



Arts, Culture and Leisure - A Policy Review Paper

Sinn Féin policy review September 2001

Executive Summary

Introduction

This policy review paper examines arts, culture and leisure in the context of the new political dispensation created by the Good Friday Agreement, the new institutions in the Six Counties, and the changing political and economic situation in the Twenty-Six Counties.

The potential for the development of arts, culture and leisure in Ireland is immense. Recent political developments, particularly of an all-island nature, could be underpinned by the inclusive and unique scope of Irish arts and culture. Furthermore, a more integrated, imaginative and innovative arts, culture and leisure policy could open up markets that generate indigenous business and craft sectors and also serve as a dynamic to reinvigorate Irish culture in general.

Summary Recommendations

- Policy should recognise the links between economic development and arts, culture and heritage policy.
- The potential of the cultural and tourist industries needs to be acknowledged in the context of economic regeneration, particularly when it comes to rural communities and areas in need of regeneration.

- The Programme for the Arts should emphasise the all-Ireland potential within the sector. An all-Ireland strategy should be developed and the Irish government and the administration in the Six Counties should instigate a single policy agenda. There should be a progressive all-Ireland harmonisation of arts, culture, leisure and heritage policies.

- The Arts Councils, North and South should work towards better co-operation in terms of project co-ordination and strategic development.

- Within the respective departments in Dublin and Belfast, branches should be established which would encourage integrated policy development.

- All government business should be conducted on a bi-lingual basis, with a reassessment of the role of the Irish language within the workings of public administration in accordance with commitments made in the Good Friday Agreement.

- Foras na Gaeilge should assist the Arts Council in promoting the Irish language through the arts.

- Sport needs to be profiled more within this policy programme, particularly in relation to the tourist potential of Gaelic games. Gaelic games should be highlighted as a unique feature of heritage and culture.

- Tourism should be promoted internationally as an all-Ireland destination. The tourist boards should be merged in the interests of consolidating a market within the context of a single European

destination. There should be a single agency to market tourism.

- The Equality Duty encompassing the right to equality of opportunity and enshrined in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act should be enforced throughout all public authorities in relation to arts, culture and heritage sectors.

- The arts and culture infrastructure needs urgent capital investment for the improvement of facilities.

- The governments should be encouraged to look into establishing a Hospitality College that could assist in the upgrading of services and facilities and the quality and scope of arts and cultural initiatives.

- The Arts Councils and respective government departments should ensure that access to arts, culture and heritage attractions is as open as possible.

- An action plan and timetable should be developed which fully implements the new Targeting Social Need programme in the Six Counties.

- Community arts should be given a special designation within arts and culture policy and supported accordingly.

- The media, particularly television, should be encouraged to dedicate more time to Irish arts and culture.

- The government should consolidate micro enterprises working in the Irish medium, and particularly cottage television production. Investment should be directed to companies within the Gaeltacht areas.

- Archaeological heritage needs to be prioritised and preserved as a matter of urgency. The respective Departments, North and South should produce detailed maps of archaeological sites profiled as a part of the unique cultural identity of the island.

Mission Statement

Sinn Féin want to develop arts, culture and leisure within the context of an all island framework. We want to build on the respective strengths of the existing disparate agencies, so as to best utilise the sectors potential for delivering a quality arts,

culture and leisure programme which will maximise opportunities for social and economic development.

Introduction

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Context

The potential for the development of arts, culture and leisure in Ireland is immense. Recent political developments, particularly of an all-island nature, could be underpinned by the inclusive and unique scope of Irish arts and culture. Furthermore, a more integrated, imaginative and innovative arts, culture and leisure policy could open up markets that generate indigenous business and craft sectors and also serve as a dynamic to reinvigorate Irish culture in general.

The relevant industries, North and South, have a pool of people who are willing to broaden the range and quality of services and products. What has to be taken into account with all-Ireland developments is the role of the sector across the island, the wealth of experience and potential for investment in human resources

Mapping the Infrastructure

The scope for arts, culture and leisure policy development is enormous and covers interests that may not initially seem to be involved.

