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# A summary of proposed funding changes for the Irish language voluntary sector: recent developments

This paper summarises developments so far in the proposed changes to the way in which the Irish language voluntary sector is funded by Foras na Gaeilge. The roles of the various organisations involved in these developments is described, and Annexe 2 provides a commentary on some of the contextual differences of the Irish language in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

## 1 Background: the Irish language voluntary sector

The Irish language voluntary sector consists of a large number of groups, covering both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Some groups have a local remit, while others are national in their coverage. Foras na Gaeilge, the Irish language agency, requires all groups seeking funding to register with them, and their directory of groups contains 113 entries, though not all of these are voluntary groups<sup>1</sup>. The groups listed cover a variety of issues and activities from community groups to drama, heritage, software and internet specialists, sports, after-school clubs and summer camps.

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<sup>1</sup> Foras na Gaeilge. 'Directory: Irish language organisations and groups': [http://gaeilge.ie/Directory/org\\_groups.asp](http://gaeilge.ie/Directory/org_groups.asp) Accessed 19.11.10.

Foras na Gaeilge provides funding to projects and bodies through 20 different funding streams under four broad categories including education, community and business, the public sector and the arts, communications and marketing, and writing and publishing.

One of the categories of funding is 'core-funding'. There are 19 bodies which currently receive core-funding from Foras na Gaeilge, seven of which are based in Northern Ireland. The 19 bodies together receive around €8million per annum<sup>2</sup>. Eight bodies are named in legislation in the Republic of Ireland<sup>3</sup>, so further legislation would have to be introduced to the Dáil for funding to be removed from these bodies.

Seven of the 19 core-funded bodies are based in Northern Ireland. These are as follows<sup>4</sup>:

Organisation	Remit
An tÁisaonad	Creates resources for use in the Irish medium sector, including training.
Iontaobhas Ultach	Promotes language issues on a cross-community basis.
Pobal	Umbrella lobby group promoting Irish language rights.
Forbairt Feirste	Belfast based language development and training.
Altram	Pre-school education and support.
Raidió Fáilte	Local radio station.
Comhaltas Uladh & an tUltach.	Promotion of language at secondary level and lifelong learning initiatives.

## 2 Background: role and responsibilities for Irish language development

The following summarises the legal basis and responsibilities of the North/South Language Body, and more particularly Foras na Gaeilge.

The Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement established 12 areas of North/South cooperation, six of which are served through the establishment of North/South Implementation Bodies. The Supplementary Agreement was given effect in Northern Ireland by the North/South Co-operation (Implementation Bodies) (Northern Ireland) Order 1999, and in the Republic of Ireland by the British-Irish Agreement Act 1999.

The North/South Language Body (An Foras Teanga) is one of the Implementation Bodies established by the North/South Co-operation Order. It is a single body, composed of two separate and largely autonomous agencies: Foras na Gaeilge, and the Ulster-Scots Agency, Tha Boord O Ulstér-Scotch.

Foras na Gaeilge and Tha Boord O Ulstér-Scotch operate on an all-island basis, and both bodies are accountable to the Oireachtas and the Northern Ireland Assembly.

<sup>2</sup> Telephone conversation with Brendan Maccraith, Foras na Gaeilge, 16.11.10.

<sup>3</sup> British-Irish Agreement Act (1999).

<sup>4</sup> Information taken from an email sent from DCAL on 19.11.10.

They are co-sponsored by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs. Decisions regarding the work of the North/South Language Body are made by the North/South Ministerial Council which discusses its policies and actions during 'Language Sector' meetings.

### **(a) Foras na Gaeilge**

Foras na Gaeilge, which took over the functions of the previously existing Bord na Gaeilge, has responsibility for the promotion of the Irish language on an all-island basis. It conducts a range of functions, as follows<sup>5</sup>:

- Promotion of the Irish language;
- Facilitating and encouraging its use in speech and writing in public and private life in the South and, in the context of Part III of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, in Northern Ireland where there is appropriate demand;
- Advising both administrations, public bodies and other groups in the private and voluntary sectors;
- Undertaking supportive projects, and grant-aiding bodies and groups as considered necessary;
- Undertaking research, promotional campaigns, and public and media relations;
- Developing terminology and dictionaries;
- Supporting Irish-medium education and the teaching of Irish.

