post. Dob é seo an chéad bhliain go raibh ar An Post a Tuarascáil Bhliantúil a fhoilsiú i ngach aon de na teangacha oifigiúla. Is eagraíocht mór í An Post agus de bharr nádúr agus castacht na Tuarascála Bhliantúil níorbh fhéidir leis An Post an Tuarascáil Bhliantúil a fhoilsiú i ngach aon de na teangacha oifigiúla roimh a Cruinniú Cinn Bhliana. Mar sin, d’aontaigh an Roinn, mar bheart aonair, cead a thabhairt do An Post foilsiúchán dá Tuarascáil Bhliantúil ar aon uain a chur ar athló go ceann tréimhse íosta. Tá ceangaltas tugtha ag An Post don Roinn nach tarlóidh an staid seo arís agus go bhfoilseofar Tuarascáil 2005 de réir coinníollacha Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003.”

Tá dualgas reachtúil ar gach comhlacht poiblí a thagann faoi scáth Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003 líon teoranta doiciméad a fhoilsiú go comhuaineach i ngach ceann de na teangacha oifigiúla, d’ainneoin aon achtacháin eile. Tá tuarascálacha bliantúla san áireamh sa liosta teoranta doiciméad seo.

Rinne m’Oifig teagmháil leis An Post agus leis an Aire Cumarsáide, Mara agus Acmhainní Nádurtha i dtaobh an scéil seo.

An Post

Thug An Post míniú cuimsitheach ar na fadhbanna sonracha a tháinig chun cinn agus na deacrachtaí a bhí acu an leagan Gaeilge agus an leagan Béarla a fhoilsiú go comhuaineach. Ghlacadar leis go raibh an reachtaíocht sáraithe acu ach

“Permission” to breach legislation

A complaint was made to my Office by a person who had sought the Irish language version of An Post’s annual report for 2004, which was published in 2005, and who had been told that only the English language version was available. He was informed that the Irish version had been delayed.

The complainant was unhappy with this and brought the matter to the attention of the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources. The Department’s response to him included the following (translation):

“The Department has a function in the corporate governance of An Post. This was the first year that An Post was obliged to publish its annual report in each of the official languages. An Post is a large organisation and because of the nature and complexity of the annual report it was not possible for An Post to publish it in each of the official languages before its Annual General Meeting. Consequently, the Department agreed on a once off basis to permit An Post to postpone for a minimal period of time the simultaneous publication of the report. An Post has guaranteed the Department that this will not arise again and that the 2005 annual report will be published in accordance with the requirements of the Official Languages Act 2003.”

There is a statutory obligation on all public bodies listed in the Official Languages Act to publish a limited number of documents simultaneously in each of the official languages, notwithstanding any other enactments. Annual reports are included in this limited list of documents.

My Office contacted An Post and the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources in relation to the matter.

An Post

An Post offered a comprehensive explanation of the specific problems encountered in seeking to publish both Irish and English versions simultaneously. An Post accepted that they had breached the legislation but that it was not their

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mhaíodar nach raibh ar intinn acu é sin a dhéanamh ach nach raibh aon rogha acu de bharr nádúr agus chastacht an tionscnaimh.

Ghealladar, áfach, go raibh ceachtanna foghlamtha acu ón méid a tharla agus go raibh céimeanna á dtógáil acu láithreach le pleananna a dhéanamh sa chaoi is nach dtarlódh a leithéid an chéad bhliain eile.

An Roinn Cumarsáide, Mara agus Acmhainní Nádúrtha.

Ba chúis mhór imní dom an dearcadh a bhí léirithe ag an Roinn Cumarsáide, Mara agus Acmhainní Nádúrtha sa chás seo, sa mhéid is gur aontaigh an Roinn sin “cead a thabhairt” do An Post an reachtaíocht a shárú agus gan cloí le téarmaí an Achta i dtaca le foilsiú comhuaineach i nGaeilge agus i mBéarla.

Ba chúis iontais dom go gceapfadh aon Roinn go raibh údarás aici “cead a thabhairt” forálacha de dhlí ar bith a shárú agus tharraing mé an cheist anuas le hAire na Roinne sin.

Ghlac an tAire leis nár cheart don Roinn a leithéid de chomhairle a thabhairt do An Post agus ghabh sé leithscéal ina thaobh. Dúirt sé go raibh “dualgas dlíthiúil follasach faoi Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla” i gceist agus gur cheart do An Post é a chomhlíonadh.

