

Draft

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STATE LANGUAGE POLICY GUIDELINES 2003–2008

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

The Lithuanian language constitutes the basis of the national and cultural identity of Lithuania. The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania grants the Lithuanian language the status of the state language, Lithuanian is the language of state management and that of relations between the state and the individual and the state and the society.

The main aim of the state language policy is to preserve the language heritage and to foster its development in order to ensure the functionality of the Lithuanian language in all the spheres of public life. The main objective of the language policy is to influence the development of the state language in a planned and creative fashion in such a way that the society realises the value of its own language and is not disappointed in its powers.

The state language policy must be clear and acceptable for the members of society.

The Republic of Lithuania has created conditions for all the persons residing on its territory and belonging to national (ethnic) minorities to foster and develop the language of their respective nation or ethnic group.

The state language policy is part of the overall state policy and is therefore inseparable from the processes prompted by the European and global integration. On the one hand, Europe is witnessing a growing universal conviction that it is imperative to preserve the diversity of languages and that the protection and fostering of national languages are matters of state importance. On the other hand, the use of languages is greatly influenced also by economic and social factors that tend to work in favour of the so-called languages of international communication.

Language planning, comprising such areas as the status of a language (building and improving the legal basis for the use of language); the language system and usage, and the teaching of language, provides the basis for the implementation of the language policy.

OVERVIEW OF CURRENT SITUATION

The legal framework for the protection and development of the state language has been created by adopting the Law on the State Language of the Republic of Lithuania, other laws, and implementing legislation. The state language is mandatory in such spheres of public life as law making, public administration, education, the services, etc. Mass media, books and other publications, public signs are subject to language correctness requirements.

The Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Lithuania lays down administrative liability in cases of violation of the status of the state language and correctness of public language.

In Lithuania, there exist a number of language standardisation, administration and supervision institutions: the State Lithuanian Language Commission, the State Language Inspectorate, and county language services. A contribution to the development of the public language has been made by the Lithuanian Language Society, other public organisations, members of the teaching profession, specialists in various fields, students.

The state supports Lithuanian language research as a priority area and has created favourable conditions for the protection of language norms, personal names, place-names, dialects, and written sources of the language. Research is carried out at the Lithuanian Language Institute, Lithuanian philology departments of higher educational institutions. Fundamental research works, standard Lithuanian and terminology dictionaries, publications on correct language usage have been published. Lithuanian language studies have gained international recognition.

The development of the state language is being promoted through four language programmes approved by the Government of the Lithuanian Republic: the Programme for the Use and Development of the State Language 1996 – 2005; the Programme of the Lithuanian Language in Information Society 2000 – 2006; the Programme for the Replacement of Loanwords by Lithuanian Equivalents; the Programme for the Preservation of Dialects and Ethnic Place-Names 2001 – 2010.

Broad possibilities for the dissemination of the Lithuanian language norms and recommendations are opening up thanks to information technologies; support to the efforts of employing IT for the needs of the language is being rendered by Lithuanian experts in a variety of fields of science.

The present moment marks the beginning of a new stage in the functioning of the state language. It is predetermined both by the processes of European integration and the state's strategic goal of building a knowledge society. It is therefore necessary to adjust the already existing provisions of the state language policy and to formulate new ones.

The process of globalisation stimulates not only integration of cultures but also their uniformity. The globalisation philosophy is especially characterised by the criterion of functionality; the language therefore tends to be treated solely as an instrument for communication, it is disassociated from culture and the people using it. One language,

considered to be universal, starts to dominate, at the same time also creating the possibility of establishing the domination of one culture.

English is considered to be the most important medium on the material and intellectual markets of the world. Its role in Lithuania's economic, social, and cultural life is increasing; not only is the motivation for learning English growing; it is also increasing for acquiring a trade, finding a job, and engaging in creative work, whereas at the same time the prestige of the Lithuanian language is diminishing.

The state language policy must offset the new value orientations dictated by the globalisation; otherwise the knowledge society of the future will have lost its language and national identity in general.

Viewed from the present day perspective, the main state language policy document, the Law on the State Language of the Republic of Lithuania, does not sufficiently define the fields of the use of the state language, its relation with other languages, the links between the institutions engaged in the standardisation, regulation and supervision of the use of the language, etc.

Improvement is needed also in the legislation related to the language policy and its implementation.

The right of the citizens of Lithuania to maintain labour relations and to upgrade their qualifications in the state language is not being guaranteed. Existing legal norms do not ensure that technical and normative documents needed for production and business activities are mandatorily translated into Lithuanian.

The laws provide that the language of instruction in the institutions of higher education is Lithuanian but the number of courses taught in a foreign language, yet not linked to the perfection of the language for special purposes, is growing.

The proportion of scientific research works and other products of intellectual activity financed by the state and published in other languages than the state language has been growing. The documents setting down qualification requirements for university lecturers and research workers give priority to research published in foreign languages. Terminology work is not treated as applied research; as a result, the motivation to develop Lithuanian terminology and the language of science in general has been dwindling.