A working definition of the arts, cultural and leisure sector covers:

- The music industry;
- Popular culture;
- Cinema and film;
- Arts performers;
- Artists; • Museums;
- The language movement;
- Heritage and local history;
- Libraries;
- Sport;

- High and ecclesiastical art and culture;
- Community art and festivals;
- Leisure services;
- Sport;
- Literary art;
- Education.

Together these elements impact on the lives of everyone on the island.

Policy development will also have an effect on the craft industry, producers and service providers, tourism, local and central government public spending, the environment, community relations. And in terms of policy implementation it is solidly within the context of an all-island framework and all-island identity.

Viewed in this way art, culture and leisure policy is not only about supporting cultural ventures but is about creating or building on the Irish identity as it has evolved to date.

Some regions of the island, such as Galway or Cork, are highly developed with regard to the infrastructure which has been developed, whereas other regions are struggling to fit arts and culture into their development strategies.

The lessons from areas such as Galway are that regional and even rural regeneration can benefit significantly from a concerted investment in the arts and cultural sectors.

Developing an all-island policy for the arts

All-Ireland co-operation in the arts and culture is (at the time of drafting this document) largely ad hoc and unstructured.

To increase the potential of the arts and cultural sector and to enhance its contribution to a developing all-island policy perspective; current strategies should be designed and promoted on an inter agency basis. Co-operation needs to be developed along lines that work towards a single strategic policy.

The two Arts Councils, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and An Chomhairle Ealaíon, have a pivotal role to play in providing the overall vision and

direction for an all-island strategy. Where this would best come to fruition is in a situation where both sets of interests are seen to be best served through the establishment of a single forum to direct policy and administer funding.

Existing local government bodies across Ireland could readily serve as centre-points for developing the sector in a co-ordinated manner. In this way arts and culture could be rapidly situated in terms of a policy priority on a par with other, more product-focused, business and corporate enterprises.

All-Ireland co-operation in arts and cultural ventures could play an important role in terms of the growth of the island economy.

It is generally recognised that the island should be marketed as a single entity. This needs to be explored in a more thoroughgoing manner in relation to not just tourism but also in relation to the fields of arts, culture and sport.

Strategic policy development should seek to tap into the whole reconciliation theme that has been so prominent in the developing peace process during and after the Good Friday Agreement.

The potential of a single policy management structure governing programme delivery, investment and development throughout Ireland has only been touched upon in the past number of years. Where contact within the general sector has been encouraged (for example, the inland waterways link along the Shannon) it has proved to be productive and returns have been higher than was hitherto the case in separate projects.

Where significant benefits will come in a reasonably short period of time is the role that arts and culture can play in relation to the tourist industry's marketing and development strategies. Marketing the all-island aspects of arts, culture and heritage has the potential for solidifying the best of an all-island identity that would have a greater appeal to the international market than the perception of a divided country with a conflict in one region.

Economic development, investment and the arts

In many ways, the arts and cultural industries have sustained economic development. And with its wealth of heritage-based initiatives, Ireland would be in an ideal position to emulate this continental formula for economic development.

The arts are reliant on the commitment of government funds to be sustainable and economically viable. The sector has previously not been viewed as a profit-generating enterprise and has consequently not been prioritised in government policy. In the South, among the various budgetary priorities it is not included as an expenditure-related policy, never mind being a priority with potential for sustained economic growth.

There has been a great emphasis, throughout Ireland, on the need for the arts sector to attract private venture funding. Cultural industries have largely been left to develop autonomously and have, arguably, not been able to draw down strategic support from the governments in the way that other enterprises have been able to do, certainly since the 1980s. In terms of economic potential, the cultural industries have therefore been under-utilised and the real opportunities for sectoral development have been neglected.

In the North, the amount of public spending for the cultural industries is 78 per cent of that in England. Furthermore, business sponsorship is not as reliable or extensive as in other parts of Europe. The tendency has also been for corporate sponsorship to be targeted at initiatives that are high profile and located close to the headquarters of the sponsors offices. Therefore, in terms of the current situation, the tendency would be for high arts and profiled sporting events in or around Dublin to benefit most from corporate funding.

