



# Conradh na Gaeilge

**Freagra**

## **Chonradh na Gaeilge**

**ar an tuairisc a chuir an Grúpa Speisialta ar fáil don Rialtas le déanaí darbh ainm**

**‘Report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes’**

**11 Meán Fómhair 2009**

## CÚLRA:

Ní miste athstruchtúrí agus coigiltí ar an airgead a chaitheann Rialtas na hÉireann ar ár son. Tá an 'Report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes', grúpa a bunaíodh ag deireadh 2008, ar fáil anois. Tá freagra Chonradh na Gaeilge ar an tuairisc a chuir an Grúpa Speisialta sin le chéile le léamh thíos. Díríodh ar thagairtí don Ghaeilge sa Tuairisc agus ar mholtaí a mbeadh tionchar acu ar chaomhnú, ar chur chun cinn agus ar spreagadh úsáid na Gaeilge in Éirinn.

## COMHTHÉACS AGUS ÉILEAMH:

Is faoin Rialtas féin atá sé cinneadh a dhéanamh faoi na moltaí sa Tuairisc ón nGrúpa Speisialta, faoina bhfuil le cur i bhfeidhm, nó nach bhfuil le cur i bhfeidhm, nó atá le leasú sula gcuirfear i bhfeidhm é.

***Éilíonn Conradh na Gaeilge ar an Rialtas, áfach, an Straitéis 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge atá le foilsiú ag deireadh Meán Fómhair a chur san áireamh sula ndéantar aon chinneadh faoi na moltaí sa Tuairisc a bhaineann le caomhnú, le cur chun cinn agus le spreagadh úsáid na Gaeilge in Éirinn.***

Ní luaitear an Straitéis 20 Bliain seo sa Tuairisc, agus is gá dúinn glacadh leis, dá réir sin, nach raibh údair na tuairisce ar an eolas faoi, nó gur cheap siad nach raibh tábhacht leis. Caithfear na moltaí atá déanta ag an nGrúpa Speisialta maidir leis an nGaeilge a mheas in éineacht leis na moltaí a bheidh sa straitéis 20 bliain i leith na teanga, chun go dtiocfar ar an mbealach is fiúntaí chun an acmhainn chultúir, chogneolaíoch agus pobail seo a neartú agus a chur chun cinn.

Beidh páirt ríthábhachtach le himirt ag pobal na Gaeilge sa straitéis, agus táimid ag súil go mbeidh an pobal lárnach i gcur i bhfeidhm agus cur chun cinn na straitéise.

## BUNPHOINTÍ:

Is gá go mbeadh an pobal agus an Rialtas feasach faoi easnaimh, faoi mhíthuiscintí, agus faoin easpa eolais fiú i gcásanna áirithe, a bhí ar an ngrúpa speisialta maidir le hearnáil na Gaeilge agus le tábhacht na Gaeltachta: d'fhéadfadh nach raibh dóthain ama acu iad fhéin a chur ar an eolas, nó nach raibh taithí acu ar an earnáil roimh ré. De réir a ndéantar faoi bhaill an Ghrúpa Speisialta sa Tuairisc féin, tá sé le tuiscint gur roghnaíodh iad ar a dtaithe ar chúrsaí gnó agus airgeadais. Ní léir gur roghnaíodh aon duine acu toisc a chur amach ar chultúr agus ar an gcéad teanga oifigiúil. Dá réir seo, ba mhaith leis an gConradh roinnt bunphointí a chur os comhair an Rialtais:

- ***Creideann Conradh na Gaeilge, dá gcuirfí na moltaí atá sa tuairisc ón nGrúpa Speisialta i bhfeidhm gurb ionann é agus díscor ar pholasaí an stáit ó 1922 anall, maidir le cothú agus cur chun cinn na Gaeilge sa Ghaeltacht, agus lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht féin.***
- ***Léirítear easpa tuisceana, agus déantar éagóir, dá réir, sa Tuairisc cúpla uair. Mar shampla sonrath, déantar beag den obair riachtanach atá curtha i gcrích ag an gComhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG), a cuireadh ar bun sa bhliain 2002 le freastal ar riachtanais oideachais chéad leibhéal agus dara leibhéal na hearnála Gaeilge. Sa tuairisc, luaitear go bhfuil COGG bainteach leis an dara leibhéal amháin. Ní fíor sin. Aithnítear chomh maith go bhfuil dúshlán faoi leith ag baint le forbairt theagasc na Gaeilge i scoileanna a fheidhmíonn trí mheán an Bhéarla. Mar shampla eile: tugtar le fios gur gá de réir Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003 gach foilseachán oifigiúil a aistriú, agus gur gá an riachtanas sin a leasú. Ní fíor in aon chor gur gá gach foilseachán oifigiúil a aistriú: níl de dhualgas ar chomhlachtaí poiblí ach doiciméid áirithe a mbeadh spéis ag an bpobal iontu a fhoilsiú i nGaeilge agus i mBéarla ag an am céanna, mar shampla, tuarascálacha bliantúla (Alt 10 den Acht).***

## **BACKGROUND**

It is entirely appropriate that spending by the Government on our behalf should be restructured and savings made. The 'Report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes', which group was established at the end of 2008, is now available. Conradh na Gaeilge's answer to the report compiled by that Special Group can be read below. Our focus is on references to the Irish Language in the report, as well as on proposals which would exercise an influence on the preservation, promotion, and encouragement of the use of Irish.

## **CONTEXT AND CALL ON GOVERNMENT**

In relation to the proposals in the Special Group's report, it is a matter for the Government itself to decide what is, or is not, to be implemented, or what is to be amended prior to implementation.

