

# Act respecting the status of the Icelandic language and Icelandic sign language

2011 No 61 7 June

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**Entry into force 15 June 2011** Amended by Act No 126/2011 (entry into force 30 September 2011).

Any reference in this Act to “the Minister” or “the Ministry” not accompanied by express mention of or reference to a specific field of responsibility shall be understood as being a reference to the **Minister of Education, Science and Culture** or to the **Ministry of Education, Science and Culture** as responsible for the implementation of this Act.

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■ **Article 1** *National language – Official language*

☐ Icelandic is the national language of the Icelandic people and the official language of Iceland.

■ **Article 2** *The Icelandic language*

☐ The national language is the common language of the Icelandic general public. Public authorities shall ensure that its use is possible in all areas of Icelandic society.

☐ All persons residing in Iceland must be given the opportunity to learn Icelandic and to use it for their general participation in Icelandic society, as further provided in *leges speciales*.

■ **Article 3** *Icelandic sign language*

☐ Icelandic sign language is the first language of those who must rely on it for expression and communication, and of their children. It must be fostered and supported by public authorities.

☐ All persons who have a need for sign language must be given the opportunity to learn Icelandic sign language and to use it from the beginning of their language acquisition, or as soon as deafness, hearing impairment or deaf-blindness has been diagnosed. Their immediate family members shall have the same right.

■ **Article 4** *Icelandic Braille*

☐ Icelandic Braille is the first written language of those who have to rely on it for expression and communication. All persons who need to be able to read braille because of impaired vision must be given the opportunity to learn and to use Icelandic Braille as soon as they have the capacity to do so.

■ **Article 5** *Language policy*

☐ Central and local authorities shall be responsible for preserving and promoting the Icelandic language, and shall ensure that it is used. The collaboration of the Icelandic Language Council (see Article 6) should be sought in regard to language policy and matters relating to the status of the Icelandic language.

☐ The Icelandic government and local authorities shall facilitate the development, study, teaching and wider use of Icelandic sign language, and provide other support for cultural activities and formal and informal education for deaf, hearing-impaired and deaf-blind people. The collaboration of the Icelandic Sign Language Council (see Article 7) should be sought in regard to language policy and matters relating to the status of Icelandic sign language.