### **(b) Departmental responsibilities**

The Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure states that its responsibilities in regard to Foras na Gaeilge are as follows:

'The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) jointly sponsors the North/South Language Body along with the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (DCRGA). The North/South Language Body was established on 2 December 1999 following the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. It comprises Foras na Gaeilge, (Irish Language Agency) and Ulster-Scots Agency (Tha Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch). DCRGA funds 75% of the budget of Foras na Gaeilge and DCAL the remaining 25%. DCAL funds 75% of the budget of the Ulster-Scots Agency and DCRGA the remaining 25%.'<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> British-Irish Agreement Act 1999: Annex 1, Part 5 – Language; see also Foras na Gaeilge website. 2010. 'About Foras na Gaeilge': Accessed 15.11.10.

<sup>6</sup> Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure website. 'Language/Cultural Diversity': <http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/index/language-cultural-diversity-r08.htm> Accessed 17.11.10.

The Department for Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs in the Republic of Ireland describes a broader range of relationships with Irish language bodies and funds. It describes these relationships as follows:

‘The Department supports and works closely with other agencies, particularly An Foras Teanga (the North-South Language Body) and Údarás na Gaeltachta (the Gaeltacht authority), in pursuing its objectives. Ciste na Gaeilge is a fund from which Irish language organisations and various Irish initiatives are grant-aided...The Placenames Branch researches the placenames of Ireland and provides authoritative Irish language forms of those placenames. Colmcille is a tripartite initiative, which comes under the remit of Foras na Gaeilge (one of the two Agencies of An Foras Teanga), the main objectives of which comprise strengthening the links between Ireland (North and South) and Scotland in addition to the promotion of the Irish and Scots Gaelic languages.’<sup>7</sup>

The Ministers who attend the Language Sector of the North-South Ministerial Council are the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure and the Minister of Education from Northern Ireland, and the Minister for Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs in the Republic of Ireland.

### 3 Recent policy developments

The following is a summary of some of the key developments in the proposed change in funding arrangements for Irish language groups. These developments are also summarised in the timeline in Annexe 1.

Foras na Gaeilge has proposed a new funding model involving a switch away from the current situation where 19 bodies are ‘core-funded’, and towards a more thematic approach where any voluntary sector Irish language organisation is eligible to apply for project funding, made available via a set of discrete subject headings which may vary from year-to-year. These plans have been drawn up at the request of the North-South Ministerial Council (NSMC), and have been described by Foras na Gaeilge as a ‘significant realignment’<sup>8</sup>. The plans were made available for consultation in September 2010. It was initially proposed that this new model would be implemented via a series of steps, with full implementation from mid-2011. It was later concluded that this timetable should be extended so that full implementation is achieved by December 2011.

On 2 December 2009, Foras na Gaeilge was directed by the NSMC to restructure its funding for the core-funded groups within the Irish language voluntary sector:

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<sup>7</sup> Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. ‘The Irish Language’: <http://www.pobail.ie/en/IrishLanguage> Accessed 17.11.10.

<sup>8</sup> Foras na Gaeilge. 2010. *New Funding Model for the Core-Funded Organizations*: p8.

‘Ministers agreed that core-funding of the Irish language voluntary sector by Foras na Gaeilge be reconfigured on the basis that Foras na Gaeilge will set high level strategic priorities...This reconfiguration is to ensure a more effective, streamlined and cost effective approach to funding of the sector.’<sup>9</sup>

NSMC specified a deadline of 30 June 2010 for this restructuring to be carried out. As a result, Foras na Gaeilge created a ‘Development Committee’ to progress the matter and the Committee set to work in association with the consultants Mazars.

