

## Comparing the language policies and the revitalization process of Celtic languages at the beginning of 21st century

*Hara Kiyoshi (Joshi University of Art and Design, Tokyo)*

Since the 1990s, a number of significant developments related to the revitalization of Celtic languages may be noted: Welsh Language Act in 1993, Welsh Assembly and Scottish Parliament, opened in 1999, Ofis ar Brezhoneg in 1999, Irish Language Act in 2003 (took effect in 2006), Gaelic Development Agency (Bòrd na Gàidhlig) in 2003, Gaelic Language Act in 2006, Recognition of Irish as an Official language of EU in 2007, etc.

The ratification by the UK of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 2001 (additional recognition in 2003) brought 5 Celtic languages in official recognition by the UK in terms their status as regional minority languages: Welsh, Cornish, Manx, Scottish Gaelic and Irish Gaelic (in Northern Ireland). This charter has a strong power for the revitalization of regional minority languages in EU level. But Breton is not recognized by this charter, as the French government has not ratified it yet.

Welsh is absolutely in the leading position within the revitalization processes. Welsh language schemes, required of every public organization (and also some in private sector) by the Welsh Language Act became effective in 2000s and now we can see everywhere the bilingual signs and indications in Wales.

Breton, Scottish Gaelic and Irish are following the Welsh lead in terms of bilingual signs and for the utilization in media, but not always in an effective way. We will discuss here what kind of policies are necessary for the real revitalization and what are the obstacles. We will propose the comparative perspective not only between these languages but also to other minority languages in developed countries.