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EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

COMMENT – INFORMATION

**Submitted to the Committee of Experts
in accordance with paragraph 2 of Article 16 of the Charter**

UNITED KINGDOM

Comment submitted by Kowethas an Yeth Kernewek

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with paragraph 2 of Article 16 of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, legally established bodies and associations may submit comments/information for the attention of the Committee of Experts for the Charter. The purpose of these comments is to draw the Committee's attention to matters relating to the undertakings entered into by that Party under Part III of the Charter, or concerning state policy pursued by a Party in accordance with Part II of the Charter.

After consultation with the party concerned, the Committee may take into consideration the content of this information in their report to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

This comment was submitted by Kowethas an Yeth Kernewek, UK. The Committee is invited to examine the enclosed comment.

Kernewek – Cornish

[Compiled on behalf of Kowethas an Yeth Kernewek by D.A. Hicks & Jane Ninnis]

This document comprises the response of Kowethas an Yeth Kernewek to the UK Initial Report to the Committee of Experts, ECRML 'Comex' as part of the process of the UK's fulfilment of its obligations under the ECRML. This submission by Kowethas an Yeth Kernewek is made pursuant to Article 16, paragraph 2 of the Charter. We note that for the purposes of Article 16, paragraph 2, Kowethas an Yeth Kernewek is a body or association legally established in the UK.

The following are our comments on the implementation of the Charter. They follow the structure of the Charter, as Cornish was not mentioned on the original UK Initial Report. An Informal Report on Cornish was received from the Council of Europe (18th December 2002) after this document was drafted. However, our comments on this informal report are contained in the Addenda.

On the 5th November 2002 the UK Government issued a press release stating that Cornish was to be included at the Part II level on the ECRML. In answer to a written Parliamentary Question from Cornish MP Andrew George, Nick Raynsford, the Minister for Local Government and the Regions, said:

‘After careful consideration and with the help of the results of an independent academic study on the language commissioned by the Government, we have decided to recognise Cornish as falling under Part II of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The Government will be registering this decision with the Council of Europe. The purpose of the Charter is to protect and promote the historical regional or minority languages of Europe. It recognises that some of these languages are in danger of extinction and that protection and encouragement of them contributes to Europe's cultural diversity and historical traditions.

This is a positive step in acknowledging the symbolic importance the language has for Cornish identity and heritage. Cornish will join Welsh, Scottish Gaelic, Irish, Scots and Ulster Scots as protected and promoted languages under the Charter, which commits the Government to recognise and respect those languages.

Officials will be initiating discussion with Cornwall County Council and Cornish language organisations in Cornwall to ensure the views of Cornish speakers and people wanting to learn Cornish are taken into account in implementing Part II of the Charter.’

Kernow / Cornwall Statistics

Population	501,000
Capital	Truru / Truro
State	UK

Glossary

ECRML	European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages
Comex	Committee of Experts, ECRML, Council of Europe
CLR	Cornish Language Report (2000) MacKinnon K.
FCPNM	Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
RDA	(UK) Regional Development Agency
CRE	Campaign for Racial Equality
CCC	Cornwall County Council but Kowethas an Yeth Kernewek prefer to use the Kernewek ‘Konsel Kernow’ for this organisation.

Prefatory notes

Cornwall should be seen as a region in its own right, as reflected by its own language, culture & customs. There is currently a campaign for Cornwall to gain her own Assembly.

Outline of Cornish NGOs

There are various NGOs concerned with different aspects of Kernewek. It is presumed that each will send in their own report, outlining their work. The following are those that are known to the Kowethas an Yeth Kernewek:

Agan Tavas

An organisation that provides support to users of Unified Cornish through publications & social events.

Buro rag Yethow Nebes Kowsys

This is the Cornish branch of the UK Bureau for lesser-used languages. It consists of representatives from the groups mentioned here, Cornish cultural groups & local governmental organisations.

Contact: Jori Ansell, 65 Churchtown, Gwinear, Hayle, Kernow TR27 5JL
e-mail: jori-ansell@talk21.com

Cossell an Tavaz Cornoack

This organisation supports users of Late Cornish through its own publications & classes.

Kesva An Taves Kernewek (The Cornish Language Board)

The Kesva provides academic support to users of Common Cornish (Kernewek Kemmyn) & Unified Cornish. The Kesva works through 5 committees: education; examinations; grammar and vocabulary; media & publications.

Contact: Maureen Pierce, 16 Trelawney Road, Callington, Kernow PL17 7EE
e-mail: mpierce@caresawgrym.freemove.co.uk

Kowethas An Yeth Kernewek (The Cornish Language Fellowship)

The Kowethas promotes the use of Kernewek Kemmyn by establishing links between the community of Cornish speakers through its monthly all-Cornish magazine 'An Gannas'. It publishes a wide range of books & has its own website (www.cornish-language.org). It organises an annual Pennseythun Gernewek (Cornish Language Weekend) for speakers to congregate and improve their Kernewek. It is a registered charity & incorporates the former children's group Dalleth.

Contact: Jane Ninnis, Fentenwynn, Grampound Road, Truro, Kernow TR2 4DR
e-mail: fentenwynn@hotmail.com

Governmental Organisations and Administrative Structure

Duchy of Cornwall

This is a largely symbolic organisation pertaining to the estates held by the Duke of Cornwall but it does refer to Cornwall's official status in relation to the UK as a Duchy (much as Wales is referred to as a Principality¹). Under the Duchy, the Duke of Cornwall (also Prince of Wales) is head of state. The Stannary Parliament was set up by the Duchy Charters in 1337 & reported to the Duchy for Cornish governance up until the early 19th century. The Duchy and the Stannary Parliament still have officers performing a ceremonial role at Westminster.