***Conradh na Gaeilge, however, calls on the Government to take the 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language, which is to be published at the end of September, into account before any decision is made regarding the proposals in the Report which relate to the preservation, promotion, and encouragement of the use of Irish.***

This 20 Year Strategy is not mentioned in the Report: we must therefore accept that the authors of the report were not aware of it, or that they thought it unimportant. The proposals made by the Special Group in relation to Irish must be assessed in conjunction with the proposals which will be in the 20 Year Strategy for the language, so that the best methods for strengthening and promoting this community, cognitive and cultural resource can be established.

The Irish language community will have a most important part to play in the strategy, and we hope that the community will be central to its implementation and promotion.

## **BASE POINTS**

It is necessary that the community and the Government be aware of the special group's deficiencies, misunderstandings, and lack of knowledge in some instances, regarding the Irish language sector and the importance of the Gaeltacht: perhaps they had insufficient time to inform themselves or lacked previous experience of the sector. As is stated in the report itself in relation to its members, it is to be understood that they were chosen because of their experience of business and finance. It is not apparent that any one of them was chosen because of his or her knowledge of cultural matters and the first official language. Accordingly, Conradh na Gaeilge wishes to put several base points before the Government:

- ***Were the proposals in the report of the special group to be implemented, Conradh na Gaeilge believes that it would amount to a discontinuance of the policy of the State since 1922 regarding the maintenance and promotion of the Irish language, both within the Gaeltacht and outside it.***
- ***The report shows a lack of understanding, and unjust proposals are the result in several instances. By way of particular example, the vital work done by an Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG) since its establishment in 2002, in serving the educational needs of the Irish language sector at primary and second level, is dismissed. In the report, it is stated that COGG relates only to second level. This is not so. It is recognised also that there is a significant challenge to develop the teaching of Irish in schools that operate through the medium of English. By way of further example, the Report states that it is necessary pursuant to the Official Languages Act, 2003, to translate every official publication, and that this needs to be amended. It is not true that all official publications must be translated: public bodies are only obliged to publish certain documents of interest to the public in Irish and English simultaneously, e.g. annual reports (section 10 of the Act).***

- ***Is léir nach ngéilltear go bhfuil mórán tábhacht le Gaeltacht ná le Roinn Gaeltachta.*** Ní réitíonn seo le Straitéis Spásúlachta Náisiúnta an Rialtais, áit a n-admhaítear gur gá cúram a dhéanamh de limistéir a bhfuil tábhacht cultúrtha leo, an Ghaeltacht san áireamh (National Spatial Strategy for Ireland, e.g Mír 3.5.1., lgh. 51-52), toisc: ‘These cultural identities can make a significant contribution... to underpinning the rural economy...’. ***I gcás na Roinne Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta,*** ní hamháin go moltar deireadh a chur leis an Roinn sin, ach i gcás na bhfeidhmeanna a chomhlíonann an Roinn, moltar laghdú maoinithe de 31.7%. Sin laghdú atá breis is a trí oiread níos mó ná an meánlaghdú de 8.9% i gcás na ranna eile. Chomh maith leis sin, moltar laghdú foirne de 23.2%, laghdú atá beagnach a ceithre oiread níos mó ná an meánlaghdú de 6.3% i gcás na ranna eile..

Táimid ag éileamh ar an Rialtas na fíricí sin, chomh maith lenár n-aiseolas ar gach moladh a bhaineann leis an nGaeilge thíos, a chur san áireamh sula ndeintear aon chinneadh ar na moltaí a bhaineann le caomhnú, le cur chun cinn agus le spreagadh úsáid na Gaeilge in Éirinn.

- ***It is clear that the Report does not attach much importance to the Gaeltacht or to a Department of the Gaeltacht.*** This is not in agreement with the Government's National Spatial Strategy, where it is stated that regard must be had for areas which are culturally important, including the Gaeltacht. (National Spatial Strategy for Ireland, e.g Mír 3.5.1., lgh. 51-52), because: 'These cultural identities can make a significant contribution... to underpinning the rural economy...'. ***In the case of the Department of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs,*** not only is it proposed that the Department be abolished, but in the case of the functions carried out by that Department, it is proposed that funding be reduced by 31.7%. That is a reduction more than three times as large as the average reduction of 8.9% across the other departments. A reduction in staff of 23.2% is also proposed, a reduction almost four times the average reduction of 6.3% proposed in the case of the other departments.

We call on the Government to take these facts into account, as well as our feedback on each proposal below concerning the Irish language, before any decision is made on the Special Group's proposals that relate to the preservation, promotion, and encouragement of the use of Irish.

## MOLTAÍ NA TUAIRISCE AGUS FREAGRAÍ AN CHONARTHA ORTHU:

### **1. An Roinn Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta a dhúnadh.**

Tá Conradh na Gaeilge in aghaidh deireadh a chur le Roinn na Gaeltachta, mar ba bhuille é a d'fhéadfadh a bheith marfach don Ghaeilge agus don Ghaeltacht, agus ní thagann sé le ciall go ndéanfadh an Rialtas dochar don Ghaeilge agus don Ghaeltacht i gcomhthéacs an aitheantais agus na tacaíochta atá tugtha don teanga, san áireamh :

- Achtú *Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla* in 2003
- An brú a cuireadh le stádas a bhaint amach don Ghaeilge mar theanga oifigiúil den Aontas Eorpach, agus an obair atá ar siúl ó shin d'fhonn fáil réidh leis an maolú ar an stádas sin
- An *Ráiteas i leith na Gaeilge* a d'eisigh an Rialtas in 2006
- An Straitéis 20 Bliain atá curtha le chéile ag an Rialtas le dhá bhliain anuas, agus atá le foilsiú go luath anois, straitéis a chuimsíonn plean le líon na gcainteoirí laethúla Gaeilge a ardú go dtí 250,000 duine taobh istigh de 20 bliain, agus an Ghaeltacht agus úsáid na teanga ar fud na tíre a chaomhnú agus a láidriú.

