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English Version Below

Ráiteas ó Iar-Uachtaráin Chomhdháil Náisiúnta na Gaeilge ar an tSamhail Nua Mhaoinithe atá beartaithe ag Foras na Gaeilge

Is mian linne, mar Iar-Uachtaráin ar Chomhdháil Náisiúnta na Gaeilge, a bhfuil 24 balleagraíochtaí inti, an ráiteas seo a dhéanamh ag uain atá chomh cinniúnach d'earnáil dheonach na Gaeilge.

Na fíricí

1. Is cuid fhíorthábhachtach den pholaitíocht dhaonlathach nua-aimseartha í earnáil phobail dheonach bheoga, agus aithnítear seo timpeall na cruinne. I stáit dhaonlathacha éiritheacha, is minic a thugtar cúnamh seachtrach chun rannpháirtíocht sa stát a chinntiú ón tsochaí shibhialta eagraithe, ar nós an chúnaimh a thug an tAontas Eorpach do thíortha iarchumannacha in Oirthear na hEorpa.
2. Tá Gluaiseacht Dheonach na Gaeilge, agus na heagrais a bhaineann léi, nasctha ar bhealach domhain le bunú an Stáit agus leis an bhforbairt a tháinig ina dhiaidh sin ar pholasaithe teanga na tíre ceannasaí. Ní hamháin go raibh na polasaithe seo ceannródaíoch ag an am, ach cuireadh i bhfeidhm iad le linn blianta deacra geilleagracha. Faoi theidil éagsúla, chabhraigh Earnáil Dheonach na Gaeilge leis an Stát chun gnéithe pobalbhunaithe na bpolasaithe sin a chur i bhfeidhm, agus ina ról, atá uathúil don earnáil dheonach, chun ionadaíocht a dhéanamh thar ceann lucht labhartha na Gaeilge agus a mianta siúd a chur faoi bhráid an Stáit. Tá ról níos leithne ag earnáil dheonach na Gaeilge sa tsochaí Éireannach ná mar a léirítear sa téarma "tríú hearnáil". Go deimhin, nuair a bunaíodh an áisíneacht stáit, nó quango, Foras na Gaeilge, d'fhonn athchothromú a dhéanamh ar ionad na Gaeilge i dTuaisceart Éireann, aistríodh chuig an áisíneacht nua tríd Acht a bunaithe 1999, ó Roinn an Aire a bhí freagrach astu go dtí sin, na feidhmeanna maoinithe i leith ocht gcinn d'eagraíochtaí deonacha, thuaidh agus theas.

3. *Is mór idir inné agus inniu*, a deir an seanfhocal. Is dócha go bhfuil an Stát sa droch-chaoi chéanna anois is a bhí nuair a tionscnaíodh polasaithe teanga ar dtús tar éis a bhunaithe. Aithníonn an earnáil dheonach státmhaoinithe é seo, agus tá sí sásta freagairt de réir mar a theastaíonn, ach is gá gur trí phróiseas aontaithe rannpháirteach a dhéanfar seo, agus é sin go sonrach sna réimsí polasaithe sin nach ndéanfaidh dochar aimhleasach d'fhorbairt nó do chur chun cinn na Gaeilge ó thuaidh agus ó dheas sa todhchaí. Is gá go mbainfí úsáid as critéir chuí, nuair atá 'luach ar airgead' á mheas sna réimsí sóisialta, cultúrtha agus intleachtacha.

4. Is uirlis athraithe thútach atá i bhfreagra na háisíneachta maoinithe, Foras na Gaeilge, agus athrú aontaobhach á bheartú ó bhunmhaoiniú go maoiniú gearrthréimhseach iomaíoch oscailte bunaithe ar thionscadail –
is athrú é seo le himpleachtaí fadtéarmacha a fhágfaidh drochbhail ar an nGaeilge ó thuaidh agus ó dheas.

5. Is léir go raibh freagra na Comhairle Aireachta Thuaidh Theas do mholadh an Fhorais tugtha i bhfolús eolais, toisc nár tugadh deis dóibh siúd is mó a bheidh thíos leis na hathruithe molta seo léiriú ar na himpleachtaí a chur faoi bhráid na Comhairle, bíodh an léiriú sin ó na heagrais bhunmhaoinithe nó uathu siúd a bhaineann leas as saothar na n-eagras.