The first point of reference in terms of enhancing the cultural industries is to ensure that the facilities exist to cater for the different aspects of arts initiatives. This would mean an investment in capital provision or the expansion of existing facilities to diversify their interests. An example could be the Waterfront Hall in Belfast adapting its provision for art exhibitions.

There is also the perennial question of location. The Midlands and the West of Ireland are poorly serviced when it comes to facilities that can be adapted for theatre, museums and galleries. The concentration of provision around the main economic centres has led to an exclusiveness that is geographic.

Moves should be made to relocate, to encourage regionalisation and to ensure a more equitable distribution of provision for cultural industries. The cost implications of expanding the sector may restrict the potential but there is also an understanding that the cultural industries, if encouraged in an integrated and inclusive manner, could expand and enhance regional regeneration in an innovative manner.

The immediate difficulty with strategic planning in relation to the cultural industries is the uncoordinated manner in which the policies are managed

Projects and programmes throughout Ireland are, taken as autonomous and worked through on the basis of single profiled initiatives. A single vision document may be a more constructive way to approach the development of the cultural industries and a strategy which is sensitive to the regions and the various aspects of the arts, culture and leisure economies.

The North's Economic Council, in its 1996 evaluation, *The Arts and the NI Economy* (pxii), argued that participation in, and awareness of the arts arise from a range of factors:

- Appropriate and sufficient funding from both the public and private sectors;
- Education about and around the arts throughout peoples lives;
- Perceptions and images of the arts, especially those that are commonly regarded as Highbrow;
- Accessibility in terms of cost and location; and
- Effective marketing and promotion.

Within the cultural industries themselves, public funding should be made available for those initiatives that are underworked

A working group could be established which would look at the provisions and potential of the various projects which could have a high 'yield' in terms of jobs and production/services.

The role of the Irish language and the traditional arts would be in a good position to benefit from this type of concerted programme and a co-ordinated development would ensure a focus for dynamic growth with numerous regional opportunities.

Furthermore, if the arts are to evolve in such a way as to reflect the diverse cultures across the island, a more strategic approach will have to be taken by government, most notably in the South.

Mapping the facilities and the partnerships can be a delicate process, especially with the various political concerns, but without a vision-driven approach what will remain will be dispersed and in some cases sectarian and partitionist arrangements. The key objective of cultural 'reconciliation' should be utilised as a process in itself by statutory authorities to link projects and to develop initiatives in the traditionally underdeveloped regions in terms of the cultural industries. In effect, it is about building new venues, expanding the old, facilitating partnerships, solidifying links between initiatives and encouraging the expansion of the sector in general.

Tourism

Central to the new cultural economy is the role of tourism as a steady source of interest and income for the sector.

Both Arts Councils in Ireland have been very aware of the need to consolidate the attractions that are on offer to build up a distinct cultural experience that would appeal to non-residents as well as residents. The inclusive aspects of the policy should be a priority and especially in the North, could have a positive impact on changing the controversial and/or sectarian elements of religious/political marching.

Dublin and parts of the West Coast of Ireland benefit significantly from the influx of tourists each year. In some localities the basis of the economy is tourism. Lessons have obviously been learnt in certain regions on how to maximise the potential of attractions and accommodate the activities of tourists. In other areas of the European Union, which depend heavily on the influx of tourists for economic development, many aspects of government - from the education system (through the teaching of languages, management and

hospitality skills) to the creation of a tourism minister - have been adopted to contribute to and inform a multicultural, inclusive and developmental approach to the cultural industries in conjunction with the tourist sector.

Tourism can have a significant effect on the way in which arts and culture evolves on the island. If policy can be co-ordinated in such a manner that it is sensitive to the historical antecedents of Irish culture, it could enrich the nature and broaden the scope of cultural activities.