The development of information technologies has outpaced the localisation of the electronic environment.

A terminology search system needed for the administration of the state and for public use has not been created; an electronic data bank is non-existent, which makes it difficult to control the influx of loanwords, to standardise terminology, to relate it to other languages; all of this is needed in order to introduce Lithuanian into the electronic environment and to ensure a high quality of translation of EU legislation and other documents into Lithuanian.

The activities of administrators of registers, cadastres, and other data bases related to place-names have not been co-ordinated, a coherent system for the registration, standardisation, codification, and information exchange and its provision for the users is non-existent. The need to improve these activities is stimulated not only by the interests of public administration but also by the global process of standardisation of place-names co-ordinated by the United Nations.

There is insufficient regulation of the relationship between the state language and foreign languages in public use. The number of public signs in foreign languages is growing.

Information about goods and services, presented in incorrect language and therefore inaccurate, not only harms the interests of the consumer but also tarnishes the image of the state language, hampers the development of specific terminology, and encourages the proliferation of non-Lithuanian language elements.

According to the Law on the State Lithuanian Language Commission, the latter is granted significant powers in the implementation of the language policy; the greater part of these, however, is related to the regulation of the language system and usage. Some of the important decisions (e.g. on the Lithuanian language teaching and training, on the regulation of the use of other languages in legal acts drafted in the various ministries, etc.) are made without the conclusions of the State Lithuanian Language Commission because the relations of the latter with other state institutions have not been legally defined. A significant amount of terminology that has not been subjected to expert evaluation of the State Lithuanian Language Commission is brought into official use through laws, Government decisions and legal acts adopted by various institutions.

According to the Law on Local Self-Government, one of the functions delegated by the state to the local authorities is the control over the use and correctness of the state language; however, unclear status of the language administrators of the local authorities, their competencies and relations with the State Lithuanian Language Commission and State Language Inspectorate fail to ensure a proper implementation of this function.

The feedback between the state language supervision institutions and language standardisation and regulation institutions is too weak; therefore, there is a lack of information about the changes in the language use and trends and the effectiveness of language planning.

The methodology for the state language supervision fails to ensure that the control is universal and effective, first of all in the fields that have the greatest influence on the language culture in the society, such as the media, publishing, cinematic and video production, and consumer information.

The development of applied linguistics has failed to keep pace with the needs of language usage. Research into new language phenomena and their assessment from the point of view of standard Lithuanian is lagging behind, as are recommendations, especially the ones with relation to loanwords. Due to a speedy development of the

economy and other spheres, the language is already facing vocabulary difficulties. There is a great deficit of works on language technologies, without which localisation of the electronic environment is impossible. Text correction software lacks elements of syntax, language culture, and stylistics.

There is a lack of consensus on the variability of language norms and the level of rigidity in applying these norms; on the link between the norms and the present-day dialects and interdialects (including the varieties of urban language); on the means of maintaining the stylistical diversity of the language (especially in the education system), etc. The opinion of the user is not always taken into consideration in the process of language standardisation. There is a lack of socio-linguistic research needed for the establishment of feedback between the language standardisers and the users.

The gap between the standard language and the living language is being widened by an inadequate recognition of dialects as a cultural and linguistic value despite the fact that dialects are the source of life for the standard language and a reliable counter-balance to the debasement of language. Against the context of the ethno-cultural movement in Europe, attempts to foster dialects in Lithuania lack modern approach; dialects are little referred to in the education system and in the promotion of distinctive peculiarities of ethnographic regions.

Improvement of public language is hindered also by an insufficiently developed system for the dissemination of the Lithuanian language standards and language advisory services, especially through the electronic medium. It is exactly the latter way of communication that opens up great possibilities for involving the various strata of society in language activities and for strengthening their cultural and linguistic self-awareness.

There is a lack of coherence in the activities of institutions and individuals involved in the language standardisation work (the State Lithuanian Language Commission, Lithuanian Language Institute, departments of Lithuanian Philology of higher educational institutions, individual scholars, and, in part, state authorities and institutions of public administration that legitimise various language phenomena in their legal acts).

The results of the state Lithuanian language examination and the experience of teachers working at higher educational establishments show a declining level of literacy among the pupils and, hence, among the would-be specialists in various fields, including scientists. This means that the level of Lithuanian language training in general education schools is not sufficient.

The present system of teacher training and appraisal does not ensure the correctness of the teachers' language.

Within the system of higher education, the motivation for improving the proficiency of Lithuanian as the speciality language is overshadowed by the motivation to learn other languages with a view to accessing the global labour market. Improvement of language proficiency among teachers is not being stimulated. The result of this is the emergence and entrenchment on the labour market of professional jargon. The would-

be specialists in foreign languages do not receive sufficient training in the Lithuanian language. This makes the problem of Lithuanian language proficiency of translators and interpreters especially acute.

Lithuanian language training does not feature sufficiently in the curricula for the training of journalists. As a result, the language of the media has suffered.

