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Pat / Komeen / ~~Jayne~~ 17/7

From: K Robinson (Ms)
Office of the Permanent Secretary

cc Secretary
DMB
Mr Davis
~~Mr Duffy~~
Mr Johnston
Mr Crozier

Date: 10 July 2001

To: PS/Minister

John - for your
up
George 17/7

**INTERIM GUIDANCE FOR DEPARTMENTS ON THE USE OF
IRISH IN OFFICIAL BUSINESS**

Summary:

ISSUE:	Compliance with the minimum requirements of the Council of Europe Charter for Regional or Minority languages as it relates to the use of Irish.
TIMESCALE:	In force from 2 July 2001
RECOMMENDATION:	That the Minister agrees that arrangements should be put in place within the Department and its Agencies to provide services in Irish to enable compliance with the provisions of the Council of Europe Charter as set out in Paragraph 3.

BACKGROUND

1. The Council of Europe Charter for Regional or Minority Languages is an international agreement designed to protect and promote Regional Minority languages. The UK Government ratified the Charter on 27 March 2001 and specified Irish as one of the languages to which some of the more detailed provisions of Part 111 of the Charter apply (Tab A).

2. The Charter, which came into force on 2 July 2001, brings with it certain obligations in relation to the use of Irish in official business. The relevant provisions of Article 10 as they relate to Administrative authorities and public services to which the UK signed up are highlighted in Annex A (Tab B) and form the basis of the interim guidance that has been issued to Departments for implementation.

3. The provisions are as follows:

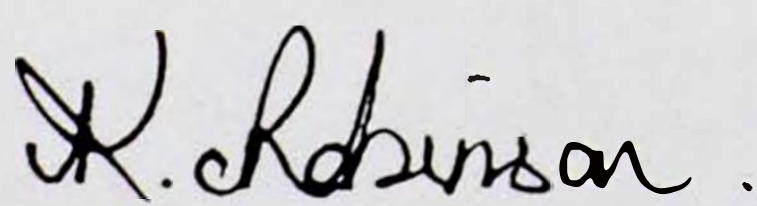
- According to the situation of each language and as far as this is reasonably possible:
 - (Article 10, 1, (a) iv) to ensure that users of regional or minority languages may submit oral or written applications in these languages;
 - (Article 10 c) to allow the administrative authorities to draft documents in a regional or minority language.
- To allow and/or encourage:
 - (Article 10 2 b) the possibility for users of regional or minority languages to submit oral or written applications in these languages;
 - (Article 10 2 e) the use by regional authorities of regional or minority languages in debates in their assemblies, without excluding, however, the use of the official languages of the State;

- (Article 10 2 f) the use by local authorities of regional or minority languages in debates in their assemblies, without excluding however, the use of the official languages of the State;
 - (Article 10 2 g) the use or adoption, if necessary in conjunction with the name in the official language(s), of traditional and correct forms of place names in regional or minority languages.
 - In accordance with the situation of each language and as far as this is reasonably possible:
 - (Article 10 3 c) to allow users of regional or minority languages to submit a request in these languages.
 - With a view to putting into effect those provisions of Article 10 1, 2 and 3 accepted by them the parties undertake:
 - (Article 10 4 a) translation or interpretation as may be required.
 - (Article 10 5) The parties undertake to allow the use or adoption of family names in the regional or minority languages, at the request of those concerned.
4. Minister will note from the interim guidance that there are certain discretionary areas within these provisions that provide Departments with the freedom to decide policy in relation to:
- a. the identification of Irish-speaking staff for the purposes of responding to telephone calls (Paragraphs 9 – 10);

- b. making arrangements for an Irish-speaking official to be available for face to face interviews, public/meetings, Enquiries and Hearings (Paragraphs 11 – 14); and
- c. the acknowledgement or reply in Irish to correspondence received in Irish (Paragraph 17).

