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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).