Konsel Kernow

The Council is responsible for many of the domains covered in the ECRML e.g. education. This is a crucial domain for Cornish development so this body would be the ideal partner for NGOs to oversee ECRML implementation. Konsel Kernow makes small annual grants to projects involved with Kernewek. The UK state terms the Council as a 'County' Council; it operates at the same level as the county councils of England (e.g. Devon, Somerset etc). Konsel Kernow is a democratic organisation with elections held every 5 years.

District Councils

The district councils operate at the tier beneath Konsel Kernow. They are Caradon, Carrick, Kerrier, North Cornwall, Penwith, Restormel & Isles of Scilly. In terms of Kernewek, the district councils are responsible for approving street names & individual organisations can approach them for small grants.

Parish and Town Councils

These are the next tier down & cover much smaller geographical areas. They would be the ideal partners with regard to bilingual signage at a more local level.

1:1 Background

Cornish or *Kernewek* is one of the P-Celtic languages, which derived from Brittonic, originally the indigenous language of most of Britain. However, after the Germanic-speaking Anglo-Saxon incursion of the 5th – 6th century, south-eastern Britain became English speaking. P-Celtic speakers (i.e. the Britons) held onto, and established kingdoms in what would become Wales in the west, Dumnonia in the south-west and Strathclyde / Cumbria in south-west Scotland / north-west England area. Dumnonia, after military attacks, was eventually assimilated into an emerging medieval English state leaving Cornwall for the south-west Britons. Meanwhile, other south-west Britons migrated to Armorica to establish Brittany, which has a shared language and heritage with the Cornish. Cultural and economic contacts with Brittany continued into the late 16th century. Although Cornwall came under the domination of Anglo-Norman kings, the Cornish language thrived in the Middle Ages. On maps Cornwall was marked as West Wales² and Cornish place-names began at the River Tamar, Cornwall's border with England which clearly delineated an earlier linguistic divide.

¹ Cf. Luxembourg itself a Duchy with a smaller population than Cornwall but 6 MEPs.

² Cornwall is the English word for Kernow. The English meaning refers to the land of the Cornish Welsh, *wal* in Old English meaning 'foreigner' cf. Walloon (NL), Wallis / Valais (CH).

Cornish went into decline after the Reformation such that by c.1800 it had ceased to be the normal community language, even in the west of Cornwall.

At the beginning of the 20th century Cornish was revived. By the 1960s and 70s, young families began to reintroduce inter-generational transmission. This revival has justifiably been commented upon as being remarkable. It has been done with very little support from the UK State. The movement has grown up from the grass roots, often with activists having three different jobs, e.g. running an NGO, teaching Kernewek and their normal salaried occupation. When, on November 5th 2002, the UK Government announced that Cornish was to be included at the Part II level, it signalled a breakthrough in relations between the Cornish community and the UK Government. Importantly, and to their credit, the UK also stated that they would be 'initiating discussion' on how to best develop the language.

- 1) This document will briefly outline the sociolinguistic situation and current Cornish linguistic situation.
- 2) The exclusion of Cornish from the UK Initial Report to the Comex will be commented on. Other international treaties that the non-inclusion of Cornish contravenes will also be discussed.
- 3) This document discusses how current Cornish provision satisfies Part II, and discusses provision according to Article 7 in the charter. Also, at the end of each section suggested improvements are made. In addition, there is discussion on domains that need to be targeted in order to increase the number of speakers and areas that are having a detrimental effect on development.
- 4) Strategies are discussed in order to move Cornish onto inclusion at Part 3.
- 5) The document concludes with a summary of recommendations from Kowethas an Yeth Kernewek.

It is the explicit aim of the Cornish movement to restore the language as a normal everyday community language within Cornwall. With appropriate development, language planning and in partnership with the British state (and possibly a future Cornish assembly), normalisation of the language will be achievable. In addition, the symbolic value and message of hope of future Cornish successes will be immense for threatened languages, not only in Europe, but world-wide.

Current sociolinguistic situation of Kernewek

The most recent report (2000), to which Comex is referred, is that conducted by Professor Ken MacKinnon.³ The British State sponsored this report in order to ascertain whether Cornish provision did fulfil the criteria for inclusion on the Charter at Part 2. The report states clearly that Cornish does.

For the purpose of this response, the 2000 Cornish Language Report (CLR henceforth), attached as a separate document, may be summarised briefly.

Cornish may be seen as in a diglossic situation i.e. where two languages are used within the community; one for official function (English) and one for informal and social functions (Cornish). However, even at this level, it is an achievement that Cornish has reversed the language shift enough to attain diglossia and, as Mackinnon has observed, has reached Stage 5 on Fishman's GIDS scale (see below).

³ See GOSW website (publications) for downloadable version

Number of speakers

It has been estimated that there are between 200-300 speakers who use it as their everyday normal language and some 3,000 speakers who have a knowledge of the language, perhaps as semi-speakers (see CLR Table 3:1). A useful estimate is also to count all those who have passed advanced level⁴ Cornish over the years but unfortunately we have no accurate figures. The British State census conducted in 2002 made no provision on the census form for a Cornish speaker to register themselves (unlike Gaelic, Welsh and Irish). Therefore, there will be no opportunity to establish the number of speakers⁵ for the next decade until 2011. It is suggested that this anomaly is rectified and that future UK census at least includes a tick box for Cornish. This would help further development and could be implemented at the Cornwall level only, if necessary.