The following key recommendations were produced by Foras na Gaeilge, and presented to the NSMC on 26 May 2010<sup>10</sup>:

- The funding model will be based on a portfolio of schemes which will be announced openly to the entire Irish language sector, rather than to the 19 previously core-funded organisations;
- Foras na Gaeilge will prepare one central strategy in relation to the fund;
- The portfolio of schemes will be in accordance with the strategy and there will be an annual review process based on the achievement of the proposed results and on submissions which Foras na Gaeilge will invite from the Irish language sector each year;
- At the moment it is proposed that Foras na Gaeilge will develop schemes in the following categories:
  - A Local Radio Scheme
  - An Arts Scheme
  - An Education Scheme
  - A Family Support Scheme
  - A Community Empowerment Scheme
  - A Youth Scheme
  - An Advocacy and Research Scheme.

In response, Ministers decided at that NSMC meeting that ‘officials from the sponsor Departments should now work with Foras na Gaeilge to agree by end-June 2010 the detail of these proposals and a timescale for their implementation’<sup>11</sup>.

Foras na Gaeilge forwarded a proposal document entitled ‘New Funding Model for the Core-Funded Organizations’ to those groups on 9 July, and issued a public consultation on 6 September, closing on 30 September.

Following the NSMC meeting of 3 November, it was reported that:

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<sup>9</sup> North South Language Body Sectoral Format. Joint Communiqué: 2.12.09.

<sup>10</sup> Foras na Gaeilge. 26.5.10. ‘Press release: New funding model for core-funded Irish language organisations’: <http://www.gaeilge.ie/ForasNaGaeilge/newsarticle.asp?id=258> Accessed 16.11.10.

<sup>11</sup> North South Language Body Sectoral Format. Joint Communiqué: 26.5.10.

‘The Council noted the current position in regard to the review of the core-funded organisations undertaken by Foras na Gaeilge. Ministers noted proposals in regard to the enhanced implementation arrangements, including the appointment of a project manager and establishment of a steering committee and an advisory committee. They agreed that, in the context of satisfactory progress on implementation being achieved, interim funding may continue to be provided by Foras na Gaeilge to existing funded organisations to end May 2011 and progress will be reported at the next NSMC Language meeting.’<sup>12</sup>

It was subsequently decided that this timetable should be extended, with funding continued until December 2011 for the core-funded groups which had been unsuccessful under the new schemes.

On 13 December, the Project Steering Committee met for the first time, followed by the first meeting of the Advisory Committee on 20 January 2011.

On 25 November 2011, the CAL Committee was briefed by DCAL and Foras na Gaeilge on the review of core-funded bodies, and concerns were expressed by some members regarding the nature of the consultation process. The committee then agreed to write to DCAL requesting a timeline and details of the EQIA screening process for the restructuring of core-funded Irish Language voluntary groups<sup>13</sup>.

At the end of March 2011 a public consultation was re-released, with a closing date of 14 June 2011.

## 4 Concerns expressed

Although some groups have responded with some positive comments, in general the reaction from the voluntary Irish language groups themselves has been one of concern. This concern has been expressed on a number of different issues, both in relation to the new funding arrangements themselves, and about the nature of the process undertaken by Foras na Gaeilge in conducting consultation with the sector thus far. These concerns have been communicated in briefings to the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure by a Joint Committee of Core-Funded Groups, and by one of the core-funded groups, the Ultach Trust. Further concerns have also been expressed by each of the different groups which responded to the first Foras na Gaeilge consultation exercise in September 2010:

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<sup>12</sup> Statement by the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure to the Northern Ireland Assembly, 15.11.10.

<sup>13</sup> Minutes of the Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee for 25.11.10.

### **(a) Key skills lost to the sector**

Oireachtas na Gaeilge raised the issue in their consultation response of the potential loss of skills from the sector if organisations are forced to downsize as a result of potential funding reductions. They state that ‘there is a danger under the schemes system that the well of knowledge, specialist skills and experience will run dry...it is difficult to put a price on the loss of such human resources’<sup>14</sup>.

### **(b) Effectiveness of the project funding model**

In their consultation response, Pobal expressed concern that ‘if funding is available only through Schemes, and there is no funding support for organisations to employ core staff, there is a danger that management, administration or co-ordination will not be as effective as they are now’, concluding that ‘we do not believe...of themselves, the schemes can stand in for organisations’<sup>15</sup>. Indeed, a number of groups stated in their consultation responses that they will not be able to survive under the proposed new funding scheme. Forbairt Naíonraí Teoranta stated that it ‘does not accept that it is possible to run the voluntary Irish language sector on the basis of schemes alone’<sup>16</sup>. A key reason for this is that some of the groups currently funded carry out work which may not fit neatly with the project funding model, in that they essentially perform an ongoing support or strategic role for the sector. For example, An tÁisaonad<sup>17</sup> states that it organises meetings of CATOC (the Joint Committee for Support, Training and Curriculum Resources), and sits on various steering groups. Such roles may not necessarily be replicable within the more finite time constraints of a project.