Dheimhnigh an tAire nach raibh a leithéid de chead ná de chomhairle tugtha ag an Roinn d’aon chomhlacht poiblí eile faoina scáth agus nach dtabharfaí a leithéid feasta.

intention to do so. An Post felt it had no choice because of the nature and complexity of the project.

An Post promised, however, that lessons had been learned and steps taken immediately to ensure avoidance of a repeat occurrence in the following year.

Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.

The attitude of the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources on this issue was a matter of concern to me, insofar as it had agreed to “permit” An Post to breach the legislation and to contravene the terms of the Act in relation to simultaneous publication of documents in Irish and English.

I was surprised that any Department would believe it had the authority to “permit” breaches of the provisions of any legislation and I brought the matter to the attention of the Minister in that Department.

The Minister accepted that the Department should not have offered such advice to An Post and apologised for the matter. He said that there was a “clear legal obligation in the Official Languages Act” and that An Post should have complied with that.

The Minister confirmed that such permission or advice had not been given by the Department to any other public bodies under its aegis, nor would it be given in future.

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Foirmeacha Iarratais ar Dheontais Tríú Leibhéal

Rinne tuismitheoir as Gaeltacht na Gaillimhe gearán le m'Oifig nach raibh fáil ar leagan Gaeilge den fhoirm iarratais agus nótaí a bhain le deontais tríú leibhéal de chuid na Roinne Oideachais agus Eolaíochta go ceann seachtaine tar éis an spriocdháta a bhí leagtha síos d'iarratais ag an údarás áitiúil a bhí ag riaradh na scéime.

Chiallaigh sin gur bhraith sí go raibh brú uirthi a cuid gnó a dhéanamh trí Bhéarla agus nach raibh de rogha aici ach foirmeacha agus nótaí Béarla a úsáid má bhí sí le hiarratas a dhéanamh do dhuine dá clann roimh spriocdháta oifigiúil an údarais áitiúil.

Ba léir go mbeadh an deacracht chéanna ag gach duine eile sa cheantar Gaeltachta is mó sa tír agus i measc an chuid eile sin den phobal a roghnódh an Ghaeilge i limistéir riartha an údarais áitiúil – Comhairle Contae na Gaillimhe. Dá mbeadh spriocdhátaí mar a chéile leagtha amach ag údarais eile ba léir go mbeadh an fhadhb chéanna ag tuilleadh den phobal ar fud na tíre.

Ba léir freisin nár bhain an fhadhb leis an údarás áitiúil féin mar gurbh í an Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta a bhí freagrach as na doiciméid a chur ar fáil.

Ní raibh dualgas de réir aon fhorála de chuid Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003 ar an Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta na doiciméid seo a fhoilsiú go comhuaineach i ngach ceann de na teangacha oifigiúla agus ní raibh aon scéim teanga daingnithe faoin Acht a thabharfadh an t-ábhar seo san áireamh.

Dá bhrí sin, bheartaigh m'Oifig an cheist a tharraingt anuas leis an Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta de réir "spiorad na reachtaíochta".

Ba léir go raibh sé mar pholasáí cheana féin ag an Roinn na doiciméid seo a sholáthair i nGaeilge agus i mBéarla agus ó tharla go raibh, mheas mé nach bhféadfadh aon impleachtaí airgeadais a bheith ann maidir leis na doiciméid a chur ar fáil go dátheangach, go comhuaineach nó ar a laghad chomh gar sin dá chéile le go mbeadh deis chothrom ag daoine a rogha teanga a bheith acu.

Ba é croí na faidhbe sa chás seo go raibh spriocdháta den 31 Lúnasa 2005 socraithe ag an

Application Forms for Third Level Grants

A parent from the Galway Gaeltacht complained to my Office that the Irish language versions of the Department of Education and Science's application form and notes for third level grants were not available until one week after the application deadline set by the local authority administering the scheme.

This meant that she felt under pressure to transact her business in English and that she considered she had no choice but to make use of the English versions of the form and notes if she wished to submit an application for a member of her family before the local authority's official deadline.

It was obvious that the same problem would arise for others in this, the largest Gaeltacht area in the country and also for those throughout this local authority area – that of Galway County Council – who would prefer to do their business through Irish. If similar deadlines were adopted by other local authorities, it would appear that the same difficulties would occur in other parts of the country.

Clearly the difficulty here did not relate to the local authority itself since the Department of Education and Science was responsible for providing the documentation.

There was no direct provision of the Official Languages Act that required the Department of Education and Science to publish documents of this nature simultaneously in each of the official languages, and no scheme under the Act had been confirmed which would cover this issue.

