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Ordinance on the National Languages and Understanding between the Linguistic Communities (Languages Ordinance, LangO)

of 4 June 2010 (Status as of 1 October 2014)

The Swiss Federal Council,

based on the Languages Act of 5 October 2007¹ (LangA),

ordains:

Section 1 Official Languages of the Confederation

Art. 1² Scope of application of Section 2 of the LangA

(Art. 4 para. 2 LangA)

Whenever, in the cases described in Article 4 paragraph 2 of the LangA, a unit of the Federal Administration sets strategic objectives or prepares a service agreement or a similar instrument with an organisation or person operating throughout Switzerland, it must verify if:

- a. criteria or objectives in accordance with the requirements of Section 2 of the LangA should be included in the strategic objectives or instruments;
- b. certain provisions in Section 2 of the LangA should be deemed applicable by way of ordinance.

Art. 2 Comprehensibility

(Art. 7 LangA)

¹ Official publications and other federal texts written for a public readership must be drawn up in all of the official languages in an appropriate, clear and citizen-friendly manner and must comply with the principles of gender equality in language.

² The units of the Federal Administration shall take the necessary organisational measures to guarantee the quality of the drafting and form of texts. The Federal

AS 2010 2653

¹ SR 441.1

² Amended by No I of the Ordinance of 27 Aug. 2014, in effect since 1 Oct. 2014 (AS 2014 2987).

Chancellery shall draw up instructions establishing quality standards for the drafting and form of texts.³

Art. 3 Romansh
(Art. 11 LangA)

¹ The Federal Chancellery shall coordinate within the Federal Administration the translation and publication of texts in Romansh.

² The texts shall be translated into Romansh in collaboration with the Chancellery of the Canton of Graubünden.

³ The Federal Chancellery shall ensure that legislative texts translated into Romansh are continually updated.

⁴ It is responsible for Romansh terminology within the Federal Administration and shall publish it online.

Art. 4 Internet
(Art. 12 para. 2 LangA)

¹ The units of the Federal Administration shall provide the key content of their websites in French, German and Italian. Key content is determined by the significance of the text and of the target readers.⁴

² They shall also offer a selection of content in Romansh, in consultation with the Federal Chancellery.

Art. 5 International agreements
(Art. 13 LangA)

¹ International agreements may be concluded in English:

- a. in urgent circumstances;
- b. if this is required by the specific form of the agreement; or
- c. if it is standard practice in international relations in Switzerland to do so in the area concerned.

² Nevertheless, every effort should be made to produce an original version in one of the official languages.

³ Amended by No I of the Ordinance of 27 Aug. 2014, in effect since 1 Oct. 2014 (AS 2014 2987).

⁴ Amended by No I of the Ordinance of 27 Aug. 2014, in effect since 1 Oct. 2014 (AS 2014 2987).

Art. 6⁵ Equal opportunities for employees from the various linguistic communities
(Art. 9 and 20 LangA)

¹ The employers of the personnel of the federal administrative units referred to in Article 1 paragraph 1 of the Federal Ordinance of 3 July 2001⁶ on the Personnel of the Swiss Confederation (FPersO), with the exception of the ETH Domain, shall ensure that employees are not disadvantaged on the basis of their membership of a specific linguistic community.

² In particular, they shall ensure that all employees, irrespective of their linguistic community:

- a. may choose to work in French, German or Italian, unless there are good reasons for carrying out the work in a language other than the chosen one;
- b. may participate equally in the decision-making process in accordance with their qualifications;
- c. have the same prospects for development and promotion.

Art. 7⁷ Representation of linguistic communities in the Federal Administration
(Art. 20 para. 2 LangA and Art. 4 para. 2 let. e FPA)

¹ The representation of linguistic communities in the federal administrative units referred to in Article 1 paragraph 1 letters a and b of the FPersO⁸, with the exception of the ETH Domain, must aim to achieve the following ranges, including for management positions:

- a. German: 68.5 – 70.5%
- b. French: 21.5 – 23.5%
- c. Italian: 6.5 – 8.5%
- d. Romansh: 0.5 – 1.0%

² Representation of the Romance language communities may exceed the upper limit of the ranges specified in paragraph 1 letters b to d.