Beidh gá le hAire sinsearach agus le Roinn na Gaeltachta chun comhordú a dhéanamh ar obair na Straitéise dúshlánaí 20 Bliain seo a chur i bhfeidhm mar thosaíocht Rialtais. Sonraímid, chomh maith, go bhfuil neartú na Gaeltachta ag teacht le Straitéis Spásúlachta an Rialtais, straitéis a bhfuil an Ghaeltacht luaite inti, toisc gur ceantar í a bhfuil a oiread tábhacht cultúrtha léi.

### **2. Feidhmeanna na Roinne Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta maidir leis an nGaeltacht agus leis an bhForas Teanga a aistriú go dtí an Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta.**

Creideann Conradh na Gaeilge gur chun aimhleas na teanga agus na Gaeltachta trí chéile a rachadh sé feidhmeanna Gaeilge agus Gaeltachta ('matters relating to Irish language & culture' mar a mholtar sa Tuairisc) na Roinne Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta a aistriú go dtí an Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta. Níl an Roinn Oideachais in ann cúram a dhéanamh díobh ar fháthanna éagsúla, ina measc:

- Tá i bhfad níos mó i gceist le húsáid na Gaeilge a chur chun cinn agus a spreagadh ná oiliúint scoile, mar is eol faoi seo d'oideachasóirí, agus do phleanálaithe teanga agus riarthóirí. Tá an tuiscint ag fás agus ag leathnú, chomh maith, gur acmhainn cogneolaíoch, cultúir agus eacnamaíoch í an Ghaeilge, arbh ionann agus féinmharú polaitiúil, sóisialta agus cultúrtha é fáil réidh léi. Ach caithfear cur chuige iomlánaíoch a fheidhmiú chun í a neartú i sochaí ina bhfuil sí in iomaíocht leis an mBéarla, teanga idirnáisiúnta a bhfuil forlámhas eacnamaíochta domhanda aici, agus b'fhearr dá réir go mbeadh Roinn faoi leith agus Aire sinsearach ag plé go díreach leis an nGaeilge agus leis an nGaeltacht, ach go háirithe leis an straitéis 20 bliain don Ghaeilge a chur i bhfeidhm.
- Nótáiltear nach bhfuil ach 3% d'fhoireann na Roinne Oideachais agus Eolaíochta in ann seirbhísí a chur ar fáil as Gaeilge de réir na bhfigiúirí is déanaí ón Roinn sin, agus dá réir, creideann an Conradh nach bhfuil ar chumas na Roinne sin freastal ar phobal na Gaeilge go sásúil, sa Ghaeltacht nó lasmuigh di. Creideann Conradh na Gaeilge, chomh maith, nach mbeadh an líon foirne sa Roinn Oideachais atá in ann freastal ar an bpobal trí Ghaeilge titithe chomh híseal, mura raibh sainmheon na Roinne Oideachais & Eolaíochta féin easnamhach.
- Ag cur leis an bpointe sin, tá an Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta i mbun an Ghaeilge a lagú sa chóras oideachais le tamall anuas. Mar shampla, tá an Roinn fós ag iarraidh deireadh a chur leis an luath-thumoideachas iomlán i ngaelscoileanna an Stáit, in ainneoin go n-aithníonn oideachasóirí sa bhaile agus go hidirnáisiúnta gurb é seo an bealach is fearr leis an dara teanga a mhúineadh. Is ionsaí tromchúiseach é polasáí seo na Roinne Oideachais agus Eolaíochta ar sheachadadh na teanga ó ghlúin go glúin sa Ghaeltacht, chomh maith. Is faillí do-mhaite é, chomh maith, go bhfuil na scoileanna náisiúnta i gcoitinne fágtha gan cúrsa ceart comhtháite Gaeilge (lena leorsholáthar d'acmhainní tacaíochta) agus tá COGG i mbun oibre sa réimse seo faoi láthair.

## **THE REPORT'S PROPOSALS AND CONRADH NA GAEILGE'S RESPONSE:**

### ***1. The closure of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.***

Conradh na Gaeilge opposes the abolition of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, because such an act could prove fatal to the Irish language and the Gaeltacht, and it is contrary to common sense that the Government would endanger Gaeltacht and language in the context of the recognition and support afforded to Irish, including:

- The enactment of *The Official Languages Act* in 2003
- The pressure exerted to achieve the status of an official EU language for Irish, and the work in hand since in order to dispense with the derogation in relation to that status.
- The *Statement on the Irish Language* issued by the Government in 2006
- The 20 Year Strategy which has been developed by the Government over the past two years, and which is to be published shortly; the strategy includes a plan to increase the number of daily speakers of Irish to 250,000 persons within 20 years, and to preserve and strengthen the Gaeltacht and the use of the language throughout the state.

A senior minister and the Department of the Gaeltacht will be necessary to coordinate the implementation of this challenging 20 Year Strategy as a Government priority. We also note that the strengthening of the Gaeltacht is consistent with the Government's Spatial Strategy, in which the Gaeltacht is specifically mentioned, because of its cultural importance.