Consequently, my Office decided to bring the matter to the attention of the Department under the "spirit of the legislation".

Since it was already the Department's policy to publish such documents in Irish and in English, it did not appear to me that there could be any financial implications in arranging to produce the documents simultaneously in both languages or at least, as near in date to one another as to offer the public a real and equal choice of language.

The core issue here was that the Department of Education and Science had fixed 31 August 2005 as its deadline for receipt of completed applications but Galway County Council had fixed

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Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta d'iarratais ach go raibh 22 Iúil 2005 mar spriocdháta ag Comhairle Contae na Gaillimhe. Bhí geallta ag an gComhairle Contae, ina gcás siúd a rinne iarratais roimh an spriocdháta sin, go mbeadh deimhniú ar fáil dóibh i dtaca le deontais roimh thús a gcúrsaí.

Sheol an Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta an leagan leictreonach den fhoirm iarratais agus nótaí i mBéarla ar an 31 Márta – níor foilsíodh an t-ábhar seo go leictreonach trí Ghaeilge ar chor ar bith.

Foilsíodh an t-ábhar céanna i bhfoirm chlóite i mBéarla ar 14-20 Aibreán agus an leagan Gaeilge ar 28 Iúil.

Foilsíodh an leagan Béarla den cháipéis faisnéise faoin scéim deontais go leictreonach agus i bhfoirm chlóite i mBéarla ar an 20 Meitheamh ach ní raibh fáil ar an leagan leictreonach i nGaeilge go dtí 29 Iúil agus an leagan Gaeilge clóite go dtí 16 Lúnasa.

Ba é cás na Roinne Oideachais agus Eolaíochta é, cé go raibh fáil ar na leaganacha Gaeilge níos déanaí ná na cinn i mBéarla, go raibh siad ar fáil mar sin féin roimh spriocdháta oifigiúil na Roinne. Ghlac an Roinn leis, áfach, go raibh spriocdháta níos luaithe ag údaráis éagsúla a bhí ag riaradh na scéime thar a ceann ach dúradh go raibh lánchumhacht ag na húdaráis sin glacadh le hiarratais ar dhátaí níos déanaí.

Mheas an Roinn nach mbeadh sé indéanta na foirmeacha iarratais agus nótaí a chur ar fáil go dátheangach de bharr “castacht na foirme agus an leabhráin nótaí” agus gur fearr cloí leis an nós reatha, leagan Béarla agus leagan Gaeilge den fhoirm a bheith ann, in ionad foirme dátheangáil.

Dhearbhaigh an Roinn, áfach, go mbeadh sí ar a dícheall a chinntiú go mbeadh na cáipéisí i mBéarla ar fáil ag na húdaráis chuí faoi dheireadh Eanáir 2006 agus go mbeadh an leagan Gaeilge ar fáil chomh gar don dáta sin agus ab fhéidir. Bhí plé ar siúl chuige sin le clódóirí agus le lucht soláthar seirbhísí aistriúcháin.

Creidim nach féidir aon bhreithiúnas cruinn a thabhairt ar an éileamh a bheidh ar sheirbhís trí Ghaeilge ó chomhlachtaí poiblí nó ar an leas agus an buntáiste a bhainfear as na seirbhísí sin go dtí go mbeidh siad ar fáil ar chomhchaighdeán agus chomh tráthúil céanna lena macasamhail i mBéarla.

its own deadline of 22 July 2005 with the guarantee that all successful applicants whose applications were received before that date would be advised as to their entitlement to the grant prior to the commencement of their courses.

The Department of Education and Science had published electronic versions of the application form and notes in English on 31 March. This material was not published electronically in Irish at all.

The same material was published in print form in English on 14-20 April and in Irish on 28 July.

The information document on the grant scheme was published electronically and in print form in English on 20 June, but was not available in Irish until 29 July (electronically) and 16 August (print version).

The Department of Education and Science's case was that although the Irish versions were available later than the English versions they were, nonetheless, available before the Department's official deadline. The Department did accept that other authorities administering the scheme on its behalf had fixed earlier deadlines but these authorities were fully authorised to accept later applications.

The Department was of the opinion that it would not be possible to provide the application forms and notes in a bilingual format because of the “complexity of the form and the notes booklet” and that the current practice of providing separate versions in Irish and English was preferable.

The Department confirmed, however, that it would endeavour to ensure for the next year that the appropriate authorities would have the English versions by the end of January 2006 and that the Irish versions would be available as near to that date as possible. The matter was being addressed in consultation with printers and translation service providers.

