

## **Ráiteas Tosaigh do Chomhchoiste na Gaeilge, na Gaeltachta agus Phobal**

### **Labhartha na Gaeilge**

Ba mhaith liom buíochas a ghabháil le Cathaoirleach agus le Baill an Choiste as cuireadh a thabhairt dom plé a dhéanamh ar an gcóras earcaíochta do phoist shinsearacha sa Státseirbhís inniu, go háirithe i gcomhthéacs na bhforálacha cuí in Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla (Leasú), 2021, a bhaineann le cúrsaí earcaíochta.

Ar dtús báire, chun comhthéacs a thabhairt i dtaca le beartas earcaíochta sa státseirbhís, ceapaim go mbeadh sé úsáideach achoimre a dhéanamh ar na príomhstruchtúir a bhaineann le beartas earcaíochta sa tseirbhís phoiblí. San Acht um Bainistíocht na Seirbhíse Poiblí, 2004, leagtar amach príomhghnéithe an chreata dlí reatha i dtaca le cúrsaí earcaíochta sa tseirbhís phoiblí agus sa státseirbhís. Tá foras maoirseachta dar teideal An Coimisiún um Cheapacháin Seirbhíse Poiblí nó an CCSP sa chreat seo, foras earcaíochta lárnaithe, An tSeirbhís um Cheapacháin Phoiblí, agus leagtar amach córas i dtaca le ceadúnú earcaíochta deonach d'fhorais aonair ann, a ligeann dóibh earcaíocht dhíreach a dhéanamh.

Is é an CCSP an príomhrialálaí i dtaca le cúrsaí earcaíochta agus roghnaithe i Seirbhís Phoiblí na hÉireann agus cinntíonn sé go gceaptar daoine ar bhealach cothrom, trédhearcach agus bunaithe ar fhiúntas. De réir riachtanais an Achta,

déantar earcaíocht faoi cheadúnas de réir na gCód Cleachtais a ullmhaíonn an CCSP, ina leagtar amach na prionsabail ar chóir cloí leo agus ceapachán á dhéanamh.

San Acht um Bainistíocht na Seirbhíse Poiblí, 2004, luaitear go bhfuil an tAire Caiteachais Phoiblí, Sheachadadh PFN agus Athchóirithe freagrach as ceisteanna a bhaineann le cúrsaí earcaíochta sa Státseirbhís. Tá critéir cháilitheachta, líon na mball foirne, grádú, pá agus coinníollacha oibre eile san áireamh. Ina theannta sin, luaitear ann go bhfuil dualgais ar Airí eile i dtaca le seirbhísigh phoiblí a earcú i bhforais a thagann faoi choimirce a gcuid Ranna.

I dtaca le hearcaíocht shinsearach sa státseirbhís, is coiste neamhreachtuil é an Coimisiún um Cheapacháin Ardleibhéil, ar a dtugtar TLAC go coitianta, a bunaíodh trí chinneadh Rialtais in 1984. Tá sé mar aidhm ag an gCoimisiún iarrthóirí a mholadh d'Airí agus don Rialtas do na poist is sinsearaí sa Státseirbhís – ag leibhéal an Rúnaí Chúnta agus níos airde. Tá 16 bhall ar TLAC faoi láthair; naonúr ball seachtrach, an Cathaoirleach san áireamh, agus seachtar ball ón Státseirbhís atá ag grád an Ard-Rúnaí. Ceapann an Taoiseach gach ball tar éis don Aire Caiteachais Phoiblí, Sheachadadh PFN agus Athchóirithe iad a ainmniú agus tar éis don Rialtas glacadh leis an gceapachán.

Maidir le próiseas roghnaithe TLAC, tá roinnt príomhchéimeanna i gceist, mar seo a leanas: gearrliostú, réamhagallaimh, agus agallaimh dheiridh. Ag céim dheiridh an phróisis, ní mór don bhord agallaimh moladh/moltaí a dhéanamh. I dtaca le poist ag leibhéal an Rúnaí Chúnta, agus poist ar aon chéim leo, agus i dtaca le poist ag leibhéal an Leas-Rúnaí agus poist ar aon chéim leo – is é sin formhór na bpost TLAC – molfaidh TLAC iarrthóir amháin don Ard-Rúnaí atá ag earcú chun gur féidir leis an Aire cuí iad a cheapadh. Maidir le poist ag leibhéal an Ard-Rúnaí lena bpléann TLAC, is féidir le TLAC suas go triúr iarrthóirí, a bhaineann an caighdeán cuí amach don phost dar leo, a mholadh don Aire atá ag earcú.

Is é an Rialtas an t-údarás ceaptha d'Ard-Rúnaithe, de réir mar a leagtar amach san Acht Airí agus Rúnaithe, 1924. Molann an tAire cuí ceapachán ar leith don Rialtas, bunaithe ar an measúnú a dhéanann siad ar mholadh/mholtaí TLAC. Ceaptar Ard-Rúnaí tar éis do na hAirí Rialtais an ceapachán a cheadú.

Mar is eol don Choiste, bhunaigh an tAire Turasóireachta, Cultúir, Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán an Coiste Comhairleach um Sheirbhísí Gaeilge i mí an Mheithimh 2022 faoi alt 18 d'Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla (Leasú), 2021.