After discussion with several focus groups MacKinnon placed Cornish at Fishman's GIDS Stage 5⁶: '...literacy in home, school and community, but without taking on extra-communal reinforcement of such literacy.' He states:

'This is where the language movement very largely stands today. The language is being used as a home language, children are taught to read and write as well as speak it. A developing Cornish-language press produces learning and resource materials for children. Without exception respondents did not distinguish between speaking, reading and writing abilities in Cornish. These were all felt to be pretty much the same, which is understandably the case since Cornish is predominantly acquired through classes, books and written materials. There has been some development of the language in school education ... Cornish is seen above as getting into community use in various ways - even beyond the network of speakers, and it is being institutionalised in Cornish life in entertainment, language events, public signage and official uses' (2000:3.3).

The committee is referred to the CLR for more detail on the current sociolinguistic situation.

The UK Initial Report to the Committee of Experts July 2002

Considering the recent inclusion of Cornish at Part II and the lack of infrastructure in the UK's dealing with Cornish, this NGO recognises the difficulty faced by the British State in including an assessment of Cornish in its initial report. However this NGO registers its surprise at not even being mentioned.⁷ The UK Initial Report illustrates the UK attitude towards Cornish:

- 1) The lack of even a mention (e.g. as a regional or minority language) indicated that the British State did not recognise Cornish as existing at all.
- 2) The institutional lack of recognition underlines the need for legislation for Cornish as has been received by Welsh. It also suggests that Cornish needs to have its own place within the UK government infrastructure. Welsh is represented in the Welsh Executive (Bwrdd Yr Iaith Gymraeg) and Gaelic in the Scottish Executive by the recently established Bòrd Gàidhlig na h-Alba. Clearly the British State has infrastructural problems to overcome in

⁴ The Cornish advanced level lies between the standard English/Welsh A level to degree level.

⁵ Breton faces a similar situation where the French State refuses to include questions about Breton on its census forms.

⁶ GIDS (Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale) refers to the system devised by Fishman (1991) to measure the progress or decline of a minoritised language. Its theoretical approach is based largely on examining usage of the language in various domains e.g. home, school, at work, and in the delivery of public services etc.

⁷ The relatively meagre UK document can be compared with the substantial and comprehensive initial report issued by Germany (November 2000).

order to properly implement the ECRML on behalf of Cornish. It remains unclear whether governmental responsibility lies with the Dept of Transport and the Regions, The Home Office or even the newly contrived 'south-west region'. The Welsh Office has also dealt with Cornish affairs, which may be preferable to any of the former departments. One of the main stumbling blocks for the State in its dealings with the Cornish language community has been its inability to decide which department should deal with Cornish. It is strongly recommended that the UK liaise directly with the Cornish Language Board and the EBLUL Cornish sub-committee, pending the possible establishment of an Assembly. This NGO strongly recommends that the UK establish a Cornish Language Board office as part of Konsel Kernow to work with the NGOs and provide the conduit between Europe, the UK State and Cornwall. An existing structure that may be envisaged is that of the relationship of the Welsh Language Board with the Welsh Assembly.

- 3) The non-inclusion of Cornish in the initial report is odd considering that the FCO issued a statement presented to Parliament in July 2000. It states:

'Cornish language organisations will be consulted for comments on the results of the independent factual study on Cornish prior to consideration in Government ... Cornwall County Council has also been consulted in respect of their policies on the Cornish language.⁸ The Government has not yet decided its position on Cornish in relation to the Charter'⁹

ECRML Article 1

Current provision and satisfying Article 1 of the ECRML

The British state in its implementation of the ECRML for Welsh, Irish, Gaelic (at Part III) Scots and Ulster Scots (at Part II) so far adopted a minimalist approach. It has meant that the UK's criteria for inclusion at a certain level only occurs when the language and language provision have already attained that level, with little or no state support. This approach is in marked contrast to that of the German State, which has signed up to the Charter in a much more positive fashion.¹⁰ Nevertheless the following outlines how Cornish satisfied the requirements for inclusion at Part II and states the case for future inclusion at Part III.

Article 1- Definitions

Cornish, the autochthonous language of Cornwall, clearly satisfies the definitions specified in Article 1. (a and b). These are that:

- i) Cornish is traditionally used in Cornwall by Cornish (British) nationals who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the State's population;
- ii) Cornish is different from the language of the State (English);
- iii) Cornish is not a dialect of English or the language of migrants;
- b) Cornwall is the territory in which the language is used.
- c) Cornish is not a non-territorial language; it is the language of the territory of Cornwall.

The UK report states clearly that: 'As criteria for the definition of a regional or minority language, the United Kingdom applies the definition given in Article 1 of the Charter'.

⁸ See below for the Konsel Kernow's Cornish policy.

⁹ See FCO website: Explanatory Memorandum for the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (01/07/00)

¹⁰ See Germany's Initial Periodical Report November 2000 available from the ECRML Secretariat, Council of Europe.

Article 2 – Undertakings

This paragraph is of note in that when the UK originally ratified the ECRML it gives the impression that Cornish is included by default as it is clearly a regional or minority language.

Article 6 – Information

We note that the UK government has had little time to put such information in place since Cornish was only included in November 2002.

However, the British government has yet to make known the rights and duties deriving from the application of the Charter to Cornish. Whilst the government has issued a press release on the British ratification of the Charter, this does not constitute the detailed information necessary to fully inform either public bodies or the general public of the rights and duties created by the Charter. One example of this lack of information is that the UK Informal Report was received by this NGO (on December 19th 2002) from the ECRML Secretariat and not the British Government itself.