I believe it to be impossible to make any accurate judgement in relation to the demand for services in Irish from public bodies or to the uptake in those services until they are available at the same standard and in as timely a fashion as similar services in English.

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SUMMARY OF SELECTED CASES

Cárta Eorpach Árachas Sláinte

Thuairisc mé sa Tuarascáil Tionscnaimh anuraidh cuid mhaith gearán a bheith déanta le m'Oifig gur i mBéarla amháin a bhí fáil ar an gCárta Eorpach Árachas Sláinte nua a eisíodh do bhaill den phobal mar mhalairt ar an bhfoirm E111 agus foirmeacha eile.

Úsáidtear an cárta nua ar mhaithe le leas a bhaint as seirbhísí sláinte áitiúla le linn do dhuine a bheith ar cuairt in aon tír eile de chuid an Aontais Eorpaigh, i mballstáit an AEE nó san Eilvéis.

I gcomhfhreagras leis an Roinn Sláinte agus Leanaí tháinig sé chun solais ag an am go raibh reachtaíocht Eorpach comhaontaithe i gcás an chárta (Cinneadh 189 agus 190 de chuid an Choimisiúin Riaracháin) a rialaigh nach n-eiseofaí an cárta ach i dteangacha oifigiúla oibre de chuid an AE.

Deirtear in Airteagal 4, de Chinneadh 189 an méid seo:

"Comhlíonfaidh an cárta Eorpach samhail aonair a shainmhíneoidh an Coimisiún Riaracháin, rud a éascóidh rochtain ar chúram sláinte agus a chabhróidh le cosc a chur ar úsáid neamhrialta, ar mhí-úsáid agus ar úsáid chalaioiseach an chárta."

Dá réir sin, socraíodh ar rialacha dochta maidir le méid, dath, cló, teangacha agus téacs an chárta ar mhaithe le "mearbhall aigne a sheachaint agus aitheantas éasca an chárta a chinntiú sna 25 bhallstát de chuid an AE, 3 bhallstát an AEE agus san Eilvéis".

Thagair an Roinn Sláinte agus Leanaí do cheist stádas na Gaeilge a bheith idir lámha ag an Rialtas ag an am agus dúirt an méid seo:

"Gan amhras, coimeádfaimid súil ar dhul chun cinn na saincheiste sin ionas go mbeimis in ann dul i ngleic leis an gceist arís nuair a thagann deis chun cinn."

Ar an 13 Meitheamh 2005 fógraíodh cinneadh Airí Gnóthaí Eachtracha an Aontais Eorpaigh glacadh d'aonghuth le moladh Rialtas na hÉireann go dtabharfaí stádas oifigiúil agus oibre don Ghaeilge san Aontas Eorpach ó thus na bliana 2007 ar aghaidh.

European Health Insurance Card

I reported in last year's Inaugural Report that a number of complaints had been made to my Office about the fact that the new European Health Insurance Card which was issued to members of the public in place of form E111 and other forms was available in English only.

The new card is used by people to avail of local health services when visiting other states of the European Union, member states of the EEA or Switzerland.

In correspondence with the Department of Health and Children at the time, it emerged that the agreed European legislation regarding the card (Decisions 189 and 190 of the Administration Commission) stipulated that the card would only be issued in the official working languages of the European Union.

Article 4 of Decision 189 reads as follows:

"The European card must conform to a single model defined by the Administrative Commission, which should both help facilitate access to health care and help prevent irregular, abusive or fraudulent use of the card."

Accordingly, strict rules were agreed on regarding the size, colour, type-face, languages and text of the card in order "to avoid confusion and to ensure recognition of the card with ease in the 25 member states of the EU, the EEA and Switzerland".

The Department of Health and Children also referred to the question of status of the Irish Language which was at the time being dealt with by the Government and they had this to say:

"We will of course keep an eye on the progress of this specific issue so that we will be able to deal with the issue again when the opportunity arises."

On the 13 June 2005, the decision of the Foreign Ministers of the European Union to accept, unanimously, the recommendation by the Irish Government that official and working status be given to the Irish Language in the European Union from the beginning of the year 2007 was announced.

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SUMMARY OF SELECTED CASES

Rinne m'Oifig teagmháil leis an Roinn Sláinte agus Leanaí ina dhiaidh sin ag meabhrú a raibh ráite roimhe sin faoi "dul i ngleic leis an gceist arís nuair a thagann deis chun cinn".

