English version below

Tugann an tArd Aighne TÉ óráid ag ócáid POBAL 'Úsáid an Gaeilge sna cúirteanna TÉ'

Thug an tArd Aighne TÉ, John Larkin, óráid ag ócáid de chuid POBAL, eagras abhcóideachta na Gaeilge, in Óstán Europa, Béal Feirste Dé hAoine 3ú Nollaig. Dúirt Janet Muller, Príomhfheidhmeannach POBAL, '*Seo an chéad uair a thug an tArd Aighne óráid ag ócáid Ghaeilge. Tá ról tábhachtach ag an Ard Aighne, mar go gcuireann sé comhairle don Fheidhmeannas ar réimse ábhar a bhaineann le reachtaíocht; na dualgais atá orthu faoi chonartha idirnáisiúnta san áireamh. Tá muid sásta gur ghlac sé le cuireadh uainn labhairt le pobal na Gaeilge ag an ócáid seo ar úsáid na Gaeilge sna cúirteanna i dTÉ*.' Chomh maith leis an Ard-Aighne, labhair Mike Ritchie, Stiúrthóir Committee on the Administration of Justice, dlíodóir Micheál Ó Flannagáin agus Daniel Holder ar son Phríomhchoimisinéir an Coimisiún um Chearta an Duine TÉ ag an ócáid.

Labhair John Larkin ar stair Acht 1737 agus ar chásanna cúirte POBAL ar an ábhar. Dúirt sé i dtaca le húsáid na Gaeilge sna cúirteanna, *'What i want to suggest today is that those who wish to use the courts in Irish language proceedings do not do so as a matter which sounds on the fairness or otherwise of those proceedings, but simply by virtue of who they are as human beings with a distinct linguistic culture and history and who wish to give expression to that culture and history in the private and public arenas'.*

An mhí seo caite, bhuail POBAL leis an Ard Aighne. Pléadh gealltanais a d'éirigh as Comhaontú Cill Rímhinn maidir leis an Ghaeilge, feidhmiú leanúnach Acht 1737 um Riar na Córa agus torthaí na Saineolaithe ar Chairt na hEorpa do Theangacha Réigiúnacha nó Mionlaigh.

Faoi láthair, cuireann Acht 1737 bac ar úsáid na Gaeilge sna cúirteanna. I dtuairisc a foilsíodh i mí Aibreán 2010, dúirt Coiste na Saineolaithe ar Chairt na hEorpa go bhfuil Acht 1737 ina '*phíosa reachtaíochta a chuireann cosc gníomhach ar an teanga i réimse tábhachtach an tsaoil agus a théann salach ar spiorad agus ar aidhmeanna na Cairte*.' Chomh maith, dúirt na Saineolaithe go bhfuil an tAcht ina '*constaic neamhdhlisteanach maidir le húsáid na Gaeilge, a chuireann forbairt na teanga i mbaol*.'

Tá POBAL i dtús cadhnaíochta maidir le stádas na Gaeilge a fheabhsú agus ar na mallaibh, scríobh an t-eagras chuig David Cameron agus Nick Clegg, chuig an Stát rúnaí Owen Patterson agus chuig Aire Dlí agus Cirt David Ford maidir leis seo. Dúirt Janet Muller, '*Tá an feachtas ar son chearta na nGael ar ceann do na heochair cheisteanna sa sochaí seo*.'

NI Attorney General addresses POBAL event
'Use of Irish in the NI Courts'

The NI Attorney General, John Larkin, spoke at an event on the **'Use of Irish in the NI Courts'** organised by the Irish language advocacy group, POBAL, in the Europa Hotel, Belfast on Friday, December 3. POBAL CEO Janet Muller said, *'This is the first time that the Attorney General has given a speech at an Irish event. A key role of the Attorney General is to advise the Assembly on a range of topics relating to legislation, as well as their responsibilities under international contracts'*. We are pleased that he accepted an invitation from us to speak with the Irish community at this event on the use of Irish in courts in the north. Speaking at the event also were Mike Ritchie, Director Committee on the Administration of Justice, lawyer Michael Ó Flannagáin and Daniel Holder on behalf of the Human Rights Commission.

John Larkin spoke on the history of the 1737 Act and about POBAL's court cases regarding it. On the matter of the use of Irish in the courts he said, *'What i want to suggest today is that those who wish to use the courts in Irish language proceedings do not do so as a matter which sounds on the fairness or otherwise of those proceedings, but simply by virtue of who they are as human beings with a distinct linguistic culture and history and who wish to give expression to that culture and history in the private and public arenas'*.

Last month, POBAL met with the Attorney General. On the agenda were the commitments arising from the St Andrews Agreement in respect of the Irish language, the continuous operation of Act 1737 for the Administration of Justice and report by the Experts on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

Currently, the 1737 Act precludes the use of Irish in the courts. In a report published in April 2010 the Committee of Experts on the European Charter said of the 1737 Act, *'a peice of legislation actively prohibiting the use of the language from an important field of one of the Articles under Part III is, in the view of the Committee of Experts, contrary to the spirit and objectives of the Charter '*. Also, the experts said that *'the 1737 Act is an unjustified restriction relating to the use of Irish, endangering the development of language'*.

POBAL is at the forefront of improving the status of Irish and recently the organisation wrote to David Cameron and Nick Clegg, to the State Secretary and Minister for Justice Owen Patterson and to the Justice Minister David Ford on the matter. Janet Muller said, *'The campaign for Irish language rights on one of the key issues in this society'*.