

Press Release. Annual Report. An Coimisinéir Teanga 2019

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- *Provision of the Planning and Development Act investigated for the first time*
 - *Significant increase in the number of complaints received by An Coimisinéir Teanga*
 - *Increase in amount of Irish language programming committed to by RTÉ*
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Kerry County Council breached the planning law by not implementing a language condition attached to planning permission for a housing development in the West Kerry Gaeltacht, according to an investigation carried out by An Coimisinéir Teanga.

The Language Commissioner described the investigation as “an important one” due to the possible impact an increase in non-Irish speakers could have on “the future of Irish as a community language in the Gaeltacht.”

“There is a language crisis in the Gaeltacht as is and if the law to protect the Irish language in the Gaeltacht isn’t adhered to then it is clear the situation will deteriorate,” An Coimisinéir Teanga added.

This is the first time an investigation was carried out on a provision of the Planning & Development Act 2000. Information on the investigation is included in the Annual Report of An Coimisinéir Teanga, which is published today.

The report shows a significant increase (11%) in the number of complaints received by the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga last year. An Coimisinéir Teanga said that the increase highlights the continuing difficulties people experience accessing public services in Irish.

The majority of complaints related to signage and stationery, replies in English to correspondence in Irish, road signs and difficulty in using names and surnames in Irish.

The annual report also provides an update on how RTÉ has responded to findings by An Coimisinéir Teanga that the organisation breached the broadcasting law regarding its Irish language obligations by broadcasting 99% of its programmes on television in English only.

The Language Commissioner welcomed RTÉ’s commitment to significantly increase the amount of programming in Irish broadcast on television this year, but he said that more is needed to ensure the broadcaster fully complies with its language obligations under the Act.

The Language Commissioner also stressed the need for an amended Official Languages Act in his report. He said that an amended Bill, published late last year, doesn’t adequately address the lack of State services available through Irish. He also highlighted the lack of a deadline in the Bill relating to the number of Irish speakers that it says will be recruited to the public service.

Further Information:

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