### **(c) Consultation limitations**

It had also been expressed by the Joint Committee for Core-Funded Groups that insufficient time was allowed for the first consultation process in September, and that the consultation was broadcast through a limited range of outlets<sup>18</sup>. Subsequently, the consultation was re-issued by Foras na Gaeilge in March 2011, with a closing date of 14 June.

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<sup>14</sup> *Submission from Oireachtas na Gaeilge in relation to the new funding model for core-funded organisations*, translated from the Irish by Hansard, NI Assembly, December 2010.

<sup>15</sup> *Pobal's submission in response to letters from Foras, 9 July and 20 August*, translated from the Irish by Hansard, NI Assembly, December 2010.

<sup>16</sup> *Submission from Forbairt Naíonraí Teoranta on the new funding model and the funding schemes for the early-years sector*, translated from the Irish by Hansard, NI Assembly, December 2010.

<sup>17</sup> *Submission from An tÁisaonad on An tÁisaonad and the new funding model*, translated from the Irish by Hansard, NI Assembly, May 2011.

<sup>18</sup> Joint Committee of Core-Funded Groups. 2010. ‘The New Funding Model for the Core-Funded Organisations: implications for the promotion of Irish in Northern Ireland’. Written submission to the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure, 21.10.10: pp4-5.

#### **(d) Regulatory and impact assessments**

The Joint Committee stated some concerns about whether a Regulatory Impact Assessment, or an Equality Impact Assessment, had been carried out<sup>19</sup>. Since that time, the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure has now confirmed that it carried out an EQIA in relation to the change in funding arrangements,<sup>20</sup> though not yet a RIA.

#### **(e) All-island approach**

Concerns have been expressed by the Joint Committee of Core-Funded Groups and the Ultach Trust about the all-island approach to the funding changes proposed by Foras na Gaeilge. The Ultach Trust stated that there are 'significant differences in the context in which the language is developed in the two jurisdictions – political, legal, educational, social and infrastructural and these can require significantly different strategies'<sup>21</sup>. It has been argued that the thematic, non-core funded nature of the new proposals may work well where a high level of state and legislative support exists, as in the Republic of Ireland, but may work less well in Northern Ireland. The section below, on the status of Irish, highlights the fact that there is a substantial body of legislation, a government statement and a 20-year strategy, all of which provides for a political, legal and funding framework. The Ultach Trust has argued that 'the voluntary sector in Northern Ireland will become no more than a bolt-on, or afterthought, to that of the south'<sup>22</sup>. The British/Irish Agreement Act (1999) in the Republic of Ireland states of Foras na Gaeilge that:

'In carrying out its functions, the Irish language agency will have regard to the positions of the language in the two jurisdictions.'<sup>23</sup>

Annexe 2 sets out some of the main legislative and strategic differences between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

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<sup>19</sup> Joint Committee of Core-Funded Groups. 2010. 'The New Funding Model for the Core-Funded Organisations: implications for the promotion of Irish in Northern Ireland'. Written submission to the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure, 21.10.10: pp3-5.

<sup>20</sup> Conversation with official within the languages branch, Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure: 11.5.11.

<sup>21</sup> Ultach Trust. 2010. 'Differences between the situation of Irish in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland'. Written submission to the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure, 18.11.10: p2.

<sup>22</sup> Ultach Trust. 2010. 'Differences between the situation of Irish in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland'. Written submission to the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure, 18.11.10: p3.