CONCLUSION

- 5. In essence, to comply with the Charter the least action the Department should take is to enable those who use the Department's services to use Irish orally or in writing in conducting their business (Article 10, 1, (a) iv).
- 6. This in practice means that translation and interpretation services will have to be provided either in-house or using the central services facilitated through DCAL. However, there are a number of issues to be considered. It is not yet known if there are sufficient numbers and conveniently located DSD staff who are fluent in and available for conducting business in Irish. There are also issues in using staff such as those relating to, proficiency allowances, confidentiality, training, level of demand and cost implications. Officials will therefore take these matters forward and put proposals to the Minister in due course.
- 7. In the meantime, if Minister is content, it is proposed:
 - (1) to put arrangements in place for providing services in Irish when required by the Department's customers; and
 - (2) use the centralised services and issue suitable guidance to staff.


K ROBINSON (MS)

APPENDIX 2
THE EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY
LANGUAGES

PART III
MEASURES TO PROMOTE THE USE OF REGIONAL OR MINORITY
LANGUAGES IN PUBLIC LIFE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE UNDERTAKINGS
ENTERED INTO UNDER ARTICLE 2, PARAGRAPH 2

Article 8
Education

1. With regard to education, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used, according to the situation of each of these languages, and without prejudice to the teaching of the official language(s) of the State, to:
 - a. i. make available preschool education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or
 - ii. make available a substantial part of preschool education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or
 - iii. apply one of the measures provided for under (i) and (ii) above at least to those pupils whose families so request and whose number is considered sufficient; or
 - iv. if the public authorities have no direct competence in the field of preschool education, favour and/or encourage the application of the measures referred to under (i) to (iii) above;
 - b. i. make available primary education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or
 - ii. make available a substantial part of primary education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or
 - iii. provide, within primary education, for the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum; or
 - iv. apply one of the measures provided for under (i) to (iii) above at least to those pupils whose families so request and whose number is considered sufficient;
 - c. i. make available secondary education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or
 - ii. make available a substantial part of secondary education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or
 - iii. provide, within secondary education, for the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum; or
 - iv. apply one of the above measures provided for under (i) to (iii) above at least to those pupils who, or where appropriate whose families, so wish in a number considered sufficient;
 - d. i. make available technical and vocational education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or
 - ii. make available a substantial part of technical and vocational education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or
 - iii. provide, within technical and vocational education, for the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum; or
 - iv. apply one of the measures provided for under (i) to (iii) above at least to those pupils who, or where appropriate whose families, so wish in a number considered sufficient;
 - e. i. make available university and other higher education in regional or minority languages; or
 - ii. provide facilities for the study of these languages as university and higher education subjects; or

- iii. if, by reason of the role of the State in relation to higher education institutions, subparagraphs (i) and (ii) cannot be applied, encourage and/or allow the provision of university and higher education in regional or minority languages or of facilities for the study of these languages as university or higher education subjects;
- f. i. arrange for the provision of adult and continuing education courses which are taught mainly or wholly in the regional or minority languages; or
 - ii. offer such languages as subjects of adult and continuing education; or
 - iii. if the public authorities have no direct competence in the field of adult education, favour and/or encourage the offering of such languages as subjects of adult and continuing education;
- g. make arrangements to ensure the teaching of the history and the culture which is reflected by the regional or minority language;
- h. provide the basic and further training of the teachers required to implement those of paragraphs (a) to (g) accepted by the Party;
- i. set up a supervisory body or bodies responsible for monitoring the measures taken and progress achieved in establishing or developing the teaching of regional or minority languages and for drawing up periodic reports of their findings, which will be made public.

2. With regard to education and in respect of territories other than those in which the regional or minority languages are traditionally used, the parties undertake, if the number of users of a regional or minority language justifies it, to allow, encourage or provide teaching in or of the regional or minority language at all the appropriate stages of education.

