

DÁIL ÉIREANN

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE IRISH LANGUAGE, THE GAELTACHT AND THE IRISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITY

COMHCHOISTE NA GAEILGE, NA GAELTACHTA AGUS PHOBAL LABHAR- THA NA GAEILGE

Dé Céadaoin, 2 Feabhra 2022

Wednesday, 2 February 2022

Tháinig an Comhchoiste le chéile ag 1.30 p.m.

The Joint Committee met at 1.30 p.m.

Comhaltaí a bhí i láthair / Members present:

Teachtaí Dála / Deputies	Seanadóirí / Senators
Dara Calleary,	Seán Kyne.
Catherine Connolly,	
Pa Daly,	
Aindrias Moynihan,	
Fergus O'Dowd,	
Marc Ó Cathasaigh.	

Teachta / Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh sa Chathaoir / in the Chair.

Bunriachtanais Teanga sa Gharda Síochána: Plé

Chairman: Tá leithscéal faighte agam ón Seanadóir Ward. Cuirim fáilte roimh na comhaltaí coiste atá i láthair agus roimh na finnétithe atá i seomra an choiste. Thar ceann An Gharda Síochána, tá Anne Marie McMahon, Leas-Choimisinéir An Gharda Síochána; Joseph Nugent, príomhoifigeach riaracháin; Eimear Ní Cheallaigh, oifigeach Gaeilge; agus Yvonne Cooke, stiúrthóir gníomhach feidhmiúcháin ar chúrsaí acmhainní daonna agus forbartha daoine. Thar ceann na Roinne Dlí agus Cirt, tá Doncha O'Sullivan, leas-ardrúnaí; agus Mary McKenna, príomhoifigeach ar chúrsaí rialachais agus ceartais choiriúil. Thar ceann an Údaráis Póilíneachta, tá Bob Collins, cathaoirleach; agus Helen Hall, príomhfheidhmeannach. Thar ceann na Seirbhíse um Cheapacháin Phoiblí, tá Shirley Comerford, príomhfheidhmeannach; agus Liam Sinclair, riarthóir earcaíochta, rannóg earcaíochta um cheartas. Gabhaimid ár mbuíochas leo ar fad as teacht anseo inniu. Tá súil agam go mbeidh tairbhe as an gcomhrá a bheidh againn.

Déanfaimid ár mbreithniú ar dhá ábhar atá ar chlár an chruinnithe seo. Tá siad scartha óna chéile agus beidh sos de 15 nóiméad eatarthu. Sa chéad seisiún, is mian linn a fháil amach cén fáth a ndearnadh fáil réidh leis an riachtanas bunreachtúil d'iarrthóirí lena bheith incháilithe le hardú céime a fháil chun bheith ina sáirsint nó ina gcigire 50% a bhaint amach sa scrúdú iniúlachta béil sa Ghaeilge. Cé a rinne an cinneadh sin? Cén fáth nár cuireadh an cinneadh sin in iúl dúinn ag ár gcruinniú ar an 12 Bealtaine 2021? Is cinnte go mbreathnaítí ar an gcinneadh ag an am sin nó fiú go raibh sé beartaithe ag an am sin. Cén fáth, mar sin, nach dúradh é sin linn?

Sa dara seisiún, is mian linn cinneadh an Rialtais nach mbeidh Gaeilge riachtanach níos mó ag baill den Gharda Síochána a phlé. Cé a rinne an cinneadh sin? Cén fáth nár cuireadh an cinneadh sin in iúl dúinn ag an gcruinniú ar an 12 Bealtaine anuraidh? Is cinnte go raibh daoine ag breathnú air sin ag an am. Cén fáth nach dúradh é sin linn?

Cuirim ar aird na bhfinnétithe go bhfuil siad, de bhua alt 17(2)(l) den Acht um Chlúmhilleadh, 2009, faoi chosaint ag lánphribhléid maidir leis an bhfianaise a thugann siad don choiste seo chomh fada is atá siad lonnaithe sa seomra coiste féin. Má ordaíonn an comhchoiste dóibh, ámh, éirí as an bhfianaise a thabhairt i leith ní áirithe agus má leanann siad dá thabhairt, níl siad i dteideal dá éis sin ach pribhléid cáilithe i leith na fianaise acu. Ordaítear dóibh nach dtabharfar ach fianaise a bhaineann le hábhar na n-imeachtaí seo agus fiafraítear dóibh cleachtadh parlaiminte a urraimiú nár chóir, más féidir, daoine ná eintiteas a cháineadh ná líomhaintí a dhéanamh ina n-aghaidh, ina ainm, ina hainm nó ina n-ainmneacha ar shlí a bhféadfaí iad a aithint. Ba mhaith liom na finnétithe a chur ar an eolas go ndéanfar na ráitis tionscnaimh a chuireann siad faoi bhráid an choiste a fhoilsiú ar shuíomh ghréasáin an chomhchoiste tar éis an chruinnithe seo. Meabhraítear do chomhaltaí an cleachtadh parlaiminte atá ann le fada nár chóir dóibh tuairimí a thabhairt maidir le duine atá taobh amuigh de na Tithe, nó leis na hoifigigh, ina ainm nó ina hainm nó ar shlí ina bhféadfaí é nó í a aithint.

Meabhraím do na comhaltaí atá ar líne gur gá dóibh an ceamara a bheith ar siúl agus a lámh a chur in airde ar an scáileán má tá siad ag iarraidh ceisteanna a chur ionas go bhfeicim iad. Meabhraím dóibh siúd atá sa seomra an fón a mhúchadh. Tá súil agam go dtuigeann siad go bhfuil sé seo á thairbh agus á chraoladh ag an am céanna. Glaoim ar an ionadaí ón nGarda Síochána chun an ráiteas tosaigh a léamh.

Ms Eimear Ní Cheallaigh: Ar an gcéad dul síos, ba mhaith leis an nGarda Síochána buíochas a ghabháil leis an gcoiste as an deis a bheith os a chomhair inniu chun ceisteanna a fhre-

agairt i dtaobh na hathruithe ar rialacháin maidir le hardú céime go céim an tsáirsint.

Tá an eagraíocht tiomanta a chinntiú go gcomhlíontar ár ndualgais reachtúla Gaeilge ar fad. Is maith is eol dúinn na dualgais ar fad atá leagtha orainn agus tuigeann muid na bearta nach mór dúinn tabhairt fúthu chun na dualgais chéanna sin a chomhlíonadh. Rachfar i mbun na mbeart siúd, ní hamháin mar gheall gur gá, ach mar gheall gur mian leis an eagraíocht é sin a dhéanamh.

Cuireadh socruithe nua rialachais i bhfeidhm le déanaí chun tacú leis an eagraíocht a ndualgais i leith na Gaeilge a chomhlíonadh. Mar thoradh air sin, táthar ag dul i ngleic le ceisteanna a bhaineann leis an nGaeilge ag an leibhéal is airde laistigh den eagraíocht. Idir Bealtaine 2021 agus Eanáir 2022 bhí seacht gcruinniú ag an meitheal straitéiseach i leith na Gaeilge, leis an leas-choimisinéir mar chathaoirleach. Rinne Coimisinéir an Gharda cathaoirleacht ar chruinniú eile de chuid an ghrúpa rialachais Gaeilge.

Maidir leis an gceist atá á phlé anseo inniu i dtaobh ceapacháin chuig céim an tsáirsint, rinneadh leasuithe ar na rialacháin tar éis idirchaidreamh forleathan a idir an Roinn Dlí agus Cirt, an tSeirbhís um Cheapacháin Phoiblí agus An Garda Síochána, agus i gcomhairle leis an Údarás Póilíneachta agus cumainn An Gharda Síochána. Cé nach gá do chomhaltaí tabhairt faoi mheasúnú Gaeilge níos mó mar chuid den phróiseas ardaithe céime, caithfidh aon sáirsint ar mian leo a bheith ag fónamh i stáisiún Gaeltachta tabhairt faoi mheasúnú Gaeilge. Tá an measúnú seo i bhfad níos déine ná an scrúdú a cuireadh deireadh leis i mí Iúil. De réir polasaí a tugadh isteach in 2018, caithfidh aon chomhalta ar mian leo oibriú i gceantar Gaeltachta léiriú gur cainteoir líofa é nó í.

Maidir leis an gcritéar a bhain le hardú céime go céim an tsáirsint, rinne An Garda Síochána aighneachtaí go luath sa phróiseas go leanfaí leis an measúnú. Aontaíodh, áfach, tar éis idirchaidrimh, nár cheart go mbeadh cáilitheacht d'ardú céime go dtí céim an tsáirsint ag brath ar phas i dtástáil inniúlachta sa Ghaeilge mar chuid den phróiseas iomaíochta. Bhí sé seo bunaithe ar an tuiscint go bhfaigheann iontrálaithe nua ar fad oiliúint fhairsing, oiliúint sa Ghaeilge ina measc.

Bhí straitéis nua Gaeilge na heagraíochta le seoladh i mí na Nollag 2021 ach mar gheall ar na treoirilínte sláinte phoiblí, tógadh an cinneadh é sin a chur siar. Forbraíodh an straitéis tar éis dul i gcomhairle le póilíní sa Bhreatain Bheag agus bunaíodh í go príomha ar na dualgais reachtúla atá ar an eagraíocht. Cinnteoidh an straitéis, i measc rudaí eile, go mbeidh seirbhís iomlán as Gaeilge le fáil i ngach stáisiún Gaeltachta le himeacht ama. Aithníonn An Garda Síochána an tábhacht a bhaineann le pleanáil teanga sa Ghaeltacht agus i mbailte seirbhíse Gaeltachta agus rachfar i mbun comhairle le hoifigigh teanga agus le coistí pleanála teanga lena chinntiú go bhfuiltear ag freastal ar riachtanais an phobail sin. Tá liosta de 60 stáisiún Garda seirbhíse Gaeltachta curtha le chéile ag an eagraíocht, agus déanfar iniúchadh iomlán ar na scileanna teanga sna stáisiúin sin. Déanfar measúnú ar leibhéal na seirbhísí a theastaíonn agus socrófar céatadán de chomhaltaí a theastaíonn chun na seirbhísí sin a sholáthar, i ngnáth aonaid agus in aonaid speisialta.

Anuas ar an straitéis, seolfaidh An Garda Síochána tionscnamh go luath le tacú le húsáid na Gaeilge laistigh den eagraíocht agus sa phobal i gcoitinne. Go dtí seo, tá os cionn 1,000 pearsanra de chuid An Gharda Síochána tar éis síniú suas chun ceann de na fáinní Gaeilge a chaitheamh. Tá trí fháinne le fáil: fáinne óir, fáinne airgid agus fáinne cúpla focal, atá deartha go sonrath don Gharda Síochána i gcomhair le Conradh na Gaeilge. Caithfidh pearsanra i ngach céim laistigh den eagraíocht fáinne, ón gCoimisinéir anuas. Tá An Garda Síochána tío-

manta leanúint ar aghaidh ag neartú éiteas na heagraíochta i dtaobh na teanga agus tógáil ar an dea-obair atá curtha i gcrích le blianta beaga anuas.

Mr. Bob Collins: Gabhaim ár mbuíochas leis an gcoiste as an gcuireadh teacht i láthair inniu. Is achoimre an méid a bheidh le rá agam mar thús. Baineann sé leis an dá cheist atá faoi chaibidil, cé go n-aithnímid go mbeidh an coiste ag plé go seachtrach leo sin. Ní macalla ar thábhacht na gceisteanna é a laghad a bheidh le rá agam fúthu, ach léiriú ar an seasamh reachtúil difriúil atá ag an údarás ina dtaobh.

Tá fíis ag an Údarás Póilíneachta don Gharda Síochána go mbeidh seirbhís phóilíneachta ann a bheidh eiticiúil, éifeachtach, dírithe ar chearta an duine, go bhfuil muinín an phobail éagsúil inti agus sin tuillte aici. Maidir leis an gcaoi gur féidir le seirbhís phóilíneachta an mhuinín sin a thuilleamh, is tábhachtach go mbeadh sí á cur féin in oiriúint don éagsúlacht atá sa phobal ar a ndéanann sí freastal. Tá dhá chuid leis an gcur in oiriúint sin. Baineann sé i dtosach le seirbhís a sholáthar atá san airdeall maidir le riachtanais agus cearta an phobail, cúrsaí teanga san áireamh, ach seirbhís freisin a thagann oiread agus is féidir leis an daonra sin ó thaobh aicme, eitneachta, creidimh, gnéasachta agus araile. Is mó an mhuinín a bheidh ag an bpobal as an tseirbhís sa chás go mbeidh an tseirbhís phóilíneachta mar mhacalla ar réaltacht na ndaoine ar a ndéanann sí freastal, agus an oiread a bhfuil sí rannpháirteach agus tuisceanach ar an réaltacht sin.