### **2. The transfer of the functions of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs relating to the Gaeltacht and An Foras Teanga to the Department of Education and Science.**

Conradh na Gaeilge believes that it would be to the general detriment of the language, and of the Gaeltacht, were the Irish language and Gaeltacht functions ('matters relating to Irish language & culture' as is proposed in the Report) of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs to be transferred to the Department of Education and Science. The Department is incapable of undertaking these functions for various reasons, including the reasons below: -

- The promotion and encouragement of the use of Irish involves much more than schooling, as educationalists, language planners and administrators are now aware. The realisation that Irish is a cognitive, cultural and economic resource is also growing more widespread, as is the awareness that jettisoning it would constitute cultural, social and political suicide. A holistic approach, however, must be implemented in order to strengthen Irish in a society where it is in competition with English, an international language of global economic dominance, and therefore it is preferable that a particular Department under a senior Minister deal directly with Irish language and Gaeltacht matters, and in particular with the implementation of the 20 year strategy for Irish.
- It is noted that only 3% of the staff of the Department of Education and Science are able to provide services in Irish according to the latest figures from that Department, and therefore Conradh na Gaeilge believes that that Department does not have the ability to satisfactorily serve the Irish language community, either within the Gaeltacht or outside it. Conradh na Gaeilge also believes that the number of staff capable of serving the community through Irish would not have fallen so low were it not for the fact that the ethos of the Department of Education and Science itself is deficient.
- In addition, the Department of Education and Science has been engaged in weakening the Irish language in the Education system for some time. For example, the Department is still endeavouring to abolish early total immersion in gaelscoileanna within the State, although educationalists at home and abroad recognise that it is the best way to teach a second language. This policy of the Department of Education and Science is also a grave attack on the transmission of the language from one generation to the next in the Gaeltacht. Furthermore, it is an example of unforgivable neglect that national schools in general have been left without a proper integrated Irish course (with appropriate provision of resource materials) and COGG is doing work in this area presently.

Is ionann, dar le Conradh na Gaeilge, scor Roinn na Gaeltachta agus stádas na Gaeilge a laghdú, d'fhonn ábhar scoile amháin a dhéanamh di feasta, seachas í a chothú mar urlabhra teaghlaigh agus pobail sa Ghaeltacht, agus mar urlabhra ar fud na tíre. Ag cur san áireamh go luaitear go sonrach sa Tuairisc ón nGrúpa Speisialta gur chóir deireadh a chur le tacaíochtaí sóisialta éagsúla di, chomh maith leis an Roinn a scor, rud atá glan in aghaidh tuiscintí idirnáisiúnta maidir le tacaíochtaí sóisialta a chur ar fáil do theangacha atá faoi bhrú, tá sé deacair a mhalairt de bhrí a bhaint as na moltaí sa Tuairisc ach gurb é íosghrádú na Gaeilge an sprioc. Le fírinne, ní chuirtear san áireamh sa Tuairisc seo ón nGrúpa Speisialta gur gá an teanga a mhúineadh i gceart, fiú, ach oiread: nótaíl arís go moltar go gcuirfí deireadh leis an áisíneacht atá ag soláthar téacsleabhar agus acmhainní riachtanacha eile chun go múinifí an Ghaeilge mar is cóir (i.e. COGG).

### **3. Deireadh a chur leis an gComhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG)**

Aithníonn an Conradh go bhfuil obair riachtanach á dhéanamh ag COGG i dtaca le múineadh agus le foghlaim na Gaeilge inár scoileanna ar fud an stáit, cúraimí nach raibh agus nach bhfuil á gcomhlíonadh go sásúil ag an Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta. Is iomlánú é an obair atá ar siúl ag COGG ar shaothar dhá ghlúin de thuismitheoirí agus gníomhaithe teanga a thug faoi gaelscoileanna bun agus dara leibhéal a bhunú i ngach contae sa tír, i dtreo go mbeadh eolas maith ag a bpáistí ar an teanga shinseartha. Is obair é seo atá fós ag dul chun cinn, Ní cóir deireadh a chur le COGG; is le cúnaimh COGG a fhreastalaítear ar an nGaelscolaíocht agus ar riachtanais múinte na Gaeilge i gcoitinne ar chostas 1.2 milliún. (300,000 euro ar phá agus riaracháin & 900,000 euro ar acmhainní, taighde agus obair eile na comhairle). Is áisíneacht é ar gealladh a leithéid in Acht Oideachais 1998, b'íslíú ar stádas na Gaeilge é a chur ar ceal, agus b'ionsaí frithoideachasúil é sin ar obair na mílte saoránach. Is gá na fíricí a leanas a chur san áireamh:

- Léirítear easpa tuisceana sa Tuairisc, agus neamhshuim fiú, san obair fhiúntach atá déanta ag an gComhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG) ó cuireadh ar bun í sa bhliain 2002 le freastal ar riachtanais oideachais an chéad leibhéal agus an dara leibhéal. Cheapfaí ó Vol 1, lch. 44, (C.6), go bhfuil COGG bainteach le teagasc na Gaeilge in iarbhunscoileanna amháin. Ní iontas go raibh an Grúpa Speisialta aineolach ar obair COGG ar an gcéad leibhéal, mar nach ndearnadh teagmháil le COGG nuair a bhí an tuairisc á hullmhú.
- Moltar sa tuairisc go bhfaighfí réidh le COGG ina iomláine. Ní léir go dtuigtear gur gá buiséad a bheith ar fáil chun na hacmhainní agus na téacsanna riachtanacha don 35,000 dalta atá ag freastal ar an ngaelscolaíocht ar an gcéad leibhéal agus ar an dara leibhéal a sholáthar. Cuir san áireamh, chomh maith, gur gá cúrsaí cearta comhtháite Gaeilge a chur ar fáil do dhaltaí na scoileanna náisiúnta i gcoitinne, chomh maith le scoileanna Gaeltachta, agus go bhfuil an cúrsa comhtháite Séideán Sí fós le críochnú le haghaidh na mbunscoileanna lánGhaeilge. Arís, faillí de chuid na Roinne Oideachais agus Eolaíochta is ea é nach bhfuil cúrsa ceart comhtháite Gaeilge ann do scoileanna náisiúnta i gcoitinne. Is gá COGG a bheith ann chun an fhaillí seo a leigheas ar son leas oideachais shaoránaigh óga na tíre i gcoitinne.
- Cheana féin fógraíodh nach bhfuiltear ag dul ar aghaidh, faoi láthair, leis an ionad náisiúnta oideachais i mBaile Bhúirne. Bhí ceathrar breise le bheith fostaithe ag COGG ann, agus ní beag an dochar é sin do chumas na Comhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta téacsanna agus acmhainní riachtanacha a sholáthar le haghaidh mhúinteoirí agus daltaí an stáit, agus dea-mhúineadh na Gaeilge a chothú, sna gaelscoileanna agus sna scoileanna náisiúnta i gcoitinne. Ar mhaithe le luach ar airgead is gá go mbeadh acmhainní tacaíochta a gceirde ar fáil ag múinteoirí Gaeilge an Stáit ag an dá leibhéal.
- Nach bhfuil soláthar téacsleabhar i nGaeilge ar fáil don teastas sóisearach nó don ardteist i bhformhór na n-ábhar scoile. Tá sé de cheart ag daltaí agus múinteoirí téacsleabhair i nGaeilge a bheith acu.

