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**1. In your opinion, are these obligations adequate, are they excessive or do they need to be amended?**

This obligation is adequate as regards OLA Sections 9.2 and 9.3

**2.**

**Publications under section 10 of the Act**

Current obligations under the Act:

- To publish certain documents simultaneously in Irish and in English (e.g. annual reports, audited accounts, public policy proposals, strategy statements etc.)

**2. In your opinion, are these obligations adequate, are they excessive or do they need to be amended?**

There should be greater flexibility around the requirement for simultaneous publication of Acts, Statutory Instruments, and Regulations in Irish and English. This requirement can lead to delays in the publication of what may often be emergency legislation that ends up unavailable for some time while awaiting translation. It is recommended that at least a reasonable de minimis delay be built into the operation of Section 10 for translation from Irish to English or English to Irish to cater for publication of emergency legislation. The determination of what constitutes emergency must rest with the owner of the legislation.

**3.**

**Signage, stationery & recorded oral announcements under Regulations of the Act (S.I. No. 391 of 2008)**

Current obligations under the Act:

- To comply with the Regulations in regard to the use of Irish and English on signs, stationery and in recorded oral announcements.

**3. In your opinion, are these obligations adequate, are they excessive or do they need to be amended?**

This obligation is adequate as regards OLA S.I. No. 391 of 2008

**4. Language Schemes under the Act**

The language schemes form the core of the Language Act. The language schemes set out the system through which public bodies develop their services in Irish over a period of time. It is through the language schemes that the use of Irish is dealt with on websites, leaflets, brochures, forms, through telephone services, through other interpersonal services, through online services etc. \*

**4.(a) In your opinion, is the system of language schemes satisfactory, excessive or does it need to be amended?**

The operation of the language schemes under the Act is adequate.

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**4.(b) Would you recommend an alternative system which would be more efficient and more effective?**

No.

**5. Services from public bodies in the Gaeltacht**

In order for the State to support the status and use of Irish in the Gaeltacht, it is vital that Gaeltacht communities can carry out their official business with the State through Irish.

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**5.(a) Are you satisfied with the services being provided by public bodies in Irish in the Gaeltacht?**

Services provided by Revenue meet the commitments of the statutory framework .

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**5.(b) Would you recommend any amendments that would enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of public bodies in this area?**

No.

**6. Other provisions of the Act**

Other provisions of the Act ratify rights with regard to the use of Irish in the Oireachtas, in the courts and in the State's placenames system.

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**6. In your opinion, are these provisions adequate, are they excessive or do they need to be amended?**

These provisions are adequate.



## **7. Public bodies under the Act**

The Act requires public bodies, which are listed under the Act, to provide services through Irish. The full list of public bodies featured under the Act can be found at [www.ahg.gov.ie](http://www.ahg.gov.ie).

The following public bodies are listed under the Act – Government Departments and offices, local authorities, universities, other third-level institutions, vocational education committees, An Garda Síochána, the Courts Service, the Revenue Commissioners, the Health Service Executive, other State agencies, boards & companies.

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## **7. In your opinion, is this list of public bodies under the Act appropriate or is an amendment necessary in this area?**

The list of public bodies under the Act appears to be comprehensive.

## **8. The Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga**

The Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga was established under the Act. The main role of the Office is to monitor the implementation of the Act.

## **8. In your opinion, are the powers and functions of that Office adequate or excessive and do they need to be amended?**

The general thrust of the legislation in relation to the Office is that of enforcement. The Office may carry out an investigation and make findings, which the public body may only appeal on a point of law to the High Court.

Section 29 of the Act provides that the Coimisinéir may publish commentaries in relation to investigations and findings following investigations:

It is recommended that the OLA legislation include a provision that the Coimisinéir '**shall**' rather than '**may**' afford the public body the right of rebuttal regarding the facts, findings, recommendations and commentary in advance of any published commentary.

## **In General\***

## **9. Are there other amendments to the Act that you would recommend in order to ensure that the legislation is suitable and appropriate to its function?**

No

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**10. What services through Irish do you personally require from public bodies or what services do you think should be given priority?**

N/A

**11. What do you think are the obstacles or difficulties associated with providing the same standard of services in Irish by public bodies?**

**The main difficulties are:**

- Securing enough staff with the proficiency in business Irish to provide a comparable service to the service provided in English.
- Maintaining staff proficiency given the relatively low level of demand for service in Irish.
- Inflexibility of schemes to meet changes in the business environment. If we are to continue with the system of Language Schemes, there needs to be provision whereby commitments for the delivery of services which were made in good faith by public bodies but are subsequently found to be unrealistic/undeliverable can be deferred or dropped from the Scheme.
- The cost of providing simultaneous bilingual services may result in a decreased level of service.
- There was very little done to promote the use of Irish for official purposes through fostering the good will and cooperation of departments. The existing strategy is largely enforcement focussed. Enforcement has its place, however, it is important that enforcement is not the primary and only strategy used to achieve the objective of the Act - that is to promote the use of Irish for official purposes in the state.

**12. What amendments would you recommend to the Act in order to develop State services through Irish in an efficient and cost-effective manner?**

Establishment of a centralised translation service where practicable and based on a cost benefit analysis.