Tá méadú ag teacht ar shaibhreas na héagsúlachta atá i ndaonra na hÉireann. In éineacht leis sin tá dúshlán don Gharda Síochána conas tabhairt faoi. Tá ceisteanna comhionannais agus cothroime ann. Ní féidir ídiú a dhéanamh ar dhualgais reatha chun freagairt don dúshlán nua seo. Tá oibleagáid sheasmhach ann, faoin dlí, freastal ar lucht labhartha na Gaeilge, go háirithe iad siúd sa Ghaeltacht, trí mheán na Gaeilge, agus tá sé de cheart acu rochtain a fháil ar sheirbhísí poiblí i nGaeilge. Tá reachtaíocht ann a dhéanann buanú ar an gceart sin.

Is úsáideach agus is tráthúil athscrúdú a dhéanamh ar bhearta a rinneadh le dea-thoil roinnt blianta ó shin agus measúnú á dhéanamh ar an oiread a d'éirigh leo an cuspóir a bhaint amach, agus ar an bhféidearthacht, thar am, go mbeadh siad ina gcúis le dálaí a chuirfeadh cosc ar an nGarda freagairt don saibhreas éagsúlachta sin. Is iomaí duine a bhfuil a saol agus a dteaghlach bunaithe sa tír seo agus ar mhian leo dul isteach sa tseirbhís phóilíneachta ach go bhfuil baic rompu. Níor chóir go mbainfí den dualgas seirbhís a chur ar fáil trí Ghaeilge le hiarracht a chinntiú gur féidir leis An nGarda Síochána freagairt do phobal éagsúil a bhfuil riachtanas acu freisin seirbhís a fháil a thagann lena n-eispéireas féin. Is é an dúshlán atá os comhair An Gharda Síochána anois ná fiosrú a dhéanamh faoi na bearta eile a bheidh riachtanach agus a bheidh in ann freagairt a chur ar fáil de réir na gcearta agus na ndualgas sin atá sainmhínithe sa dlí, agus ag an am céanna freagairt don daonra atá ag athrú agus leas a bhaint as an bhfreagairt sin chun a sochar féin.

I bhfocail eile, an dá bhunphrionsabal atá againn sa chás seo ná ceist an chomhionannais agus an t-éagsúlacht agus ilchineálacht atá sa daonra i láthair na huaire. Dar linne, is féidir leis an ngobadán an dá thrá seo a fhreastal. Beidh muid sásta freagraí a thabhairt ar cheisteanna amach anseo.

Mr. Liam Sinclair: Tuigeann an tSeirbhís um Cheapacháin Phoiblí go mbaineann an cheist rialála seo le scrúdú inniúlachta béil sa Ghaeilge a leagadh síos i leagan níos luaithe de na rialacháin ardaithe céime maidir le sáirsintí agus cigirí sa Gharda Síochána ó 2006. Ní raibh baint ag an tSeirbhís um Cheapacháin Phoiblí le comórtais ardaithe céime go céim an tsáirsint agus céim an chigire, a réachtáil An Garda Síochána go himmheánach de réir na rialachán a luadh

thuas, sa tréimhse 2006-21.

Chairman: Níl aon ráiteas tosaigh againn ón Roinn Dlí agus Cirt ach b'fhéidir go bhfuil Doncha O'Sullivan ag iarraidh rud éigin a rá.

Mr. Doncha O'Sullivan: Tá an-áthas orainn bheith anseo chun cuidiú leis an gcoiste. Tá ráiteas oscailte ullmhaithe againn don dara seisiún ach níl ceann agam don chéad seisiún. Táimid sásta aon cheisteanna a fhreagairt ach beidh orainn iad a fhreagairt as Béarla.

Chairman: É sin ráite, tá sé oscailte do na comhaltaí ceisteanna a chur.

Deputy Pa Daly: Tá an cheist seo do Eimear Ní Cheallaigh nó Anne Marie McMahon. Bhí an Coimisinéir, Drew Harris, os comhair an choiste an bhliain seo caite. Dúirt sé linn go raibh sé ar intinn aige an Ghaolainn a neartú agus rudaí mar sin. Ina dhiaidh sin, tharla an cruinniú agus beartaíodh ann go raibh na rialacha a luaigh siad le hathrú. B'fhéidir gur féidir le Doncha O'Sullivan freagra a thabhairt air sin freisin. Nuair a chuaigh siad isteach sa chruinniú, céarbh é nó í an duine a mhol don chruinniú na rialacha a athrú? Conas a tharla sé sa chruinniú gur bheartaíodh na rialacha sin a athrú?

Ms Anne Marie McMahon: In terms of the working group, I was not personally represented. An Garda Síochána was represented. I understand that representative was Mr. Alan Mulligan who was the then acting head of human resources and people development. He was the organisational representative. On how the decision was arrived at-----

Deputy Pa Daly: Was that HR in An Garda Síochána?

Ms Anne Marie McMahon: Yes. On how this decision was arrived at or what the inputs were, I cannot elaborate as I was not there. On the Commissioner's appearance before this committee last May and his commitment to strengthen the Irish language, I submit that he has made extensive efforts to progress that. Since then, as outlined in the opening statement, there is a strategic Irish language group he chairs. There is a working group that I chair. That has sat seven times since its inception. We have developed our Irish language strategy and implementation plan. That was due to be launched prior to Christmas but we had to postpone it because of Covid. The plan is to launch it during the two-week Seachtain na Gaeilge. That is a very significant development.

There are many actions in the plan that aim to increase the awareness of Irish language in the organisation as well as support and underpin our statutory obligations in terms of the Irish language. It also recognises that the Irish language is very much a community language. It contains three different pillars: recruitment and workforce planning, which is about our staffing and how we make sure the Gaeltacht areas are sufficiently staffed with people who are sufficiently trained and meet the standard of fluency required; Irish language development and awareness raising, which takes on many forms, including the development of online courses, one of which has already been done, in addition to supporting people if they want to go to external service providers to upskill etc.; and the fáinne, which comprises three strands, including everything from the cúpla focal all the way to the gold fáinne. These are initiatives in the strategy and they illustrate the organisation and the Commissioner's desire, understanding of the obligations, and commitment in progressing the Irish language.

In addition, there is the Irish language promotion and engagement. In so far as the Irish language is a community language, we want it to be a community language within An Garda Síochána as well. That is one of the reasons the cúpla focal fáinne came into being. There was

an understanding and acceptance that many of us had quite a lot of vocabulary but perhaps did not have the confidence to engage and use it and improve. That commitment is from recruit gardaí all the way to the Garda Commissioner and Garda staff throughout the organisation. There is no doubting the commitment of the organisation and the Commissioner in meeting our obligations in terms of the Irish language.

Mr. Doncha O’Sullivan: The change we are talking about today forms one part of a very large package of change in the regulations governing the appointments to the ranks of sergeant and inspector. Following a series of studies, reviews and reports, the consultation surrounding that new package has been going on for a number of years with extensive engagement, as has been said, with the various stakeholders in the policing administration, including the Garda Commissioner, his representatives, the Policing Authority, and Garda associations. There has also been input from the Public Appointments Service, PAS, on some aspects of the process but not the aspect we are discussing today because PAS will not be involved in managing the test as it will no longer exist.

That process went on for a number of years and culminated last summer in the making of regulations, which is a ministerial power under the Garda Síochána Act and which needs to be done with the approval of the Government after consulting the Garda Commissioner and the Policing Authority. That was the decision train. When one looks at the regulations, there is an extensive range of changes around all aspects of the promotion process. It was very significant change and this forms one part of it. It was a lengthy and complex process of consultation.

Chairman: Sula ligimid an Teachta isteach, an bhfuil aon duine eile ag iarraidh teacht isteach ar an gceist seo? Luadh sa mhéid a dúradh go raibh baint ní hamháin ag an Roinn agus An Garda Síochána ach ag an tSeirbhís um Ceapacháin Phoiblí, an tÚdarás Póilíneachta agus cumainn An Gharda Síochána chomh maith leis an gcinneadh seo.

Mr. Bob Collins: Bhí ról ag an Údarás Póilíneachta sa mhéid is go raibh gá leis an Roinn dul i gcomhairle leis an údarás sula cuireadh aon athruithe i bhfeidhm sa chóras rialacháin seo. Pléadh an cheist siar in 2018, más buan mo chuimhne. Ag an am, ba mhó an bhéim a bhí á chur ar chuid de na hathruithe eile sna rialacháin seachas ar an gceist áirithe seo.

Cé nár mhaith liom labhairt go hiomlán ar son na gcomhaltaí an údaráis a bhí in oifig ag an am, mar is iomaí athrú atá tagtha ar dhéanamh an údaráis san idirlinn, ba é an dearcadh a bhí agam féin ag an am ná dá mba rud é go raibh aon fhianaise ann go raibh an chuid sin a bhí le baint ó na rialacháin ag tacú le caighdeán na seirbhísí a bhí á chur ar fáil ar fud na tíre, b’fhéidir go ndéanfaí argóint níos láidre in a thaobh. Ní dóigh liom go raibh aon fhianaise den saghas sin ar fáil. Ar shlí, b’fhéidir go dtagann an pointe sin níos cuimsithí i gceist sa dara hábhar atá le plé ag an gcoiste.

Chairman: An bhfuil freagra ag an Seirbhís um Cheapacháin Phoiblí? Luadh go raibh an tseirbhís ar chaidreamh forleathan idir é agus An Garda Síochána, an Roinn Dlí agus Cirt, agus araile.

Ms Shirley Comerford: We do have a relationship with the Garda and the Department of Justice because we are obviously the primary recruitment operator for the civil and public service. On this particular question, as Mr. O’Sullivan said, the new regulations are very wide reaching and there have been a number of changes. One of the changes is that the Public Appointments Service will support An Garda Síochána in its internal promotion process. The important thing, particularly in respect of this particular topic, is that the eligibility to compete

is a matter for An Garda Síochána. While we would administer the mechanics of a recruitment process, the eligibility criteria are assessed by An Garda Síochána. We do not, therefore, have a role in that part of the process.

Chairman: Is í an cheist a chuir an Teachta ná cén uair a glacadh an cinneadh agus cén ról a bhí ag gach eagrais maidir leis an gcinneadh, ní maidir leis an toradh, mar tá a fhios againn faoin toradh. An raibh an tSeirbhís um Cheapacháin Phoiblí páirteach ann mar dúirt na heagrais eile go raibh siad ina gcuid den chomhrá faoin athrú? Tá sé ráite go raibh an tSeirbhís um Cheapacháin Phoiblí páirteach sa chomhrá faoin athrú seo, ach an fíor sin?

Ms Shirley Comerford: To explain briefly, our role in the new regulations was in the administration of a new process whereby we would normally handle all of the public recruitment. We do not usually get involved in internal promotions. We have had ongoing discussions with An Garda Síochána. On foot of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland's position, there was a sense that we needed to look at the promotion process more so than the eligibility piece. We went in and worked with An Garda Síochána to do an assessment of the competencies required for the role of modern policing. We designed a process for this and supported the organisation by running its internal promotion processes for it. The issue of eligibility was not part of that discussion.

Chairman: Glaoim ar an Teachta arís.

Deputy Pa Daly: Tá Shirley Comerford ag rá gur tháinig an eligibility ón nGarda Síochána féin. Is it the case that An Garda Síochána decided on that itself?

Ms Shirley Comerford: There was ongoing discussion with all parties involved. I was not privy to the discussion in respect of who made that exact decision and I cannot answer that. From the Public Appointments Service's perspective, this was not something we would have sought or around which we would have felt particularly strongly. We can understand the rationale and perspective that was put forward to us in that regard. Mr. Collins covered this quite well in his submission, as did Ms McMahon. It was about ensuring there is an aspiration that the people who work in the public sector are reflective of the society of which they are members. In that vein and certainly from our perspective we would not have an issue and do not see this as diminishing-----

Deputy Pa Daly: Míneoidh mé an méid atá mé ag iarraidh a fháil amach. I ngach Dáil, Seanad nó coiste, tagann iarratais nó moltaí - applications or proposals - chun go ndéanfaí rialacha a athrú. B'éigean do dhuine amháin é sin a lua. An bhfuil a fhios ag na finnétithe cé a thug an t-iarratas seo isteach do dtí an cruinniú? Who proposed the rule change?

Ms Shirley Comerford: I do not know.

Deputy Pa Daly: An bhfuil aon duine sa seomra seo a bhí ag an gcruinniú sin agus a bheadh in ann an cheist sin a fhreagairt?