6. Má tá rath le bheith ar an Straitéis 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge nó leis an gcur chuige nua i dTuaisceart Éireann, is sa phobal, tríd an bpobal, agus le taithí an phobail a bhainfear seo amach.

7. Bíodh seo déanta d'aon turas nó ná bíodh, is iad iarmhairtí loma na samhla nua maoinithe atá molta ag Foras na Gaeilge ná go mbeidh eagraíochtaí deonacha fadbhunaithe dhícheallacha ligthe i léig.

8. Mar IarUachtaráin ar eagraíocht abhcóideachta ionadaíoch a bunaíodh i 1943, airímid go gcaithfeadh go bhfuil réiteach níos fearr ar an scéal seo ná mar atá á mholadh ag Foras na Gaeilge. Teastaíonn seirbhísí leanúnacha chomh maith le tionscnaimh nua ón nGaeilge agus ó phobail labhartha na teanga, agus tá sé seo tuillte acu. Cuirimid na moltaí a leanas chun cinn, moltaí maoinithe agus moltaí struchtúrtha, i dtreo réiteach a fháil a bheidh inghlactha ag cách.

9. Beidh buiséad de dhíth chun tabhairt faoi na scéimeanna ócáidiúla atá á moladh. B'fhéidir an buiséad sin a roinnt ar bhealaí eile.

9.1 Bealach 1: Blocbhuiséad áirithe trí bliana a ainmniú do shaothar na n-eagraíochtaí sa phobal agus Comhchoiste a bhunú ar a mbeadh ionadaithe tofa ag na heagraíochtaí agus ionadaithe ainmnithe ag Foras na Gaeilge d'fhonn an bhuiséad sin a riaradh de réir coinníollacha dochta. Shaorfadh Bealach 1 foireann an Fhorais chun obair eile ar son na Gaeilge a bheith ar siúl acu.

9.2 Bealach 2: I dteannta an bhlocbhuiséid sin, buiséad ar leith a bheith á riaradh ag Foras na Gaeilge féin ar chóras scéimeanna ar bhonn iomaíoch mar atá á dhéanamh acu le scéimeanna eile.

10. Mar chríoch, ní fiúntach comhairliúchán poiblí mar atá beartaithe a thionscnamh ar ábhar chomh tromchúiseach mura bhfuiltear sásta bealaí eile a iniúchadh chomh maith, an status quo ina measc, ar bhonn an daonlathais ar a laghad.

Is é ár moladh struchtúrtha mar sin, ná Grúpa ionadaíoch a bhunú, faoi Chathaoirleacht neamhspleách, chun féidearthachtaí a phlé ionas go dtiocfar ar réiteach comhaontaithe, atá bunaithe ar na fíricí go léir atá ar fáil, le cur faoi bhráid na Comhairle Aireachta Thuaidh Theas.

Is sinne le meas,
Helen Ó Murchú (1995 – 1998) (2010 – 2011)
P.T. Mac Ruairí (2004 – 2010)
Caitríona Ní Cheallaigh (2001 – 2004)
Pádraig Mac Donncha (1998 – 2001)
Liam Mac Mathúna (1992 – 1995)
Pádraig Ó Ceithearnaigh (1987 – 1992)

*** *** CRIOCH *** ***

Nóta don Eagarthóir:

Is í Comhdháil Náisiúnta na Gaeilge lárchomhairle ar phobail na Gaeilge. Tá sé mar aidhm aici bá agus tacaíocht don Ghaeilge mar bheotheanga agus cumas inti a neartú agus a bhuanú, le go mbeidh sí á húsáid go saoráideach agus go forleathan i ngach gné de shaol mhuintir na hÉireann.Tá gach eolas faoi Chomhdháil Náisiúnta na Gaeilge ar fáil ag www.gaelport.com.

Samhail Nua Mhaoinithe: I mí Bealtaine 2010, d'fhógair Foras na Gaeilge Samhail Nua Mhaoinithe. Punann scéimeanna atá i gceist leis an tsamhail seo áit a mbeadh iarratasóirí á maoiniú, chun tionscadail gearrthéarmacha a chur i gcrích seachas an tsamhail reatha de bhunmhaoiniú eagraíochtúil.