The value of tourism in the North alone is estimated at over Stg £150 million per year, securing upwards of 5,205 jobs. The number of visitors to the North in the 1990s has shown a 27.1 per cent increase.

In relation to the South, which has a much more developed system to accommodate tourism, it supports 86,000 full-time jobs which in 1992 was equivalent to 7.6 per cent of the state's workforce; this is now up to about 9 per cent.

The baseline for a co-ordinated approach to tourism should be authorities, sectors and government working together to make Ireland competitive in relation to other European destinations. In Ireland the average growth rate for the tourist industry was 3.8 per cent throughout the 1990s, which is significantly better than the European average of 2.7 per cent (Paul Tansey, *Tourism: A Product with Big Potential*, p198 -201).

Undoubtedly, the political divisions, which have been created between the North and the South, have acted as a disincentive for those outside the country viewing the place as a holiday destination. What would seem to be necessary would be the removal of political as well as economic obstacles to tourism to ensure that the tourist industry views the island in a positive manner.

Ireland has a distinct position on the tourist map in Europe and although the 'cosmopolitan' attractions of Dublin itself will continue to dominate the sector, the prospects of regional and rural focuses remain open to expansion.

Tailoring the infrastructure to adapt to a more environmentally focused heritage could ensure a unique destination. Marketing and the diversification of the products available are central

to the process of securing the position of tourism within the economy. Areas for development include waterway expansion, equestrian pursuits, golf, water-sports, activity holidays, historic and archaeological tours and culture and arts in general.

Prior to the 1990s the image of Ireland abroad dictated the way in which an underdeveloped economic sector, tourism, struggled to attract people into the country. Negative aspects have included Ireland being perceived as a place that offered little to its own population and even less to those who visited the place. Immigrants or second-generation Irish living in the USA visiting families at home sustained the American market. This continues to be a growth area that should be encouraged, but it is not necessarily tourism in the sectoral definition of the word.

There was a view that the rural areas had nothing to offer visitors and that the built heritage, antiquities and ecclesiastical history was in some way 'backward' and uninteresting.

With the ongoing conflict in the North, history and culture were perceived to be 'dangerous' commodities to work with. This view was encouraged by the NIO and the Irish government until relatively recently. The popularity of the political murals in the North and the number of visitors to places like West Belfast and Derry give some indication of the potential that was being suppressed

Agrarian culture and history has traditionally been hidden as an asset. With the recent emergence of the environmentally aware tourist the potential throughout rural areas is immense. Industrial archaeology is just one aspect of this particular rural market that has yet to be assessed for its market potential. Whereas the 17th Century Jacobin wars and battle sites have long been highlighted as points of interest, the role of the industrial revolution and rural culture have been overlooked as assets.

The conflict in the North has without doubt kept people away. In this context the tourist economy is perhaps in a position to benefit significantly from the peace process. The difficulties in selling Ireland abroad were an all-Ireland problem and subsequently the peace process has provided an opportunity to enhance all-island perceptions from

an international perspective.

Arts and culture should be seen to be a key support of the tourist industry. There is the potential that 10 per cent to 15 per cent of the total working population could be employed in this sector by 2005 and 2010 respectively. Working side-by-side and co-ordinated by central and local government, arts and cultural sectors could benefit significantly from closer association with the whole tourist industry. The unification or institutionalising of joint working arrangements between Bord Fáilte, the NI Tourist Board, and the Arts Councils, North and South could provide a spur for sectoral development and the continued growth of arts and cultural initiatives throughout the island

Overall, in relation to tourism as a support for arts and culture throughout Ireland, a number of aspects should be highlighted which could be beneficial to those working in these fields:

- Arts and cultural industries should be linked more inclusively to the whole tourism sector;
- Tourism should be given a status in terms of financial support and policy profile similar to other European Union regions which have a highly progressive marketing strategy (this will also help build the all-island identity in international terms);
- The quality of tourism products should be improved ('kite mark' systems should be introduced by the Tourist Board to ensure a value-added aspect for the visitor);
- Ireland should be marketed internationally as a single entity;
- Tourist boards, North and South should merge in the interests of presenting reconciled marketing opportunities and joint initiatives should be promoted;
- Key tourist attractions should be enhanced, and in some instances new attractions should be developed to provide a focus to visitors;
- Private enterprise should be encouraged to look at the potential of expanding into the tourist sector, and indeed the arts and cultural industries within this context;
- There should be investment in rural areas in such a manner that a rural holiday sector is established and supported, particularly in those areas of agricultural decline.