Language correctness requirement is not applied in the process of approving textbooks and other teaching aids.

Lithuania has no statutory system for the state language training and proficiency testing designed for foreigners. Such a system has been implemented in many European countries.

III. STATE LANGUAGE POLICY OBJECTIVES

Under the new conditions of political, economic, social, and cultural life the main mutually interrelated objectives of the state language policy are as follows:

- **to ensure the functionality of the state language in all the spheres of public life;**
- **to meet the new needs of the knowledge society determined by European integration;**
- **to promote a creative use of the language heritage for the needs of language usage.**

Factors positively affecting the attainment of the established objectives:

the framework for legal regulation of the state language has been created;
state language standardisation, administration and supervision institutions are operable;
state language programmes are being implemented;
the active part of members of society approve of the activities aimed at fostering the language;
information technologies open up new possibilities for the development of the state language.

Negative factors:

the system and usage of the Lithuanian language are strongly affected by English and Russian;
standardisation of the language lags behind usage trends;
Lithuanian is being introduced into the electronic environment too slowly;
the view that the fostering of the language is the business of linguists predominates;
the prestige of Lithuanian in some groups of the society is declining.

IV. TRENDS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE LANGUAGE POLICY

1. The Status of the Language

In order to ensure the use of Lithuanian in the electronic environment:

- to recognise as priority the work on applying Lithuanian in information technologies and to speed this work up;
- to co-operate with other countries in dealing with problems of software localisation by using national languages;
- to raise the level of Lithuanian language correctness requirements in public electronic environment;
- to grant members of the public access to electronic data banks.

In order to strengthen the positions of the Lithuanian language under the conditions of multilingual Europe:

- to ensure the representation of the state in international fora dealing with issues of language policy;
- to contribute to international initiatives aimed at consolidating the equality of languages;
- to initiate language policies in the Baltic region that correspond to new realities;
- to ensure the translation into the state language of all the documents required for the legal system of Lithuania;
- to take steps to ensure that easily accessible information about the Lithuanian language is presented in international information networks;
- to stimulate the promotion and teaching of Lithuanian abroad.

In order to ensure the right of the citizens of Lithuania to use the state language in the sphere of labour relations:

- to regulate the use of Lithuanian at work and for upgrading of qualifications, as well as its use as the language of technical and normative documentation;
- to organise the teaching of Lithuanian free of charge within the system of the Lithuanian labour exchange.

In order to ensure the development of scientific language:

- to promote, by legal and financial means, the creation and use of Lithuanian terms;
- to apply the requirement of mandatory publications in the Lithuanian language in the process of granting scientific degrees;
- to regulate the proportion of languages taught at higher educational establishments;
- to promote the improvement of the language for special purposes used at higher educational establishments.

In order to ensure the effectiveness of language standardisation, management, and supervision:

- to ensure the harmonisation of legislation related to the status of the state language and its use and to co-ordinate the adoption of such legislation;

- to introduce a more precise regulation of relations between institutions involved in the standardisation, management, and supervision;
- to define more precisely the status and competencies of the language management officials in municipalities;
- to further improve the methodology for the implementation of the state language status and for the control over the correctness of public language use;
- to build a state electronic terminology bank;
- to build an electronic database of place-names;
- to develop sociological investigations into the use of language.

2. Language System and Usage

In order to ensure the continuity of the traditions of the Lithuanian language:

- to promote the continuity of language heritage;
- to take steps to ensure the protection of written and audio heritage of the language;
- to create conditions for the development of fundamental research in the field of modern Lithuanian;
- to develop applied linguistics on the basis of fundamental research;
- to establish a closer link between the language standardisation work and the results of fundamental research and needs of language usage;
- to ensure the development and dissemination of Lithuanian terminology;
- to promote the development of language technologies;

In order to more fully meet the linguistic and cultural needs of state management and the society:

- to promote a harmonious co-operation of institutions involved in the language standardisation activities;
- to involve the interested groups of society into the language standardisation activities;
- to introduce modern methods for the dissemination of language norms and advice;
- to promote the use of dialects as the source for enriching the standard language and fostering ethnographic traditions;
- to support the efforts of Lithuanians living abroad to retain the native language.

3. Teaching of Language

In order to improve language teaching and training:

- to draft a new concept for the teaching of the state and native language in schools of general education that would ensure language teaching quality enabling a member of knowledge society to acquire necessary competencies;
- to draft a modern model for foreign language teaching at schools of general education;
- to improve the teaching of the state language to adults;
- to ensure adequate language quality of state-funded textbooks and other teaching materials;

- to apply more stringent requirements of the Lithuanian language correctness to teachers and lecturers of all subjects.

V. FINAL PROVISIONS

The state language policy guidelines shall be adjusted taking due account of the results achieved in implementing the goals thereof and the language usage needs.

Provisions of these guidelines shall be applicable in drafting the state language programmes and action plans of public institutions and science and education establishments.