Chairman: An mbeadh Doncha O'Sullivan sásta an cheist sin a fhreagairt?

Mr. Doncha O'Sullivan: The most straightforward thing I can say is that these are regulations made by the Minister, and after having complied with the statutory requirement to consult An Garda Síochána and the Policing Authority, they are approved by the Government. That is the decision trail. Clearly, anything that proceeds to the Government from the Minister will do so on foot of a memo our Department has prepared in which the various issues that arise are set

out. As has been said, there were a great many issues involved in bringing forward this change and that would have been set out as part of its proposal. The authority to do this is a ministerial one under the Garda Síochána Act. The decision is then made by the Government, essentially, if that makes sense.

Deputy Pa Daly: Tá a fhios agam go ndéanann an Rialtas an beartas ach conas a thuirling sé sin isteach do dtí an cruinniú agus go dtí an Rialtas? Was it a proposal from the Department or from An Garda Síochána? Who proposed it?

Mr. Doncha O’Sullivan: The proposal would have emerged from the discussions around 2018 that Mr. Collins has referred to when policy options were put on the table. This was identified as the preferred approach along with a whole range of other changes. Further details were teased out over the subsequent years which did not, in the main, relate to this question. The ultimate power to make these regulations is a ministerial one. The proposals are brought forward by the Department to the Government on behalf of the Minister.

Deputy Pa Daly: The proposal came then from the Department itself.

Mr. Doncha O’Sullivan: It emerged from discussions which the Department was having with the various parties. Our analysis was certainly related to the work that was being done around the competencies as described to identify how one might best select supervisors and managers in An Garda Síochána. This requirement did not seem to fit within that set of criteria which one might consider to be critical.

Deputy Pa Daly: An raibh aon pháipéar iarratais, proposal paper nó discussion paper prepared? Is there one?

Mr. Doncha O’Sullivan: There are a range of internal papers and I am not aware of any public paper on that.

Deputy Pa Daly: Tá ceist dheireanach agam do Anne Marie McMahon, más féidir liom. Nuair a d’fhreastail Coimisinéir na nGardaí ar an gcomhchoiste, luaigh Anne Marie McMahon na rudaí iontacha atá ag tarlú agus atá á ndéanamh ag An nGarda Síochána maidir leis na fáinní, etc. Is é an príomhrud a bhí á rá ag an gCoimisinéir ansin ná go raibh An Garda Síochána os comhair coiste dlí de réir éileamh an Choimisinéara Teanga mar gheall ar ghardaí a bheith líofa sa Ghaeilge agus iad ar dualgas sa Ghaeltacht. Céard iad na hathruithe atá déanta ag Coimisinéir na nGardaí ón uair a bhí an Coimisinéir istigh anseo linn chun a chinntiú go mbeadh gach comhalta den Gharda atá ag obair sa Ghaeltacht líofa nó proficient sa Ghaeilge chun a gcuid oibre a dhéanamh?

Ms Anne Marie McMahon: This is very much a work in progress and the work is not complete. There are many steps, however, that have been taken and I have outlined the development of the strategy which will be the cornerstone of how we progress, develop and achieve our statutory obligations on the proficiency of all Garda members and those who are serving in the Gaeltacht areas. I would point to that as one of the key pieces of work that has been achieved since the most recent visit of the Commissioner here.

In addition to that, it is important to point out that one of the key recommendations - and this has happened since last May - of An Coimisinéir Teanga was the establishment of an assessment within the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages whereby we could stand over the actual standard of Irish. That was developed in 2018 but the assessment was conducted with all of those serving in the Gaeltacht stations in 2020. That is a significant

step in having an organisational picture of the standard of Irish available to the public in the Gaeltacht areas. In addition, we have identified 60 stations we would call Gaeltacht service stations. They are not in the Gaeltacht but are used by people in the Gaeltacht areas. We aim to increase the proficiency of Irish in those areas as well.

There is not a clean sentence, if I can put it that way, in terms of whether we are achieving all our milestones. We are working very hard on them and are committed to continue this work. The fact the Commissioner is chairing the strategic group is an indication of his commitment to the Irish language and the very robust statutory obligations with which we have to comply. It is not an easy fix. We have the Irish language stream, which did not yield the results we would have liked, but there is also work for us to ensure all those who come through the Irish stream go to the Gaeltacht stations. We very much need to keep that work on the clár.

Our recruitment campaign will be launched next week which will have an Irish stream. We will engage in extensive outreach across the board in terms of that campaign but the Irish stream will be a particular focus. We have numerous ads. Some of our Gaeilgeoir colleagues will hold information sessions and there is an extensive outreach programme in the hope we attract as many people as possible who are able to speak the language fluently.

Later on this year, we will have a reserve competition that will, for the first time, as far as I am aware, focus on attracting reserve candidates from the Gaeltacht areas by using that outreach initiative. There are many moving parts and work going on, but we have a hill to climb and there is no getting away from that.

Deputy Pa Daly: An mbeidh an feachtas earcaíochta ag teacht go ginearálta, nó don Ghaolainn-----

Ms Anne Marie McMahon: Generally, but there will be an Irish stream, the same as heretofore.

Deputy Aindrias Moynihan: Tá scata ceisteanna agam agus d'fhéadfadh cuid acu a bheith níos oiriúnaí don dara seisiún agus tá overlap go leor ann chomh maith. Má tá siad oiriúnach don cheann eile, b'fhéidir go dtabharfadh an Cathaoirleach treoir dom. Gabhaim buíochas leis na finnétithe as a gcur i láthair. Baineann mo chéad cheist le gach aon duine. An nglacann siad leis go bhfuil an chuma ar an gcinneadh seo gur ísliú céime atá ann don Ghaolainn? Is ceist é sin i gcomhair gach grúpa. Is é sin an dearcadh atá ag go leor Gaeilgeoirí. Cad é tuairim na bhfinnétithe air?

Thuig mé go raibh an-chuid plé anonn agus anall ar feadh i bhfad chun teacht ar an gcinneadh seo. Cén stádas a bhí ann mí Bhealtaine seo caite nuair a tháinig an Coimisinéir os comhair an choiste? Cad iad na céimeanna bhí bainte amach faoin tráth sin? Cad iad na céimeanna a bhí fágtha? Thuig mé go mbeadh cinneadh tugtha os comhair an Aire agus bhord an Rialtais ach roimhe sin bheadh an-chuid taighde déanta agus bheifí tar éis féachaint ar roghanna eile. Cén taighde a rinneadh air seo? Cad iad na torthaí ar thángthas orthu maidir leis sin? Cad iad na roghanna ar féachadh orthu chun feabhas a chur ar chúrsaí?

Bhí straitéis An Gharda Síochána maidir leis an teanga le foilsiú roimh an Nollaig. Thuig mé nach raibh sé sin foilsithe toisc na srianta Covid. Tá na srianta imithe anois, áfach. Caithfidh go raibh sé ullamh faoin tráth sin agus, mar sin, tá sé ullamh anois. Cad é an mhoill? Cathain a bheidh sé sin foilsithe? Cad é an clár ama atá leagtha amach ansin?

Chairman: Tugadh freagra ar an gceist dheireanach roimhe seo. Ligfidh mé d'Anne Marie

McMahon freagra a thabhairt arís maidir le foilsíú na straitéise. Cuireadh roinnt de na ceisteanna sin ar gach duine. Tosóidh mé leis an Roinn Dlí agus Cirt.

Mr. Doncha O’Sullivan: The questions mainly pointed towards us were those around the process and the implications for Irish language speakers. There was certainly no intention to slight Irish language speakers or to undermine the efforts of the Commissioner to improve the ability to provide language services, broadly. The bulk of the work that was done around this concern-----

Deputy Aindrias Moynihan: An nglacfadh Doncha O’Sullivan leis go raibh an chosúlacht air gurb ísliú céime a bhí ann?

Mr. Doncha O’Sullivan: I accept that I have seen people say they thought it was. That in itself is a concern and one I recognise. The core of this set of regulations is an attempt to identify selection techniques which will assist An Garda Síochána in identifying future supervisors and managers. The work was all around looking at what one test for and look for. The conclusion which was arrived at was that having an Irish test score slightly higher than that required to be a Garda in the first place was not central to the decision as to whether a person would make a good supervisor or manager. That was the analysis.

The essence of the new regulation is all about making the promotion process better, on the one hand, for the organisation in order that it knows it can select the best people for the jobs and, on the other hand, for the applicants to have very clear criteria they understand and which are clearly linked to the needs of what is a very important role in An Garda Síochána.

I understand the point the Deputy made about slighting the language and that was certainly not the intent. As the Deputy Commissioner has said, a very significant volume of work is under way in An Garda Síochána to address the question of language service provision, which has the full support of the Department and the Minister. We hope we could point to that as evidence of our good faith with regard to the status of the Irish language.

Chairman: An bhfuil aon duine eile ag iarraidh freagra a thabhairt?

Ms Anne Marie McMahon: In terms of the perceived demotion of the language in the context of the change in regulation, it is important to point out that while it is not part of the eligibility criteria, if a sergeant is assigned to a Gaeltacht area, he or she has to undergo an assessment of a much higher standard than the 50% pass rate required as part of the eligibility criteria. That assessment is the same as the one I spoke about just a few minutes ago in terms of the implementation of the recommendation by the Coimisinéir Teanga to set robust standards for how we measure the ability to speak Irish of those to be stationed in Gaeltacht areas. I would argue that the standard will increase for those stationed in particular areas because they will not be assigned there unless they reach that standard.

With regard to our appearance here in May and the change in regulations, it was an omission on our part that we did not address that at that point in time. The focus of the discussion on that date was the report of the Coimisinéir Teanga and our focus, or lack thereof, on meeting those recommendations. It certainly was not on the agenda for that meeting and at that point in time, most of us attending were not aware of the change or privy to the finer points of any discussion around the Irish language. I apologise for that. On reflection, it is something that should have surfaced.

The strategy is ready. As I have said already, we plan to launch that during Seachtain na

Gaeilge, in addition to launching the fáinne.

Chairman: Luaigh an Teachta Ó Muimhneacháin taighde agus na roghanna eile. Cad é an taighde a bhí taobh thiar den chinneadh a glacadh? Nuair a dhéantar athrú bíonn fáth ann, nó figiúirí nó duine éigin ag rá go bhfuil an riail ag cur baic ar sháirsintí a fháil nó a leithéid. Glacaim gur sin a bhí i gceist ag an Teachta.

Deputy Aindrias Moynihan: Sea, tá an ceart ag an gCathaoirleach. An bhféadfadh na finnétithe soiléiriú a thabhairt maidir le pé taighde a bhí ann agus na torthaí a bhí air? Baineann an cheist mar gheall ar an dearcadh le gach grúpa, an tÚdarás Póilíneachta ina measc. An nglacann an t-údarás leis go bhfuil an cuma air go bhfuil ísliú céime á thabhairt don Ghaolainn dá bharr an t-athrú sin? Iarraim faoin bpas chomh maith.

Chairman: Roimh a fhreagraíonn na finnétithe é sin, an raibh aon duine anseo bainteach leis na comhráite faoin athrú seo? Tá Anne Marie McMahon tar éis a rá nach raibh sise ar an eolas agus ní raibh Bob Collins ar an eolas ach an oiread. Ní fiú dúinn na ceisteanna seo a chur mura bhfuil duine éigin anseo a ghlac an cinneadh nó go bhfuil an t-eolas acu conas mar a thángthas ar an gcinneadh seo agus cad air a raibh an cinneadh bunaithe.

Mr. Doncha O'Sullivan: I do not have any personal recollection of it myself but from reviewing the papers there were a series of reports over a number of years looking at how to better structure the promotion competition within An Garda Síochána. A great deal of research was done around that. From my review of it, that does not include a huge analysis of the language question. By its absence, I think the process was identifying what is needed to identify whether supervisors could be good at their job and what skills and competencies were needed. In that work, having a slightly better Irish language skills than those needed to become a garda in the first place was not identified as a need. That said, we recognise what the Deputy has said about the need for those skills in some parts of the country and there is a separate track for that. I cannot point to any particular research on the subject of the language per se but the decision was a consequence of the core analysis of the supervisory competencies required for this role. Similar changes have been made to the promotion process for the more senior ranks, although I am not aware that there was ever an Irish language requirement for those ranks. There certainly is not now. Again, there are similar promotion competitions around the public service generally. Other than where there is a very specific job that clearly requires Irish on some regular basis, I am not aware of other promotion competitions in which we require somebody to demonstrate a language skill alongside the general competencies for the supervisory role.

Deputy Aindrias Moynihan: Is dóigh liom go mbaineann an cheist maidir le héagsúlacht leis an dara seisiún.

Chairman: Fágfaimid go dtí sin é.