<sup>23</sup> British-Irish Agreement Act 1999: Annex 1, Part 5 – Language



## Annexe 1: Proposals for a change in funding arrangements for Irish language voluntary sector groups – summary timeline

Dates	Development
2.12.09	Foras na Gaeilge was directed by the North-South Ministerial Council to restructure its funding for the core-funded groups within the Irish language voluntary sector.
26.5.10	<p>A set of key recommendations was presented by Foras na Gaeilge to the North-South Ministerial Council. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New funding model based on a portfolio of schemes, announced openly to the entire Irish language sector, rather than just the 19 previously core-funded bodies.</li> <li>• Currently, these schemes are designed to include: local radio, the arts, education, family support, community empowerment, youth, advocacy and research.</li> <li>• Ministers decided that officials from the sponsor departments should work up these plans into a more detailed form by the end of June 2010.</li> </ul>
9.7.10	Foras na Gaeilge forwarded a proposal document, <i>New Funding Model for the Core-Funded Organizations</i> , to the core-funded groups.
6.9.10 – 30.9.10	A public consultation was issued.
21.10.10	The Joint Committee for Core-Funded Groups appeared before the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure, and provided a written submission in which they expressed concerns about whether a Regulatory Impact Assessment, or an Equality Impact Assessment, had been carried out.
3.11.10	At the North-South Ministerial Council, ministers noted progress: it was reported that a project manager had been appointed, and a steering committee and advisory committee established. May 2011 was initially set as the cut-off point for the previously core-funded groups, though this was later extended to

	December 2011.
25.11.10	The CAL Committee was briefed by DCAL and Foras na Gaeilge on the review of core-funded bodies, and concerns were expressed by some members regarding the nature of the consultation process. The committee then agreed to write to DCAL requesting a timeline and details of the EQIA screening process.
13.12.10	Project Steering Committee met for the first time: terms of reference are (i) to oversee implementation by Foras na Gaeilge of the change in funding arrangements, (ii) to oversee consultation with stakeholders, (iii) monitor progress, and (iv) to agree financial assistance schemes.
20.1.11 – 14.6.11	First Advisory Committee met for the first time: terms of reference are (i) to facilitate communication between the sector and Foras na Gaeilge and (ii) to ensure that opinions from the sector are fed into the change process.
28.3.11	A public consultation was re-released amid concerns that the first version was not Section 75 compliant within a Northern Ireland context – closing date 14 June 2011.

## Annexe 2: Legislative and strategic status of Irish in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland

The following sets out some of the key legislative and strategic differences between state support for the Irish language in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

In the Republic of Ireland, Irish is named as the national and first official language in Article 8 of the 1937 Constitution, with English as the second official language. This status has a number of implications. For example, the State is bound by legislation to promote the use of Irish, and there is an obligation for all parliamentary and court proceedings to be available in both official languages<sup>1</sup>. The Official Languages Act 2003 places an obligation on all public bodies to have a strategy in place to make available material in both English and Irish.

The status of Irish has been legislated for in a large number of acts. The key legislative acts are listed in the following table:

Legislation	Description
The Ministers and Secretaries (Amendment) Act 1956	Established the official Gaeltacht areas.
The Placenames (Irish Forms) Act 1973	An Act which authorises the specification of Irish place names for the purposes of law.
Údarás na Gaeltachta Act 1979	This act established the Údarás na Gaeltachta, the regional development agency responsible for the economic, social and cultural development of the Gaeltacht.
Radio and Television Act 1988	States that the making publically-funded television and radio programmes should have special regard for the elements which distinguish Irish culture and in particular the Irish language.
Education Act 1998	Study of the Irish language is compulsory at primary and secondary level, though exemptions can be made.
British-Irish Agreement Act 1999	This is the Irish equivalent of the North-South Co-operation (Implementation Bodies) (Northern Ireland) Order (1999), which established the North/South Language Body.
Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999	Aims to extend bilingualism in Irish society and achieve greater use of the Irish language.
Broadcasting Act 2001	Legislates for the provision of resources for the making and broadcast of Irish language material.
Housing (Gaeltacht) (Amendment) Act 2001	Allows for grants to be made for housing for Irish speakers within Gaeltacht areas, and places restrictions on planning decisions which may be detrimental to the use of Irish in such areas.

<sup>1</sup> Hunt, B 2009. 'Irish language', in *Murdoch's Dictionary of Irish Law*. Fifth Edition: pp661-2.