Article 9

Judicial authorities

1. The Parties undertake, in respect of those judicial districts in which the number of residents using the regional or minority languages justifies the measures specified below, according to the situation of each of these languages and on condition that the use of the facilities afforded by the present paragraph is not considered by the judge to hamper the proper administration of justice:
 - a. in criminal proceedings:
 - i. to provide that the courts, at the request of one of the parties, shall conduct the proceedings in the regional or minority languages; and/or
 - ii. to guarantee the accused the right to use his/her regional or minority language; and/or
 - iii. to provide that requests and evidence, whether written or oral, shall not be considered inadmissible solely because they are formulated in a regional or minority language; and/or
 - iv. to produce, on request, documents connected with legal proceedings in the relevant regional or minority language, if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations involving no extra expense for the persons concerned;
 - b. in civil proceedings:
 - i. to provide that the courts, at the request of one of the parties, shall conduct the proceedings in the regional or minority languages; and/or
 - ii. to allow, whenever a litigant has to appear in person before a court, that he or she may use his or her regional or minority language without thereby incurring additional expense; and/or
 - iii. to allow documents and evidence to be produced in the regional or minority languages if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations;
 - c. in proceedings before courts concerning administrative matters:

i. to provide that the courts, at the request of one of the parties, shall conduct the proceedings in the regional or minority languages; and/or

ii. to allow, whenever a litigant has to appear in person before a court, that he or she may use his or her regional or minority language without thereby incurring additional expense; and/or

iii. to allow documents and evidence to be produced in the regional or minority languages

if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations;

d. to take steps to ensure that the application of sub-paragraphs (i) and (iii) of paragraphs (b) and (c) above and any necessary use of interpreters and translations does not involve extra expense for the persons concerned.

2. The Parties undertake:

a. not to deny the validity of legal documents drawn up within the State solely because they are drafted in a regional or minority language; or

b. not to deny the validity, as between the parties, of legal documents drawn up within the country solely because they are drafted in a regional or minority language, and to provide that they can be invoked against interested third parties who are not users of these languages on condition that the contents of the document are made known to them by the person(s) who invoke(s) it; or

c. not to deny the validity, as between the parties, of legal documents drawn up within the country solely because they are drafted in a regional or minority language.

3. The Parties undertake to make available in the regional or minority languages the most important national statutory texts and those relating particularly to users of these languages, unless they are otherwise provided.

Article 10

Administrative authorities and public services

1. Within the administrative districts of the State in which the number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages justifies the measures specified below and according to the situation of each language, the Parties undertake, as far as this is reasonably possible, to:

a. i. ensure that the administrative authorities use the regional or minority languages; or

ii. ensure that such of their officers as are in contact with the public use the regional or minority languages in their relations with persons applying to them in these languages; or

iii. ensure that users of regional or minority languages may submit oral or written applications and receive a reply in these languages; or

iv. ensure that users of regional or minority languages may submit oral or written applications in these languages; or

v. ensure that users of regional or minority languages may validly submit a document in these languages;

b. make available widely used administrative texts and forms for the population in the regional or minority languages or in bilingual versions;

c. allow the administrative authorities to draft documents in a regional or minority language.

2. In respect of the local and regional authorities on whose territory the number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages is such as to justify the measures specified below, the Parties undertake to allow and/or encourage:

a. the use of regional or minority languages within the framework of the regional or local

- authority;
- b. the possibility for users of regional or minority languages to submit oral or written applications in these languages;
 - c. the publication by regional authorities of their official documents also in the relevant regional or minority languages;
 - d. the publication by local authorities of their official documents also in the relevant regional or minority languages;
 - e. the use by regional authorities of regional or minority languages in debates in their assemblies, without excluding, however, the use of the official languages of the State;
 - f. the use by local authorities of regional or minority languages in debates in their assemblies, without excluding, however, the use of the official language(s) of the State;
 - g. the use or adoption, if necessary in conjunction with the name in the official language(s), of traditional and correct forms of place-names in regional or minority languages.

3. With regard to public services provided by the administrative authorities or other persons acting on their behalf, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which regional or minority languages are used, in accordance with the situation of each language and as far as this is reasonably possible, to:

- a. ensure that the regional or minority languages are used in the provision of the service; or
- b. allow users of regional or minority languages to submit a request and receive a reply in these languages; or
- c. allow users of regional or minority languages to submit a request in these languages.

