DATE

Wednesday, 22nd October 2014 10am – 1pm

PLACE

Royal College of Surgeons, 123 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2

WELCOME ADDRESS

Damien English TD

Minister for Skills, Research and Innovation



EIL INTERCULTURAL LEARNING

EIL Intercultural Learning is an Irish "not for profit" organisation which provides intercultural learning opportunities through study abroad, volunteer abroad, language training, travel awards, group educational programmes, and other cultural immersion activities for up to 2,000 people each year. Part of the worldwide network of The Experiment in International Living, the organisation celebrates it's 50th Anniversary in Ireland this year.

The EIL Study Abroad programme primarily focuses on language immersion programmes abroad for Irish post-primary students. This has given the organisation very direct experience of the challenges and struggles we face as a nation in relation to foreign language skills. It is against this background that we enthusiastically welcome the "Consultation on a Foreign Languages in Education Strategy for Ireland" and through this event we hope we can make a positive contribution to the process.

Further information about our work is available at: www.eilireland.org.



WINNING ABROAD: IRELAND'S STRUGGLE FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Admission is free but we request that you RSVP by e-mail to joanne@eilireland.org or telephone 021 4551535 before

Wednesday, 8th October 2014.

'Framework for Consultation on a Foreign Languages in Education Strategy for Ireland'

Responding to the









WINNING IRELAND'S FOREIGN ABROAD: STRUGGLE FLANGUAGES

This Panel Discussion takes place in the context of the consultation process initiated by the Department of Education and Skills in relation to "A Foreign Languages in Education Strategy for Ireland". The particular focus of the gathering will be on the Post Primary Sector.

The need for a Foreign Languages in Education strategy is well made in the Framework for Consultation document issued by The Department of Education and Skills. Stark among the statistics presented is that:

In 2012, Ireland was found to have one of the lowest percentages in Europe of citizens who were able to hold a conversation in at least one foreign language – 40% compared with an average of 54%.

Other challenges identified in the Framework for Consultation document include:

THE ECONOMIC CHALLENGE

As an island nation dependent on service industries and overseas markets our challenge is that:

- Less than half the EU population know English well enough to be able to communicate.
- In the world of international business, where competence in English is increasingly taken for granted, it is companies with additional language capabilities that will enjoy competitive advantage.

THE POST PRIMARY LEVEL CHALLENGE

As highlighted in the Framework for Consultation document, the uptake of foreign languages at post-primary level is worrying:

- Ireland is almost unique in Europe in that the learning of foreign languages is optional in Post Primary education.
- Fewer students than in the past are choosing to study two foreign languages, and in some schools it is not possible to do so.



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PANELISTS



Tony DonohoeHead of Education and
Social Policy, IBEC



Tanya Flanagan

One Voice for Languages (OVFL) Communications Officer and Second Level Representative, Languages Teacher in St. Farnan's Post-Primary School



Seánaí Kiely

LL.B (ling. Germ) Candidate, Trinity College Dublin, Past participant on an EIL Study Abroad programme



Philippe Milloux

Director of Alliance française de Dublin and Chief Representative of Alliance française in Ireland



Karen Ruddock

National Coordinator at Post Primary Languages Initiative



Joanna Tuffy, T.D.

Chairperson of Dáil Committee on Education and Social Protection

CHAIRPERSON



Joe Humphreys

Education Correspondent, The Irish Times