Rinne an Roinn sin teagmháil leis an Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha, le hOifig an Ard-Aighne agus le húdaráis na hEorpa i dtaobh an scéil ar bhealach a bhí réamhghníomhach agus dearfach.

Deimhníodh do m'Oifig go luath ina dhiaidh sin go raibh na socruithe cuí déanta, agus nár ghá fanacht go mbeadh an stádas nua teanga i bhfeidhm san Eoraip in Eanáir 2007 ach go raibh údarás faighte cártaí trí Ghaeilge a sholáthar a luaithe agus a bheadh na socruithe cuí déanta ag Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte anseo.

Dheimhnigh an Roinn Sláinte agus Leanaí freisin go ndéanfaí teagmháil faoin scéal le Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte.

My Office subsequently made contact with the Department of Health and Children to remind them of what had been said previously in respect of "dealing with the issue again when the opportunity arises".

That Department contacted the Department of Foreign Affairs, The Office of the Attorney General and the European authorities in a manner which was both proactive and positive.

It was confirmed to my Office shortly afterwards that the appropriate arrangements had been made, and that there was no need to wait until the new status for the language came into effect in Europe in 2007, but that they had received sanction to supply cards in Irish as soon as the Health Service Executive could make the appropriate arrangements.

The Department of Health and Children also confirmed that they would contact the Health Service Executive in respect of the card.

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SUMMARY OF SELECTED CASES

Toghchán Údarás na Gaeltachta

Rinneadh trí ghearán éagsúla le m'Oifig faoi dheacrachtaí a bhí ag daoine déileáil trí Ghaeilge le baill den fhoireann a bhí ag riaradh na vótála i dtoghchán Údarás na Gaeltachta a bhí ar siúl ar an 2 Aibreán 2005.

Bhain na gearáin le trí bhoth vótála ar leith i dtíochtaí dhifriúla.

Na húdaráis áitiúla éagsúla a d'eagraigh an córas vótála thar ceann na Roinne Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta.

Tharraing m'Oifig na gearáin anuas leis an triúr ceann comhairimh cuí.

Sa chéad chás mhínigh an ceann comhairimh gur labhair sé go pearsanta ar an teileafón roimh ré le gach duine a bhí le fostú sna bothanna vótála agus go raibh sé sásta go raibh ar a gcumas a gcuid oibre a dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge. Cé nach scrúdú Gaeilge a bhí i gceist, dúirt sé gur shásaigh sé é féin go raibh cumas sa teanga acu.

Sa dara cás, mhínigh an t-údarás áitiúil go raibh dearbhú sínithe ag gach duine a ceapadh le dul i mbun oibre sna hionaid vótála go raibh ar a gcumas na dualgais oibre a chomhlíonadh trí Ghaeilge agus bhí an comhfhreagras leo ar fad trí Ghaeilge.

Ní raibh ar chumas an údaráis áitiúil, de bharr brú oibre, aon tástáil eile a dhéanamh ar chumas teanga na n-oibrithe ach ghlacadar leis an dearbhú sínithe mar chomhartha cumais.

Sa tríú cás, d'admhaigh an ceann comhairleamh gur foistíodh na daoine céanna do thoghcháin an Údaráis a bhíodh á n-úsáid ag toghcháin eile roimhe sin gan aon cheist a chur faoina gcumas teanga. Mheas sé go mbeadh Gaeilge acu ó tharla cónaí a bheith orthu sa Ghaeltacht ach ní raibh ceist na teanga curtha ar an gclár oibre aige. Ba thura leis gur tharla sin agus thug sé le fios go gcinnteodh sé go mbeadh cumas i nGaeilge acu sin feasta a cheapfaí chun oibre le linn vótála sa cheantar Gaeltachta sin.

Údarás na Gaeltachta Elections

Three complaints were made to my Office in relation to difficulties encountered by members of the public in dealing, through Irish, with staff administering the voting in elections to the board of Údarás na Gaeltachta, held on 2 April 2005.

The complaints involved three polling stations in three different counties.

The election process was administered by the local authorities on behalf of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

My Office brought the matter to the attention of the returning officers in the three counties involved.

In the first case, the returning officer explained that he had spoken personally, by telephone, in advance, to all potential staff to be employed in polling stations and had assured himself that they were competent to perform their duties through Irish. Although no language test was involved, he was confident that they were proficient in Irish.

In the second case, the local authority explained that all those appointed to polling stations had signed declarations stating that they could perform the duties of the post through Irish and that all correspondence with them had been in Irish. Because of pressure of work, the local authority had not been in a position to test the language ability of those involved but had accepted the signed declarations as an indication of competence.