### **4. Deireadh a chur le Scéim na bhFoghlaimoirí Gaeilge**

Faoin scéim seo cuirtear páirtmhaoiniú ar fáil do na mná tí a sholáthraíonn lóistín do dhaltaí na gcoláistí samhraidh Gaeltachta. Is í an tréimhse a chaitheann scoláirí óga ag coláistí samhraidh an deis is fearr atá acu a gcuid scileanna cumarsáide Gaeilge a fheabhsú, go háirithe a scileanna labhartha. Tá lucht eagraithe na gcoláistí ag brath ar *Scéim na bhFoghlaimoirí Gaeilge* leis an bpraghas a choinneáil ag leibhéal réasúnta do thuismitheoirí. Dá gcuirfí an moladh seo i bhfeidhm, chuirfí na coláistí samhraidh Gaeilge i mbaol. Is gá na pointí a leanas a thabhairt san áireamh:-

Conradh na Gaeilge is of the view that abolishing a Department of the Gaeltacht would amount to the downgrading of the status of Irish to that of a school subject only, and would signal a readiness to abandon its promotion as a household and community vernacular in the Gaeltacht, and as a living speech throughout the country. As it is specifically proposed in the Report of the Special Group, not just that the relevant Department should be abolished, but that various social supports for Irish should be abandoned, a stance which contradicts international understanding in relation to the need to provide social supports for languages under pressure, one is driven to the conclusion that the downgrading of the language is in fact the object of the proposals. Indeed, the report of the Special Group does not take into account, either, that the language needs to be properly taught: we note again that it even recommends that the agency which provides textbooks and other necessary resources for the proper teaching of Irish should be abolished (i.e. COGG).

### **3. The abolition of An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG)**

Conradh na Gaeilge recognises that COGG fulfils an essential function in relation to the teaching and learning of Irish in schools throughout the State, a role which the Department of Education has not, and does not, fulfil in a satisfactory fashion. The work undertaken by COGG complements the work of two generations of parents and language activists who undertook the establishment of Irish medium schools at primary and post primary level in every county in Ireland, in order that their children might have a good knowledge of the ancestral language. This work continues. COGG should not be abolished. It is with COGG's assistance that the resource needs of Irish-medium schools, and the teaching of Irish in general, are now being met at a cost of 1.2 million euro. (€300,000 on pay and administration & €900,000 on resources, research and other work of the Comhairle). This agency was promised in the Education Act 1998; to abolish it is a downgrading of the status of the language, as well as being an undermining of the educational endeavours of thousands of citizens. The following facts must be taken into account:-

- A lack of understanding and even indifference is apparent in the Report, regarding the necessary and worthwhile work done by An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG) since its inception in 2002, to cater for educational needs at primary and second level. One would think from Vol 1, pg. 44 (C.6) that COGG deals only with the teaching of Irish in post-primary schools. It is not surprising that the Special Group was ignorant of COGG's work at primary level given that no contact was made with COGG, when the report was being compiled.
- It is recommended in the report that COGG be abolished in its entirety. This shows an indifference to the need for a budget to provide essential educational resources and textbooks for 35,000 pupils attending Irish-medium primary and second level schools. Also take into account that proper integrated Irish courses need to be provided for national school pupils in general, as well as Gaeltacht schools, and that the integrated course 'Séideán Sí' has yet to be completed for Irish-medium primary schools. We note that a proper integrated course for the teaching of Irish in the general body of national schools is not available. This amounts to neglect on the part of the Department of Education. COGG is necessary in order to remedy this neglect for the educational benefit of the young citizens of this country.
- It has already been announced that the national education centre in Baile Bhuirne will not go ahead at this time. Four people were to be employed there by COGG, and this loss is a substantial blow to COGG's ability to supply necessary texts and resources for the teachers and pupils of the State so that Irish can be taught well in Irish-medium schools and in all national schools. In pursuit of value for money, it is necessary that professional support resources be available to the State's Irish teachers at both primary and second level.
- That there is no provision of text books in Irish available in the majority of school subjects. It is the right of pupils and teachers to have text books in Irish.

### **4. The Ending of Scéim na bhFoghlaimoirí Gaeilge (The Learners of Irish Scheme)**

Under this scheme part funding is made available to 'mná tí' who make accommodation available to pupils of Gaeltacht summer colleges. The period spent by young students in summer colleges constitutes their best opportunity to improve their communication skills in Irish, especially spoken Irish. The organisers of the colleges rely on *Scéim na bhFoghlaimoirí Gaeilge* to keep the price to parents reasonably low. Were this recommendation to be implemented Irish summer colleges would be endangered. The following points must be taken into account:-