Deputy Catherine Connolly: Chun soiléiriú a fháil, seo an chéad seisiún agus táimid ag díriú isteach ar rud amháin, sin ardú céime.

Chairman: Táimid ag breathnú ar cheist an tsáirsint.

Deputy Catherine Connolly: Tá fáilte roimh na finnétithe. B'fhéidir go méadóidh mo thuiscint ar an méid atá tarlaithe de réir a chéile acu tá mé beagán measctha. Tá na ráitis go léir léite agam. Ar phléigh An Garda Síochána an rialachán seo leis an gCoimisinéir Teanga? Níl a fhios agam cén duine is feiliúnaí chun an cheist sin a fhreagairt. Mar chomhthéacs nó cúlra ar an ndíospóireacht seo, bhí an Coimisinéir Teanga os ár gcomhair maidir leis An nGarda Síochána.

na. Cloisim Anne Marie McMahon agus cuirim fáilte roimh an méid a dúirt sí, gur míthuiscint a bhí ann nó go ndearna siad botún beag. Tá sé sin déanta agus níor cuireadh an t-eolas seo os ár gcomhair. An raibh an Coimisinéir Teanga ar an eolas faoin athrú seo? Nuair a bhí an cruinniú sin againne, bhí sé bunaithe ar an gcéim dheireanach a bhí ar an gCoimisinéir Teanga a thógáil, sé sin, an tuarascáil a leagadh os comhair na Dála. Sin rud neamhghnách. Chuir seisean an tuarascáil sin i gcomhthéacs dúinn agus dúirt sé go raibh air an chéim dheireanach sin a thógáil mar, de réir mo thuisceana, bhí sárú dlí i gceist. Sin an comhthéacs. Tá an chosúlacht air go bhfuil ísliú céime á dtógáil don Ghaeilge ó thaobh ardú céime de. An raibh an Coimisinéir Teanga ar an eolas faoin athrú sa rialachán seo? An raibh an Garda Síochána i dteagmháil leis?

Mr. Doncha O’Sullivan: The Coimisinéir Teanga was not consulted in connection with the making of the regulations.

Deputy Catherine Connolly: Go raibh míle maith agat as ucht d’ionracais agus freagra díreach a thabhairt. Is mór an trua nach raibh, go háirithe i gcomhthéacs an chúlra atá leagtha amach agam.

Chairman: Tá ceist amháin agam agus b’fhéidir go bhfuil an freagra tugtha cheana féin. Fuair muid litir ó Choimisinéir an Gharda Síochána ar an 17 Eanáir. Deir sé beagnach an méid céanna atá ráite sa ráiteas tosaigh ach sa litir sin deir sé go ndearna An Garda Síochána cinneadh go luath sa phróiseas gur cheart go bhfanfadh an riachtanas gan athrú. Sin An Garda Síochána ag rá linn nach raibh siadsan ag lorg athrú sa phróiseas ó thaobh sáirsint de. Beidh orainn teacht ar ais aige seo agus tá cuireadh tugtha againn don Aire Dlí agus Cirt teacht os ár gcomhair. Tá duine éigin, dream éigin nó dreamanna éigin tar éis athrú a lorg agus tá an t-athrú sin déanta ag an bpointe seo. Tá muidne ag iarraidh teacht ar cén fáth go ndearnadh an t-athrú, cé a lorg an t-athrú agus, mar a dúirt an Teachta Ó Muimhneacháin, cén duine nó cén taighde ar a raibh sé bunaithe. An raibh fadhb ann nach raibh muid ag fáil go leor sáirsintí toisc an riachtanas Gaeilge nó an é go raibh easpa sáirsintí ann? I mo cheantar féin, agus ní ceantar Gaeltachta é, ní raibh go leor sáirsintí sna stáisiúin Gharda chun na gardaí nua a bhí earcaithe a thraenáil, toisc go raibh an bord snip i bhfeidhm sa tír ar feadh tréimhse fhada agus gur chuir sé sin fadhbanna áirithe ar An nGarda Síochána. Sa chás seo, go bhfios dom, ní raibh aon fhadhb nó aon easpa nó bac ann ó thaobh An Garda Síochána maidir le sáirsint a earcú nó ardú céime a thabhairt dóibh toisc an Ghaeilge agus go raibh go leor daoine ann. Níl a fhios agam an bhfuil an ceart agam ansin.

Nuair a chríochnaíonn muid leis sin, tógfaimid sos agus ina dhiaidh sin déileálfaimid leis an gcéad ábhar eile. An bhfuil a fhios ag aon duine an raibh bac ann nó nach raibh?

Ms Anne Marie McMahon: I will have to answer that question in a general sense as opposed to specifically about Irish speaking sergeants. There was a revision, as was already alluded to, of the regulations regarding promotion to the rank of sergeant. That took considerable time. In fact, it is over three years since we had a competition. We are currently in the process and are almost at the end of the first phase of the first batch of sergeants. They will come on stream in the next week or so, or imminently in any event. In terms of recruiting sergeants who specifically speak Irish, to the best of my knowledge, that was not an issue and it was not a driving force in the changes that emerged.

Chairman: Muna bhfuil aon duine eile ag iarraidh-----

Deputy Aindrias Moynihan: An bhféadfainn ceist amháin a chur? Cén fhadhb a bhí á iarraidh a dheisiú nó a cheartú leis an athrú seo?

Chairman: An bhfuil a fhios ag aon duine cén fhadhb a bhí ann? No. Ciúnas. Níl a fhios againn cad í an fhadhb.

Deputy Aindrias Moynihan: Tá freagra an-ghlórmar sa chiúnas sin.

Chairman: Tá siad ag teacht anois. Tabhair deis do Anne Marie McMahon.

Ms Anne Marie McMahon: I am not sure this will completely answer the question, but I am aware that in the early stages of the deliberations, An Garda Síochána made a submission to retain the existing regulations as they were. However, over time and as the discussion evolved, the consensus was to change. That is my understanding of the process, having not been part of it.

Mr. Doncha O'Sullivan: To go back on this for the Deputy, what was taking place here was a complete change of the promotion regulations. There were a lot of problems with the promotion regulations. When we came to do all the review work and build the new regulations, we built them on an objective basis on grounds that are linked to the skills one needs to be a good supervisor. I am not aware that anyone particularly felt the Irish language requirement was acting as a barrier to people going forward. One could construct scenarios where perhaps there may be people who might be dissuaded if their Irish was good enough to meet the basic standard but not the 50%. The reality is that there would probably be very few people in that mix. The point is that in a contemporary promotion competition process, the competency criteria we think are essential to general supervisory work are included, noting that there are some parts of the country where specialist skills will be needed. In general, one is looking to hire good supervisors based on the competencies that pertain to that sort of work. That is essentially the problem that was looking to be solved.

Mr. Bob Collins: Ní theastaíonn uaim cur le fad an chruinnithe ach fós féin, ar mhaithe le seasamh an údaráis a shoiléiriú, ní miste liom cúpla focal gairid a rá ag an bpointe seo. Mar a dúirt mé ní ba luaithe, pléadh é seo leis an údarás in 2018. Rud a bhí iomlán fíor ag an am go dtí gur athraíodh an córas rialála ná go raibh géarghá le hathrú sa chóras rialúcháin mar bhí sé as dáta agus ní raibh sé in oiriúint don saol ina mairimid. Ba é sin an bhéim. Bhí an t-údarás ag éileamh na n-athruithe sa chóras earcaíochta agus an córas a ba chóir a bheith i bhfeidhm nuair a bhí daoine ag lorg ardú céime. Ní raibh polasaí ag an údarás i dtaobh an riachtanas go mbeadh 50% faighte sa scrúdú Gaeilge. Níorbh é sin cúram an údaráis nó an rud ba mhó a bhí ag déanamh tinnis dúinn sa mhéid go rabhamar ag díriú ar an mbunstruchtúir, na bunrialacháin agus an gá atá le hathrú bunúsach a dhéanamh orthu.

An dara rud, is é dearcadh pearsanta é. Pé fadhb a bhí ann, níorbh éinne ag iarraidh í a dheisiú, chun focail an Teachta Ó Muimhneacháin a úsáid. Níorbh í an fhadhb ba mhó i gcás freastal ceart cuí a chur ar fáil don phobal i nGaeilge. Níor chuidigh sé agus ní dóigh liom go gcabhródh sé dá bhfágfaí an chuid seo den rialachán gan athrú le forbairt nó le feabhsú ar an seirbhíse atá á chur ar fáil. Mar a dúirt an leas-coimisinéir, agus tá a fhios agam ó mo chomhráite leis an gCoimisinéir - ní sa cheist áirithe seo atá á phlé ag an gcoiste ach atá ag eascairt ó thuarascáil an Choimisinéara - aithníonn An Garda Síochána go bhfuil géarghá le feabhas a chur ar an bhfreastal atá á dhéanamh i gcoitinne agus go háirithe sa Ghaeltacht. Bheadh i bhfad níos mó fianaise ag teastáil le bheith cinnte go mbeadh aon laghdú ag eascairt as an athrú seo nó go mbeadh aon fheabhsú ann dá bhfágfaí an píosa rialacháin seo gan athrú. Ní dóigh liom go raibh baint dá laghad aige le caighdeán na seirbhíse a bhí á chur ar fáil ag an am. Ní ann a bhí an fhadhb, i mo thuairimse.

Chairman: Cuirfimid an cruinniú ar fionraí ar feadh sos deich nó 15 nóiméad má tá daoine ag iarraidh dul go dtí an leithreas nó a leithéid. Níl a fhios agam an bhfuil cead acu cupán caife a fháil fiú a thuilleadh.

Deputy Catherine Connolly: Le masc is dócha.

Chairman: Caithfidh siad masc a chaitheamh agus iad ag bogadh timpeall.

Chuaigh an suí ar fionraí ar 2.37 p.m. agus cuireadh tús leis arís ar 2.53 p.m.

Chairman: Táimid ag tosú arís. Is é seo an dara cuid de chruinniú an lae inniu agus tá na finnétithe a bhí anseo níos luaithe ar ais linn i seomra an choiste. Déileálfaimid anois leis an dara ábhar a bhí againn maidir leis an gcinneadh Rialtais nach mbeadh an Ghaeilge riachtanach níos mó ag baill den Gharda Síochána. Cuirim an cheist cé a rinne an cinneadh sin agus cén fáth nár cuireadh an cinneadh in iúl dúinn ag an gcruinniú an 2 Bealtaine anuraidh? Iarraim ar Doncha O’Sullivan, thar ceann na Roinne Dlí agus Cirt, a ráiteas tosaigh a dhéanamh.

Mr. Doncha O’Sullivan: Go raibh maith agat arís, a Chathaoirligh. Ba mhaith liom mo bhuíochas a ghabháil arís leis an gcoiste as an deis chun labhairt libh go léir inniu maidir leis na riachtanais teanga d’earcaigh nua chuig An nGarda Síochána.

Beidh an comórtas earcaíochta seo romhainn i gcomhair ball den Gharda Síochána faoi rialú ag Rialacháin an Gharda Síochána (Ligean Isteach agus Ceapacháin), 2021. Is rialacháin iad sin a thug an tAire Dlí agus Cirt isteach tar éis don Rialtas iad a fhorhmeas, i mí na Nollag seo caite. Leis na rialacháin sin, tugtar isteach roinnt athruithe ar Rialacháin an Gharda Síochána (Ligean Isteach agus Ceapacháin), 2013.

Ceann de na hathruithe sin ná deireadh a chur leis an riachtanas go mbeadh inniúlacht in dhá theanga ag iarratasóirí. Ciallaíonn sé sin, i gcomhair chomórtas earcaíochta 2022, agus i gcomhair comórtas earcaíochta ina dhiaidh sin, nach foláir d’iarratasóirí chuig An nGarda Síochána a bheith inniúil sa Bhéarla nó sa Ghaeilge – faoi mar nárbh fholáir dóibh a bheith roimhe seo – ach ní bheidh aon riachtanas ann a bheith inniúil i ndara teanga. Ní hamhlaidh gur ceanglaíodh le rialacháin 2013 ar iarrthóirí a bheith inniúil i nGaeilge.

Bhíothas tar éis a aithint go bhféadfadh an riachtanas maidir leis an dá theanga a bheith ina bhac ar dhul isteach sna Gardaí ó roinnt grúpaí daoine agus, dá dheasca sin, go bhféadfadh sé bheith ina bhac ar an eagraíocht a bheith ina léiriú iomlán ar an bpobal éagsúil dá bhfónann sí.