Funding

The role of public funding is central to the current policy programme, working from the premise that partnerships should be established between government and community-based initiatives. Funding would depend on sustainability or 'doing it effectively'

In the North's Programme for the Arts, the strategy for developing the arts and culture remit also looks to the possibility of establishing an inter-departmental working group with a full-time worker within the Assembly in the North to work towards a more comprehensive and inclusive funding strategy for arts services. The Irish language organisations and medium got a special mention as being central to the building of a fair and equitable policy base.

Both public and private sector funders need to take into account the nature and potential of the cultural industries. They must ensure that resources are committed in an imaginative manner to underpin their role in the political and economic regeneration of Ireland.

Since the establishment of the arts-supporting statutory bodies the key targets of public investment have been museums, profile theatres and so-called 'high art' companies (opera, etc).

There have also been a number of beneficiary organisations and projects that have a broader base in terms of attracting a more inclusive audience. These include community festivals, individual arts initiatives, themed festivals and specialised initiatives. But these initiatives and companies have also had to draw funding from the private sector to supplement their work. Market viability has been secured for successful initiatives through their ability to draw in the public. A broader mix of funding should be encouraged and the type of projects benefiting from this type of funding should be expanded.

Film

Film and cinema has a potential role in forming a cultural base that could enhance the local industry. It is accepted by the respective Art Councils, North and South, that the film making component of the cultural industries is under-developed and has

much scope for expansion.

It's potential can be seen from the continued development of the film industry and the building of a new generation of cinema complexes throughout the island.

Circumstances have altered to such an extent that the film industry has come to establish itself as a leader in the arts sector, even though it is consumer driven. Investment could most feasibly be drawn from the private sector to encourage the film industry itself. Co-ordination of this developmental strategy could, without much strain on the public purse, come from government with returns being substantial.

Arts and sporting events

Given the high proportion of the population that pays regular visits to museums, cinema, theatre or sporting events, these elements are the most influential forms of popular community interaction.

Arts and sporting events are not only educational for the public in general but can serve to highlight the richness of Irish culture itself.

Attendances at cultural functions have consistently been higher in the South than in the North. There has been the tendency in the North for cultural traditions to be subsumed within religious events. This has had a mixed effect on the development of the cultural sector proper. More research is needed into this interaction. It may help to service Irish culture in general but it could also be refined so that it helps enhance cultural policy. All the churches, for example, have 32-county structures and from this premise they offer a holistic and historic perception of the island identity.

Political art

This includes art or cultural initiatives from those areas that have suffered social, economic and political discrimination and deprivation.

The obvious bias towards 'neutral arts' has led to a situation where opera and state museums are prioritised and subsidised disproportionately. This approach has undermined the social contribution to developing inclusive arts initiatives or extending the audience base. Community arts in particular

have been discriminated against yet this aspect of the sector has the greatest potential for growth - encouraging inclusiveness and generating employment within areas of economic disadvantage.

Community arts

A recent Sinn Féin briefing paper noted:

"Community arts have an enormous impact on local communities. They help provide social cohesion, individual and personal development, community empowerment, identity, imagination and vision, creativity, health and well-being. "

It was also recognised that these elements of cultural policy are fundamental to the creation of an equality agenda and an environment that respects cultural diversity.

