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Addendum 3

EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

**Addendum to the Initial Periodical Report
presented to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe
in accordance with Article 15 of the Charter**

UNITED KINGDOM

Informal UK report on Cornish

**THE EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR
REGIONAL OR MINORITY
LANGUAGES – INFORMAL UK
REPORT ON CORNISH**

December 2002

Foreward:

This informal report was requested by the Committee of Experts to provide background for its visit to the UK on 20-25 January 2003. Cornish was not covered in the UK's initial periodical report, submitted in July 2002, because at that time the UK Government was still considering its position on that language. The UK Government announced on 5 November 2002 that it had decided to recognise Cornish as falling under Part II of the Charter.

This informal report must be read in conjunction with the UK's initial periodical report, see especially the answers in that report in Part Two, Article 7 paragraphs 1 a), b), f) and h).

PART ONE

1. Please state the main legal act(s) whereby the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages has been implemented in your State. If you so desire, please mention the general considerations which have guided your country in the ratification process.

There is no legislation pertaining particularly to the Cornish language.

2. Please indicate all regional or minority languages, as defined in paragraph (a) of Article 1 of the Charter which exist on your State's territory. Indicate also the parts of the territory of your country where the speakers of such language(s) reside.

Cornish speakers in the UK reside predominantly in Cornwall.

3. Please indicate the number of speakers for each regional or minority language. Specify the criteria for the definition of "speaker of regional or minority language" that your country has retained for this purpose.

An independent academic study commissioned by the Government Office for the South West and published in April 2000 suggests there may be about 300 fluent speakers of Cornish. The criterion for fluency adopted in the study was the ability to 'hold a general conversation at ordinary speed on everyday topics.'

4. Please indicate the non-territorial languages, as defined in paragraph (c), Article 1 of the Charter, used on your State's territory and provide statistical data concerning speakers.

Not applicable to Cornish

5. Please indicate if any body or organisation, legally established, exists in your State which furthers the protection and development of regional or minority languages. If so, please list the names and addresses of such organisations.

There is no statutory body formed for this purpose for Cornish. There are more than forty organisations involved with the language. These include: language organisations dedicated to

the promotion of the language; cultural organisations; organisations in political and public life including local government organisations; communication media organisations; private sector enterprises; and organisations active in religious life. There is a Cornish Sub-Committee of the UK Committee of the European Bureau of Lesser Used Languages.

6. Please indicate if any body or organisation has been consulted on the preparation of this periodical report. In the case of an affirmative answer, specify which one(s).

No body was consulted on this informal report in view of the very short time available before the Committee of Experts visits the UK in January 2003, but the report draws heavily on information collected in the independent academic study on which there was extensive participation by and consultation with a wide range of Cornish language organisations.

7. Please indicate the measures taken (in accordance with Article 6 of the Charter) to make better known the rights and duties deriving from the application of the Charter.

The Minister for Local Government and the Regions announced on 5 November 2002 the Government's decision to recognise that Cornish falls under Part II of the Charter. A national press release was issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to make widely known this decision, which was reported in the national and regional media in Cornwall.

The Government Office for the South West will be working with Cornwall County Council and language organisations on the application of the Charter.

PART TWO

1. Please indicate what measures your State has taken to apply Article 7 of the Charter to the regional or minority languages referred to in paragraphs 2 and 4 of part I above, specifying the different levels of government responsible.

Article 7: Objectives and principles

1. In respect of regional or minority languages, within the territories in which such languages are used and according to the situation of each language, the Parties shall base their policies, legislation and practice on the following objectives and principles:

- a) the recognition of the regional or minority language as an expression of cultural wealth;***
- b) the respect of the geographical area of each regional or minority language in order to ensure that existing or new administrative divisions do not constitute an obstacle to the promotion of the regional or minority language in question.***

Cornwall is administered locally by Cornwall County Council, six District Councils and the Isles of Scilly Council.

