



Legislation Committee No. 5  
Legislation Office  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

20 March 2009

Dear Sir/Madam,

**The Proposed National Assembly for Wales (Legislative Competence) (Welsh Language) Order 2009**

The UK Competitive Telecommunications Association (“UKCTA”) is grateful for the opportunity to submit written evidence to the Committee on the above-captioned proposed Order.

UKCTA’s overall aim is to foster a more competitive fixed telecommunications market in the UK, based on a regulatory framework that treats all competitors in this field equally and fairly. Our mission is to advocate industry regulation that stimulates competition and does not favour the nation’s largest legacy operator, BT. UKCTA’s membership is made up of the vast majority of the UK’s alternative fixed-line network operators.

UKCTA supports in principle the proposal to confer power on the National Assembly for Wales to make laws on the promotion and use of the Welsh language and about which services the public should be able to receive bilingually. These proposals are entirely consistent with the principle of devolved Welsh governance.

UKCTA notes and appreciates the Assembly’s practice to avoid engaging in detailed discussions on specific proposals that could be brought forward in the future as a result of the conferral of legislative competence. That said, UKCTA would like to make some brief remarks about the ways in which the use of the Welsh language can be best promoted when telecommunications operators provide services in Wales.

Although we accept that a compulsory approach has been adopted in relation to public bodies, in relation to a competitive sector such as telecommunications, UKCTA's starting point is that it firmly believes that formal legislation requiring the use of the Welsh language is the wrong approach. A compulsory approach would drive up costs and potentially dissuade companies from operating in Wales thereby increasing prices paid by consumers or reducing competition and all the benefits which this brings to Welsh consumers.

A much better alternative is always to identify ways in which telecommunications operators can be persuaded of the benefits of offering services in Welsh when doing business in Wales. UKCTA believes that operators will actually provide services in Welsh if they can see that this is something that customers want. Beyond that, a wider public interest to promote the Welsh language should in the first instance be furthered through a close dialogue between the Welsh government and operators who offer services in Wales. UKCTA or, more likely, its members would be happy to contribute to making a success of such voluntary efforts.

Yours sincerely,

Rickard Granberg  
On behalf of UKCTA