Part II

Article 7

1. The preamble to Article 7 contains an important clause by stating that the Parties (i.e. the UK State and its agencies) shall base their policies, legislation and practice on the following objectives and principles.¹¹ Considering this clause (this NGO) would like to recommend that all current and future UK legislation, policies and practice which has any bearing on the future development of Cornish be reviewed and amended, if need be, to facilitate Cornish language development (e.g. the 1890 Education Act, and with policy the National Curriculum which has no space for Cornish). This review could be made to apply to Cornwall only, or a future Cornish Assembly could pass the necessary amendments. Alternatively, a Cornish Language Act could include in its clauses measures to be taken to annul any current legislation, policy and practice which prejudices Cornish language development.

1.a. Current Governmental Support

Governmental organisations have recognised Cornish as an expression of cultural wealth at many tiers. At the ‘County’ (i.e. the national level) Konsel Kernow has a policy supporting the language and in February 1999 passed a motion calling for it to be included on the Charter.

This policy states:

Cornwall County Council – Policy Statement on the Cornish Language

1. The Council recognises the distinctive nature of Cornwall and its responsibility to cherish and protect its special heritage.

¹¹ 'Policies and practice' is taken to include existing legislation where applicable to the Cornish language.

2. The Council sees the Cornish Language as a vital part of that heritage and welcomes the work that has been done by the Council and by other bodies and individuals towards promoting its revival. The Council will keep in mind the need to promote the Cornish language.
3. In its work as an education authority, the Council will endeavour to give the language proper attention in the teaching of local, social and language studies. Within the limits of its overall resources it will seek to provide funding for teaching the language and help individual schools to obtain the maximum benefit from their own spending. The Council will co-operate with institutions of higher education carrying out work on the language within the resources it has available.
4. The Council will remember the language's role in the arts; in relations with the European nations and with Cornish exiles. It will be mindful of the possible cultural benefits that may accrue from the language. This will include appropriate use in connection with tourism and publicity and in submissions to the Government and to the European Union where Cornwall's cultural distinctiveness re-enforces its claims to special consideration.
5. Although it recognises that responsibility for street naming is with other authorities, it will help within available resources with highway and other locational signing in two languages where desired.
6. As library and arts authority the Council will continue to provide appropriate material, including books and audio records for loan and for reference purposes. It will try to help with the publishing and preservation of such material.

Konsel Kernow has an Arts Officer who is a Cornish speaker and who undertakes a co-ordinating function for the Cornish language. She maintains an information source on Cornish language organisations. In addition, Councillor Pat Rowe, Vice-Chair of Konsel Kernow, recently welcomed the UK Committee of the Bureau to its meeting at Redruth and said it was time to review the amount of subvention given by the Council towards language development.

District Council level

This framework policy was circulated to all the District Councils seeking its joint adoption. This has been forthcoming from all of them: Caradon, Carrick, Kerrier, North Cornwall, Penwith, Restormel & Isles of Scilly. Carrick has adopted a proactive policy of bilingual signage.

Parish and Town Council level

Also an adapted policy has been sent to the *c.* 250 parish and town councils and of the 25 replies received to date, 21 parish councils have agreed to adopt the policy. With the inclusion of Cornish on the Charter it is expected that all councils will adopt the policy.

At the UK State level, it is difficult to determine what the policy is towards Cornish (or even if there is one). However, in response to Andrew George MP on discrimination against Cornish because of non-inclusion on the ECRML (and FCPNM), a Minister from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) J. Quin stated: 'We would be very concerned to hear of

any specific barriers preventing people from freely maintaining and expressing their culture and identity' (see House of Commons Hansard debate 23/2/1999 (pt 37)).¹²

b. Respect for the geographical area of Cornwall and how the existence of existing and new administrative divisions constitute an obstacle to the promotion of Cornish

The border of Cornwall with England was recognised as early as 936, when King Aethelstan of England expelled Britons from what remained of Eastern Dumnonia and the old capital *Keresk* (Exeter). This border has continued to the present day and, as mentioned above, is still marked by the River Tamar and a toponymic linguistic boundary. Cornwall was administered as a Duchy and this title exists today, much as Wales is still termed a 'Principality'. However, in 1890 the British state deemed it necessary to relegate Cornwall's status to that of 'county'. This constitutional arrangement rides rough shod over existing arrangements both for the Duchy, with the Duke of Cornwall as head of state¹³ and disenfranchised the Cornish people by effectively eliminating their Stannary Parliament without any prior consultation with the Cornish.

Currently there is a campaign in Cornwall for a Cornish Assembly¹⁴ and for the UK to respect Cornwall as a region in its own right in their plans for devolution. The desire for such an Assembly was recently reflected in a petition, signed by some 10% of the Cornish population (50,000). Such an assembly has antecedents in the past where Cornwall had a measure of autonomy until the nineteenth century with its Stannary Parliament and 44 MPs instead of today's 5. It is suggested that an appropriately empowered Cornish Language Board, working in partnership with Konsel Kernow and the Cornish District Councils would be able to implement much of the ECRML's Part II clauses. It would also benefit from the experience of those working for those Councils and the governmental structures they have established. An RDA officer interviewed by a Cornish academic tellingly revealed the attitude of those constructing the south-west region to Cornish (and European) view of Cornwall as a distinct region.

'It's a mute point I think as to whether a Cornish culture and identity is helping to foster a regional governance in the sense the RDA might wish it or whether it is actually fostering separate identity as many in Cornwall would wish ... The whole issue has been given a further twist with Objective 1 in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly where the EU recognises Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly as a separate region within Europe and that is in a sense in flat opposition to the RDA's position ... it doesn't particularly help this building of a regional identity from Cornwall up to Gloucestershire and across to Dorset, to have the European Union recognising Cornwall as a separate region.' (Deacon 2002)

It underlines the south west's attitude to Cornish culture and identity as a 'problem' something that needs to be overcome as the new region is enforced and how the EU, with its policy of empowering regions, is also part of this 'problem'.