- Is ionann an scéim seo agus infheistíocht rialtais de €5m sa bhliain i dtionscal a ghineann tuairim is €50m sa bhliain don gheilleagar áitiúil i gceantair Ghaeltachta, agus a chruthaíonn 2,000 post sealadach gach samhradh, chomh maith le fostaíocht lán-aimseartha a chruthú do 60 duine ar a laghad i rith na bliana..
- Tá coláistí samhraidh Gaeilge á reáchtáil i gcuid de na ceantair is mó atá faoi mhíbhuntáiste sa tír. Céad bliain ó shin is coláistí Gaeltachta a chothaigh an mheanma a shaolaigh stát Éireannach, agus státseirbhís Éireannach. Ní dea-bhainistíocht ar acmhainní stáit é deireadh a chur le Scéim na bhFoghlaimoírí Gaeilge, agus buille trom a bhualadh ar eacnamaíocht na Gaeltachta. Drochthorthaí eacnamaíochta, cultúir agus Gaeltachta a thiocfadh de, in ainneoin an Ghaeltacht a bheith luaite go sonrach sa Straitéis Náisiúnta Spásúlachta toisc gur ceantar í a mbaineann luach ar leith léi.
- Chuirfeadh deireadh le *Scéim na bhFoghlaimoírí Gaeilge* le claontacht aicme ag an dara leibhéal oideachais. Beidh níos mó marcanna ar labhairt na teanga sna scrúduithe stáit ón mbliain 2012 ar aghaidh, beidh buntáiste ag mic léinn a bhfuil sé d'acmhainn ag a dtuismitheoirí íoc as cúrsa Gaeltachta dóibh, agus chuirfeadh an moladh seo ón nGrúpa Speisialta leis an gclaonadh seo.
- Tionscal dúchasach turasóireachta is ea Scéim na bhFoghlaimoírí Gaeilge a chothaíonn fostaíocht i gceantair atá imeallach. Tá tionscal na turasóireachta faoi bhrú eacnamaíoch faoi láthair, agus ní cóir cur isteach a thuilleadh ar thurasóireacht a bhaineann ó nádúr le cultúr na gceantar seo ach go háirithe.

## 5. Feidhmeanna fiontraíochta Údarás na Gaeltachta a aistriú go Enterprise Ireland

Is cuid lárnach agus ríthábhachtach iad feidhmeanna fiontraíochta Údarás na Gaeltachta de ghnó an institiúid sin, agus níor chóir iad a aistriú go dtí Enterprise Ireland. Tá cúpla fáth leis sin ach go háirithe:

- Deirtear sa tuairisc: ‘The group considers that the new enterprise body should operate a regional office based upon the nine gateways identified in the National Spatial Strategy.’ Dhéanfaidh sé seo dochar agus dhéanfaí tuilleadh imeallú ar fhiontraíocht sna Gaeltachtaí, mar bheadh béim ag Enterprise Ireland ar na cathracha agus na bailte tairseacha, agus dhéanfaí neamhshuim de riachtanais na mbailte iargúlta Gaeltachta.
- Tá taithí na mblianta ag Údarás na Gaeltachta agus d’éirigh ar fheabhas leis an Údarás fiontair a mhealladh go dtí na Gaeltachtaí.
- Beidh athrú ar fheidhmeanna an Údaráis, agus ar struchtúr bhord an Údaráis, neamhspleách ar fad ar mholtaí an Ghrúpa Speisialta. Tiocfaidh na hathruithe sin chun cinn sa chéad leath den bhliain romhainn, mar tá sé ráite ag an Aire Gaeltachta go gcuirfead toghchán an Údaráis siar ó Aibreán go Deireadh Fómhair más gá.

## 6. An riachtanas líomhnaithe in Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003 le gach foilseachán oifigiúil a aistriú a leasú

Léirítear easpa eolais an Ghrúpa Speisialta áit a luaitear sa Tuairisc gur gá leasú ar riachtanas in Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003 gach foilseachán oifigiúil a aistriú. Ní fíor gur gá gach foilseachán oifigiúil a aistriú. Níl de dhualgas ar chomhlachtaí poiblí ach doiciméid áirithe a mbeadh spéis ag an bpobal iontu a fhoilsiú i nGaeilge agus i mBéarla ag an am céanna, mar shampla, tuarascálacha bliantúla (Alt 10 den Acht).

## 7. Ciste na Gaeilge a laghdú de €1 milliún

Dar leis an nGrúpa Speisialta, is cóir Ciste na Gaeilge a laghdú *pro rata*: ‘the allocation for the funds should be reduced by €1m consistent with its recommendations for similar reductions in other cultural programmes.’ Ní aontaíonn Conradh na Gaeilge gur chóir go mbeadh laghdú chomh mór leis seo ar Chiste na Gaeilge. Féach an comhthéacs: Foras Trasteorann.

- This scheme equates to Government investment of €5m per annum in an industry which generates approximately €50m each year in the local economy in Gaeltacht areas, and which provides 2,000 temporary jobs each summer, as well as full-time employment for at least 60 people throughout the year.
- Irish summer colleges are run in some of the most disadvantaged areas in the country. One hundred years ago Gaeltacht colleges gave rise to the spirit which resulted in the foundation of an Irish State and civil service. Abolishing *Scéim na bhFoghlaimoírí Gaeilge* and undermining the Gaeltacht economy is not good management of State assets. It would have negative results economically, culturally and linguistically, as well as contradicting the recognition of the Gaeltacht in the National Spatial Strategy as an area of specific value.
- The ending of *Scéim na bhFoghlaimoírí Gaeilge* would accentuate the economic bias at second level education. As more marks will be afforded in State exams for the spoken language from 2012 onwards, students whose parents can afford to pay for Gaeltacht courses will have an advantage, and this recommendation of the Special Group would accentuate this bias.
- *Scéim na bhFoghlaimoírí Gaeilge* is an indigenous tourist industry, which maintains employment in marginal areas. Our tourist industry is under economic pressure at present, and tourism which has a natural connection with the culture of these areas should not be undermined.