4. With a view to putting into effect those provisions of paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 accepted by them, the Parties undertake to take one or more of the following measures:

- a. translation or interpretation as may be required;
- b. recruitment and, where necessary, training of the officials and other public service employees required;
- c. compliance as far as possible with requests from public service employees having a knowledge of a regional or minority language to be appointed in the territory in which that language is used.

5. The parties undertake to allow the use or adoption of family names in the regional or minority languages, at the request of those concerned.

Article 11

Media

1. The Parties undertake, for the users of the regional or minority languages within the territories in which those languages are spoken, according to the situation of each language, to the extent that the public authorities, directly or indirectly, are competent, have power or play a role in this field, and respecting the principle of the independence and autonomy of the media:

- a. to the extent that radio and television carry out a public service mission:
 - i. to ensure the creation of at least one radio station and one television channel in the regional or minority languages, or
 - ii. to encourage and/or facilitate the creation of at least one radio station and one television channel in the regional or minority languages, or
 - iii. to make adequate provision so that broadcasters offer programmes in regional or minority languages;
- b. i. to encourage and/or facilitate the creation of at least one radio station in the regional or minority languages, or
- ii. to encourage and/or facilitate the broadcasting of radio programmes in the regional

- or minority languages on a regular basis;
- c. i. to encourage and/or facilitate the creation of at least one television channel in the regional or minority languages, or
 - ii. to encourage and/or facilitate the broadcasting of television programmes in the regional or minority languages on a regular basis;
 - d. to encourage and/or facilitate the production and distribution of audio and audio-visual works in regional or minority languages;
 - e. i. to encourage and/or facilitate the creation and/or maintenance of at least one newspaper in the regional or minority languages; or
 - ii. to encourage and/or facilitate the publication of newspaper articles in the regional or minority languages on a regular basis;
 - f. i. to cover the additional costs of those media which use regional or minority languages, wherever the law provides for financial assistance in general for the media; or
 - ii. to apply existing measures for financial assistance also to audiovisual productions in regional or minority languages;
 - g. to support the training of journalists and other staff for media using regional or minority languages.

2. The Parties undertake to guarantee freedom of direct reception of radio and television broadcasts from neighbouring countries in a language used in identical or similar form to a regional or minority language, and not to oppose the re-transmission of radio and television broadcasts from neighbouring countries in such a language. They further undertake to ensure that no restrictions will be placed on the freedom of expression and free circulation of information in the written press in a language used in identical or similar form to a regional or minority language. The exercise of the above-mentioned freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.

3. The Parties undertake to ensure that the interests of the users of regional or minority languages are represented or taken into account within such bodies as may be established in accordance with the law with responsibility for guaranteeing the freedom and pluralism of the media.

Article 12

Cultural activities and facilities

1. With regard to cultural facilities and activities - especially libraries, video libraries, cultural centres, museums, archives, academies, theatres and cinemas, as well as literary work and film production, vernacular forms of cultural expression, festivals and the culture industries, including inter alia the use of new technologies - the parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used and to the extent that the public authorities are competent, have power or play a role in this field, to:
- a. encourage types of expression and initiative specific to regional or minority languages and foster the different means of access to works produced in these languages;
 - b. foster the different means of access in other languages to works produced in regional or minority languages by aiding and developing translation, dubbing, post-synchronisation and subtitling activities;
 - c. foster access in regional or minority languages to works produced in other languages by aiding and developing translation, dubbing, post-synchronisation and subtitling activities;

- d. ensure that the bodies responsible for organising or supporting cultural activities of various kinds make appropriate allowance for incorporating the knowledge and use of regional or minority languages and cultures in the undertakings which they initiate or for which they provide backing;
- e. promote measures to ensure that the bodies responsible for organising or supporting cultural activities have at their disposal staff who have a full command of the regional or minority language concerned, as well as of the language(s) of the rest of the population;
- f. encourage direct participation by representatives of the users of a given regional or minority language in providing facilities and planning cultural activities;
- g. encourage and/or facilitate the creation of a body or bodies responsible for collecting, keeping a copy of and presenting or publishing works produced in the regional or minority languages;
- h. if necessary create and/or promote and finance translation and terminological research services, particularly with a view to maintaining and developing appropriate administrative, commercial, economic, social, technical or legal terminology in each regional or minority language.

