Aighneacht don Choimisún Um Thodhchaí na Meán ó Cheardchumann na nIriseóirí RTE Raidió na Gaeltachta

Cuireann RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta seirbhís iomlán craoltóireachta raidió ar fáil i nGaeilge dona ceantair Gaeltachta agus don phobal Gaeilge go náisiúnta agus go hidirnáisiúnta. 'Sí an Ghaeilge an chéad teanga oifigiúil sa Stáit agus tá dualgas bunreachtúil ar an rialtas a chinntiú go bhfuil maoiniú ar chomhchéim tugthaí do chraoladh na Gaeilge agus atá don Bhéarla. Níl sé seo ag tarlú agus tá sé ag cur leis an gcrimeadh atá ag tarlú do sheirbhísí craoltóireachta RnaG ach go háithrithe.

Tá stádas ar leith ag RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta mar chraoltóir náisiúnta na Gaeilge agus tá ról ann i gcothú an daonlathais i measc na bpobal a bhfuil an stáisiún ag freastal orthu. Caithfear a chinntiú go bhfuil achmhainní agus maoiniú cuí curtha ar fáil don stáisiún le freastal faoi leith a dhéanamh ar an bpobal Gaeltachta agus Gaeilge atá ar fud an domhain. Ar an mbunús seo, tá sé rí-thabhachtach gur cheart forbairt a dhéanamh ar an stáisiún atá fréamhaithe i bpobal agus i gcultúr na Gaeltachta agus na Gaeilge.

Tá ról ar leith ag RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta mar go bhfuilear ag freastal ar phobal mhionlach Gaeltachta agus pobal Gaeilge níos leithne. Ina theannta seo, tá RnaG ar an t-aon chraoltóir sa tír nach bhfuil goidte I muinín fógraíochta, mar sin tá an stáisiún ag brath go thoil agus go h-iomlán ar mhaoiniú ó chiste RTÉ.

De bharr ganntann airgid in RTÉ, tá laghdú tagthaí ar an mbuiséad a cuirtear ar fáil do RnaG agus tá idir 30-40% don fhoireann imíthe ó 2008, gan aon duine tagtha I gcoirbeacht orthu. Fagann sé seo go bhfuil bearnai móra ó thaobh craoltóireacht dhe, mar nach bhfuil dóthain daoine le freastal ar riachtanais an stáisiúin. Ó thaobh tuarastála de, níl an fhoireann sa stáisiún á íoc ar chomhchéim le oibríthe eile ar fud RTÉ, TG4 san áireamh, mar sin tá RnaG ar an nganncuid ar roinnt bealaí éagsúla.

Teastaíonn méadú súntasach a chur ar bhuiséad RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta agus ba cheart go mbeadh sé sin faoi smacht agus stiúr na heagraíochta féin. Ina thaobh seo, ba dea-chleachtas a bheadh ann dá gcuirfi ceannasaí airgeadais sa stáisiún, mar a bhíodh san am a caitheadh, a bheadh ag plé go hiomlán le gnóthaí airgeadais RnaG, neamhspleách ó RTÉ. Anuas ar seo, ba cheart níos mo cumhachta a thabhairt do lucht bainistiochta RnaG le dul i ngleic le cúrsaí rialaithe agus riarúcháin, mar go bhfuil tuiscint agus eolas níos leithne ag an stáisiúin ar an bpobal ina bhfuilear ag freastal orthu.

Mar gheall go bhfuil an maoiniú atá á chur ar fáil don t-aon chraoltóir Gaeilge a bhfuil ábhar sa teanga dúchais á chraoladh cheithre huaire fichid, seacht lá in aghaidh na seachtaine, laghdaithe thar na mblianta, tá constaicí móra le sárú ó thaobh craoltoireacht pobail dhe. Is ciste fíor-bheag airgid atá ar fáil o thaobh cláir dhe agus is minic gur ar bhun dea-mhéine a dhéantar cláracha, má chuirtear I gcomparáid iad lena macasamhail ar stáisiúin poiblí eile. Teastaíonn forbairt a dhéanamh ar chláracha don óige mar shampla, nó cláracha fáisnéise ach níl aon mhaoiniú breise ar fáil le tabhairt faoi seo.

Tá an tobar is tábhachtaí maidir le teanga agus pobal na hÉireann in RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta ach de bharr easpa maoinithe, ní féidir aon fhorbairt a dhéanamh ar sin agus is caillteanas mhór é seo don phobal éisteachta san am amach romhainn.