## **5. The transfer of the enterprise functions of Údarás na Gaeltachta to Enterprise Ireland**

The enterprise functions of Údarás na Gaeltachta are of central importance to that body, and should not be transferred to Enterprise Ireland. There are several reasons for this, in particular:

- In the Report it is stated that: *'The group considers that the new enterprise body should operate a regional office based upon the nine gateways identified in the National Spatial Strategy.'* This would damage and further marginalise enterprise in Gaeltacht areas, as Enterprise Ireland would emphasise gateway cities and towns, and the needs of the remote Gaeltacht towns would be ignored.
- Údarás na Gaeltachta has years of experience and has had great success in attracting enterprises to Gaeltacht areas.
- The functions and structure of Údarás na Gaeltachta are to be changed independent of the recommendations of the Special Group. These changes will come to the fore during the first half of next year as the Minister for the Gaeltacht has stated that elections to Údarás na Gaeltachta will be postponed from April to October if needs be.

## **6. The amendment of the alleged duty in the Official Languages Act 2003 to translate all official documents**

A lack of awareness on the part of the Special Group is shown in the report where it is stated that the 'requirement under the Official Languages Act to translate all official publications into Irish should be amended'.... It is not true that all official publications must be translated. Public bodies are only obliged to publish certain documents of interest to the public in Irish and English simultaneously, e.g. annual reports (Section 10 of the Act).

## **7. The reduction of Ciste na Gaeilge (the Irish language fund) by €1 million**

According to the Special Group, Ciste na Gaeilge should be reduced pro rata: *'the allocation for the funds should be reduced by €1m consistent with its recommendations for similar reductions in other cultural programmes.'* Conradh na Gaeilge does not agree that Ciste na Gaeilge should be subject to so large a reduction. See context: Cross Border Bodies.

## 8. Deireadh a chur le Scéim Labhairt na Gaeilge

Faoin scéim seo féadann an Roinn deontas €260 in aghaidh na scoilbhliana a íoc le teaghlaigh sa Ghaeltacht, má shásaíonn siad an Roinn gurb í an Ghaeilge a ngnáth-theanga labhartha agus go bhfuil líofacht nádúrtha dá réir acu. Caitear thart ar €700,000 sa bhliain ar Scéim Labhairt na Gaeilge. Ba chóir an Scéim seo a choinneáil ar na fáthanna a leanas:

- De réir thorthaí taighde an Staidéir Chuimsithigh Theangeolaígh ar Úsáid na Gaeilge sa Ghaeltacht a thionscnaigh an Roinn GPTG agus a d'ulmhaigh Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge, Ollscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh i gcomhar leis an Institiúid Náisiúnta um Anailís Réigiúnach agus Spásúil, Ollscoil na hÉireann, Maigh Nuad, tá an Ghaeltacht mar aonad teangeolaíoch i mbaol, agus déantar moltaí leis an meath a chosc agus úsáid na Gaeilge sna Gaeltachtaí a neartú. Ina measc san, moltar leasuithe ar Scéim Labhairt na Gaeilge - ní mholtar deireadh a chur leis an scéim.
- Tá tobar na Gaeilge, saibhreas teanga, le fáil sna Gaeltachtaí. Is buntáiste do phobal an stáit é go gcaomhnófaí agus go gcothófaí an saibhreas cultúir agus teanga sin, i dtreo go mbeidh deis ag cách é a bhlaiseadh. Más pobal sinn seachas aonad eacnamaíochta gan phréamhacha, is fiú labhairt na Gaeilge sa teaghlach Gaeltachta a chothú. Ní mórán d'infheistíocht í €260 sa bhliain, ach is aitheantas é agus cothabháil ar shaibhreas gur féidir é a roinnt ar shaoranaigh uile na tíre, agus:
- Baineann an scéim le líon lucht labhartha na Gaeilge sna Gaeltachtaí a mheas. Bheadh córas eile ag teastáil ina áit dá bhfaighfí réidh leis, córas a mbeadh costas leis. Tá sé beartaithe ag an Roinn Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta leasuithe a dhéanamh ar an scéim, agus bheadh sé ciallmhar fanacht leis na leasuithe sin a mheas, sula ndéanfar cinneadh i dtaobh na scéime seo.

## 9. Deireadh a chur leis na scéimeanna pobail agus áineasa

Tá na scéimeanna seo tar éis cur go mór leis an líon ionad pobail agus áineasa sna Gaeltachtaí le roinnt blianta anuas. Tá sé tábhachtach a leithéid de scéimeanna a bheith ar fáil ar na fáthanna a leanas:

- De bhíthin na n-ionad pobail agus áineasa, cothaítear snaidhmeanna pobail agus Gaeilge sa Ghaeltacht, agus soláthraítear deiseanna siamsaíochta a spreagann daoine chun fanacht sa cheantar nó bogadh ar ais chuige.
- Is fearr iniúchadh a dhéanamh ar na háiseanna atá ann anois de thoradh na scéime, agus a bhfuil fós ag teastáil a mheas, sula ndéantar aon chinneadh fáil réidh leis an scéim. Le cúnamh na n-ionad pobail d'fhéadfadh go gcothófaí labhairt na Gaeilge ar bhealach níos éifeachtaí ná mar a dhéanfaí i mór-mhonarcha, cuir i gcás, a bhféadfadh a lán fostaithe nár chainteoirí líofa Gaeilge iad a bheith ag taisteal chuici ó cheantair lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht féin.

## 10. Anailís traschláir ar gach caiteachas ar an nGaeilge

Níl aon fáth nach gcuirfí a leithéid de mholadh i bhfeidhm mar chuid den Straitéis 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge. Ar ndóigh, bheifí ag súil go mbeadh saineolaithe agus ionadaithe ó earnáil na Gaeilge rannpháirteach san anailís.