2. In respect of territories other than those in which the regional or minority languages are traditionally used, the Parties undertake, if the number of users of a regional or minority language justifies it, to allow, encourage and/or provide appropriate cultural activities and facilities in accordance with the preceding paragraph.

3. The Parties undertake to make appropriate provision, in pursuing their cultural policy abroad, for regional or minority languages and the cultures they reflect.

Article 13

Economic and social life

1. With regard to economic and social activities, the Parties undertake, within the whole country, to:

- a. eliminate from their legislation any provision prohibiting or limiting without justifiable reasons the use of regional or minority languages in documents relating to economic or social life, particularly contracts of employment, and in technical documents such as instructions for the use of products or installations;
- b. prohibit the insertion in internal regulations of companies and private documents of any clauses excluding or restricting the use of regional or minority languages, at least between users of the same language;
- c. oppose practices designed to discourage the use of regional or minority languages in connection with economic or social activities;
- d. facilitate and/or encourage the use of regional or minority languages by means other than those specified in the above sub-paragraphs.

2. With regard to economic and social activities, the Parties undertake, in so far as the public authorities are competent, within the territory in which the regional or minority languages are used, and as far as this is reasonably possible, to:

- a. include in their financial and banking regulations provisions which allow, by means of procedures compatible with commercial practice, the use of regional or minority languages in drawing up payment orders (cheques, drafts, etc.) or other financial documents, or, where appropriate, ensure the implementation of such provisions;
- b. in the economic and social sectors directly under their control (public sector), organise activities to promote the use of regional or minority languages;
- c. ensure that social care facilities such as hospitals, retirement homes and hostels offer the possibility of receiving and treating in their own language persons using a regional or

minority language who are in need of care on grounds of ill-health, old age or for other reasons;

d. ensure by appropriate means that safety instructions are also accessible in regional or minority languages;

e. arrange for information provided by the competent public authorities concerning the rights of consumers to be made available in regional or minority languages.

Article 14

Transfrontier exchanges

The Parties undertake:

a. to apply existing bilateral and multilateral agreements which bind them with the States in which the same language is used in identical or similar form, or if necessary to seek to conclude such agreements, in such a way as to foster contacts between the users of the same language in the States concerned in the fields of culture, education, information, vocational training and permanent education;

b. for the benefit of regional or minority languages, to facilitate and promote co-operation across borders, in particular between regional or local authorities in whose territory the same language is used in identical or similar form.

THE USE OF IRISH IN OFFICIAL BUSINESS

COUNCIL OF EUROPE CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

ARTICLE 10 – ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITIES AND PUBLIC SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

1. **The Council of Europe Charter for Regional or Minority Languages** is an international agreement designed to protect and promote Regional and Minority languages. The UK Government signed the Charter on **2 March 2000** recognising Irish, Scots Gaidhlig, Welsh, Ulster-Scots and Scots as languages to which the general principles of non-discrimination contained in Part II apply.
2. The Government ratified the Charter on **27 March 2001** and specified Irish, Scots Gaidhlig and Welsh as languages to which some of the more detailed provisions of Part III apply.
3. The Charter comes into force on **2 July 2001** bringing with it certain obligations regarding the use of Irish.
4. This circular offers **interim** guidance to **help staff understand and as far as reasonably possible meet the minimum requirements** of the Charter regarding the use of Irish in official business in the period immediately following the coming into force of the Charter. It supersedes Cent Sec 1/95 and applies to staff in Northern Ireland Departments.
5. A Standing Interdepartmental Charter Group will produce more detailed policy guidance which will be circulated to staff in due course.