¹² See www.parliament.thestationeryoffice

¹³ This special constitutional arrangement still has some representation in that the Lord Warden of the Stannaries, the envoy to the British Parliament, still has a position in the UK Parliament today. The Duke of Cornwall (and Prince of Wales) could reassert his position as the Cornish head of state. Similarly by Cornish Stannary Law no one in Cornwall has to pay any UK taxes without the consent of the Stannary Parliament. Even though the UK State has seen this as an archaic left over from the past the fact remains that this is still the law and that the setting up of Cornwall as a 'county' remains at best a legally dubious act.

¹⁴ See www.senedhkernow.org for details about the campaign and accompanying papers.

This NGO calls for the establishment of a body within Konsel Kernow, based on the model of the Welsh Language Board, which, as part of Konsel Kernow, deals directly with Europe and the UK Government. This body should have a budget to establish Cornish language projects.¹⁵

c. 'Resolute Action'

It is unclear what the Charter means exactly by 'resolute action'. The UK Initial Report gives the indication that it does recognise the need for resolute action for Welsh, Scots-Gaelic, Irish and Scots. However, the UK Government has shown little signs of such resolute action. It is encouraging to note that in the Ministerial press release, the UK Government is prepared to 'initiate discussion' with governmental bodies and NGOs in Cornwall. However, it remains unclear whether this will result in resolute action.

This NGO requests that the UK government take meaningful resolute action for Cornish development with the setting up of a Cornish Language Board, as outlined above. This NGO also requests that resolute action be taken in the domain of education. Suggestions are outlined below in section f.

d. Encouragement

The British State has occasionally at a local level, and contrary to the lack of mention in its initial report, given some encouragement to the use of Cornish. For examples, see the actions of Konsel Kernow and the District Council mentioned above (a).

e. Links

One example of links being established with other indigenous language committees is through the work of the UK Committee of EBLUL, which the Cornish sub-committee participates in. In the past Cornish groups have worked together with Welsh Universities, for example, in the setting up of Cornish examinations.

Most towns and villages in Cornwall have been twinned with ones in Brittany. This reflects the shared cultural heritage and has resulted in years of exchanges and visits between the two countries. Bards from the Cornish Gorsedh attend the Welsh Eisteddfod and Breton Goursez. Music groups attend the Breton Lorient Interceltic festival and the Celtic Song Contest at Killarney, Ireland. Cornwall has been both a host and participant in the Celtic Film and TV festival. Cornwall hosts and has representatives at the Celtic Congress, a conference presenting research papers on Celtic themes. Individual members of the Cornish language community have participated in several renowned international academic conferences e.g. the International Conference of Minority Languages, the International Celtic Congress, Linguapax (Barcelona), Federation of Endangered Languages, Terralingua, North American Association of Celtic Language Teachers.

¹⁵ There is not the space here to discuss the many issues raised by the enforcing of a south-west region on Cornwall. However, the ECRML Secretariat may feel free to contact Cornish NGOs/ the author for further details on the inappropriateness of inclusion in a notional south-west region both for Cornwall and other areas and for details of the current debate. For example, at a meeting for discussions on a south-west assembly the majority of those in attendance had come from Cornwall to voice their opposition to such an assembly if it were to include Cornwall. Also the Minister for the regions, Nick Raynsford MP, commented in Parliament that out of the letters received demanding devolution for the regions the vast majority came from Cornwall.

It is proposed that Cornwall participates as a full member of the 'Council of the Isles' in order to build further links. It is envisaged that a body could be set up similar to the *Colm Cille* initiative which encourages links between Irish and Scots Gaelic speakers. In the Cornish case this NGO envisages a body that facilitates links and exchanges with Breton and Welsh speakers.

f. Education

Current provision

There is some provision for Cornish at all levels of education. This has been outlined in the CLR. Cornish is currently taught as a second language in 12 primary schools and 4 secondary schools.

At college level, Hayle Community School is now a Language College. Students in their final year (age 15/16) are given an introduction to Italian, German and Cornish (one term of each) in addition to their French and Spanish.

Cornish language teacher training remains problematic, to say the least. There are no teacher-training programmes either for teachers to teach through the medium of Cornish or even to teach Cornish as a second language. Existing Cornish language teachers are either professionals who have learned Cornish or are self-taught after years of teaching evening classes. Provision happens on an out-of-hours, extra curricula and *ad-hoc* basis according to the motivation of the individual teacher. Provision is therefore patchy at best and the complete lack of infrastructure means that developing provision is unlikely. Although there has been enough evidence to satisfy inclusion at Part II, there is a need for development and planning at every level of education in order to provide basic coverage in Cornwall. It stands in contrast with the Isle of Man which, with its own autonomous government, has succeeded in setting up pre-school groups which are now feeding into a Manx medium unit.

Target areas include the establishment of funded adult intensive immersion courses to create new speakers and of Cornish medium pre-school groups.

MacKinnon outlined problems and made suggestions (2000:4.5) stating that:

‘The presence of Cornish in the primary stage is heavily dependent upon the presence of a Cornish-speaking teacher, the sympathy of school staff, local management resource budgets, and especially head teachers. This study reports parental demand for Cornish as a second language in the school system but it is again distributed across many catchment areas, and a 'critical mass' calling for provision has been diluted by distance - unlike the more concentrated demands experienced in the Northern Irish, Gaelic and Welsh contexts.