In the third case, the returning officer admitted that the same people had been retained for polling stations in the Údarás na Gaeltachta elections as in other previous elections, without any reference to language ability. He assumed that since they lived in Gaeltacht areas they would have Irish, but had not put the issue of language on the agenda. He regretted that this had happened and he undertook to ensure that, in future, those appointed to work in polling stations in that Gaeltacht area would have Irish.

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Comharthaí i Stáisiúin Traenach

Rinne duine gearán le m'Oifig maidir le comharthaí nua rabhaidh i mBéarla amháin a bheith curtha i stáisiúin traenach i gceantair áirithe i mBaile Átha Cliath ina mbíodh na fógraí seo dátheangach roimhe sin.

Ag tráth a bhfuil iarrachtaí á ndéanamh trí Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla spás a chruthú don teanga i saol poiblí na tíre ba léir gur imeallú ar an teanga a bheadh ann dá mbeadh fógraí aonteangacha Béarla á gcur san áit a mbíodh fógraí dátheangacha roimhe sin.

Ní raibh ag an tráth sin aon rialacháin déanta fós faoi úsáid na Gaeilge ar chomharthaíocht phoiblí faoi Alt 9(1) den Acht ag an Aire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta maidir leis na dualgais a bheadh ar chomhlachtaí poiblí uile sa réimse seo.

Ach ó tharla gur stáisiúin traenach agus Córas Iompair Éireann/Iamróid Éireann a bhí i gceist tá forálacha san Acht Iompair 1950 a thugann an t-ábhar seo san áireamh.

Tá an dualgas seo leagtha amach in Alt 57 den Acht sin:

57-(1) *"Ní foláir na buan-fhógraí agus na buan-chomharthaí poiblí uile (lena n-áirítear ainmneacha stáisiún) a bheas á gcothabháil ag an mBord a bheith i nGaeilge ach is cead iad a bheith i nGaeilge agus i mBéarla."*

Tharraing m'Oifig an cás anuas le hIamróid Éireann agus dheimhnigh Príomhfheidhmeannach (Gníomhach) na heagraíochta gur chóir go mbeadh an chomharthaíocht i nGaeilge freisin. "Ordóidh mé don bhainisteoir ginearálta le freagracht as na stáisiúin atá i gceist socrú a dhéanamh i dtaobh comharthaí oiriúnacha a chur ar fáil," a dúirt sé.

Signage in Train Stations

A complaint was made to my Office that new warning signs in English only had replaced the previous bilingual signs, in certain railway stations, in areas of Dublin.

At a time when efforts are being made through the Official Languages Act to create a space for the Irish language in the public life of the country, it would appear that such a move would contribute to the marginalisation of the language by the replacement of bilingual signs with English only versions.

There were no regulations in place at that stage under Section 9(1) of the Official Languages Act in relation to the use of Irish in signage in general by public bodies.

However, this complaint involved railway stations and CIE/Iamróid Éireann and therefore the matter is adequately covered by the provisions of the Transport Act 1950.

Section 57 of that Act includes the following obligation in relation to signage:

57-(1) *"All permanent public notices and signs (including the names of stations) maintained by the Board shall be in the Irish language but may be in both the Irish and English languages."*

My Office brought the matter to the attention of Iamróid Éireann and the Acting Chief Executive confirmed that that the signage involved should be in Irish also. He wrote, "I shall instruct the general manager responsible for the stations involved to arrange for the provision of the appropriate signs".

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Logainm ar Comharthaí Bóithre

Is beag duine nach mbíonn bród áirithe air as a cheantar dúchais agus is minic gur treise an bród sin i measc daoine atá gafa le forbairt pobail agus le cumainn forbartha áitiúla.

Rinne cumann forbartha áitiúil amháin as ceantar Gaeltachta teagmháil liom le linn na bliana faoi bhotúin litrithe a bheith i logainm na háite ar gach ceann de na comharthaí bóthair a bhí dírithe ar an gceantar.

Dúirt siad go raibh an cheist tarraingthe anuas acu leis an údarás áitiúil cuí ach gur bhraith siad gurb í an chluas bhodhar a fuair siad.

Dhearbhaigh m'Oifig go raibh leagan cruinn, oifigiúil den logainm daingnithe ag an Aire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta san Ordú Logainmneacha (Ceantair Ghaeltachta) 2004.