³ When recruiting personnel, the employers referred to in paragraph 1 shall ensure that candidates from all linguistic communities progress from the preselection phase to the interviews, provided they fulfil the objective criteria. Where candidates have equal qualifications, priority shall be given to those who belong to a linguistic community that is underrepresented in the administrative unit in question; this applies in particular for management positions.

⁵ Amended by No I of the Ordinance of 27 Aug. 2014, in effect since 1 Oct. 2014 (AS 2014 2987).

⁶ SR 172.220.111.3

⁷ Amended by No I of the Ordinance of 27 Aug. 2014, in effect since 1 Oct. 2014 (AS 2014 2987).

⁸ SR 172.220.111.3

Art. 8⁹ Language skills of federal personnel
(Art. 20 para. 1 LangA and Art. 4 para. 2 let. e^{bis} FPA)

- ¹ The employers referred to in Article 6 paragraph 1 shall ensure that:
- a. all employees have the oral and written skills in a second official language required for performing their duties;
 - b. all middle management employees have good active knowledge of at least a second official language and, where possible, passive knowledge of a third official language;
 - c. all senior management employees and all middle management employees with team leadership responsibilities have good active knowledge of at least a second official language and passive knowledge of a third official language.
- ² Employers shall offer their employees French, German and Italian language courses.
- ³ If a manager does not have the required language skills when recruited, the employer shall take the measures necessary to improve them within one year of recruitment.
- ⁴ Training required for acquiring language skills is considered to be training which meets the needs of the service within the meaning of Article 4 paragraph 4 of the FPersO¹⁰.

Art. 8a¹¹ Strategic objectives
(Art. 20 para. 1 and 2 LangA)

The Federal Council shall set the strategic objectives in connection with the promotion of plurilingualism for each legislative period.

Art. 8b¹² Federal delegate for plurilingualism
(Art. 20 para. 1 and 2 LangA)

- ¹ The Federal Council shall appoint a delegate for plurilingualism (the Federal Delegate for Plurilingualism), who will be affiliated to the Federal Department of Finance.
- ² The tasks of the Federal Delegate for Plurilingualism include:
- a. supporting the Federal Council in setting the strategic objectives and monitoring their implementation;

⁹ Amended by No 1 of the Ordinance of 27 Aug. 2014, in effect since 1 Oct. 2014 (AS 2014 2987).

¹⁰ SR 172.220.111.3

¹¹ Inserted by No 1 of the Ordinance of 27 Aug. 2014, in effect since 1 Oct. 2014 (AS 2014 2987).

¹² Inserted by No 1 of the Ordinance of 27 Aug. 2014, in effect since 1 Oct. 2014 (AS 2014 2987).

- b. coordinating and evaluating the implementation of the strategic objectives by the departments and the Federal Chancellery;
- c. advising and supporting the departments, the Federal Chancellery as well as their subordinate administrative units and their personnel on plurilingualism matters and raising awareness of these matters;
- d. collaborating with cantonal services and other public administrations and maintaining contacts with external institutions that promote plurilingualism;
- e. keeping the general public regularly informed on matters concerning plurilingualism;
- f. representing the Confederation in national bodies that promote plurilingualism.

Art. 8c¹³ Implementation of the strategic objectives by the departments and administrative units

(Art. 20 para. 1 and 2 LangA)

¹ The departments and the Federal Chancellery together with their subordinate administrative units shall establish a range of measures for a four-year period for implementing the strategic objectives.

² The administrative units are responsible for implementing the range of measures and shall provide the financial and human resources necessary for the promotion of plurilingualism.

Art. 8d¹⁴ Monitoring and evaluation

(Art. 20 para. 1 and 2 LangA)

¹ The annual personnel management report for the attention of the parliamentary supervisory committees must include a section on the development of the representation of the linguistic communities in the administrative units referred to in Article 7 paragraph 1.

² The Federal Office of Personnel shall provide the Federal Delegate for Plurilingualism with detailed statistics on the representation of the linguistic communities among employees of the administrative units referred to in Article 7 paragraph 1, particularly among those in management positions. The statistics shall be compiled on the basis of the data and analyses contained in the Federal Administration's personnel information system (BV PLUS).