Don todhchaí tá sé soiléir gur i seirbhísí sruthaíthe a bheidh an fás is mó don chraoltóireacht, ach níl RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta feistíthe don aois nua faraor. Nil treallamh ná achmhainní cearta ar fáil do fhoireann RnaG, go deimhin tá treallamh in úsáid fós sa eagraíocht a bhí in úsáid I 1972 nuair a bunaíodh an stáisiún. Ba cheart coimisiúnú a dhéanamh ar na seirbhísí nua-aimseartha a d'fhéadfadh RnaG a chur ar fáil agus na moltaí sin a chur I bhfeidhm, maraon le méadú ar an mbuiséad. Tá géar ghá le infheistíocht ar ábhar ar-líne, chomh maith le treallamh craoltóireachta caighdeánach a chur ar fáil ionas gur féidir leanacht ar aghaidh lena gcuid seirbhísí.

Mar gheall ar an struchtúr ar leith atá ag RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta, ó thaobh a bheith ag cur seirbhís craoltóireachta réigiúnda agus náisiúnta ar fáil, bíonn dúshláin faoi leith ag baint le seirbhís shásúil a chur ar fáil do phobal mionlaithe. Aithnítear go bhfuil ról riachtanach i stáisiún raidió I bhforbairt pobal agus teanga agus le breis achmhainní, bheadh sé de chumas ag RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta cur lena gcuid seirbhísí san aimsir amach romhainn agus sa todhchaí i gcoitinne.

Submission to the Future of Media Commission on behalf of RTÉ
Raidió na Gaeltachta's Union of Journalists

RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta provides a complete radio broadcasting service through the medium of Irish for the Gaeltacht areas and for the Irish language community, both nationally and internationally. Irish is the first official language of the state and the Government has a legal obligation to ensure that the financial support given to Irish medium broadcasting is equivalent to that awarded to services which broadcast through the medium of English. This obligation is not being met and it adds to the attrition which is occurring in particular as relates to RnaG broadcasting services.

RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta has a distinct status as the national Irish language broadcaster and it has a role in fostering democracy within the communities for whom the station provides a service. It must be ensured that proportionate resources and adequate funding is allocated to the station in order for it to provide a service specifically aimed at the Gaeltacht communities and at Irish speaking communities worldwide. On this basis, the development of this station, which has its roots in the Gaeltacht community and its culture, is of the utmost importance.

RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta has a distinguishing role in that it delivers a service to a minority language community within the Gaeltacht and to the wider Irish language community. Additionally, as RnaG is the only broadcaster in the country not in receipt of advertising revenue, the station is utterly dependent on funding from RTÉ.

As a result of a shortage in funding in RTÉ, the budget allocated to RnaG has been reduced and there has been a 30-40% reduction in staff since 2008 and those vaccancies have not yet been filled. This has left significant gaps in the station's broadcasting ability, as staff shortages have resulted in the station's needs not being met. Regarding salary, the station's staff do not have parity with their counterparts in RTÉ, including TG4, and therefore RnaG is disadvantaged in various ways.

RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta's budget must be significantly increased and this budget should be directed and controlled by the organisation itself. In this respect the the re-appointment of a head of finance within the station, who would deal purely with RnaG's finances and be independent of RTÉ, would be in line with best practice. In addition to this, considering that RnaG has a better appreciation and awareness of the community it serves, RnaG management should be given more autonomy in addressing issues relating to policy and administration.

As the funding which is made available to the only broadcaster providing a twenty four seven service through the medium of our native language has been reduced over the years, there are now significant obstacles to ovecome in relation to public broadcasting. The funding available for the production of programmes is minuscule when compared to RnaG's counterparts in other public broadcasting stations and programme production is very often reliant on good will. While there is a need for us to develop more programmes for our younger audiences for example, as well as documentaries, no additional funding has been made available to facilitate this.

While RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta is the most important repository we have for the Irish language and its community, due to lack of funding this can not be further developed which will be a huge loss for its audiences in the future.

It is clear that, for the broadcasting industry, the biggest areas of growth for the future will relate to the provision of streaming services, unforfunatly, RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta is not equipped for this new era. RnaG staff do not have access to the necessary equipment or resources, indeed some of the equipment still used by the organisation dates back to 1972, when the station was first established. A report should be commissioned to investigate new services which could potentially be provided by RnaG and its recommendations should be implemented, along with an increase in the buget. To enable us to continue providing our services, investment in on-line material is urgently required, as is the provision of standard broadcasting equipment.

The provision of a satisfactory service for a minority community is particularly challenging due to the specific structures in place in RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta, as regards the delivery of a national and international broadcasting service. Radio stations are recognised as having a fundamental role in supporting community and language development, therefore increasing the resources available to it would mean that RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta would be able to expand on its services in the future.