Thug an Coimisiún um Thodhchaí na Póilíneachta in Éirinn dá aire gur sócmhainn ríthábhachtach d’aon eagraíocht a fhéachann le bheith nuálach agus solúbtha atá san éagsúlacht. Tá an éagsúlacht a mhéadú agus Gardaí á n-earcú ag teacht le gealltanais faoin gclár Rialtais agus faoi straitéis agus plean gníomhaíochta An Gharda Síochána um chomhionannas, éagsúlacht agus cuimsiú.

Ar ndóigh, áirítear daoine agus pobail a labhraíonn Gaeilge san éagsúlacht sin. Mar sheirbhís náisiúnta póilínithe, tá An Garda Síochána tiomanta i gcónaí don Ghaeilge. Faoi mar a luadh ag an gcéad seisiún, tá straitéis nua Gaeilge forbartha ag An nGarda Síochána, agus seolfar í go luath sa bhliain seo. Tá mar aidhm leis an straitéis seirbhísí Gaeilge a neartú laistigh den phóilíneacht in Éirinn. Ábhair a bhaineann le Coimisinéir na nGardaí atá i mionsonraí na hoibre sin, ach tá an Roinn Dlí agus Cirt ag tacú go hiomlán leis an obair sin.

Go raibh maith agaibh. Mar a dúirt mé níos luaithe, táimid sásta aon cheisteanna a fhre-

agairt a bheidh ag baill an choiste anois. Gabhaim buíochas leis an gCathaoirleach.

Chairman: Gabhaim buíochas le Doncha O’Sullivan agus iarraim anois ar Eimear Ní Cheallaigh labhairt thar ceann An Gharda Síochána lena dara ráiteas.

Ms Eimear Ní Cheallaigh: Gabhaim buíochas leis an gCathaoirleach. Maidir leis an gceist atá á phlé i dtaobh na n-athruithe ar rialacháin maidir le hiontráil don Gharda Síochána, sonraítear sna leasuithe a rinneadh go gcaithfidh iarrthóirí a bheith inniúil i dteanga amháin, Béarla nó Gaeilge. Má tá Béarla nó Gaeilge ag iarrthóir, is leor sin agus ní gá le teanga bhreise taobh amuigh de cheachtar acu sin. Faoi rialacháin 2013 a bhí ann roimhe seo, b’éigean d’iarrthóirí cumas a bheith acu in dhá theanga, agus b’éigean Béarla nó Gaeilge a bheith ar cheann amháin de na teangacha sin.

Tá an Ghaeilge fós mar ghné riachtanach den oiliúint a fhaigheann gardaí faoi oiliúint i gColáiste an Gharda Síochána. Tá an t-ábhar mar chuid de dhá cheann de na príomhmhodúil sa gclár BA i bpóilíneacht fheidhmeach. An chéad mhodúil ina múintear an Ghaeilge ná bunús na póilíneachta agus is é an dara modúil ná póilíneacht tráchta. Baineann na modúil seo le dualgais ghardaí agus iad i mbun teagmhála le baill den phobal i nGaeilge.

Mar a dúradh níos luaithe, mar chuid den straitéis nua, díreofar ar líon na bpearsanra le Gaeilge a mhéadú trí chlár forbartha nua. Chomh maith leis sin, tá an eagraíocht tar éis an chéad acmhainn chuimsitheach Gaeilge ar líne a chur ar fáil don phearsanra go léir. Tá an acmhainn, a d’fhorbair Gaelchultúr, dírithe ar fhoghlaimoírí ar leibhéal A2 ar Chomhchreat Tagartha na hEorpa um Theangacha agus beidh sé mar ghné thábhachtach de sprioc ár straitéise deiseanna a sholáthar don phearsanra feabhas a chur ar scileanna teanga trí mhodhanna oiliúna cumaisc. Forbrófar acmhainní oiliúna breise ar líne sna míonna amach romhainn, rud a thabharfaidh deis don phearsanra barr feabhais a chur ar a gcuid Gaeilge agus ar a muinín an teanga a úsáid, ar a luas féin. Gabhaim buíochas leis an gcomhchoiste.

Chairman: Go raibh maith agat. Measaim go bhfuil ráiteas eile ón tSeirbhís um Cheapacháin Phoiblí.

Mr. Liam Sinclair: Gabhaim buíochas leis an gCathaoirleach arís. Ní shocraíonn an tSeirbhís um Cheapacháin Phoiblí na critéir cháilíochta a bhíonn i bhfeidhm ag comórtais earcaíochta agus roghnaithe. Is faoi na Ranna agus na heagraíochtaí atá ina gcliant den tseirbhís critéir a shocrú ar an gcéad ásc agus comhairle a thabhairt don tseirbhís maidir leis na riachtanais cháilíochta a bhaineann lena bpróisis earcaíochta agus roghnaithe. Nuair a iarrtar uirthi, áfach, tugann an tseirbhís aiseolas d’eagraíochtaí na gcliant, mar shampla An Garda Síochána, maidir le comórtais a réachtáil agus maidir le leibhéal na héagsúlachta atá le brath sna grúpaí iarrthóirí a chuireann isteach ar chomórtais.

Tagraím do chomórtais a réachtáladh d’earcaigh sa Gharda Síochána roimhe seo. Fógraíodh an comórtas is déanaí in 2019. Bhí sé de nós ag an tseirbhís ceisteanna a tháinig chun tosaigh maidir le leibhéal na héagsúlachta sa ghrúpa iarrthóirí a roinnt. Cuireadh béim ar an ngá atá ann le leibhéal na héagsúlachta sa Gharda Síochána a mhéadú sa tuarascáil ón gCoimisiún um Thodhchaí na Póilíneachta in Éirinn. Thabharfadh an tseirbhís tacaíocht don Gharda Síochána maidir leis an aidhm atá aige bearta a chur i bhfeidhm chun an grúpa iarrthóirí a chuireann isteach ar chomórtais d’earcaigh sa Gharda Síochána a leathnú chun a chinntiú go léiríonn na daoine a dhéanann iarratas an leibhéal éagsúlachta atá le brath i sochaí na hÉireann agus sna pobail áitiúla ar a bhfreastalaíonn An Garda Síochána, atá ag méadú i gcónaí.

Tagraím don chomórtas d'earcaigh sa Gharda Síochána is déanaí a reáchtáladh agus a fógraíodh go déanach sa bhliain 2019. Tháinig ceisteanna chun tosaigh maidir leis an riachtanas rialála a bhí i bhfeidhm i dtaca le teangacha. Is é sin go raibh ar iarrthóirí dhá theanga a bheith acu agus go raibh orthu Béarla nó Gaeilge a bheith acu mar chuid den riachtanas seo, mar go raibh inní ann go mbeadh sé níos deacra d'iarrthóirí ó chúlraí éagsúla cáiliú chun iarratas a chur isteach ar an gcomórtas d'earcaigh sa Gharda Síochána dá bharr. Tá sé tábhachtach a thabhairt faoi deara go reáchtáladh comórtais earcaíochta, lena n-áirítear comórtas na bliana 2019, faoi na rialacháin d'earcaigh sa Gharda Síochána ó 2013, agus nach raibh ar iarrthóirí cumas a léiriú sa Ghaeilge agus sa Bhéarla araon, ach in dhá theanga agus go raibh orthu a léiriú go raibh cumas acu sa Ghaeilge nó sa Bhéarla mar chuid den riachtanas sin. Ní raibh cumas sa Ghaeilge ná cumas sa Bhéarla riachtanach chun cáiliú don chomórtas ag an bpointe sin, mar sin.

Tuigeann an tSeirbhís um Cheapacháin Phoiblí go raibh inní ar An nGarda Síochána go bhféadfadh an riachtanas rialála seo maidir le teangacha a bheith mar bhac suntasach i dtaca le leibhéal na héagsúlachta sa ghrúpa iarrthóirí a chuireann isteach ar chomórtais d'earcaigh sa Gharda Síochána a mhéadú, mar shampla daoine Éireannacha-Afracach agus baill den Lucht Siúil. Agus é sin curtha san áireamh, caithfidh iarrthóirí cumas a léiriú sa Ghaeilge nó sa Bhéarla nó sa dá cheann acu anois de réir na rialachán leasaithe d'earcaigh sa Gharda Síochána, 2021, a chuir an tAire Dlí agus Cirt i bhfeidhm le déanaí. De bharr na forála seo, is féidir go dtiocfaidh méadú ar leibhéal na héagsúlachta sa ghrúpa iarrthóirí a chuireann isteach ar chomórtais d'earcaigh sa Gharda Síochána. Ina theannta sin, cuireann an fhoráil béim ar thábhacht na Gaeilge agus an Bhéarla agus tugann sí comhstádas don dá theanga seo maidir le cáilitheacht na n-iarrthóirí. Déantar é seo chun iarracht a dhéanamh a chinntiú go gcomhlíontar riachtanais éagsúlachta i réimse na póilíneachta amach anseo. Sa chéad staid d'aon phróiseas earcaíochta d'earcaigh sa Gharda Síochána, caithfidh iarrthóirí critéir cháilitheacha a chomhlíonadh. Mar chuid den phróiseas iomlán sin, caithfidh iarrthóirí tástálacha agus agallamh iomaíoch a dhéanamh chomh maith. Maidir leo siúd a roghnaítear tar éis dóibh próiseas earcaíochta na seirbhíse a chomhlíonadh, caithfidh siad tréimhse dian-oiliúna agus forbartha a dhéanamh i gColáiste an Gharda Síochána sa Teampall Mór.

Fógrófar clár d'earcaigh sa Gharda Síochána 2022 go luath. Bainfear úsáid as an bpróiseas roghnaithe a reáchtálfadh an tseirbhís agus bainfear úsáid as an gclár oiliúna d'earcaigh i gColáiste an Gharda Síochána a leanfaidh an próiseas sin, lena n-áirítear an bachelor of arts, BA, sa phóilíneacht mar chuid den chlár sin, chun cumas na n-iarrthóirí sa Bhéarla agus sa Ghaeilge a dheimhniú. Fógrófar an comórtas d'earcaigh sa Gharda Síochána 2022 trí Ghaeilge agus trí Bhéarla agus beidh iarrthóirí in ann cur isteach ar shruthanna Béarla agus Gaeilge agus agallamh a dhéanamh i gceachtar den dá theanga nó go dhátheangach. Bhí an próiseas seo i bhfeidhm do chomórtas d'earcaigh sa Gharda Síochána a reáchtáladh roimhe seo chomh maith. Agus an comórtas seo á reáchtáil aici ar son Choimisinéir an Gharda Síochána, beidh an tseirbhís ag iarraidh tacaíocht a thabhairt don Gharda Síochána maidir lena dualgais Ghaeilge agus riachtanais Ghaeilge i bpobail Ghaeltachta a chomhlíonadh. Tuigeann an tseirbhís go seolfadh An Garda Síochána straitéis Ghaeilge nua nuair a thagann deireadh le srianta Covid-19 agus go leagfar amach spriocanna sa straitéis seo chun seirbhísí Gaeilge a neartú san fhórsa agus chun a chinntiú go gcomhlíontar dualgais teanga reachtúla. Tá an tSeirbhís um Cheapacháin Phoiblí ag súil go mór le tacaíocht a thabhairt don tionscnamh seo.

Chairman: An bhfuil aon rud le rá ag Bob Collins agus a chomhghleacaithe?

Mr. Bob Collins: Ní theastaíonn uainn aon rud a rá sa bhreis ar an méid a dúramar ag tús an tseisiúin eile ach beimid sásta ceisteanna a fhreagairt.

Deputy Catherine Connolly: Tá sé cosúil le míreanna meara roimh jigsaw. Tá an Straitéis 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge, an plean gníomhaíochta don Ghaeilge agus neart tuarascálacha eile ag cur in iúl go bhfuil géarchéim ann ó thaobh na Gaeilge de. Freisin, tá an tÚdarás Póilíneachta agus an tuarascáil ón gCoimisiún um Thodhchaí na Póilíneachta in Éirinn ag cur in iúl go bhfuil gá le héagsúlacht agus aontaím leis sin. Ansin tá an Coimisinéir Teanga i ndeireadh na feide mar gheall ar an easpa dula chun cinn ó thaobh na Gaeilge de sa Gharda Síochána. Píosa eile de na míreanna mara ná go ndéanfaimid iarracht dul chun cinn a dhéanamh ó thaobh éagsúlachta de agus tugaimid ísliú céime don Ghaeilge.

Níl a fhios agam an bhfuil pictiúr iomlán anseo beag nó mór. Rachaidh mé ar ais chuig Bob Collins mar ní bhfuair mé deis ceist a chur air. Dúirt sé roimh dheireadh an chéad seisiúin go bhfuil géarghá le hathrú ó thaobh éagsúlachta de. De réir mar a thuig mé bhí géarghá an rialachán a bhí ann a athrú. An féidir tuilleadh sonraí a thabhairt dúinn ar cá bhfuil seisean nó an t-údarás ag teacht ó thaobh sin agus an Ghaeilge san áireamh?