³ The departments and the Federal Chancellery shall submit a report to the Federal Delegate for Plurilingualism every four years containing quantitative and qualitative information on the status of plurilingualism and the implementation of Articles 6 to 8 in their administrative units. They shall provide the Delegate with additional

¹³ Inserted by No I of the Ordinance of 27 Aug. 2014, in effect since 1 Oct. 2014 (AS 2014 2987).

¹⁴ Inserted by No I of the Ordinance of 27 Aug. 2014, in effect since 1 Oct. 2014 (AS 2014 2987).

information on plurilingualism matters in their departments and administrative units when requested.

⁴ The Federal Delegate for Plurilingualism shall prepare an evaluation report for the attention of the Federal Council every four years based on the reports of the departments and Federal Chancellery. The Delegate shall also make recommendations in the evaluation report on the thrust of plurilingualism policy in the future.

⁵ If a department or the Federal Chancellery manifestly fails to comply with the provisions on the promotion of plurilingualism, the Federal Delegate for Plurilingualism may issue recommendations for the department in question or the Federal Chancellery.

Section 2

Promoting Understanding and Exchange Between the Linguistic Communities

Art. 9 School exchanges (Art. 14 LangA)

¹ Financial assistance for the promotion of school exchanges shall be granted to organisations which meet the following requirements:

- a. have as their mission the promotion of national and international exchange between students and between teachers at all school levels, with the aim of improving knowledge of the national languages;
- b. have been set up by the cantons;
- c. are active throughout Switzerland.

² The financial assistance is granted for:

- a. basic services at national and regional level;
- b. projects of national importance for the promotion of understanding and linguistic diversity.

³ Basic services are deemed in particular to be:

- a. the development and maintenance of an exchange network;
- b. the provision of advice and support for exchange projects;
- c. mediation between exchange partnerships;
- d. the implementation and evaluation of own exchange projects;
- e. the production of publications, didactic aids and documentation;
- f. the provision of training and continuing professional development for people promoting exchange in schools and administration.

Art. 10 Promoting the national languages in teaching

(Art. 16 let. a and b LangA)

Financial assistance for promoting the national languages in teaching shall be granted to the cantons for:

- a. innovative projects for the development of concepts and didactic aids for the teaching of a second and third national language;
- b. projects for promoting the acquisition of another national language through bilingual instruction;
- c. promoting skills in the local national language among children whose first language is not a national language prior to starting primary school.

Art. 11 Promotion among speakers of other languages of knowledge of their first language

(Art. 16 let. c LangA)

Financial assistance for the promotion among speakers of other languages of knowledge of their first language shall be granted to the cantons for the following measures:

- a. the promotion of concepts for integrated learning in the language and culture of origin;
- b. the continuing professional development of teachers;
- c. the development of didactic aids.

Art. 12 Academic institution promoting plurilingualism

(Art. 17 LangA)

¹ Financial assistance shall be granted to the Institute of Multilingualism at the University of Fribourg and the University of Teacher Education, Fribourg (the Institute) for their basic services in applied research on languages and plurilingualism.

² The Federal Office of Culture (FOC) shall conclude a service agreement with the Institute which includes a research mandate.

³ Basic services are deemed in particular to be:

- a. the coordination, management and implementation of the research mandate;
- b. the development and maintenance of a documentation office;
- c. the production of publications on plurilingualism;
- d. the monitoring and evaluation of teaching practices;
- e. collaboration in national and international research networks and participation in the work of scientific organisations.

⁴ The financial assistance is conditional on the Institute:

- a. developing and running a network which brings together research institutions from all of the country's language regions that take part in applied re-

search on plurilingualism, and, as an academic institute, assuming a leading role in the network;

- b. implementing its own projects, to the extent provided for in the service agreement;
- c. implementing projects on behalf of federal offices not included in the scope of the research mandate or projects on behalf of cantons or third parties only if the clients participate proportionately in the implementation costs.

Art. 13 Support for news agencies

(Art. 18 let. a LangA)

¹ Financial assistance may be granted to news agencies of national importance which:

- a. commit to and perform an assignment concerning the policy of promoting understanding; and
- b. report on topics relating to language and culture policy and the policy of promoting understanding in all four language regions.

² A news agency is of national importance if it regularly publishes information in at least three national languages.