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Statement from recent past Presidents of Comhdháil Náisiúnta na Gaeilge on the New Funding Model Proposed by Foras na Gaeilge

We, former Presidents of Comhdháil Náisiúnta na Gaeilge, which represents 24 member organisations, wish to make the following statement at this critical time for the Irish Language Voluntary Sector.

The facts

1. A vibrant community voluntary sector is an integral part of modern democratic politics and is recognised as such across the world. In emerging democracies, external assistance is often provided to ensure participation in the state by organised civil society, as was provided by the EU in the case of former communist states in Eastern Europe.
2. However, the Irish Language Voluntary Movement and associated organisations are intricately bound up with the gestation and birth of a free Ireland and the subsequent development of our sovereign state's language policies. These policies were not alone pioneering in their time but undertaken at a time of straitened economic circumstances. Under its differing facets, the Irish Language Voluntary sector has served the State well in the implementation of the community aspects of those policies as well as in its role, unique to the voluntary sector, of representing the wishes of Irish-speaking citizens to the State. Its place in Irish society is much more than is conveyed by the epithet 'third sector'. Indeed, when the new political agency or quango, Foras na Gaeilge, was set up with the

intention of rebalancing the position of the Irish language in Northern Ireland, the funding functions of the responsible Minister in respect of 8 voluntary organisations, north and south, were transferred by the 1999 Act to the new agency.

3. As the proverb states, *Is mór idir inné agus inniu* (a lot has changed between then and now). The State is now probably in as poor a position as when establishing policies for the Irish language at its inception. The voluntary State-aided sector understands this and is willing to make any appropriate responses required but only through an agreed participative process and only in those policy areas which will not ultimately prove detrimental to the future development of the language north and south. Social, cultural and intellectual activities require appropriate criteria in deciding what is 'value for money'.
4. The response of the funding agency, Foras na Gaeilge, in unilaterally moving from core funding to open competitive short-term project funding is a crude instrument of change which will have long-term invidious consequences for the Irish language north and south.
5. The response of the North South Ministerial Council to this advice tendered by Foras na Gaeilge must, of necessity, have been founded on incomplete information since the Council received no representations from those most affected by the proposed change, whether as funded organisations or as beneficiaries of the work of those organisations.
6. If the 20-Year Strategy for Irish and the new approaches in NI are to succeed, it is in and through the community and the experience of community organisations that that will happen.
7. Whether intended or unintended, the real consequences of the new funding model proposed by Foras na Gaeilge is the demise of long-founded and hard-working voluntary organisations.
8. As past Presidents of a representative advocacy and service body founded in 1943, we feel there must be more solutions than that proposed by Foras na Gaeilge. The Irish language and its communities of speakers need, and deserve, both continuing service and new initiatives. We make the

following suggestions, both funding and structural, towards a solution acceptable to all.

9. A budget will be required to undertake the occasional schemes proposed. Such a budget could be divided in a number of ways.

9.1 Method 1: Ringfence a specific three year block budget for the work of the organisations in the community, and establish a Joint Committee consisting of representatives elected by the organisations and representatives elected by Foras na Gaeilge, to administer the Budget under strict conditions. Method 1 would allow Foras na Gaeilge staff the opportunity to work in other areas of Irish language promotion.

9.2 Method 2: In conjunction with the block budget above, a separate budget to be administered by Foras na Gaeilge on a competitive schemes basis, such as those already administered by the organisation.

10. In conclusion, it is pointless to initiate a public consultation process as proposed on such an important matter if it is not intended to investigate alternatives, including the *status quo*, and allow a democratic outcome.

Our structural proposal then is the establishment of an ad hoc representative group, having an independent chair, to discuss possibilities and reach an agreed solution, based on all the available facts, to put before the North South Ministerial Council.

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*** *** ENDS *** ***

Note to the Editor: Comhdháil Náisiúnta na Gaeilge is the central steering council for the Irish language community. Its mission is to strengthen and consolidate goodwill and support for the Irish language and its usage as a living language so that it may be used freely and widely in all aspects of Irish life. Further information about Comhdháil Náisiúnta na Gaeilge is available at www.gaelport.com.

New Funding Model: In May 2010, Foras na Gaeilge announced a New Funding Model, consisting of a portfolio of short-term schemes. Under the new model, applicants would be funded to undertake short-term projects only on a contract basis, rather than the current model of organisational core-funding.

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