- c) *the need for resolute action to promote regional or minority languages in order to safeguard them*
- d) *The facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of regional or minority languages, in speech and writing, in public and private life*

BBC Radio Cornwall offers, on Sundays, a news summary in Cornish and a current affairs programme that includes some items in Cornish. There is a weekly, partly bilingual format, Cornish language column in the Cornwall edition of the Western Morning News regional newspaper. There is a lively production of Cornish literature and poetry, a specialist press publishing Cornish language material and specialist high street bookshops have been established in a number of towns. The Arts is an important domain of use, including Cornish pop and rock music groups, folk music, choirs, theatre, poetry, an annual Song for Cornwall event, and an *Esethvos Kernow* Eisteddfod. Public ritual, ceremony and services in Cornish take the language well beyond the effective language speaking community. There are Cornish language church services at least once a month and an increasing demand for weddings in Cornish. Many place names in Cornwall are in Cornish and entry signs into Cornwall include both English and Cornish (Kernow). All the local authorities in Cornwall have adopted a policy statement on the Cornish language. Many towns have a Cornish welcome in their name-boards and at least one local authority has a policy on designating Cornish language names for new streets and public buildings.

- e) *The maintenance and development of links, in the fields covered by this Charter, between groups using a regional or minority language and other groups in the State employing a language used in identical or similar form, as well as the establishment of cultural relations with other groups in the State using different languages*

Cornish is represented on the UK Committee of the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages.

- f) *the provision of appropriate forms and means for the teaching and study of regional and minority languages at all appropriate stages*

Individual primary and secondary schools may offer learning of the Cornish language if they wish. The independent academic study commissioned by the Government Office for the South West shows there is some form of teaching in the language in twelve primary schools and four secondary schools, generally as ex-curricular activity although in four of the primary schools it is taught as part of the integrated school curriculum. Since that report was completed at least one more secondary school, Hayle Community College, has provided teaching of Cornish. Cornwall County Council has provided teaching support materials. A Cornish Language Board offers graded examinations in the Cornish language and these are moderated by Cornwall County Council and validated by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

- g) the provision of facilities enabling non-speakers of a regional or minority language living in the area where it is used to learn if they so desire

There is general provision made for adult education classes. The independent academic study found there were 36 formal adult education classes in Cornwall with an estimated enrolment

of 365. Including informal and self-help groups the total number of learners was estimated at 445.

- h) the promotion of study and research on regional or minority languages at universities or equivalent institutions

A number of Universities in the UK have Departments of Celtic Studies with undergraduate and post-graduate students. There is an Institute of Cornish Studies at Truro in Cornwall, established by Exeter University and Cornwall County Council in 1972, which will move to the new Combined Universities in Cornwall campus under construction at Tremough.

- i) the promotion of appropriate types of transnational exchanges, in the fields covered by this Charter, for regional or minority languages used in identical or similar form in two or more States
2. *The parties undertake to eliminate, if they have not yet done so, any unjustified distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference relating to the use of a regional or minority language and intended to discourage or endanger the maintenance or development of it. The adoption of special measures in favour of regional or minority languages aimed at promoting equality between the users of these languages and rest of the population or which take due account of their specific conditions is not considered to be an act of discrimination against the users of more widely used languages.*

The UK Government is committed to seeking a society in which every individual is able to fulfil his or her potential through the enjoyment of equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities. The Human Rights Act 1998, which came into force in October 2000, incorporates specified provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law.

3. *The parties undertake to promote by appropriate measures, mutual understanding between all the linguistic groups of the country and in particular the inclusion of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to regional or minority languages among the objectives of education and training provided within their countries and encouragement of the mass media to pursue the same objective.*
4. *In determining their policy with regard to regional or minority languages, the Parties shall take into consideration the needs and wishes expressed by the groups which use such*

languages. They are encouraged to establish bodies, if necessary, for the purpose of advising the authorities on all matters pertaining to regional or minority languages.

The Government Office for the South West is exploring, through Cornwall County Council, what forum can bring together the 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 of the Charter.