ARTICLE 10 – ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITIES AND PUBLIC SERVICES

6. A copy of Article 10, with the provisions which apply in respect of Irish **highlighted in bold** is attached at **Annex A**.

OVERALL POLICY

7. Staff should respond courteously and as positively as possible to persons who want to use Irish.

PERSONAL NAMES

Article 10 5

8. A person is legally entitled to assume any name he or she wishes – in English or in any other language. If he or she is generally known by that name, it is valid for purposes of legal identification. Unless it appears that he or she is not generally known by that name, staff must respect the wishes of anyone who wants to be known by the Irish version of their name, and should use only that name in official business. Care should be taken to avoid confusion and duplication if an individual is known by both Irish and English names and it may be useful to put a record of both versions on file.

TELEPHONE CALLS

Article 10 1 a iv ; Article 10 2 b ; Article 10 3 c

9. If a caller begins the conversation in Irish the official may respond in Irish (if they speak it) or English. If the official does not speak Irish they should explain this and offer alternatives for dealing with the call. The following form of words may be helpful:

:

“I am sorry I cannot answer you in Irish. But I can offer you the following options for dealing with your call. You may

- continue the call in English,
- let us have your views in writing in Irish
- [wait while I transfer you to an Irish speaking colleague]

Note: This option is only available for those Departments who have identified Irish-speaking staff.

- transfer you to our voice mail where you can leave a message in Irish. “
- :

10. To contact the voice mail phone **(028902) 58971**. Details of the voicemail message and follow-up procedure are attached at **Annex B**. The Charter only requires (**Article 10 2 b**) the State to accept oral requests and applications in Irish. There is no obligation to respond in Irish.

FACE TO FACE INTERVIEWS AND MEETINGS

Article 10 3 c

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11. If a person gives advance notice that they want to speak Irish, (*an Irish- speaking official or interpreter may be made available - Departments to decide*)

12. If no notice is given, the person should be offered the choice of -

- continuing the interview/meeting in English;
- giving written views in Irish
- [making an appointment for a meeting when officials will have an interpreter present]. *Note: This is at the discretion of Departments. DCAL will help identify an interpreter if necessary.*

PUBLIC MEETINGS, ENQUIRIES AND HEARINGS

Article 10 3 c

13. If a person gives advance notice that they want to speak Irish, (*an Irish-speaking official or interpreter may be made available - Departments to decide*).

14. If no notice is given, the person should be offered the choice of -

- making their point in English
- giving written views in Irish.
- [making an appointment for a meeting when officials will have an interpreter present]. *Note: This is at the discretion of Departments. DCAL will help identify an interpreter if necessary.*

CORRESPONDENCE

Article 10 3 c

15. When someone writes to the Department in Irish the letter should be referred as soon as possible to a translator. DCAL noel.stewart@dcalni.gov.uk will help identify a translator if necessary.

16. If it seems that, taking translation into account, it will not be possible to provide a substantive reply by the relevant deadline, an acknowledgement should be issued in the normal way, explaining that the letter is being translated and that a substantive reply will follow.

17. Staff are not obliged to acknowledge or reply in Irish to correspondence received in Irish. English translations should be filed of the original letter and of any response in Irish.

ADDRESSES

Article 10 2 g

18. A District Council may place a version of a street name in another language alongside the English name. For up to date information on lawfully adopted non-English street names contact Raymond Clements (rclements.osni@doeni.gov.uk). When a person has used a lawful Irish language street name staff should use the Irish form in replying to correspondence, processing applications etc. They should note both versions on the official record.
19. Where third parties may be involved i.e. where a document may need to be scrutinised (e.g. driving licence) or publicised (e.g. planning application) the English form of the street address should be shown as well as the Irish version. Where it is not technically possible to show both, the English version only should be shown. There are no restrictions on using Irish versions of other parts of an address e.g. townland, town, county, country.