Is é ceann de phríomhfheidhmeanna an Choiste Chomhairligh um Sheirbhísí Gaeilge ná Plean Náisiúnta maidir le Seirbhísí Poiblí Gaeilge a ullmhú, atá le cur

faoi bhráid an Aire Turasóireachta, Cultúir, Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán roimh lár na bliana 2024 chun gur féidir leis an Aire é a cheadú. Tá sé mar phríomhaidhm ag an bPlean Náisiúnta seo an sprioc earcaíochta a leagtar amach san Acht a bhaint amach, .i. go mbeidh cumas sa Ghaeilge ag 20%, ar a laghad, de bhaill foirne a earcaítear i bhforais phoiblí roimh an 31 Nollaig 2030.

Tagann baill den Choiste ó réimse d'fhorais seirbhíse poiblí agus tá ionadaithe do na Limistéir Phleanála Teanga Ghaeltachta agus ó cheantair eile sa Stát nach Limistéir Phleanála Teanga Ghaeltachta iad air a cheap an tAire. Táim féin páirteach ar an gCoiste de bharr mo róil, a bhaineann le beartas earcaíochta sa státseirbhís agus tá ionadaí ón tSCP air chomh maith, de bharr an róil earcaíochta atá acu siúd, ar a ndearna mé cur síos thuas. Tá an Coiste ag leanúint ar aghaidh lena gcuid oibre, agus beidh treoir ar fáil sa Tuairisc Dheiridh maidir le róil sa tseirbhís phoiblí don mbeidh cumas sa Ghaeilge riachtanach agus maidir le straitéisí a d'fhéadfadh a úsáid go gearrthéarmach, go meántéarmach agus go fadtéarmach chun grúpa leathan iarrthóirí a chur ar fáil, a bheadh in ann na róil sin a líonadh.

Bheinn lánsásta aon cheisteanna atá ag an gCoiste a fhreagairt.

**Opening Statement to the Joint Committee on the Irish Language, Gaeltacht  
and the Irish-speaking Community**

I would like to thank the Chair and Members of the Committee for their invitation today to discuss the recruitment system for senior posts in the Civil Service, particularly in the context of the relevant recruitment provisions of the Official Languages (Amendment) Act, 2021.

Firstly, by way of background on civil service recruitment policy, I think it would be useful to outline the key structures for recruitment policy in the public service. The Public Service Management Act, 2004 established the key elements of the current legal framework for recruitment in the public and civil service. This framework consists of an oversight body called the Commission for Public Service Appointments or the CPSA, a centralised recruitment body, the Public Appointment Service or PAS, and also provides for a system of voluntary recruitment licensing for individual bodies that allows them to hire directly.

The CPSA are the principal regulator of recruitment and selection in the Irish Public Service and ensure that appointments are fair, transparent and merit-based. As required under the Act, recruitment under licence is subject to Codes of Practice drawn up by the CPSA, which set out the principles that should be followed when making an appointment.

The Public Service Management Act, 2004 also establishes that the Minister for Public Expenditure NDP Delivery and Reform is responsible for matters relating to recruitment in the Civil Service. This includes eligibility criteria, staff numbers, grading, pay and other working conditions. It further provides that other Ministers have responsibility in respect of the recruitment of public servants in bodies under the aegis of their Departments.

In relation to senior recruitment in the civil service, the Top Level Appointment Committee, or commonly referred to as TLAC, is a non-statutory committee established by Government decision in 1984. The Committee's function is to recommend candidates to Ministers and Government for the most senior positions in the Civil Service – at Assistant Secretary level and upwards. There are currently 16 members of TLAC; nine external members, one of whom is Chair, and seven members from within the Civil Service who are at Secretary General grade. All members are appointed by the Taoiseach following the nomination of the Minister of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform and agreement by Government.

The TLAC selection process can be summarised into the following phases: shortlisting, preliminary interviews and final interviews. The final stage of the selection process is for the interview board to make its recommendation. For Assistant Secretary and equivalent and Deputy Secretary and equivalent posts,

which are the majority of TLAC posts, TLAC will recommend 1 candidate only to the hiring Secretary General for appointment by the relevant Minister. For Secretary General posts considered by TLAC, TLAC may recommend up to 3 candidates to the hiring Minister who, in their judgement, meet the required standard for the post.

The Government is the appointing authority for Secretaries General as set out in the Ministers and Secretaries Act, 1924. The relevant Minister recommends a particular appointment to Government based on their consideration of TLAC's recommendation. Appointment of a Secretary General is made following approval by Cabinet.

As the Committee will be aware, the Irish Language Services Advisory Committee was established by the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media in June 2022 under section 18 of the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021.

One of the key functions of the Irish Language Services Advisory Committee is to prepare a National Plan for Irish Language Public Services, which is to be submitted to the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media for approval by mid-2024. A key objective of this National Plan is to reach the

recruitment target laid down in Act that at least 20% of staff recruited to public bodies are competent in the Irish language by 31 December 2030.

The members of the Committee are from a range of public service bodies and representatives appointed by the Minister for Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas and also areas of the State that are not Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas. I participate on the Committee in respect of my role in relation to recruitment policy in the civil service and PAS are also represented in respect of their recruitment role as I outlined above. The work of the Committee is ongoing and the final Report will provide guidance as to roles within the public service requiring competency in the Irish language and potential strategies in the short, medium and longer term aimed at providing a broad pool of candidates capable of filling those roles.

I am happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.