The Programme for the Arts relies heavily on the definition of arts by Francois Matarasso from The Comedia Report: The Art of Regeneration:

"Creating a successful partnership between the arts culture and urban regeneration requires a more imaginative understanding of culture and the way it works than the traditional focus on aesthetic values generally allows

"We should not be concerned with high art/low art but with what the artists are trying to achieve, who with, and how it relates to people, their needs and aspirations. This is not an abandonment of quality - poor quality initiatives always fail. Instead it is a call to abandon prejudice and look beyond the surface to find deeper resonances and meanings. "

Irish language and the arts

The Irish language and Gaelic culture in general have suffered from decades of underdevelopment and, in the case of the Six Counties, systemic discrimination. In the Six Counties, in particular, the work of the Irish-language movement was politically suppressed, activists persecuted and the culture censored. Sectarianism underpinned the policies in which the Northern state dealt with the Irish language. This past was recognised in the acknowledgement of the importance of the language issue in the Good Friday Agreement.

In the North, Sinn Féin's policy is based on the following commitments from the government, civil service and public sectors to provide:-

- A bilingual, Irish language environment, including bilingual stationery, signage, correspondence, minutes and verbal procedure;
- The right to use Irish in all circumstances and to be understood in Irish through a two-way simultaneous translation system and written and oral translation staff;
- The opportunity to learn Irish for both elected members and staff, as in-service paid training;
- Irish language learning facilities, day-time classes, books, audio-visual equipment;
- Gaeltacht courses and qualified teachers;
- Access to TG4 and Radio na Gaeltachta to be made available;
- Purchase of Lá and Foinse and all press releases to include these outlets;
- Irish-speaking staff throughout the various sections of the Assembly Buildings (e.g. tour guides and press officers).

As a means of influencing policy this level of integration of the language into the actual structures of government would have a definite impact on the way in which the language is treated throughout the society.

The central plank of promoting the language and establishing Ireland as a truly bilingual society is the design of a strategy and time-scales that would plot the future expansion and accessibility of the language and the economy that surrounds it.

Irish-language newspapers should be expanded with the support of government funding and serious consideration should be given to the establishment of an Irish language daily paper.

Within the broader media it would be advantageous for the development of the language that broadcasting should work within formal structures on an all-island basis.

Highly developed operations in the South such as TG4 should be supported so that they can develop further and be more accessible in the North. As a rejoinder to this, the government should consolidate micro-enterprises, particularly cottage television production. Investment should be directed to companies within the Gaeltacht areas.

All public authorities and public buildings should operate a bilingual policy that includes all promotional and corporate material. Staff training needs to be made commonplace and a culture of Irish language use should be promoted within all statutory organisations

Sinn Féin has a policy of a reciprocation of interests that serves the relationship between the community development agencies and the Irish language movement. This, it is argued, should be extended to include statutory interests.

"All public institutions should build into their strategic aims and objectives and policies a commitment to working in partnership with local communities. Criteria must be put in place to monitor this process and future funding should be dependent upon its level of success." -Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, Sinn Féin: Dublin, 2000, p4).

The established Irish-language organisations have struggled for decades to keep the movement and interest in the language to the fore of policy development. These organisations, at this stage of national development, should be supported in such a manner that funding and influence should reflect the role in which the Arts Councils act. The profile of the language organisations needs to be brought closer to the statutory base and core funding should be commensurate to this.

In terms of promoting the language within arts and culture initiatives, innovative projects should be encouraged at central and local government level to enhance the level of Irish language inclusion within society in general. Language tolerance could be tied to community relations issues and the human rights/Bill of Rights agenda.

The tourist industries, including the private sector, should be encouraged to provide facilities in the Irish language. Incentives need to be introduced to maximise the potential of the tourist sector. Sinn Féin's submission to the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure notes:

"The Irish language should be recognised as a valued and integral vehicle for artistic expression and, accordingly, provision should be made for translation, dubbing and sub-titling in Irish."

Local government throughout the 32 Counties has

a responsibility to ensure local strategies for the promotion of the Irish language. This could be highlighted specifically in relation to the rights of Irish speakers within the local environment and resources need to be established accordingly. Local authorities need to strategically move towards the situation whereby Irish-language speakers have the right and opportunity to conduct all business in Irish. 'Affirmative action' in this respect is a way in which this can be facilitated.

