



PRESS RELEASE

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The first monitoring report published by An Coimisinéir Teanga

An account is provided in the monitoring report, published today, on the results of the various audits completed by the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga in 2018. The following are the main results of the audits:

- *Only 84 positions of the 20,000 employed by government departments are recognised as positions with an Irish language requirement. 67 of those positions are in the Department of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht.*
- *Only two local authorities of the ten examined were complying for the most part with the statutory language commitments relating to their websites.*
- *Almost 60% of signs examined at heritage sites under the auspices of the Office of Public Works were in compliance with the regulations.*

Staff with Irish in government departments

At the time of the audit 7 government departments had not identified any positions as ones with an Irish language requirement. Other than the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht with 10%, the number of positions identified as ones with an Irish language requirement was below 1%.

In total only 551 staff out of the 21,060 (2.62%) employed by government departments were identified as staff having competence in the Irish language. Only two government departments in the country – the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the Department of Education and Skills – have more than 5% of employees with competence in Irish.

An Coimisinéir Teanga, Rónán Ó Domhnaill, stated that *“These figures are a further indication of the lack of capacity of the State to deliver an acceptable level of service in the Irish language. These results do not engender any confidence that government departments are displaying the necessary leadership in ensuring that sufficient numbers of staff with Irish are employed by them. The low level of employees with Irish means that there cannot be an expectation of a comprehensive range of services of equal standard being provided in both official languages. This must be addressed by amending the Act and the recruitment policies of the State.”*

Local authorities' websites

As part of the 2018 audit programme a number of local authorities' websites were examined to assess if they were in compliance with the relevant commitments provided in their language schemes. Of the ten local authorities' websites examined four were non-complying for the most part with the commitments provided. These were Clare County Council, Wicklow County Council, Louth County Council and Kerry County Council. Two local authorities – Galway County Council and Dublin City Council – were in compliance with their obligations for the most part.

Signs at heritage sites

The use of the official languages on signs at various heritage sites managed by the Office of Public Works was also examined. Ten separate heritage sites in Dublin were audited during 2018. Five of the ten sites examined achieved an acceptable level of compliance. The highest level of compliance was achieved by the Pearse Museum in Rathfarnham at 89% and the lowest level of compliance by the National Botanic Gardens where only one out of ten signs examined were in line with regulations.

This is the first year that the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga has published a separate report on the Office's monitoring work, which is limited to monitoring the provisions of the Official Languages Act only. An Coimisinéir Teanga decided to change the Office's monitoring process, which focused mainly on language schemes, in light of the shortcomings that were identified in the Commentary published on the language scheme system. As part of the new monitoring model An Coimisinéir Teanga identifies annual monitoring priorities encompassing various elements of the Act.

The full report is available at the following link:

https://coimisineir.ie/userfiles/files/Tuarascail_Faireachain_2018.pdf

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