

Subject: Statement from An Coimisinéir Teanga

An Coimisinéir Teanga, Rónán Ó Domhnaill, has welcomed the Government decision to reverse the plan to merge the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga with the Office of the Ombudsman. Mr Ó Domhnaill said that it was a sensible and practical decision not to merge the two offices. Rónán Ó Domhnaill commented: "I welcome today's announcement. The Government decision protects the independence of the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga and it puts an end to any uncertainty regarding the status of the Office in the future."

The most recent step in the amendment of the Official Languages Act 2003, i.e. the publication of the heads of bill, has also been noted by An Coimisinéir Teanga. An opportunity exists as the Bill is being brought before the Houses of the Oireachtas to take account of the commentary on the implementation of the Act issued by the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga and to give due regard to the recommendations made in that report.

Mr Ó Domhnaill also said "There is an opportunity with this new Bill to strengthen language rights for Irish speakers both inside and outside the Gaeltacht. I believe that the best way this can be done is by implementing the recommendations of the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga, which are based on 10 years of experience."

An Coimisinéir Teanga looks forward to discussing the proposed legislation with the Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht.

(Ends)

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This is the English language version of the Review of the Official Languages Act published by the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga.

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