Training in various levels of Irish language competence should be made commonplace and readily available within all public bodies. A culture of language education needs to be promoted throughout government bodies.

Sinn Féin, as a political party, is in an ideal position to actively promote and canvass on behalf of the Irish language. There is already an established working relationship in the North between party activists and the Irish-language movement. This could be further developed in the North and duplicated in the South. Underpinning the role of the party in supporting the Irish-language movement, the Good Friday Agreement and the all-Ireland bodies can be influenced to carry through positive bilingual policies which 'provide us with an opportunity to create a society that genuinely values all of the rich diversity of heritage and culture on this island in a new and enlightened atmosphere based on equality, pluralism and tolerance' (Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, p8).

The equality agenda

After the transfer of powers to the Assembly in the Six Counties and the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, there is now a statutory responsibility on government to pursue broad policies for sustained economic growth and stability, and for the promotion of social inclusion, including in particular community development and the advancement of women in public life.

A new regional development strategy for the North, for consideration in due course by the Assembly, aims to tackle the problems of a divided society and social cohesion in urban, rural and border areas, protecting and enhancing the environment, producing new approaches to transport issues, strengthening the physical infrastructure of the

region, developing the advantages and resources of rural areas, and rejuvenating major urban centres.

The new economic development programmes seek to provide short and medium-term economic planning linked as appropriate to the regional development strategy. They are subject to equality legislation, something that includes all statutory authorities dealing with arts, culture, heritage and leisure.

Measures on employment equality included in the recent White Paper 'Partnership for Equality' cover the extension and strengthening of anti-discrimination legislation and a review of the national security aspects of the present fair employment legislation at the earliest possible time. A new, more focused Targeting Social Need initiative is required together with a range of measures aimed at combating unemployment and progressively eliminating the differential in unemployment rates between the two communities.

All participants in the Good Friday Agreement recognised the importance of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to linguistic diversity, where the Irish language, Ulster-Scots and the languages of the various ethnic communities are considered part of the cultural wealth of the island of Ireland.

In the context of active consideration currently underpinned by the Council of Europe's Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the British government (harmonising with Irish legislation through EU policy) will, in relation to the Irish language, where appropriate and where people so desire it:

- Take resolute action to promote the language;
- Facilitate and encourage the use of the language, in speech and written form, in public and private life where there is appropriate demand;
- Seek to remove, where possible, restrictions which would discourage or work against the maintenance or development of the language;
- Make provision for liaising with the Irish-language community, representing their views to public authorities and investigating complaints;
- Place a statutory duty on the Department of Education in the Six Counties to encourage and facilitate Irish-medium education in line with current

provision for integrated education;

- Explore urgently with the relevant British authorities (in co-operation with the Irish broadcasting authorities) the scope for achieving more widespread availability of TG4 in the North;
- Seek more efficient ways to encourage and provide financial support for Irish language film and television production in the North;
- Encourage the parties to secure agreement and that this commitment will be sustained by the new Assembly in a way that takes account of the desires and sensitivities of the community.

All parties to the Good Friday Agreement acknowledged the sensitivity of the use of symbols and emblems for public purposes and the need to reconstitute institutions to ensure that such symbols and emblems are used in a manner, which promotes mutual respect rather than division. Arrangements will be made to monitor this issue and consider what action might be required.

Key to the development of an equality agenda within arts and culture policy is the distribution of public funding. The political distinctions, North and South and those definitions that are included within the equality duty in the North, offer adequate scope for a more equitable assessment for distributing funds. Chair of the ACNI, Prof BM Walker, on his announcement of the 2000-2001 awards, commented:

"Organisations we fund at this time of the year are the lifeblood of the arts here. They are employers, they are training grounds for high achievement in all forms of the arts, and they are the organisations that tell nothing but good news... to the rest of the world. They deserve funding which is at least adequate to their value in our society."

Equality proofing not only needs to be structured within aims and objectives but the all-Ireland dimension needs to be seen as a part of this process.