Without a developed playgroup stage, prospects for wider provision of Cornish in primary schooling is more difficult - let alone a Cornish-medium primary stage being established in the foreseeable future. However, Cornish as a second language should be a feasible proposition - as has long been the case for the other Celtic languages in their respective countries. These all make provisions for their languages within the Core Curriculum in the cases of the National Curriculum in Wales generally and Northern Ireland where Irish features in its schools, and the Curriculum and Assessment Working Paper Gaelic 5-14 in Scotland.

For the language to progress within the education system it needs to be more clearly indicated within the schools curriculum, as the other Celtic languages are within their own systems. In order for it to be more widely taught, with some place for it within the school day as well as in extra-curricular classes and clubs, it would need the support of properly resourced and remunerated peripatetic teachers. Where teachers without Cornish language proficiency wished to introduce the language, resource packages

and videos would be required. To provide these would require funding and resourcing. A decision would also have to be made concerning the form of Cornish to be used in these classes.

The difficulties in restoring a state-recognised schools level examination were also identified by our consultees as a problem for the advancement of Cornish as a school subject, especially at secondary level. Local management of schools was also frequently cited as a difficulty in making a place for Cornish

within school life, and finding resources for it. However, in other Celtic countries greater local autonomy has often been seen as the means whereby enhanced provision for the language has been secured'.

What Cornish lacks, compared to Welsh for example, is any infrastructure in Cornish language learning.

Research needs to be conducted to establish the potential demand for Cornish-medium education (at all levels) and for Cornish as a second language in the short, medium and long-term. It is recommended that Cornish be made available to all schools in Cornwall as an option as soon as possible. One method previously suggested by Cornish NGOs is the establishment of a cohort of peripatetic Cornish teachers who would be available to several schools. Such an approach would address the short-term lack of provision until a greater number of Cornish teachers would come online.

g. Provision of facilities to learn Cornish

For non-speakers the following facilities are available; a wide network of evening classes spread throughout Cornwall (36); Hayle college has just started a Cornish classes; a UK wide correspondence course *Kernewek dre Lyther*; a London class and more intensive courses are offered at the annual *Goel an Yeth*.

Two companies, *Sain* (Wales) and Eurotalk (London), have recently produced interactive Cornish language learning CD-ROMs.

There is an increasing amount of Cornish language learning materials available, all privately produced. However, what is needed is corpus planning. There is a need for state-funded learning materials and the development of coherent courses and course books for every level of education from pre-school to adults.

h. Cornish in higher education

Cornish has been offered as a course in the Celtic department in the University of Wales, Aberystwyth over the last 20 years. It is, however, offered as a medieval language rather than a living language. In Cornwall various colleges and institutes offer courses and facilitate research into Cornish. For example, the Institute of Cornish Studies offer two courses: an MA in Cornish Studies and an MA in Celtic Studies, both of which have a Cornish language dimension. The Institute also publishes a periodical 'Cornish Studies' (in English) which often features new research into Cornish. In addition, a new Cornish-medium periodical *Agan Yeth* has been set up under the auspices of the Language Board featuring academic research into the Cornish language.

Currently Cornwall is about to get her own University and discussions are underway for the setting up of a Cornish / Celtic language department. This NGO recommends that these discussions be brought forward in line with the recommendations of the Charter. It is envisaged that a Cornish language department will offer degree courses in Cornish and also

offer other Celtic languages. Similarly such a department may offer joint honours courses with other departments where Cornish could be studied e.g. economics; tourism or Cornish history. The study of other Celtic languages e.g. Breton and Irish would also facilitate transnational exchanges by setting up links with other Celtic departments, Erasmus exchanges and so on. Research is essential for the further development of Cornish and the setting up of a Celtic department in Cornwall would provide an important centre for postgraduate study and research and future cohorts of language teachers, Cornish language media professionals and language dedicated civil servants.

i. Transnational exchanges

There have long been transnational exchanges with Brittany and with Breton speakers from the medieval period to the present. These take the form of cultural exchanges, conferences etc. One long running example from the early 20th century is the attendance of Cornish speakers at the Breton Gorsedh. Other examples include hosting the Celtic Film and TV festival and *Lowender Peran*. Similarly Cornish speakers can be found at big Breton festivals such as Lorient, competing at the Celtic song contest held in Killarney, Ireland and participating at the Welsh *Eisteddfod*.

j. Kernewek and the arts

The last 5 years have witnessed a flowering of Cornish language poetry; Jowann Richards, Cliff Stephens, Ken George, Julyan Holmes and Tim Saunders have had collections published by Kowethas an Yeth Kernewek. Pol Hodge has had his Cornish language poetry published in *Bardh Arnowydh Kernewek*, *Mowth on 'Un like Dolcoath Shaft* and *'Otter Than A Bitch Mackerel*. Francis Boutle published the collected work of Tim Saunders. Gorsedh and Esedhvos competitions provided a rich resource of poetry, which was published in the *Delyow Derow* magazine, edited by the late Richard Jenkin. Cornish language poetry of a high standard continues to be featured in Cornish magazines such as *An Gannas*, *An Gowsva*, and *An Garrack*.