Chuir m'Oifig an t-eolas cuí seo i láthair an údaráis áitiúil. Ghlac an t-údarás áitiúil leis láithreach go raibh a gcuid comharthaí bóthair as bealach agus rinneadar na socraithe go ndéanfaí leasuithe orthu ar an bpointe le go mbeadh leagan cruinn an logainm feasta ar gach comhartha acu.

Placename on Roadsigns

Most people have a certain pride in their native area and often that pride is stronger among people who are involved with community development and with local development committees.

One local development committee from a Gaeltacht area contacted my Office during the year with regard to spelling errors in the placename of their district on all local roadsigns.

They said that they had raised the matter with the relevant local authority but that they felt they had been ignored.

My Office was able to verify that an accurate, official version of the placename had been confirmed by the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs in the Placenames Order (Ceantair Ghaeltachta) 2004.

The appropriate information was conveyed to the relevant local authority. The local authority accepted immediately that their roadsigns were incorrect and arranged to amend them so that the correct version of the placename would appear on all signs in future.

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Suíomh Gréasáin

Ní chuireann aon fhoráil de chuid Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003 dualgas reachtúil ar chomhlachtaí poiblí a thagann faoi scáth na reachtaíochta a gcuid suíomh gréasáin a bheith dátheangach. Is gnách, i gcás comhlachta phoiblí a bhfuil a shuíomh gréasáin i mBéarla amháin nó nach bhfuil ach cuid de i nGaeilge, go gcomhaontaítear mar chuid de scéim teanga faoi Alt 11 den Acht an próiseas a bheidh i gceist ag an gcomhlacht poiblí sin le suíomh dátheangach a fhorbairt. Nuair a chomhaontaítear a leithéid i scéim teanga cuireann sin bunús reachtúil faoin socrú.

Ach beag beann ar dhualgais reachtúla is minic, mar chuid dá bpolasaí teanga agus mar dheachleachtas, a shocraíonn comhlachtaí poiblí go mbeadh suíomh gréasáin dátheangach acu.

Rinneadh gearáin le m'Oifig le linn na bliana i dtaca le roinnt deacrachtaí éagsúla ar an leagan Gaeilge den suíomh gréasáin de chuid na Roinne Comhshaoil, Oidhreacht agus Rialtais Áitiúil atá curtha ar fáil go speisialta le seirbhís trí Ghaeilge a chur ar fáil – www.motarchain.ie – ina measc, gearáin faoi fhadhbanna teacht ar fhoirmeacha áirithe i nGaeilge ar an suíomh sin.

Don té a dhéanfaidh iarracht an leagan Gaeilge d'fhoirmeacha éagsúla a íoslódáil is é an leagan Béarla amháin a bhí ar fáil. Bhain na foirmeacha seo le hathnuachan mótarachánach (RF100A), athrú sonraí (RF111) agus dearbhú aistriú úinéireachta (RF200). Mar bharr ar an donas dúradh ar an leagan Béarla de na foirmeacha a bhí le híoslódáil ansin go raibh leagan Gaeilge le fáil, ach ba léir nach raibh siad le fáil ón suíomh áirithe sin.

Tharraing an Oifig seo an cheist seo anuas le foireann na Roinne agus ní raibh aon cheist ann ach go raibh fáil ar na foirmeacha i nGaeilge. Go deimhin, bhí siad le fáil le híoslódáil in áit ar leith ar shuíomh eile de chuid na Roinne céanna ach ní bheadh aon léargas air sin ag an té a rachadh á gcuardach san áit a mbeadh súil leo ar www.motarchain.ie.

Gheall an Roinn go réiteofaí an fhadhb áirithe sin nuair a bheadh an chéad chothabháil theicniúil eile á déanamh ar an suíomh agus cinntíodh dá thoradh sin gurb iad na leaganacha Gaeilge atá le híoslódáil anois ón suíomh Gaeilge.

Website

No provision of the Official Languages Act 2003 places a legal obligation on public companies which are covered by the legislation to have bilingual websites. Usually where public companies have their websites in English only or where they have only part of the website in Irish a process is agreed as part of a language scheme under Section 11 of the Act to develop a bilingual website. When such a process is agreed as part of a language scheme the arrangement is given a legal basis.

However, leaving aside legal requirements, public bodies often arrange as part of their language policy and as a matter of good practice to provide bilingual websites.

Complaints were made to my Office during the year with regard to certain problems in relation to the Irish language version of a website provided by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government – www.motarchain.ie – a site made available specifically to offer a service through Irish, including complaints regarding difficulties accessing certain forms in Irish on the site.