Art. 14 Support for organisations and institutions

(Art. 18 let. b LangA)

¹ Financial assistance may be granted to non-profit organisations and institutions of national importance whose activity concerns at least one entire language region and which provide new impetus in at least three of the following areas:

- a. promoting the coexistence of linguistic communities and the meeting of the country's cultures;
- b. promoting the preservation and dissemination of the national languages and their cultures;
- c. promoting interest in literary creation in Switzerland beyond language borders;
- d. work and publications on the topic of language acquisition;
- e. awareness-raising among the population of individual and collective plurilingualism and mediation between linguistic communities;
- f. laying the foundations for the maintenance and promotion of languages not linked to a particular territory and officially recognised by the Confederation.

² The amount of financial assistance shall be calculated on the basis of:

- a. the structure and size of the organisation;
- b. the type and significance of the activity or project;
- c. the quality and impact of the measures;

- d. own contributions and those of third parties.

Art. 15 Support for community projects

(Art. 18 let. c LangA)

¹ Financial assistance may be granted to community projects that concern at least two of the areas listed in Article 14 paragraph 1.

² The amount of financial assistance shall be calculated on the basis of:

- a. the type and significance of the activity or project;
- b. the quality and impact of the project;
- c. own contributions and those of third parties.

Art. 16 Financial assistance for translations

(Art. 19 LangA)

¹ Financial assistance for translations may be granted to organisations and institutions for their communication activity in the various language regions, particularly for communication with the people targeted by their public benefit work.

² The organisations and institutions must meet the following requirements:

- a. they must be active in at least three language regions;
- b. they must be non-profit oriented;
- c. they must carry out activities for public benefit;
- d. they must be politically and confessionally neutral;
- e. they must fulfil a task relating to policy on languages and understanding, and their work must have a national impact.

³ Organisations and institutions in receipt of the financial assistance established in Article 14 are not entitled to financial assistance for translations.

Section 3 Support for Plurilingual Cantons

(Art. 21 LangA)

Art. 17

¹ Financial assistance for the promotion of plurilingualism in cantonal authorities and administrations shall be granted to the plurilingual cantons for performing their specific tasks, particularly for:

- a. translation and terminology services for communication within and between cantons;
- b. language and technical training and continuing professional development for the personnel of cantonal authorities for plurilingualism matters;
- c. projects for raising the general public's awareness of plurilingualism.

² Financial assistance for the promotion of plurilingualism in the area of education shall be granted to the plurilingual cantons for performing their specific tasks, particularly for:

- a. the creation of didactic aids for language teaching;
- b. language training and continuing professional development for teachers;
- c. projects for promoting the acquisition of a national language through bilingual instruction at all levels of education;
- d. projects for promoting the attendance of classes in another official language of the canton at all levels of education;
- e. projects for the promotion of e-learning.

Section 4

Preserving and Promoting the Romansh and Italian Languages and Cultures in the Canton of Graubünden

Art. 18 General measures in the Canton of Graubünden

(Art. 22 para. 1 let. a LangA)

Financial assistance for preserving and promoting the Romansh and Italian languages and cultures shall be granted to the Canton of Graubünden, particularly for:

- a. measures taken by the canton in the following areas:
 1. language courses in state schools,
 2. translation activities,
 3. publications in Romansh and Italian,
 4. promoting plurilingualism in the cantonal administration,
 5. preserving and promoting linguistic and cultural identity;
- b. support for third-party projects that involve preserving and promoting the Romansh and Italian languages and cultures.

Art. 19 Support for organisations and institutions

(Art. 22 para. 1 let. b LangA)

¹ Financial assistance shall be granted to the Canton of Graubünden for supporting the interregional activities of Romansh organisations and institutions in the following areas:

- a. language development and renewal;
- b. extracurricular courses in Romansh language and culture;
- c. development and implementation of measures for preserving and promoting Romansh;
- d. advice, mediation and documentation;
- e. publications for children and young people.

² Financial assistance shall be granted to the Canton of Graubünden for supporting the interregional activities of Italian-speaking organisations and institutions in the following areas:

- a. development and implementation of measures for promoting Italian language and culture;
- b. publications about Italian language and culture;
- c. creation and running of a documentation office on Italian language and culture.

³ The Confederation's financial assistance shall cover a maximum of 90% of the total costs of the organisation or institution.

