



## **Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-Used Languages, British-Irish Council**

**Ministerial Meeting, Gaoth Dobhair, Ireland, 11 November 2011**

### **Joint Communiqué**

The British-Irish Council, established under the Agreement reached in Belfast on Good Friday 1998, held a Ministerial meeting today in the Gweedore Court Hotel, Gaoth Dobhair, Ireland. This is the second Ministerial meeting held by the Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-Used Languages Group. The meeting was chaired by Leighton Andrews AM, the Welsh Government's Minister for Education and Skills.

The Irish Government was represented by the Minister for State for Gaeltacht Affairs, Dinny McGinley TD, who welcomed the delegates to the meeting. The Scottish Government was represented by Minister for Education and Skills, Alasdair Allan MSP. Northern Ireland were represented by Carál Ní Chuilín MLA, Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure and Junior Minister Jonathan Bell MLA. Guernsey was represented by Deputy Michael O' Hara, Minister, Culture and Leisure Department, Jersey by Mario Lundy, Director of Education, and the Isle of Man by Minister for Education and Children, Peter Karran MHK. The UK Government was represented by Hugo Swire MP, Minister of State for Northern Ireland.

A full list of delegates is attached.

The Welsh Government, represented by the Welsh Language Board, takes the lead within the BIC with regard to Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-Used languages issues. As well as English, a range of different languages indigenous to BIC Member Administrations were spoken during the meeting.

The meeting considered and endorsed 2 papers:

- Promoting Language and Culture within Minority Language Communities;
- Update on activities and suggestions for a forward work programme.

Promoting the use of indigenous and minority languages (IMLs) within communities was recognised as a vital part of promoting them and safeguarding their future. Ministers endorsed the findings of the conference held in Belfast in October 2010 that considered and shared good practice in the field of promoting language and culture within minority language communities. That conference was attended by practitioners and policy makers from all BIC Member Administrations. Ministers agreed that projects to support the use of IMLs by young people, within families, and within the wider community should be supported by Governments. Ministers also noted the importance of adopting a Government led strategies to promote the use of IMLs, and agreed to share best practice within BIC when developing such strategies.

Ministers commended the organisation of a seminar for practitioners working in the field of promoting the use of IMLs amongst young people. The seminar, which preceded this Ministerial meeting, offered an opportunity for Administrations to share best practice in the field, and further develop their own strategies in this important aspect of language planning. In response to a recommendation from the 2009 Jersey summit, the seminar was arranged in partnership with the Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity (NPLD). The NPLD is a pan-European network which encompasses constitutional, regional and smaller-state languages to promote linguistic diversity in the context of a multilingual Europe. Ministers welcomed the opportunity for practitioners from BIC Member Administrations to share experiences with European partners through the involvement of the NPLD.

The Ministers reviewed the work achieved by the Group since the last Ministerial meeting in 2006, and noted its positive contribution in ensuring that best practice is shared amongst Member Administrations. Ministers then considered and approved proposals for the future work programme of the Indigenous, Minority and Lesser Used Languages Group. The Group will continue with its work in the areas of education, young people, broadcasting, and the economic impact of IMLs. It was agreed that the Group should revisit the fields of legislation in the context of IMLs. The Group will also focus on two new areas, namely marketing, and ICT (social networking in particular). Ministers tasked the Group with identifying further synergies with the NPLD to gain maximum leverage from public resources in this area, and asked the Group to evaluate the work undertaken since 2006, and consider how the outcomes can be disseminated to stakeholders.

**British-Irish Council (Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-used Languages Sectoral Group)**

**11 November 2011**

BRITISH IRISH COUNCIL (INDIGENOUS, MINORITY AND LESSER-USED  
LANGUAGES SECTORAL GROUP)

List of Delegates

Friday 11 November 2011

<u>Irish Government</u>	
Minister for State for Gaeltacht Affairs	Dinny McGinley TD
<u>Welsh Government</u>	
Minister for Education and Skills	Leighton Andrews AM
<u>Scottish Government</u>	
Minister for Education and Skills	Alasdair Allan MSP
<u>Government of the Isle of Man</u>	
Minister for Education and Children	Peter Karran MHK
<u>Jersey</u>	
Director of Education	Mario Lundy
<u>Guernsey</u>	
Minister, Culture and Leisure Department	Deputy Michael O' Hara
<u>UK</u>	
Minister of State for Northern Ireland	Hugo Swire MP
<u>Northern Ireland</u>	
Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure	Carál Ní Chuilín MLA
Junior Minister	Jonathan Bell MLA
<u>Isle Of Man</u>	
Minister for Education and Children	Peter Karran MHK