

**From:** Janet Muller [mailto:jmuller@pobal.org]  
**Sent:** 02 March 2012 10:35  
**To:** Peter McNaney  
**Subject:** cruinniu agus cur i lathair don Chomhairle

## APPENDIX 1

Peter McNaney,  
Príomhfheidhmeannach  
Comhairle Cathrach  
Béal Feirste

2.3.12

A Peter, a chara,

Tag: Tuairisc an Choiste Comhairleach ar cur i gcríoch an Chreatchoinbhinsiún Um Chosaint na Mionlaigh Náisiúnta

Mar is eol duit, déanann POBAL monatóireacht leanúnach ar an Ghaeilge agus ar chur i gcríoch ionstraimí idirnáisiúnta dlí a bhaineann le cearta teanga. I 2011, bhail muid le hionadaithe An Choiste Comhairleach ar an Chreatchoinbhinsiún thuas luaite. D'ullmhaigh muid tuairisc chuimsitheach scríofa chomh maith agus cuireadh roimh an Choiste Comhairleach í.

Foilsíodh Tríú Thuairisc an Choiste Comhairleach ar na mallaibh, ina déantar cur síos ar thorthaí agus ar mholtaí an Choiste ar fhorfheidhmiú an Choinbhinsiúin sa thréimhse monatóireachta reatha. Mar thoradh ar an fhianaise a chuir POBAL i lathair an Choiste i 2011, rinne Comhairle na hEorpa trí mholadh shonracha atá 'le cur i bhfeidhm láithreach', lena n-áirítear an moladh seo a leanas:

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

Dar leis an Choiste,

*146. The Advisory Committee is deeply concerned by the failure to adopt legislation on the Irish language due to a lack of political consensus in the Northern Ireland Assembly, notwithstanding the fact that this was a commitment taken by the Parties to the St Andrews Agreement of 2006. It also finds it worrying that some of the authorities in Northern Ireland have expressed their opposition to the preparation of a bill on the Irish language or of an overall strategy to promote the use of the Irish language, invoking a potentially harmful effect on community relations and budgetary considerations.*

*147. Moreover, the Advisory Committee regrets that, in addition to a lack of clear legal guarantees for the use of the Irish language, there is a lack of promotion of the Irish language and culture. It understands that, in practice, very little is done to promote the use of Irish in the public sphere and that, although some Irish language officers have been appointed in a few municipalities, the possibilities to use this language in relations with local administrative authorities remain limited. It is also concerned that the overall climate in Northern Ireland does not encourage Irish speakers to use and develop their language freely. 28 The Advisory Committee was disconcerted to hear that some representatives of the authorities consider that promoting the use of the Irish language is discriminating against persons belonging to the majority population. Such statements are not in line with the principles of the Framework Convention, and in particular with the provisions of Article 10. It also reiterates that, in line with Article 4.2 and Article 4.3 of*

*the Framework Convention, implementation of minority rights protected under the Framework Convention are not be considered as discriminating against other persons (see remarks under Article 4).*

Tagraíonn an Choiste Comhairligh chomh maith do thionchar díobhálach an easpa reachtaíochta ar an Ghaeilge agus go háirithe luaitear easpa cearta agus easpa comharthaíocht Ghaeilge (alt 158). Tagraítear go háirithe do Chomhairle Bhéal Feirste,

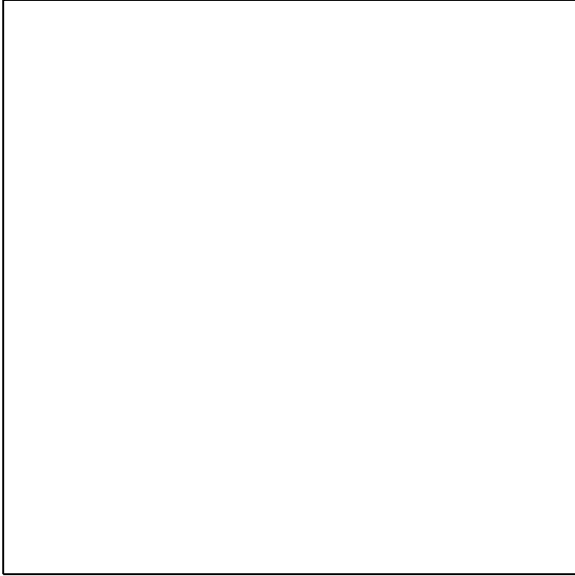
*158. In Northern Ireland, the Advisory Committee regrets that only limited progress has been made regarding the erection of bilingual signposting and topographical indications, particularly road signs, despite the fact that there is, reportedly, a demand for this in a number of municipalities. Additionally, it finds it problematic that the official policy is to limit the erection of such signs to certain areas where the issue would not raise controversies. The Advisory Committee regrets the decision by Belfast City Council to reject in March 2011 a proposal to erect bilingual signs in this city (in English and Irish or Ulster Scots). The Advisory Committee is concerned that this approach is not in line with the spirit of the Framework Convention and, in particular, the provisions of Article 11, the aim of which is to value the use of minority languages, including through the setting up of bilingual signposting, with a view to promoting more tolerance and intercultural dialogue in society.*