Art. 20 Promotion of publishing activity in Romansh-speaking regions

(Art. 22 para. 1 let. c LangA)

¹ Financial assistance shall be granted to the Canton of Graubünden for supporting Romansh publishing houses that seek to promote Romansh literature.

² The publishing houses must publish literary works in Romansh. In particular, they must:

- a. select and copy-edit the texts;
- b. organise printing and production;
- c. promote distribution.

Art. 21 Financial assistance for the preservation and promotion of Romansh in the media

(Art. 22 para. 2 LangA)

¹ Financial assistance shall be granted to the Canton of Graubünden for supporting news agencies.

² In particular, the news agencies must:

- a. provide editorial services in Romansh on a daily basis in the form of texts and pictures;
- b. take Romansh dialects and Rumantsch Grischun into consideration;
- c. make their editorial services available to the media in electronic form.

Section 5

Preservation and Promotion of Italian Language and Culture in the Canton of Ticino

Art. 22 General measures in the Canton of Ticino

(Art. 22 para. 1 let. a and c LangA)

Financial assistance for preserving and promoting Italian language and culture shall be granted to the Canton of Ticino, particularly for:

- a. support for research programmes and projects in the area of science;
- b. support for programmes and projects in the area of language and culture policy;
- c. publications of particular significance for the promotion of Italian language and culture;
- d. events on the topic of Italian language and culture.

Art. 23 Support for organisations and institutions

(Art. 22 para. 1 let. b LangA)

¹ Financial assistance for supporting the interregional activities of organisations and institutions shall be granted to the Canton of Ticino, in particular for:

- a. projects for the preservation and promotion of its cultural heritage;
- b. measures for the promotion of literary creation;
- c. the organisation and holding of language and cultural events.

² The Confederation's financial assistance shall cover a maximum of 90% of the total costs of the organisation or institution.

Art. 24 Financial assistance for the Osservatorio linguistico della Svizzera italiana

(Art. 22 para. 1 let. b LangA)

Financial assistance shall be granted to the Canton of Ticino for the activities of the Osservatorio linguistico della Svizzera italiana.

Art. 25 Financial assistance for translations

(Art. 22 para. 1 let. c LangA)

Financial assistance shall be granted to the Canton of Ticino for translations into and from Italian of literary works that are particularly important for the development of the canton's cultural identity.

Section 6 Implementation

Art. 26 Applications

¹ Applications for the financial assistance established in Articles 9 and 13 to 25 must be submitted to the FOC.

² Applications for the financial assistance established in Articles 10 and 11 must be submitted to the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Directors of Education, which shall forward the applications to the FOC with a recommendation.

³ The applications must be submitted annually, unless otherwise provided by the service agreement.

⁴ They must be submitted by the following deadlines:

- a. applications under Articles 9 to 11 and 13 to 16: by 31 March of the year for which the financial assistance is requested;
- b. applications under Articles 17 to 25: by 31 December of the previous year.

Art. 27 Procedure and legal remedies

¹ The FOC shall decide on applications for financial assistance.

² The procedure and the legal remedies are governed by the general provisions on the administration of federal justice.

Art. 28 Order of priorities

¹ Financial assistance shall be granted within the limits of the authorised credits.

² If the amount of financial assistance requested exceeds the resources available, the Federal Department of Home Affairs shall establish an order of priorities for assessing the applications in accordance with Article 13 paragraph 2 of the Subsidies Act of 5 October 1990¹⁵.

Art. 29 Payment of financial assistance

¹ The financial assistance under Articles 9 and 12 to 25 shall be paid by the FOC.

² The financial assistance under Articles 10 and 11 shall be paid by the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Directors of Education.

Section 7 Final Provisions

Art. 30 Repeal and amendment of existing legislation

The repeal and amendment of existing legislation are regulated in the Annex.

¹⁵ SR 616.1

Art. 31 Commencement

The commencement date for this Ordinance is 1 July 2010.

Annex
(Art. 30)

Repeal and amendment of existing legislation

I

The Ordinance of 26 June 1996¹⁶ on Financial Assistance for the Preservation and Promotion of the Romansh and Italian Languages and Cultures is repealed.

II

The following Ordinances are amended as follows:

...¹⁷

¹⁶ [AS 1996 2283]

¹⁷ The amendments may be consulted under AS 2010 2653.