Mr. Bob Collins: Déanfaidh mé iarracht.

Deputy Catherine Connolly: Bheinn buíoch.

Mr. Bob Collins: Mar chomhthéacs air seo tá sé riachtanach go dtuigfí ról an údaráis agus na srianta atá ar an ról sin. Pé ábhar a thugaimid faoi caithimid é a dhéanamh laistigh den dlí a bhunaigh an t-údarás agus uaireanta cuireann sin srianta orainn. Uaireanta níor mhaith linn go mbeadh na srianta sin ann ach uaireanta is maith an rud é go bhfuil siad ann.

Dúirt mé gur cheap an t-údarás go raibh géarghá le hathstruchtúrú ó bhonn ar an gcóras rialacháin. An fáth go dúirt mé é sin ná go raibh siad as dáta, seanfhaiseanta agus ró-mheicniúil. Freisin, ní raibh aitheantas mar ba ghá tugtha do saol an lae inniu; don dul chun cinn a bhí déanta in earcú agus i roghnú daoine; agus do bhealaí a aimsiú chun cumas agus éifeacht a mheasúnú i gcás daoine a bhí ag lorg ardú céime. B'fhéidir go raibh sé ró-mheicniúil toisc an bunscrúdú Gaeilge a dhéanann duine nuair a thagann sé nó sí isteach sa choláiste sa Teampall Mór. Ba mhó an béim a bhí á cur ag an údarás toisc nach raibh an t-údarás ag moladh go mbeadh aon athrú ann ó thaobh na Gaeilge de. Bhí an t-údarás ag cur béim ar chaighdeán na seirbhíse a bhí á cur ar fáil don phobal agus an tslí a bhfuil An Garda Síochána ag freastail ar riachtanais phobal na Gaeilge, daoine gur mian leo a shaolta a chaitheamh nó a ghnó a dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge, go háirithe daoine atá ag cur fúthu sa Ghaeltacht. Ní gá idirdhealú a dhéanamh agus ní gá nó ní féidir ísliú a dhéanamh ar chaighdeán na seirbhíse gur chóir a bheadh á cur ar fáil do lucht na Gaeilge ar mhaithe le freastail a dhéanamh ar an ilchineálacht nua atá i ndaonra na tíre. Caithfean an dá rud a dhéanamh i dteannta a chéile.

Ní dóigh liom gur ísliú céime i dtaobh na Gaeilge atá i gceist sna hathruithe seo cé go n-aithním go bhfuiltear ann atá á rá agus go mbítí ann riamh a bhí á rá mar go bhfuil an oiread sin ceachtanna foghlamtha ag daoine gur spéis leo freastal ar lucht na Gaeilge trí Ghaeilge agus ní freastal ar lucht na Gaeilge mar mhionlach ach aitheantas bunreachtúil agus dlíthiúil a thabhairt do dhaoine ar mian leo a saolta a chaitheamh nó gnó a dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge, go bhfuil an baol ann i gcónaí go gceapfaidh daoine go bhfuil aon athrú dainséarach.

Ní raibh an Ghaeilge riachtanach mar dara teanga le Fraincis agus Béarla. Bhí an baol ann go gceapfadh daoine go raibh bac orthu iarracht a dhéanamh dul isteach sa Gharda Síochána de bharr gur cheap siad go raibh an Ghaeilge riachtanach. Tá mé ag caint faoi dhaoine atá nuagtha chun na tíre, nach bhfuair oideachas sa tír seo agus nach mbeadh an Ghaeilge acu agus go mbeidís thíos leis dá bharr nó go mbeadh bac iomlán orthu. Tá an-chuid de shaoránaigh nua

na tíre seo dátheangach nó tritheangach cheana féin agus is cuma sa sioc leo má bhíonn Gaeilge le bheith acu. Tá an cumas sin acu agus tá siad breá sásta an Ghaeilge a fhoghlaim mar theanga eile. Níl aon bhagáiste acu ina taobh.

Is é an dearcadh atá ag an údarás ná go bhfuil sé den riachtanas go mbeidh An Garda Síochána mar mhacalla nó mar scáthán den tír mar atá i láthair na huaire agus go n-aithneoidh gach aon duine sa tír é nó í féin sa Gharda Síochána ar bhealach amháin nó bealach eile. Go dtí go mbeidh sé sin fíor nó go dtí go mbeimid leathbhealach síos an bóthar go dtí go mbeidh sé sin fíor, tá baol ann gur lú an tuiscint a bheidh ag daoine ar An nGarda Síochána agus b'fhéidir gur lú an meas a bheidh a bheith acu air nó an mhuinín a bheidh acu as, rudaí atá baolach, conúirteach agus do-ghlactha.

Ar an ábhar sin, caithfear pé rud a dhéanamh chun daoine a mhealladh isteach sa Gharda Síochána ó na réimsí ar fad nach bhfuil ionadaíocht cheart acu sa Gharda Síochána i láthair na huaire. Táimid ag caint faoi na réimsí ar fad. Níl mé ag caint amháin faoi dhaoine atá nuatagtha sa tír. Ag an am céanna, caithfidh cothromaíocht a bheith ag an dá rud seo. Níl aon rud suas agus níl aon rud síos.

Ag an am céanna, caithfear feabhsú ollmhór a dhéanamh ar an bhfreastal atá á dhéanamh ar dhaoine ar mian leo a ngnó a dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge. Níl in aon chor cinnte go raibh aon chinnteacht ag eascairt as 50% a fháil sa scrúdú inniúlachta a bunaíodh le bheith in ann freastal cuí a dhéanamh ar phobal, go háirithe phobal Gaeltachta ná ar dhaoine ar mian leo a ngnó a dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge aon áit sa tír. Bhí ar a laghad an bhéim a chur ar an rud mícheart má dhíríodh ar an mbunscrúdú ná ar an riachtanas den ardú céime. Tá an cheist ann maidir le freastal ceart a dhéanamh agus seirbhís cheart a chur ar fáil. Ní mór an bhéim a chur ar réimse i bhfad níos fairsinge ná sin.

Deputy Catherine Connolly: Is é an tuiscint atá agamsa ón méid atá ráite ag Bob Collins ná go bhfuil bréagchath i gceist anseo i ndáiríre idir éagsúlacht ó dhaoine gan Ghaeilge agus an Ghaeilge a bheith thíos. Is bréagchath i ndáiríre atá i gceist. Níl aon ghá le cath nó troid. Ba chóir béim a chur ar an dá rud.

Mr. Bob Collins: Ní dhéarfadh mé mórán eile. Tá an dá chúram ar An nGarda Síochána. Caithfidh sé an dá thrá a fhreastal. Ní féidir leis gan ceann amháin nó ceann eile a dhéanamh. Is é cuid den ról atá ag an údarás ná an mhaoirseacht a dhéanamh ar an tslí ina bhfuil An Garda Síochána ag feabhsú na seirbhíse atá á cur ar fáil. Tá cúraimí ar an gCoimisinéir Teanga gan amhras ó thaobh na Gaeilge agus tá cúraimí dlí ar An nGarda Síochána ó thaobh na Gaeilge in Acht an Gharda Síochána, 2005 agus in Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla (Leasú), 2021. Cé nach bhfuil an cúram céanna leagtha síos sa tslí chéanna i gcás éagsúlacht nó ilchineálachta an daonra, tá sé ar chomhchéim agus tá an dá rud ar chomhchéim. Ní féidir freastal ar cheann amháin agus a bheith ag ísliú an cur i láthair ar an gceann eile. Is é sin an fáth nach bhfuil aon ísliú céime i gceist sna hathruithe mar atá. Tá an líne á tarraingt san áit mhícheart má cheaptar é sin.

Deputy Catherine Connolly: Tá sé tábhachtach deimhneacht a fháil ar an rud atá faoi chaibidil anseo. Aontaím go huile is go hiomlán gur chóir go mbeadh An Garda Síochána mar mhacalla ar an tsochaí ach tá muintir na Gaeltachta agus muintir na Gaeilge thíos ó thaobh na ngardaí de. Tá sé sin admhaithe ag An nGarda Síochána nach bhfuil a dhualgas faoin reachtaíocht comhlíonta aige agus anois tá turas nua i gceist.

Is rud dearfach é go bhfuil An Garda Síochána chun straitéis nua a fhoilsiú. Is é an rud is tábhachtaí domsa ná é sin a fheiceáil agus a phlé os ár gcomhair nuair a bheidh sé ar ais agus

spriocdháta a bheith leagtha amach. Tá an t-uafás tuarascála léite againn ó gach Roinn, ní hamháin ó na gardaí, gan spriocdháta. Bhíodh na fadhbanna céanna againn maidir le Bille na dTeangacha Oifigiúla (Leasú), 2021 atá ina Acht anois. Ní chuirfidh mé am amú ag iarraidh sonraí ón straitéis ó na finnétithe. Ba mhaith liom é sin a phlé anseo.

Maidir leis an míthuiscint, bhí rialachán ann a chuir dualgas ar iarrthóir Béarla nó Gaeilge agus teanga bhreise a bheith acu. Is féidir Béarla agus Fraincis nó Béarla agus Gearmáinis a bheith ag an duine agus ní raibh aon ghá le Gaeilge, beag ná mór. Is é an t-athrú anois ná nach gá leis an teanga bhreise. Is féidir dul isteach mar iarrthóir le Gaeilge nó Béarla. Níl aon riachtanas anois. Tuigim nach raibh ag an am ach anois tá sé soiléir nach bhfuil riachtanas ar bith ó thaobh na Gaeilge de, maidir le hiarrthóir don Gharda Síochána. An bhfuil mé mícheart?

Ms Anne Marie McMahon: Back to 2005, the compulsory requirement to have Irish did not exist. It is exactly as the Deputy has said in terms of the requirement for the second language. It is Irish or English, now. Prior to this, it was two languages, one of which had to be either-----

Deputy Catherine Connolly: Tuigim é sin agus tá sé sin ráite. An bhfuil riachtanas ar bith ó thaobh na Gaeilge de ar iarrthóir atá ag iarraidh dul isteach sa Gharda anois? Dá mbeinn ag dul isteach sa Gharda amárach, an bhféadfainn a rá go raibh Béarla agam ach nach bhfuil aon Ghaeilge agam? Níl aon ghá le Gaeilge anois, an bhfuil?

Ms Anne Marie McMahon: No.

Deputy Catherine Connolly: Is é an t-aon rud atá nochta anseo ná nach raibh sé ann fiú faoi na seanrialacha. Is é sin an soiléiriú atá faighte againn. Níl gá ar bith le Gaeilge a bheith ag iarrthóir anois agus ní raibh le fada. An bhfuil mé mícheart?

Mr. Liam Sinclair: Is fíor é sin.

Deputy Catherine Connolly: Is fíor é sin. Is é an chaoi ina bhfuil an Garda ag déileáil leis sin an fhadhb atá agam. Faoi Acht 2005, tá dualgais reachtúla ag An nGarda Síochána seirbhísí Gaeilge a chur ar fáil sa Ghaeltacht trí na stáisiúin. Níl na dualgais sin á gcomhlíonadh. Tá sé sin léite agam. Níl na stáisiúin go léir sna ceantair Ghaeltachta uilig ag feidhmiú mar ba chóir dóibh faoin reachtaíocht faoi láthair. Nach bhfuil an ceart agam faoi sin?

Ms Anne Marie McMahon: If I can just go back a little bit-----

Deputy Catherine Connolly: An féidir an cheist a fhreagairt? Níl mé ag iarraidh locht a chur ar aon duine. Táim ag iarraidh an rud a shoiléiriú. Tá dualgais ag an bhfórsa faoin reachtaíocht. Tá sé sin ráite. Faoi láthair, níl sé in ann na dualgais sin a chomhlíonadh de bharr easpa foirne le hinniúlacht sa Ghaeilge. Nach é sin bun agus barr an scéil faoi láthair?

Ms Anne Marie McMahon: That is the story. Not 100% of gardaí in every station are able to speak Irish. There have been improvements.

Deputy Catherine Connolly: Tuigim. Tá sé sin uilig léite agam. Tuigim go bhfuil dul chun cinn déanta, go háirithe ó thaobh an chruinnithe a bhí againn an bhliain seo caite. Tuigim é sin agus tuigim go bhfuil meitheal ar siúl anois agus go bhfuil cruinnithe ar siúl go rialta. Táim ag tnúth leis an straitéis Gaeilge agus le spriocdháta. Is é sin atá ar siúl faoi láthair. Táimid ag dul ar strae agus muid ag caint faoi éagsúlacht. Tá gá le héagsúlacht sa Gharda ach níl aon bhaint idir é sin a bhaint amach agus an Ghaeilge i ndáiríre. Is rud eile é sin. Ba chóir

go mbeidh an dá rud ar chomhchéim.