If a person attempted to download the Irish version of certain forms, only the English version was available. These forms related to motor tax renewal (RF100A), change of details (RF111) and confirmation of change of ownership (RF200). To make matters worse the downloadable English version of the form said that an Irish version was available but it was clearly not available on that website.

This Office raised the question with the staff of the Department and there was no doubt that the forms were available in Irish. Indeed, they were available for downloading elsewhere on another site belonging to the same Department but that would not be obvious to a person seeking a copy on www.motarchain.ie where one might expect to find it.

The Department promised to make arrangements to solve this particular problem when the next technical update of the site was made and as a result the Irish versions are now available for downloading from the Irish version of the website.

CÚRSAÍ AIRGEADAIS FINANCIAL MATTERS

Bhí buiséad €700,000 curtha ar fáil don oifig don bhliain 2005. Tá cuntais na hOifige curtha faoi bhráid an Ard-Reachtair Cuntas agus Ciste lena n-íniúchadh de réir Alt 8(2) den Dara Sceideal d'Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003.

A luaithe agus is féidir tar éis an iniúchta, déanfaidh an Coimisinéir Teanga cóip de na cuntais sin, nó de cibé sleachta as na cuntais sin a shonróidh an tAire Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta, mar aon le tuarascáil an Ard-Reachtair Cuntas agus Ciste maidir leis na cuntais, a chur i láthair an Aire. Beidh cóipeanna de na doiciméid sin á leagan faoi bhráid gach ceann de Thithe an Oireachtais. Foilseofar freisin iad ar shuíomh gréasáin na hOifige.

A budget of €700,000 was provided for the Office for the year 2005. The accounts of the Office have been submitted to the Comptroller and Auditor General for audit in accordance with Section 8(2) of the Second Schedule of the Official Languages Act 2003.

As soon as may be after the audit, a copy of those accounts, or of such extracts from those accounts as the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs may specify, together with the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General on the accounts, shall be presented to the Minister. Copies of the documents shall be laid before each House of the Oireachtas. They will be published also on the Office's website.

FOIREANN AGUS SONRAÍ TEAGMHÁLA

STAFF AND CONTACT DETAILS

Foireann

Seo a leanas liosta foime Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga:

Staff

The following is a list of members of staff of the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga:

An Coimisinéir Teanga	Seán Ó Cuirreáin	An Coimisinéir Teanga
Bainisteoir Oifige	Damhnait Uí Mhaoldúin	Office Manager
Ardoifigeach Feidhmiúcháin	Órla de Búrca	Higher Executive Officer
Oifigeach Feidhmiúcháin	Cáit Uí Mhaoilríain	Executive Officer
Oifigeach Cléireachais	Laura Pathe	Clerical Officer
Oifigeach Cléireachais	Ciarán Ó Ráighne	Clerical Officer

Teagmháil

Is féidir teagmháil a dhéanamh leis an Oifig tríd an bpost, ar facs, le ríomhphost nó ar an teileafón ar chostas Glao Áitiúil, mar seo a leanas:

Contact details

Contact can be made with this Office by post, fax, email or telephone at the cost of a local call, as follows:

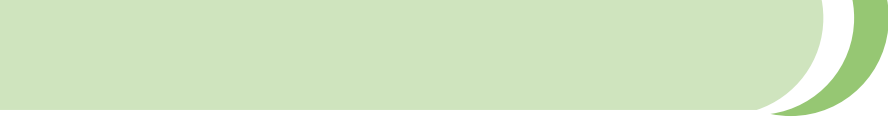
POST: **An Coimisinéir Teanga**
 An Spidéal
 Co. na Gaillimhe
 Éire

POST: **An Coimisinéir Teanga**
 An Spidéal
 Co. Galway
 Ireland

FÓN	091-504 006	PHONE
GLAO ÁITIÚIL	1890-504 006	Lo-Call
FACS	091-504 006	FAX
RÍOMHPHOST	eolas@coimisineir.ie	EMAIL
SUÍOMH GREASÁIN	www.coimisineir.ie	WEBSITE

An leagan Gaeilge an bhunchóip den tuarascáil seo.
The Irish language version is the original text of this report.

Dearadh/Design: www.jdkdesign.net Teil/Tel: 071 9120905





An Coimisinéir Teanga

An Coimisinéir Teanga

An Spidéal

Co. na Gaillimhe

Éire

Teileafón / Telephone: 091-504006

Glao Áitiúil / Lo-Call Number: 1890-504006

Facsuimhir / Fax Number: 091-504036

Ríomhphost / Email: eolas@coimisineir.ie

Idirlíon / Internet: www.coimisineir.ie