Cornish language songs, written by Richard Gendall and performed by the late Brenda Wootton, have been widely acclaimed at Celtic festivals. Their collection of Cornish language songs and poems, *Crowdy Crawn*, appeared in 1973. Cornwall has competed in the Pan-Celtic Song Contest for a number of years and won the competition outright on three occasions with *Deus Yn Rag Dolly* (Phil Knight and Forbidden Fruit), *An Arvor* (Pawl Dunbar and West) and *Tir Kemmyn* (Rachael and Common Ground). In recent years, Cornish language songs have come from Bucca, Graham Sandercock and Jim Hawken, Pennlorwydh, Skwardya, Mammvro, Dalla and many others. A number of different styles have evolved including rock, dance, rap and blues as well as more traditional folk music.

Cornwall became a full member of the Celtic Film and Television Association in the late 1980s. One condition of entry to the annual festival is that at least one film must be in the Cornish language. This has produced a growing corpus of Cornish language films including *Splatt Dhe Wertha* (Wild West Films), winner of the Golden Torc Award in 1997, when Cornwall hosted the *Goel Fylm ha Pellwolok Geltek – Celtic Film and Television Festival*. 2002 saw the release of *Hwerow Hweg* (West Coast Productions) which was the first full-length feature film in Cornish. It was premiered at the Houses of Parliament and screened at the Pennseythun Gernewek and the Montreal World Film Festival. Cornish language songs now regularly feature in a number of short films.

Short stories and novels have long been a favourite art form for Cornish writers. Jowann Richards and Michael Palmer have emerged as the two leading exponents with *Agan Tavas* and *Kowethas an Yeth Kernewek* publishing over twenty titles from these two prolific writers alone.

Plays written by Martin Miller, Polin Preece and Julia Allard have been performed at numerous Cornish language events and Celtic festivals. *Gwynn ha Du* was a collaboration between a professional writer, Paul Farmer and Kowethas an Yeth Kernewek which gained Lottery funding and produced a performance at Lowender Peran and a sub-titled film.

The most remarkable feature of Cornish language art has been its recent ability to penetrate the mainstream with performers, translators and language coaches being employed in Cornwall's thriving arts sector. This helps promote Kernewek as a part of everyday life in Cornwall.

2. Eliminating exclusion and promoting equality

Although the British state has not directly acted to eliminate institutional prejudice against Cornish on several occasions it has made comments encouraging Cornish use [Hansard quotes]. However, these warm words invariably fail to manifest themselves into any action or support, leaving an overstretched, voluntary Cornish language community very much at the level of having to do everything themselves.

This NGO recommends that legislation is drafted and enacted to enshrine the language rights of Cornish speakers in public life and in the delivery of public sector services. A basis may be taken from the 1993 Welsh Language Act and would serve to prevent discrimination against Cornish and further its usage and normalisation in all domains.

3. Mutual understanding, respect and tolerance

Within the National Curriculum set by the State for schools in the UK there is some space for the study in and about RML. In Cornwall there is some teaching in schools in and about Cornish. However, it remains on an *ad hoc* basis very much depending on the interest and whim of the individual teacher or headmaster. It can be seen that there needs to be space within the curriculum to enable everyone in Cornwall to learn about his or her linguistic inheritance and to be given the choice to learn Cornish. One negative aspect, which may reflect the attitude towards Cornish by some teachers, is the recent punishment of a child for declaring that they were Cornish and not English. This punishment resulted in the parents removing their child from the school in question. Such actions are far from the principle of tolerance advocated in the Charter and measures must be put in place to prevent any such prejudice and discrimination ever being meted out on a Cornish school child ever again e.g. within a Cornish Language Act and the inclusion of the Cornish on the FCPNM. Additionally a code of practice should be set up in Cornwall so that public servants are made aware of Cornish ethnicity and language issues.

Media

Broadcasting in Cornwall has taken some steps towards providing a minimal Cornish language service i.e. Cornish is broadcast for half an hour weekly on BBC Radio Cornwall. The private station Pirate FM used to broadcast two daily news bulletins in the language before it was removed for fear of alienating people in South-West England. There is a weekly

Cornish newspaper column in the Cornish edition of the daily Western Morning News and the weekly Cornish Guardian. Cornish is rarely heard on TV. Progress is being made however with the provision of a Cornish language news service on the Internet. Entitled *Nowodhow Kernow* 'News of Cornwall'; this initiative was given some initial support (£500) from Konsel Kernow.

It is recommended that the NGOs and government agencies work towards the establishment of a dedicated Cornish-medium radio station and, initially, a Cornish medium digital TV channel. As for the press, the NGOs would like to see a greater presence of Cornish language articles in Cornwall's press and to work towards the setting up of a dedicated Cornish language newspaper.

4. Establishing Cornish Language Institutions

There are several bodies established to represent the Cornish language community's view to government. The chief organisation is the Cornish Language Board. The Cornish sub committee of the UK committee of EBLUL is representative in drawing on many different NGOs. Additionally, there are speakers organisations such as Agan Tavas & Kowethas An Yeth Kernewek. All of these groups are willing to work with UK government agencies.

This NGO recommends the establishment of the Cornish language Board as part of Konsel Kernow, along the lines of the Welsh language Board. This would be responsible for liaising with the NGOs, putting into place language projects, co-ordinating with Westminster and Europe, and to research into best practice in language planning appropriate to Cornish language development.

Non-territorial languages

Not applicable.

Part III

Part III for the time being does not apply to Cornish: however, it is the express opinion of the Kowethas and the Cornish-speaking community that the UK puts the provision in place so that Cornish can be included at the Part III level as soon as possible. It is felt that Part II inclusion on its own, while certainly underlining the goodwill of the State towards Cornish, does not offer the specific factors that are necessary for the regeneration and normalisation of Cornish that the language community requires.