Ms Anne Marie McMahon: With regard to our efforts to meet our obligations, the Irish language is a compulsory part of the BA in applied policing. As outlined by Ms Ní Cheallaigh in the opening statement, there are two modules that are specifically targeted and tailored towards Irish. The Irish language elements equate to 20% of those two modules. In addition, there are both oral and written assessments involved in those two modules.

Deputy Catherine Connolly: Tuigim ach cé mhéad garda atá ag teacht amach as an gcóras sin le hinniúlacht sa Ghaeilge?

Ms Anne Marie McMahon: In terms of fluency, I will have to go back to the Irish language stream. As has already been stated, the numbers we have received through that particular stream have been disappointing. While the Irish language is part of the BA education programme, it is true to say that graduates will not be fluent. They will have-----

Deputy Catherine Connolly: An bhfuil 100 nó 200 garda ag teacht amach le hinniúlacht sa Ghaeilge de bharr na scéime atá ann?

Ms Anne Marie McMahon: No because the numbers are very small. The Irish language stream has not been as fruitful as we had originally expected. That is the stream through which we would expect to get fluent Irish speakers. That has not transpired. It just has not happened for us.

Deputy Catherine Connolly: B'fhéidir go mbeimid in ann obair as lámh a chéile as seo amach ach is é an rud atá nochta arís ná go bhfuil géarchéim ann sa Gharda ó thaobh na Gaeilge de in ainneoin na rudaí maithe atá déanta. Tá súil agam go bhfuil sé sin aitheanta sa straitéis atá le foilsiú agus go bhfuil cuid de réiteach na faidhbe sa straitéis sin, le spriocdhátaí.

Ms Anne Marie McMahon: With regard to the strategy, our recruitment process and our desire to enhance our service through Irish, we have found that some people who are fluent in Irish or who have a very good standard of Irish do not apply to the Irish stream but to the general scheme. I suppose they do not want to confine their options with regard to the location where they might be stationed.

Deputy Catherine Connolly: Níl siad ag iarraidh a bheith curtha isteach i mbosca ach an oiread.

Ms Anne Marie McMahon: Precisely.

Deputy Catherine Connolly: Tá na hargóintí seo cloiste againn ó gach Roinn atá tagtha os ár gcomhair le blianta. Ní bhaineann siad leis an nGarda amháin ach tá dualgais reachtúla air. Críochnóidh mé anois because tá mo dhóthain ráite ach ba chóir go mbeidh gach cinneadh bunaithe ar thaighde. Níor chuala mé aon tagairt inniu do thaighde d'aon saghas maidir leis na cinntí atá déanta ag an Roinn Dlí agus Cirt nó ag an nGarda. Tá taighde thar a bheith tábhachtach. Ag dul ar ais go dtí an straitéis, ní fiú tráithnín an straitéis muna bhfuil sí ag dul i ngleic leis an bhfadhb, is é sin, an ghéarchéim atá ann. Tá súil agam go rachaidh sí i ngleic léi.

Ms Anne Marie McMahon: The aim of the strategy is to address the problem. There are multifaceted avenues to try to do that. I am not for one minute suggesting that it will be an easy problem to solve but that is the purpose of the strategy and that is our intent. We are acutely aware of our obligations under the Irish language Acts and that those who wish to communicate

or receive service through Irish have a right to do so. We are acutely aware of that. We are trying to put a renewed emphasis on the Irish language in order to achieve that.

Deputy Catherine Connolly: Tuigim ach tá cúlra na faidhbe le deich mbliana anuas curtha in iúl ag an gCoimisinéir Teanga.

Ms Yvonne Cooke: Tá brón orm ach níl ach beagán Gaeilge agam. To add to the Deputy's comments with regard to the jigsaw and the crisis we all face, in addition to what the Deputy has raised - and we welcome the opportunity to engage with her in respect of the forthcoming Irish language strategy - the research and evidence base with regard to Irish and many other areas tells us that some of the solution lies in considering the earliest stage at which individuals choose a career, profession or vocation. The evidence base suggests we should look at this issue as early on as preschool and school age. That is something we are very keen to progress in the context of the strategy. It is at that stage that children start to consider what they would like to do for a profession. To that end and with regard to outreach, we intend to do much more with regard to our schools liaison, particularly within the Gaelscoils. In addition to that, in our outreach, we are very much focused on how to assist young people to think of us as a great place to work in the future. There is clear evidence to suggest that does assist. In moving through some of the programmes of work we are looking at, particularly the forthcoming Garda trainee competition to which the deputy commissioner referred, we need to be diverse in the ways we reach out to young people and individuals starting to think about what change in career they might like or, if they are in school, the vocation they may wish to take on. For this particular process, we are doing much more than we have ever done. The deputy commissioner chairs a group on outreach. We have engaged with colleagues from across the organisation, particularly colleagues in the Gaeltacht areas, on the point we are discussing today. We have been looking at all of the opportunities colleagues have in communities to speak to, meet, reach out to and attract individuals to apply in the first place. I will mention one more thing with regard to the evidence base and research. As part of the strategy, we will also try to understand within the communities we serve, particularly within the Gaeltacht, the key barriers and challenges, in addition to the opportunities, to people applying locally and being based locally in those areas.

In addition to what has been raised about the renewed focus within the organisation in terms of the importance of the Irish language and the training of such within the Garda College, including the fáinne we spoke about, we will be delivering on all the key important strategies over the forthcoming years. One of the most important pieces we will be investing in, for future generations and future Irish speakers within An Garda Síochána, is early outreach. That is what I wish to add.

Deputy Aindrias Moynihan: Níl ach cúpla ceist agam mar, chun a bheith dáiríre, tá an-chuid pléite ansin maidir le roinnt mhaith de na hábhair a theastaigh uaim díriú orthu. Táim chun fanacht leis an éagsúlacht. Rinneadh soiléiriú ar an-chuid agus táim buíoch as. Aontaím go láidir gur cheart go mbeadh éagsúlacht sna gardaí agus go bhféachfaidís cosúil le haon phobal eile ar a bhfuil siad ag freastal. Ní hé sin le rá gur éagsúlacht in aghaidh teanga nó in aghaidh na Gaolainne a bheadh i gceist. Ní gá go mbeidís mutually exclusive ach go mbeadh spás ann dóibh araon. Conas a aithnítear é sin?

Tuigim ó na tuairiscí gur aithníodh go bhféadfadh riachtanais maidir le dhá theanga a bheith ina mbac ar roinnt grúpaí. Conas a aithníodh é sin? An ndearnadh taighde éigin nó an tuairim duine éigin a bhí ann nó claonadh a bhí ag duine éigin? An bhféadfaí a léiriú conas a aithníodh é sin? Má bhí taighde ann, cad iad na torthaí a bhí air? An é go raibh an dá theanga mar bhac nó arbh iad na teangacha an Ghaeilge nó an Béarla a bhí mar bhac? An bhféadfaí soiléiriú a

thabhairt air sin? Conas a thángthas ar an tuairim sin go raibh an riachtanas maidir le dhá theanga ina bhac?

Maidir leis an gcóras a bhí i bhfeidhm roimhe sin, tuigim go raibh an córas oiriúnach dóibh siúd le Gaeilge nó Béarla agus teanga eile agus go bhféadfadh siad iarratas a dhéanamh agus dul chun cinn a dhéanamh leis na gardaí. Mar sin, an raibh an tSeirbhís um Cheapacháin Phoiblí ag freastal ar dhaoine nach raibh ach teanga amháin acu agus dá bharr sin nach éagsúlacht a bhí ann in aon chor ach go raibh sé ag freastal go díreach ar dhaoine leis an aon teanga amháin? Ní fheadar an é sin cailliúint do na gardaí. Dá mbeadh teanga bhreise ag daoine, chuirfeadh sé sin go mór leis an slí a bhfuiltear ag freastal ar an bpobal. An bhféadfaidís díriú ar sin?

Chairman: Cé atá ag iarraidh na ceistanna sin a fhreagairt? Tá siad bunaithe ar an gcineadh.

Deputy Aindrias Moynihan: Conas a aithníodh go mbeadh riachtanas ann maidir le dhá theanga?

Chairman: Tá Shirley Comerford ón tSeirbhís um Cheapacháin Phoiblí chun an cheist sin a fhreagairt.

Ms Shirley Comerford: It would probably be useful if I again refer to that piece about what we do in catering for candidates. It was never a requirement that one had to have Irish, as was previously said. It was English or Irish or another language. In terms of the status piece, we believe it gives Irish a status that would perhaps appeal to a broader candidate pool. That is the first piece I wish to speak on.

So that people understand from a process perspective, candidates can apply through the general stream as well as the Irish stream. They can compete in both. From that perspective, we hope that we will see – I note we are only testing this – a situation where candidates will go for both streams who may not have the level of fluency that is required to come through the Irish stream but will come through the general stream and have a level of proficiency in Irish that they can enhance through their training and the various schemes the Garda is putting in place.

We are very committed in the Public Appointments Service to the running of Irish competitions. When we run Irish streams, they can be quite focused as a campaign and allow us to focus our marketing and outreach efforts. We know from the various Irish competitions that we run that when we run Irish streams, we attract candidates who have a good command of the language. We also believe that when Irish speakers compete through the Irish competitions, they statistically do better than others insofar as the candidate pool is bit smaller.

It is a challenge in terms of providing all public services through Irish. We are all very aware of the commitments under the official languages legislation. From the Public Appointments Service's perspective, we look forward to working on the national advisory committee that is being set up to look at strategies that can be put in place to help all public servants and public services to reach their commitments to provide their services through Irish by 2030.

It is quite right in regard to what comes through from the Irish stream. We have seen a lot of attrition where people believe their proficiency is at a fluency level that it is not. The numbers that come through are very small. It is fair to say that unless some action was taken, we were not going to get anywhere with this. We hope that through the combined efforts of what we are doing and what is happening in the Garda, we will see some traction and improvements.

I refer to Yvonne Cooke's point on reaching out to young potential public and civil servants. We recently launched our public jobs schools kit, which is a pick-up-and-teach resource for transition year teachers to go through with their classes in order to give them an introduction to the public service and the Civil Service and plant that seed for them to consider pursuing careers across the public service. These resources that were recently launched are available in both English and Irish. Efforts are being made. It is fair to say that we are not going to achieve those targets by focusing on the recruitment element alone. As the members will know, more than I do, that there are a multitude of challenges facing us in driving up our participation rates of fluent Irish speakers in public sector organisations.

Deputy Aindrias Moynihan: Ní bhfuair mé freagra maidir leis an gceist. Conas a aithníodh-----

Chairman: Má fhanann an Teachta, tá Yvonne Cooke agus Anne Marie McMahon ag iarraidh freagra a thabhairt. B'fhéidir go bhfaighidh sé an freagra atá uaidh.

Deputy Aindrias Moynihan: Is í an phríomhcheist ná conas a aithníodh é sin.

Ms Anne Marie McMahon: I refer to the diversity of language and the richness of people who are bilingual, be that in Irish and English or Irish and English plus another language. That is absolutely accepted. We have quite a number of people in the organisation from other countries, and other European countries in particular. They have been of enormous benefit in various investigations. I absolutely agree with what the Deputy is saying with regard to the richness that brings to the organisation. The same thing applies to the Irish language. As has been stated many times, it is not just a nice thing to have; we have obligations and we are acutely aware of them. At the risk of repeating myself, we are trying on multiple levels to improve our proficiency. A key part of the Irish language strategy will be working with the language planning groups in the various Gaeltacht areas and Gaeltacht service areas and with Irish language officers. There will be a lot of engagement there with regard to the percentages required in light of the make-up of those communities. There are many areas in which we have an awful lot of work to do. As I have said already, it will not be done overnight. The clock is ticking.

Ms Yvonne Cooke: On the specific question of whether research had been undertaken, I can confirm that it had. A team within An Garda Síochána that was researching barriers to recruitment and inclusivity across all aspects of diversity undertook international research involving benchmarking against other police services. This team identified a number of areas, some of which were very pertinent to what we are discussing today. For example, issues such as educational attainment, language proficiency and nationality were identified as barriers for certain groups. In addition to what Ms Comerford raised earlier on, An Garda Síochána did engage with the Irish Traveller Movement. A key issue it raised with us related to challenges in respect of the requirement for languages that existed before this regulatory change. Research was undertaken and cognisance was given to opening up eligibility as wide as possible.