Is cúis mhór imní dúinn go bhfuil easpa gníomhartha ar an Ghaeilge ag tarraingt droch-chlú ar Chomhairle Bhéal Feirste agus ba mhaith liom bualadh leat leis na ceistanna seo a phlé. Chomh maith, ba mhaith liom cur i láthair a dhéanamh don Chomhairle ar cheist na Gaeilge sa saol poiblí chomh luath agus is féidir.

Janet Muller  
Príomhfheidhmeannach

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Tag. carthanachta XT27908  
Charity Ref. XT27908

**From:** Janet Muller [mailto:jmuller@pobal.org]  
**Sent:** 02 March 2012 10:35  
**To:** Peter McNaney  
**Subject:** meeting and presentation to the Council

Peter McNaney  
Chief Executive  
Belfast City Council

2.3.12

Dear Peter,

Reference: Report of the Advisory Committee on the execution of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

As you know, POBAL continuously monitors the Irish language and the execution of international instruments of law concerning language rights. In 2011, we met with representatives of the Advisory Committee about the above mentioned Framework Convention. We also prepared a comprehensive written report and submitted it to the Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee's Third Report was recently published, in which are described the results and proposals of the Committee on the implementation of the Convention in the current monitoring period. As a result of the evidence which POBAL submitted to the Committee in 2011, the Council of Europe made three specific proposals which are 'to be implemented immediately', including the following proposal:

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

The Committee thinks,

*146. The Advisory Committee is deeply concerned by the failure to adopt legislation on the Irish language due to a lack of political consensus in the Northern Ireland Assembly, notwithstanding the fact that this was a commitment taken by the Parties to the St Andrews Agreement of 2006. It also finds it worrying that some of the authorities in Northern Ireland have expressed their opposition to the preparation of a bill on the Irish language or of an overall strategy to promote the use of the Irish language, invoking a potentially harmful effect on community relations and budgetary considerations.*

*147. Moreover, the Advisory Committee regrets that, in addition to a lack of clear legal guarantees for the use of the Irish language, there is a lack of promotion of the Irish language and culture. It understands that, in practice, very little is done to promote the use of Irish in the public sphere and that, although some Irish language officers have been appointed in a few municipalities, the possibilities to use this language in*

*relations with local administrative authorities remain limited. It is also concerned that the overall climate in Northern Ireland does not encourage Irish speakers to use and develop their language freely. 28 The Advisory Committee was disconcerted to hear that some representatives of the authorities consider that promoting the use of the Irish language is discriminating against persons belonging to the majority population. Such statements are not in line with the principles of the Framework Convention, and in particular with the provisions of Article 10. It also reiterates that, in line with Article 4.2 and Article 4.3 of the Framework Convention, implementation of minority rights protected under the Framework Convention are not be considered as discriminating against other persons (see remarks under Article 4).*

The Advisory Committee also refers to the harmful influence of the lack of legislation on the Irish language and the lack of Irish language rights and signage is specially mentioned (paragraph 158) Belfast Council is specially referred to.

*158. In Northern Ireland, the Advisory Committee regrets that only limited progress has been made regarding the erection of bilingual signposting and topographical indications, particularly road signs, despite the fact that there is, reportedly, a demand for this in a number of municipalities. Additionally, it finds it problematic that the official policy is to limit the erection of such signs to certain areas where the issue would not raise controversies. The Advisory Committee regrets the decision by Belfast City Council to reject in March 2011 a proposal to erect bilingual signs in this city (in English and Irish or Ulster Scots). The Advisory Committee is concerned that this approach is not in line with the spirit of the Framework Convention and, in particular, the provisions of Article 11, the aim of which is to value the use of minority languages, including through the setting up of bilingual signposting, with a view to promoting more tolerance and intercultural dialogue in society.*

It is a matter of great concern to us that lack of action on the Irish language is gaining Belfast City Council a bad reputation and I would like to meet you to discuss these matters. In addition, I would like to make a presentation to the Council on the question of the Irish language in public life as soon as possible.

Janet Muller  
Chief Executive

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