ENQUIRIES AND MONITORING

- 20.. Enquiries about this guidance and details of all requests to do business (oral or written) in Irish should be addressed to [*Departments - insert contact name and number*]

29 June 2001

European Charter for Regional or
Minority Languages

Article 10 - Administrative authorities and public services

1. Within the administrative districts of the State in which the number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages justifies the measures specified below and according to the situation of each language, the Parties undertake, as far as this is reasonably possible
 - a*
 - i to ensure that the administrative authorities use the regional or minority languages; or
 - ii to ensure that such of their officers as are in contact with the public use the regional or minority languages in their relations with persons applying to them in these languages; or
 - iii to ensure that users of regional or minority languages may submit oral or written applications and receive a reply in these languages; or
 - iv to ensure that users of regional or minority languages may submit oral or written applications in these languages; or
 - v to ensure that users of regional or minority languages may validly submit a document in these languages; or
 - b* to make available widely used administrative texts and forms for the population in the regional or minority languages or in bilingual versions;
 - c* to allow the administrative authorities to draft documents in a regional or minority language.

2 In respect of the local and regional authorities on whose territory the number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages is such as to justify the measures specified below, the Parties undertake to allow and/or encourage

- a* the use of regional or minority languages within the framework of the regional or local authority;
- b* the possibility for users of regional or minority languages to submit oral or written applications in these languages;
- c* the publication by regional authorities of their official documents also in the relevant regional or minority languages;
- d* the publication by local authorities of their official documents also in the relevant regional or minority languages;
- e* the use by regional authorities of regional or minority languages in debates in their assemblies, without excluding, however, the use of the official language(s) of the State;
- f* the use by local authorities of regional or minority languages in debates in their assemblies, without excluding, however, the use of the official language(s) of the State;
- g* the use or adoption, if necessary in conjunction with the name in the official language(s), of traditional and correct forms of place-names in regional or minority languages.

3 With regard to public services provided by the administrative authorities or other persons acting on their behalf, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which regional or minority languages are used, in accordance with the situation of each language and as far as this is reasonably possible:

- a* to ensure that the regional or minority languages are used in the provision of the service; or

- b* to allow users of regional or minority languages to submit a request and receive a reply in these languages; or
 - c* to allow users of regional or minority languages to submit a request in these languages.
- 4 With a view to putting into effect those provisions of paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 accepted by them, the Parties undertake to take one or more of the following measures
 - a* translation or interpretation as may be required;
 - b* recruitment and, where necessary, training of the officials and other public service employees required;
 - c* compliance as far as possible with requests from public service employees having a knowledge of a regional or minority language to be appointed in the territory in which that language is used.
- 5 The Parties undertake to allow the use or adoption of family names in the regional or minority languages, at the request of those concerned.

ANNEX B

PROCEDURES FOR USE OF IRISH LANGUAGE VOICE MAIL

1. Callers contact the central switchboard or individual Department indicating that they wish to conduct their business in Irish.
2. The official receiving the call will divert the caller to the Irish language voicemail – ext. 58971.
3. The voicemail will be monitored regularly by officials in Linguistic Diversity Branch (LDB), Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure.
4. Messages received will be forwarded to an interpreter for translation.
5. Translated enquiries will be e-mailed to noel.stewart@dcalni.gov.uk (LDB) who will forward them to the appropriate Department / official for action.
6. It is at the discretion of individual Departments how they wish to action enquiries received through the voicemail facility and LDB.

MESSAGE ON IRISH VOICE-MAIL FACILITY

Welcome to the Northern Ireland Civil Service. If you would like to leave a message with us someone will come back to you as soon as possible. You can leave your message after the tone. To handle your call we need you to give us the following information:

- Your name
- Your address
- Your daytime telephone number
- The name of the person you would like to contact, if you know it
- The name of the Department you would like to contact, if you know it.
- The nature of your business

We will try to get back to you as soon as possible but if your business is very urgent you are advised to contact the Department directly in English.