Deputy Aindrias Moynihan: An é an dá theanga a bhí mar bhac, nó an é an Ghaolainn agus an Béarla a bhí mar bhac? Is cosúil go bhfuil An Garda Síochána ag dul i dtreo daoine leis an aon teanga amháin.

Ms Yvonne Cooke: My understanding is that both were issues. For some communities, the issue may have been Irish while for others it was having languages in addition to what the individual spoke from birth.

Deputy Aindrias Moynihan: Nach raibh réiteach ann cheana féin dóibh siúd nach raibh an Ghaolainn acu ach go raibh an Béarla acu? Tá réimse leathan teangacha ann sa Gharda cheana féin seachas Béarla agus Gaolainn. Ní raibh an fhadhb ann ó thaobh na Gaolainne de ag an am sin. Is amhlaidh go bhfuil an Garda ag díriú isteach ar dhaoine nach bhfuil dátheangach agus go bhfuil sé ag cúngú isteach an líon teangacha a bheadh ar fáil sa Gharda má tá sé ag earcú daoine nach bhfuil ach an t-aon teanga amháin acu.

Ms Yvonne Cooke: As the Deputy has mentioned, having to have two languages was a key barrier, hence the change in regulation.

Deputy Aindrias Moynihan: Nach dtagann sé sin salach ar éagsúlacht?

Ms Yvonne Cooke: I would not say it does. We are attempting to reach out as far as possible and to optimise the number of people from diverse backgrounds who apply to An Garda Síochána, including Irish speakers, to add to the diversity of our organisation to be truly reflective and representative of the diverse and evolving communities we serve.

Deputy Aindrias Moynihan: Táim go mór i bhfabhar éagsúlacht sa Gharda. Teastaíonn éagsúlacht uaim ach gan an costas ó thaobh teangacha. Ní gá go mbeidís in adharca a chéile.

Chairman: Tá cúpla ceist ghairid agam féin agus ansin cuirfimid críoch leis an gcuinniú. Tá ceist agam maidir le feachtas earcaíochta dírithe ar Ghaeilgeoirí. An raibh feachtas mar sin ann roimhe seo? Ní cuimhin liom aon fheachtas dírithe ar mhic léinn i nGaelcholáistí timpeall na tíre nó i gceantair Ghaeltachta nuair a bhí mé ar scoil agus níor chuala mé faoi cheann ó shin. Muna bhfuil feachtais earcaíochta dírithe ar Ghaeilgeoirí amach anseo, ní thiocfaidh siad. Tá poist eile ann dóibh seachas a bheith sa Gharda Síochána. Beidh An Garda Síochána in iomaíocht leis an Státseirbhís ina hiomláine agus le gach uile phost eile. Tá a lán post ann do Ghaeilgeoirí anois san Eoraip a íocann a lán airgid. Tá jab mór le déanamh. Chuala mé cad a bhí á rá faoi dhul isteach an-luath, fiú sna naíscoileanna agus mar sin, ach caithfear díriú ar na meánscoileanna ach go háirithe i leith feachtais earcaíochta. Tá sé beagnach ródheireanach dóibh siúd atá ag déanamh na hardteistiméireachta i mbliana. B'fhéidir nach bhfuil ach tá siad ag smaoineamh agus ag líonadh a n-iarratais CAO. Ba chóir go mbeadh siad líonta acu inné. Tá deis ann ach caithfear a bheith dírithe.

Caithfidh gardaí le Gaeilge dul isteach sna coláistí, sna scoileanna agus sna coláistí samhraidh. Caithfidh siad a bheith feiceálach ag na hócáidí sin agus iad ag labhairt Gaeilge. Tá a fhios agam gur ualach é sin ar na gardaí le Gaeilge. Uaireanta, níl siad ag iarraidh a bheith mar an token Gaeilgeoir. Tarlaíonn sé sin go minic. Tá siad ag iarraidh a bheith ina ngardaí agus an obair sin a dhéanamh seachas a bheith mar oifigigh earcaíochta Gaeilge. Caithfidh siad a aithint go gcuidíonn sé ó thaobh na hearcaíochta de má tá siad ag dul timpeall ag labhairt na Gaeilge le chéile nó le dreamanna Gaeilgeoirí ní hamháin sa Ghaeltacht, ach freisin i gceantair i mBaile Átha Cliath, srl.

B'fhéidir go bhfuil mo chéad cheist eile freagartha ag na finnítithe cheana. Níor cuireadh muid ar an eolas faoi seo ach an oiread. Is é sin an fáth go raibh sórt feirge ar an gcoiste nuair a chuala muid go raibh athrú eile ann i mí na Nollag nach raibh luaite linn nuair a bhí an Coimisinéir os ár gcomhair. Is trua nach raibh sé luaite go raibh daoine ag smaoineamh ar an athrú seo, cé nach raibh an cinneadh déanta ina iomláine, toisc go bhfuil an cuma ar an scéal gur ísliú céime eile don Ghaeilge atá ann agus muid ag triail le hardú céime a thabhairt di, nó comhionannas a shroicheadh ar a laghad. Cad iad na hathruithe eile a tharla ag an am sin nó an é an cinneadh fáil réidh leis an gcoinníoll iontrála go mbeadh dhá theanga ag iarrthóirí amháin

a bhí i gceist? Glacaim leis gur tharla roinnt athruithe eile lasmuigh den cheist mar gheall ar an nGaeilge.

Ms Anne Marie McMahon: I will address the last point first. With regard to the changes in the regulations, there were numerous changes with regard to the promotion regulations. The whole process changed from being an internal one to an external one. The entirety of that process has changed. With regard to the recruitment regulations, to the best of my knowledge, that was the only change.

Mr. Doncha O'Sullivan: The other changes would not really attract much attention. They are very technical changes. We used an outdated term in asylum protection law. The law has moved on so the regulation has to be updated to use the correct term so that people with certain protection statuses can enter the Garda. I cannot see how any of them would have any bearing on the interests of the committee and its work.

Chairman: Céard faoi na feachtais earcaíochta roimhe seo? An raibh siad dírithe ar Ghaelcholáistí, coláistí samhraidh nó a leithéid?

Ms Anne Marie McMahon: The recruitment campaign has not started yet. It will be launched on 10 February. There is an extensive outreach plan in place and that will include going into the schools, using ads as Gaeilge and doing information sessions as Gaeilge in addition to other avenues in the general sense of the competition. This is the most extensive outreach programme we have ever embarked on in a recruitment campaign. We will be promoting the fact that we have an Irish language stream and we will be using every opportunity to promote that once the campaign is launched. It will be a six-week campaign so we have quite a bit of time but we have been planning that since before Christmas.

I refer to the question on not being notified. I have already alluded to the fact that this was an omission on our part. In terms of the promotion regulations it was not something that was to the fore in our minds when we were last here. The decision on the recruitment campaign was not made at all at that point. The proximity of our visit to the committee to the change in the promotion regulations is quite short. I accept that we should have brought that up on that occasion.

Ms Yvonne Cooke: In addition to what the Deputy has raised I will make a few points and I will go back to what I said earlier. We will continue to do outreach before competitions and to have a longer term plan. On the issues the Deputy raised, in schools and colleges when people are thinking about what they will put on their CAO forms, An Garda Síochána should always be to the fore as a career or vocation option. There are a few ways in which we will do that in addition to what we have already discussed. I mentioned liaison in schools but for people who are moving into their teens and really thinking about what they want to do, we have launched an internship programme this year and part of our Irish language strategy plan is to have a bespoke or specific programme for the Gaeltacht areas. Individuals who speak Irish should have an opportunity to come into An Garda Síochána, experience what it is like to be in the organisation and consider if it is a career, job or vacation for them going forward.

The Deputy mentioned token Gaeilgeoirí and we have many Gaeilgeoirí across the organisation. With the outreach programme we are running we have had so many people come forward and say they would like to be visibly present within it, in particular within the Gaeltacht areas. There is that lovely saying that if you can see it you can be it but with the Irish language it is a case that if you can hear it you might consider this as being a place for you for the future.

The onus cannot always be placed on Gaeilgeoirí within the organisation to advocate for the Irish language. It is incumbent on us all to do so. The opening address mentioned our focus on the fáinne. Over 1,000 individuals within the organisation have varying levels of Irish proficiency. The committee has heard today about our attempts to speak the language and that needs to continue. We want to create a grá or love of the language and to be seen to do so within the organisation. We all have a role to play in that in our leadership and I say that to make the point that it is not just a responsibility for the Gaeilgeoirí.

Chairman: Tá súil agam go mbeidh An Garda Síochána linn arís amach anseo agus go mbeidh scéal níos fearr ann. Tá súil agam go n-éireodh go geal leis An nGarda Síochána leis an bhfeachtas earcaíochta agus nach mbeidh gá le rialachán chun an Ghaeilge a bhrú chun cinn. B'fhéidir go bhfuil mé ag brionglóideach ansin.

Deputy Aindrias Moynihan: Tá ceist amháin eile agam.

Chairman: Ceann gasta mar táimid in ainm is a bheith críochnaithe.

Deputy Aindrias Moynihan: Ag leanúint ar an gceist ar an éagsúlacht, an bhféadfaí soiléiriú a dhéanamh ar iarrachtaí a rinneadh chun éagsúlacht a thabhairt isteach sa Gharda Síochána gan aon athrú a dhéanamh ar chúrsaí teanga? An ndearnadh iarrachtaí chun go bhféadfadh pobail éagsúla feabhas a chur ar a gcuid Ghaeilinne nó mar sin? Cén iarrachtaí a rinneadh maidir le héagsúlacht roimhe seo nár athraigh riachtanais teanga?

Ms Anne Marie McMahon: An Garda Síochána is aware of our requirement to be more diverse and in that context we have developed a diversity and inclusion strategy. We also have an internal diversity strategy. We have an extensive outreach to new communities and not so new communities in an effort to build relations, to provide the required service and to identify if there are particular nuances to the service that particular communities may require. That is part of our day-to-day business in our community policing, outreach and efforts to build up good relations with the whole spectrum that makes up any community we work in. That is ongoing and important work and a lot of energy is going into that. There are many strands to our diversity outreach.

Deputy Aindrias Moynihan: Gabhaim buíochas leis an bhfinné as sin. Nílim ag caint mar gheall ar inniu agus amárach; táim ag caint ar iarrachtaí a rinneadh cheana féin nó an ndearnadh aon iarracht éagsúlacht a mhealladh isteach gan díriú ar an gceist teanga seo? An ndearna An Garda Síochána iarrachtaí cheana féin chun daoine a thabhairt isteach agus feabhas a chur ar a gcuid Ghaeilinne agus mar sin de? Cén iarrachtaí a rinneadh cheana féin roimh an athrú seo a thabhairt chun cinn?

Ms Anne Marie McMahon: One of the straplines for our last recruitment campaign was “The Difference is You”. We wanted to speak to the new communities in that. To answer the Deputy’s question, we were not trying to teach them Irish, communicate with them through Irish or anything like that. We were trying to get them to join An Garda Síochána and to let them see and recognise that it was an attractive proposition as a career. Once any of the recruits were in Templemore, the Irish language training was a compulsory part of the BA in applied policing and one which they must pass. I have already outlined the two modules that specifically relate to the Irish language. They would have undergone that particular process in the same way as all other recruits. In addition to that, there were other online supports available to all recruits, not just those from new or diverse communities. That is how I would answer your question.

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Chairman: Is é sin an focal deireanach. Gabhaim buíochas le Anne Marie McMahon, Eimear Ní Cheallaigh, Yvonne Cooke agus Joseph Nugent thar ceann An Gharda Síochána; Doncha O’Sullivan agus Mary McKenna ón Roinn Dlí agus Cirt; Bob Collins agus Helen Hall ón Údarás Póilíneachta; agus Shirley Comerford agus Liam Sinclair thar ceann na Seirbhíse um Cheapacháin Phoiblí as an díospóireacht agus an geur chuige a bhí againn inniu.

Mar nach bhfuil aon ábhar nó ghnó eile againn, cuirfear an comhchoiste seo ar athló anois. Beidh cruinniú den roghchoiste ar siúl an tseachtain seo chugainn leis an bPríomh-Aoire agus Aire Stáit sa Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir, Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán, an Teachta Jack Chambers, nuair a bheimid ag déileáil le Meastacháin don bhliain 2022 a bhaineann leis an nGaeltacht agus leis an nGaeilge. Beidh an chéad cruinniú eile den chomhchoiste ar 1.30 p.m. ar an 16 Feabhra Gabhaim buíochas libh go léir.

Cuireadh an comhchoiste ar athló ar 4.02 p.m. go dtí 1.30 p.m. Dé Céadaoin, an 16 Feabhra 2022.