Submission from Conradh na Gaeilge

to

re:

Mergers in the Communications Media

22 January 2015
Introduction

Conradh na Gaeilge is the democratic forum of the Irish language community and the organization works for the language throughout Ireland and the world.

The main aim of the organization is to revive the Irish language as the main language of Ireland.

Since its foundation on 31st July 1893 the members of An Conradh have been busy promoting Irish in every aspect of the life of the country, from law and education to the development of communications media and services in Irish. This major organization awakens the Irish people, gives us a new understanding of our valuable heritage and promotes respect for our Gaelic heritage.

An Conradh has 180 branches and many individual members who all work hard and diligently to promote the use of Irish in their own area.

More information about the work of An Conradh is available at www.cnag.ie
Introduction:

It is vital that the communications media will express a wide range of opinion, which serve the interests of all the people in the country and express the cultural diversity of the island of Ireland as a whole. Under the Broadcasting Act of 2009 TG4 and RTÉ have certain responsibilities as national broadcasters in regard to Irish. The Broadcasting Authority of Ireland and these new guidelines should be ready to ensure that broadcasters will serve the whole community, and this means that the Irish language and broadcasting through the medium of Irish will be important in any merger of communications media.

Proposals:

- Under the Broadcasting Act 2009, Public Service Broadcasters [RTÉ and TG4] are obliged to provide a comprehensive range of programmes in Irish, as mentioned in bar-graph 5.9 in the new guidelines. Broadcasting through the medium of Irish should be a part of the process when a decision is being made about any merger in the media, to ensure that the cultural diversity of the whole island of Ireland is presented.

- It is in the public interest to broadcast through the medium of Irish, and major broadcasters should therefore be obliged to broadcast a certain number of hours through the medium of Irish. If broadcasters do not have this obligation the schedule of the stations will not be representative of the country or its background.

- According to the 2009 Act, the stations have complete freedom regarding broadcasting times and the types of programmes they provide, as long as their options fulfill the other obligations that the stations have under the Act. This can be done with other broadcasters as long as this obligation is fulfilled on a practical basis i.e. It is not enough to say that a certain number of hours must be set aside for broadcasting through the medium of Irish, these programmes should be broadcast on days and at times that are reasonable and suitable for the viewing public.

- When the obligations of National Broadcasters regarding broadcasting through the medium of Irish are mentioned, it should be a condition that this obligation can be spread out to other broadcasters, based on the size of the other organizations and on their ability to provide broadcast through the medium of Irish.

- The matter of broadcasting in Irish should be a part of any decision be a part of every decision made under these new guidelines.