

REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA. LAW ON THE STATE LANGUAGE (VILNIUS, 31 JANUARY 1995)

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1.

This Law shall regulate the use of the state language in public life of Lithuania, protection and control of the state language, and the responsibility for violations of the Law on the State Language. The Law shall not regulate unofficial communication of the population and the language of events of religious communities as well as persons, belonging to ethnic communities. Other laws of the Republic of Lithuania and legal acts adopted by the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania shall guarantee the right of persons, belonging to ethnic communities, to foster their language, culture and customs.

Article 2.

The Lithuanian language is the state language of the Republic of Lithuania.

II. INSTITUTIONS, ENTERPRISES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Article 3.

Laws of the Republic of Lithuania and other legal acts shall be adopted and promulgated in the state language.

Article 4.

All institutions, offices, enterprises and organizations which function in the Republic of Lithuania shall conduct business and keep records, reports, financial and technical documents in the state language.

Article 5.

State and local government institutions, offices, enterprises and organizations of the Republic of Lithuania shall conduct correspondence with each other in the state language.

Article 6.

Heads, employees and officers of state and local government institutions, offices, services, as well as heads, employees and officers of the police, law-enforcement services, institutions of communications, transportation, health and social security and other institutions providing services to the population must know the state language according to the language knowledge categories, established by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania.

Article 7.

Heads of state and local government institutions, offices and organizations, as well as heads of communications, transportation, health and social security, police and law-enforcement services, trade and other institutions providing services to the population must ensure that the population be provided with services in the state language.

III. COURTS

Article 8.

Legal proceedings in the Republic of Lithuania shall be conducted in the state language. Participants in the legal proceedings, who do not know the state language, shall be provided with the services of an interpreter free of charge.

IV. TRANSACTIONS

Article 9.

All the transactions of legal and natural persons of the Republic of Lithuania shall be conducted in the state language. Translations into one or more languages may be attached to them. Transactions with natural and legal persons of foreign states shall be conducted in the state language and another language acceptable to both parties.

V. OFFICIAL EVENTS

Article 10.

Official events (sessions, congresses, meetings, sittings, conferences, etc.) organized by state and local government institutions, state offices and enterprises shall be conducted in the state language. In the events, when a speaker uses another language, translation into the state language must be provided. Paragraph 1 of this Article shall not be applied to international events organized in the Republic of Lithuania.

VI. EDUCATION AND CULTURE

Article 11.

The State shall guarantee the residents of the Republic of Lithuania the right to acquire general, vocational, higher post-school and university education in the state language. The conditions for acquiring general education in the state language shall be guaranteed within the entire territory of the Republic of Lithuania.

Article 12.

All secondary schools of general education must teach the state language in the manner prescribed by the State.

Article 13.

Audiovisual programmes, motion pictures publicly shown in Lithuania must be translated into the state language or shown with subtitles in Lithuanian. Paragraph 1 of this Article shall not be applied to teaching and special programmes and events, as well as events and programmes held for a certain occasion or intended for ethnic communities, and also to radio and television programmes or texts of musical works of foreign states which are broadcasted in Lithuania.

VII. NAMES

Article 14.

In the Republic of Lithuania official, standardized genders of place-names shall be written in the state language.

Article 15.

Genders, which are prescribed by laws, of personal names of the citizens of the Republic of Lithuania shall be used in the Republic of Lithuania. Personal names shall be changed and corrected in the manner prescribed by laws.

Article 16.

Names of all enterprises, offices and organizations, functioning in the Republic of Lithuania shall be formed adhering to the norms of the Lithuanian language and the rules approved by the State Lithuanian Language Commission under the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania.

VIII. SIGNS AND INFORMATION

Article 17.

In the Republic of Lithuania public signs shall be in the state language. Seals, stamps, letterheads, plaques, signs in offices and other places of enterprises, institutions and organizations of the Republic of Lithuania, as well as names of goods and services provided in Lithuania and their descriptions, must be in the state language.

Article 18.

Names of organizations of ethnic communities, their informational signs may be rendered in other languages along with the state language. The format of signs in other languages cannot be larger than that of signs in the state language.

IX. CORRECTNESS OF THE STATE LANGUAGE

Article 19.

The State shall enhance the prestige of the correct Lithuanian language, provide conditions for protecting linguistic norms, personal names, place-names, dialects and written language monuments, ensure the material basis for the state language functioning, provide general assistance to the Lithuanian language studies as a priority scientific branch and to the scholarly institutions which study this language, as well as to publishing of books on the Lithuanian language science and practice.

Article 20.

The State Lithuanian Language Commission shall establish the trends and tasks of the state language protection and approve linguistic norms.

Article 21.

Requirements for the knowledge of the correct state language shall be included into the qualification evaluation regulations of civil servants, pedagogues, employees of

mass media and publishing and shall be applied taking into consideration the qualification and the work status.

Article 22.

Mass media of Lithuania (the press, television, radio, etc.), all publishers of books and other publications must observe the norms of the correct Lithuanian language.

Article 23.

All public signs must be correct.

X. RESPONSIBILITY AND CONTROL

Article 24.

Any actions against the state language status which is established by the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania shall be prohibited. Heads of institutions, offices, enterprises, services and organizations shall be responsible for the direct execution of the provisions of this Law. Persons who violate this Law shall be liable in the procedure established by laws.

Article 25.

The enforcement of this Law shall be controlled by the Language Inspection of the State Lithuanian Language Commission under the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania.

Article 26.

When this Law becomes effective, the following documents shall be declared invalid:

the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR on the Use of the State Language of the Lithuanian SSR, adopted 25 January 1989 (Pin., 1989, No.4-11); and

the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian SSR on the Measures to Ensure the Use of State Language of the Lithuanian SSR, adopted on 20 February 1989 (Pin., 1989, No.7-51).

Article 27.

This Law shall be enforced pursuant to the Law on the Enforcement of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on the State Language.

I promulgate this Law enacted by the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania.

Algirdas Brazauskas
President of the Republic

Vilnius, 31 January 1995

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