

FROM: P T DURBIN  
CPL DIVISION  
4 November 1992

UNDER/ 148/11  
SEC  
- 4 NOV 1992  
CENT SEC

cc: Mr Alston  
Mr Bell  
Mr Watkins  
Mr McCusker  
Mr Maxwell  
Mr D A Hill  
Mr Kyle  
Mr Barbour

MS MCALISTER  
CCRU

IRISH LANGUAGE ISSUES

I have seen Clive Barbour's minute to you of 28 October covering two papers from the Irish about Irish language issues.

2. I particularly noted the statement in the paper about the Irish language review that "we have been informed that the question of ratification by the UK of the European Convention on Minority Languages is still under review and is linked with the Irish language policy review". (para 6.1). We need to be careful not to allow the Irish to believe that the UK stance on the Convention will depend solely on its policy on the Irish language. As Mr McCusker will be aware, other Whitehall Departments have misgivings about the Convention because of the potential cost implications and, in the case of the Home Office, because of the possible race relations complications - indigenous minority languages would enjoy the protection of the Convention but those of immigrant minorities would not (or at least the Convention is not designed to protect them). It is therefore the misgivings of other Whitehall Departments as much as any that NIO Ministers might have which are likely to determine the UK position finally. This is not something to be displayed to the Irish Government but should guide us in our dealings with them on the Convention.

3. I would like to be kept abreast of developments.

SIGNED: Peter Durbin

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ASST./ 11/11  
SEC or 6/11  
- 4 NOV 1992  
C.C.R.U.

*Part. Mc Innes*  
*Mr McCusker*  
*This is sound*  
*advice.*  
*Mr Watkins*  
*We should do*  
*at our last*  
*meeting*  
*of 4/11*  
*Good. Thanks.*  
*5.4*