Local Government Act 2001	A local authority may take such steps as it considers appropriate to encourage the use of the Irish language. The Minister may issue guidelines in relation to the use of the Irish language which local authorities must have regard to.
The Official Languages Act (2003)	An Act to promote the use of the Irish language for official purposes, in Parliamentary proceedings, in the Acts of the Oireachtas, in the administration of justice, and the work of public bodies. The Act also provides for the establishment of Oifig Choimisinéir na dTeangacha Oifigiúla (the Office of the Commissioner for Official Languages).
Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007	Section 2 provides for the functions of the DCRGA department, and places on them an obligation to 'support and promote the Irish language'.

In addition to these legislative acts, the Irish government has published the following documents:

Statement on the Irish Language 2006	This pan-governmental statement outlines a vision for the development of Irish in the future, affirming 'support for the development and preservation' of the language. It states in objective 13 that 'the Government recognises the vital role of the Irish language voluntary sector and will continue to support it' <sup>2</sup> .
20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-30	This strategy follows on from the Government Statement. It launched on 21 December 2010 and sets out a series of actions, including Education, The Gaeltacht, Family Transmission of the Language, Administration, Services and Community, Media and Technology, Dictionaries, Legislation and Status, Economic Life, and Cross-cutting Initiatives. These actions are scheduled over a series of phases, with implementation over-seen by the Cabinet Committee on Irish and the Gaeltacht chaired by the Taoiseach, a Senior Officials Group, in addition to the existing arrangements of the Minister and Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

In Northern Ireland, the legal status of Irish is somewhat different. Irish is not named as an official language, and there is no equivalent of the Official Languages Act 2003 to legislate for the provision of Irish by public bodies, or its use in court and parliamentary proceedings. However, Irish is afforded some degree of status by the following items of legislation:

Legislation	Description
Belfast Agreement	Under 'Rights, safeguards and equality of opportunity', the agreement states that 'all participants recognise the importance of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to linguistic diversity, including in Northern Ireland, the Irish language, Ulster-Scots and the languages of the various ethnic communities, all of which are part of the cultural wealth of the island of Ireland. The agreement goes on to state that 'in the context of active consideration currently being given to the UK signing the Council of Europe Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the British Government will in particular in relation to the Irish language, where appropriate and where people so desire it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take resolute action to promote the language</li> <li>• Facilitate and encourage the use of the language in speech and writing in public and private life where there is appropriate demand</li> <li>• Seek to remove, where possible, restrictions which would</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Government of Ireland. 2006. *Statement on the Irish Language 2006*: p20.

	<p>discourage or work against the maintenance or development of the language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make provision for liaising with the Irish language community</li> <li>• Representing their views to public authorities and investigating complaints</li> <li>• Place a statutory duty on the Department of Education to encourage and facilitate Irish medium education in line with current provision for integrated education</li> <li>• Explore urgently with the relevant British authorities, and in co-operation with the Irish broadcasting authorities, the scope for achieving more widespread availability of Teilifis na Gaeilge in Northern Ireland</li> <li>• Seek more effective ways to encourage and provide financial support for Irish language film and television production in Northern Ireland</li> <li>• Encourage the parties to secure agreement that this commitment will be sustained by a new Assembly in a way which takes account of the desires and sensitivities of the community</li> </ul>
Northern Ireland (St Andrews Agreement) Act 2006	In the section 'Strategies relating to the Irish language and Ulster Scots language etc', the Act states that 'the Executive Committee shall adopt a strategy setting out how it proposes to enhance and protect the development of the Irish language'.
The North-South Co-operation (Implementation Bodies) (Northern Ireland) Order (1999)	This established the North/South Language Body, and is the equivalent of the British-Irish Agreement Act (1999) in the Republic of Ireland. The UK legislation is somewhat briefer than the Irish version.
Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1988	Led to the establishment of Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (The Council for Irish-medium education) and Iontaobhas na Gaelscolaíochta (The Trust for Irish-medium education).
European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages	This is a Council of Europe Charter, to which the UK government became a signatory in 2001. The Irish language has been registered by the UK under Parts II (general objectives and principles) and III (containing 36 specific undertakings).