Article 8

Education

Within the domain of education, there is still much work to be done. However, there are some paragraphs, which the current provision of Cornish could quite quickly attain. Such attainment it is hoped will be achieved within the framework of holistic language planning. It can be seen that an education-led strategy has worked for other minority languages (Catalan, Basque, and Welsh). In order to do this more new speakers have to be produced. To achieve this, it will be necessary for children currently in education to become functional bilinguals in Cornish and English. Future cohorts of children could then be streamed into specifically Cornish-medium education. There also needs to be an ongoing programme of adult immersion, to create an adult cohort of new speakers. It is envisaged that such development will significantly help to attain paragraphs in Part III.

Conclusions and Suggestions

1. It is clear that the infrastructure for the implementation of the Charter has to be satisfactorily set up.

In considering the UK's welcome statement that it will be initiating discussions over development, this NGO welcomes the opportunity to propose a plan for best practice in the implementation of the Charter. It also recognises that the recent inclusion of Cornish on the Charter has given the UK State little time to establish the necessarily inclusive structures to enable implementation. We welcome the opportunity presented by the Comex monitoring committee to discuss our proposals and initiate a meaningful relationship with governmental organisations.

It is envisaged that the process can be initiated with the partnership of the Cornish NGOs and Government at the Cornish and UK level. It is suggested that for the medium term a Cornish language office be set up as a part of Konsel Kernow with a Cornish language Officer(s) and is based on the model of the Welsh Language Board. This office will work in partnership with the various Cornish NGOs and initiate language development projects.

2. A meaningful language plan needs to be drawn up to regenerate Cornish. It is envisaged that partnerships are established between government agencies and Cornish NGOs to draw up such a plan. Included in the plan should be a timeline for development. Crucial areas that need to be addressed are in the domain of education: the production of new speakers (by adult immersion courses), establishing an infrastructure for Cornish-medium education and the teaching of Cornish as a second language.

3. It is envisaged that future legislation will be enacted to further the development of Cornish, to enshrine the Cornish language within UK law and to give the necessary legislative support to future language development projects. Such legislation as that found in the Welsh Language Act, and the various language acts enacted for Catalan and Basque, will ensure that it will be illegal to discriminate against the Cornish language.

Addenda

Comments on the Informal UK Report on Cornish (December 19th 2002)

It would have been preferable to include comments on the informal UK Report above. However this report was received after the drafting of the main document. While brief comments are given below, the main subject areas have already been discussed above. Where the UK has left answers blank this NGO has decided, considering the timescale, to await the UK statement.

Part One

1. Main legal acts

This NGO agrees with the UK statement that 'there is no legislation pertaining particularly to the Cornish language'. However, this NGO recommends that existing legislation be reviewed in order to ascertain legislation that may in effect be construed as preventing Cornish language development (e.g. the 1890 Education Act).

3. Number of speakers

The UK states that there 'may be about 300 fluent speakers'. Even though this figure is debatable, it underlines the need for a specific question on the decennial UK census to accurately ascertain the number of speakers. It also underlines the need for further research.

4. Cornish language organisations

The UK states that there is no statutory body formed for this purpose. However, many NGOs have constitutions and some are registered as charities. It is recommended here that a statutory body be created, namely a Cornish Language Board as part of Konsel Kernow (see above).

5. Consultation of Cornish NGOs

The UK is correct in that no consultation has been conducted with any Cornish NGOs. This has already led to GOSW being invited in to work with Konsel Kernow on the application of the Charter. The Cornish NGOs wish to take the opportunity to set the agenda, devise appropriate language planning and then work in partnership with governmental organisations in order to develop the language. Cornish has grown up from the grass roots; it would be ill advised to enforce a 'top-down' approach. The Cornish language community wants to decide what is best for language development.

6. Measures taken to inform about rights and duties

As noted above the Cornish NGOs have received no information about rights and duties pertaining to the Charter from the British Government. In addition, it remains unknown as to what extent Konsel Kernow and the District Councils are aware of their duties, if at all, under the Charter.

Furthermore the UK states that the 'GOSW will be working with Konsel Kernow and the language organisations on the application of the Charter'. The Cornish language organisations

wish to begin this consultation exercise as soon as possible to evaluate the possible constraints of working with GOSW.

Part Two

Article 7

Objectives and principles

1. It is of note that the UK has made no comment on its existing policies, legislation and practice.

a. Recognition of Cornish as an expression of cultural wealth.

The UK makes no comment here. It would be useful to know if the UK is in agreement on this general point.

b. Respect for geographical area

Interestingly the UK Report states that Cornwall is administered locally by Konsel Kernow, six district councils and the Isles of Scilly council. However, it has not included the GOSW here

f. Cornish language provision

The UK states that: 'individual primary and secondary schools may offer learning of the Cornish language if they wish'. This statement, however, belies the complete lack of infrastructure in Cornish language education and how this is prejudiced by the UK State system. It is far from the proactive policy required. As mentioned above, Cornish language teaching (as a second language initially) needs to be included in the ordinary curriculum in Cornish schools.

2 Eliminating exclusion

This NGO welcomes the UK's referral to the Human Rights Act of 1998 with regard to Cornish and looks forward to further clarification on how this Act applies to the language rights of Cornish speakers.

4. Establishing Cornish language bodies

The UK states that the GOSW is 'exploring what forum can bring together Cornish language organisations into discussions to ensure the views of Cornish speakers and people wanting to learn Cornish are taken into account in implementing Part II.'

This NGO would prefer that Cornish NGOs should be able to work with Konsel Kernow by a suitably empowered Cornish language board comprising Cornish experts in the language development field.

Websites

Kowethas An Yeth Kernewek
Nowodhow Kernow

www.cornish-language.org
www.geocities.com/cornishnews

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