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CORNISH GRANTED MINORITY STATUS WITHIN THE UK

Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Danny Alexander, today announced that the proud history, unique culture, and distinctive language of Cornwall will be fully recognised under European rules for the protection of national minorities.

The decision to recognise the unique identity of the Cornish, now affords them the same status under the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities as the UK's other Celtic people, the Scots, the Welsh and the Irish. For the first time the government has recognised the distinctive culture and history of the Cornish.

Speaking on a visit to Bodmin, Cornwall, Danny Alexander said:

"Cornish people have a proud history and a distinct identity. I am delighted that we have been able to officially recognise this and afford the Cornish people the same status as other minorities in the UK."

Today's announcement builds on the government's continued commitment to Cornwall and the Cornish language. The Cornish language has already been recognised under European rules for minority languages. In March this year, the Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg announced that the Government would be investing a further £120,000 into the Cornish Language Partnership (MAGA) to promote and develop the language.

Communities Minister Stephen Williams said:

"This is a great day for the people of Cornwall who have long campaigned for the distinctiveness and identity of the Cornish people to be recognised officially.

"The Cornish and Welsh are the oldest peoples on this island and as a proud Welshman I look forward to seeing St Piran's Flag flying with extra Celtic pride on March 5th next year."

Notes to Editors

1. The UK signed the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in 1995 and ratified it in 1998.
2. The broad aims of the Framework Convention are to ensure that the signatory states respect the rights of people belonging to national minorities, undertaking to combat discrimination, promote equality, preserve and develop the culture and identity of national minorities, guarantee certain freedoms in relation to access to the media, minority languages and education and encourage the participation of people belonging to national minorities in public life.
3. The government's approach to the Framework Convention is to be modified to recognise the unique position of the Cornish as a Celtic people within England. It is without prejudice as to whether the Cornish meet the definition of "racial group" under the Equality Act 2010, as only the courts can rule on that.
4. The Cornish language is the only language in England recognised under the Council of Europe's Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. In March 2014, the government announced funding of £120,000 to the Cornish Language Partnership for the development and promotion of the Cornish language. Since 2010 the government has provided over £500,000 to the partnership. This payment which will sit alongside funds from Cornwall Council and other funds raised locally by the partnership. For more information on the Cornish Language Partnership please see <www.magakernow.org>