## **8. The ending of Scéim Labhairt na Gaeilge (The Spoken Irish Scheme)**

Under this scheme the Department may pay a grant of €260 per school year to households in the Gaeltacht, if they satisfy the Department that Irish is their habitual spoken language, and that they have a resulting natural fluency. Approximately €700,000 is spent per annum on Scéim Labhairt na Gaeilge. This scheme should be maintained for the following reasons:

- According to the research results of the Comprehensive Linguistic Study on the use of Irish in the Gaeltacht initiated by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and prepared by Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge of NUI Galway along with the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis, NUI Maynooth, the Gaeltacht as a linguistic entity is endangered and proposals are made to arrest the decline and to strengthen the use of Irish in the Gaeltacht. Among these proposals, reforms to *Scéim Labhairt na Gaeilge* are recommended – it is not recommended that the scheme be abolished.
- The wellspring of Irish is to be found in the Gaeltacht. It is to the advantage of the community that this cultural and linguistic resource be safeguarded and promoted so that it is accessible to all. If we are a community rather than an economic unit without roots, spoken Irish in Gaeltacht households is worth maintaining. €260 per annum is not a large investment, but constitutes recognition which helps maintain a resource wealth which can be shared among all.
- The scheme facilitates the evaluation of the number of Irish speakers in Gaeltacht areas. An alternative system, which would incur costs, would be necessary were the scheme to be abolished. The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs has decided to reform the scheme, and it makes sense to pause and evaluate such reforms before making a decision in relation to the scheme.

## **9. The ending of community and recreation schemes**

These schemes have greatly increased the number of community and recreation centres in Gaeltacht areas over recent years. It is important that such schemes be available for the following reasons:

- As a result of the community and recreation centres, community and Irish language links are maintained in the Gaeltacht, and entertainment opportunities are provided which encourage people to remain in the area or return to it.
- It is better to audit existing facilities, which have resulted from the schemes, and assess what is still needed before deciding to end such schemes. Community centres can help maintain the spoken language in a more effective way than large scale industry, which may attract a large number of people who are not fluent Irish speakers, and who travel to the area from outside the Gaeltacht itself.

## **10. A Cross-Programme analysis of all expenditure on Irish**

There is no reason why such a proposal not be implemented as part of the 20 Year Strategy for Irish. One would, of course, expect that experts and representatives of the Irish language sector would participate in such an analysis.

## **Eile:**

### **Na Forais Trasteorann**

Luaitear sa tuairisc go bhfuil na hAirí cuí ó dheas agus ó thuaidh ag déanamh athbhreithnithe ar chaiteachais na bhForas Trasteorann. Áitímidne gur ceadáodh arduithe beaga d'Fhoras na Gaeilge, ach go háirithe i gcomparáid leis na harduithe a ceadáodh sa Phoblacht le 5 bliana anuas do ranna rialtais agus forais eile stáit.

Cúinsí polaitiúla Thuaidh / Theas a luaitear mar chúis nach bhfuair Foras na Gaeilge níos mó d'ardú sna blianta go raibh níos mó cistíochta i gcoitinne ar fáil ar fud an chórais stáit. Nuair a bheidh na hAirí cuí ag plé chaiteachas an Fhorais, is gá an easpa meadaithe seo ar chistíocht thar na blianta a chur san áireamh, agus déileáil go cothrom leis an institiúid.

### **Maoiniú TG4**

Faigheann TG4 €10 milliún de mhaoiniú díreach ón Roinn Chumarsáide, Fuinnimh agus Acmhainní Nádúrtha. Moltar sa Tuairisc go dtiocfadh seo chun deiridh agus go gcuirfí an €10 milliún ar fáil ón gCeadúnas Teilifíse.

Tá TG4 ag cur seirbhís mhaith ar fáil ar airgead beag i gcomhthéacs na mórchostas a bhaineann le stáisiún teilifíse a reáchtáil, agus ní cóir go gcuirfí an t-airgeadú dó i mbaol ar aon tslí. Soláthraíonn comhlachtaí beaga dúchasacha cláir don chraoltóir seo, agus mhéadaigh a líon ó tháinig ann do TG4. San earnáil chraoltóireachta seo, dá réir, forbraítear scileanna 'sochaí an eolais' i measc na n-óg, agus soláthraíonn an earnáil fostaíocht chomh maith le traenáil a bhaineann le scileanna leictreonacha. Riachtanas is ea é fostaíocht mar seo a chosaint le bheith réidh d'aon chasadh san eacnamaíocht, agus is fiú a lua go gcothaíonn TG4 dea-íomhá don tír de dheasca go leor duaiseanna idirnáisiúnta a bheith buaite ag an stáisiún. Ní miste a leithéid sin agus an droch-chlú airgeadais atá tuillte againn go hidirnáisiúnta le tamall.

## **Other:**

### **Cross border Bodies**

The report mentions that the appropriate Ministers, north and south, are engaged in a review of expenditure of cross border bodies. We recognise that small increases were granted to Foras na Gaeilge, in comparison with the increases allowed in the Republic over the past 5 years, in particular, to government departments and other state institutions.

North/South political circumstances maybe the reason that Foras na Gaeilge did not get a greater increase during the years when more funding was available throughout the system. It is necessary that the appropriate Ministers take account of this lack of increase in funding, when they discuss the expenditure of Foras na Gaeilge, so that the language body is dealt with in a fair and balanced manner.

### **Funding of TG4**

TG4 receives €10 million of direct funding from the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources. It is proposed that this be discontinued, and that the €10 million be provided from the television licence.

TG4 provides a good service for little money in the context of the large costs associated with the running of a television station, and its funding should not be endangered in any way. Small indigenous companies supply programmes to this broadcaster and their number has grown since the establishment of TG4. In this broadcasting sector 'knowledge society' skills are accordingly developed among young people, and the sector provides electronic skills related employment and training. It is necessary to protect this type of employment in order to be prepared for any upturn in the economy, and it is worthwhile mentioning that TG4 promotes a positive image of the country, not least by winning many international awards. Given the bad financial reputation the state has earned internationally in recent times, this is a major positive factor in TG4's favour.