

Speaker of the National Council of the Slovak Republic

declares

revised Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic as amended by Finding of the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic No. 260/1997, Act No. 5/1999 Coll., Act No. 184/1999 Coll., Act No. 24/2007 Coll., as well as Act No. 318/2009 Coll.

ACT

OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

on the State Language of the Slovak Republic

Bearing in mind that the Slovak language is the most important attribute of the Slovak nation' specificity and the most precious value of its cultural heritage, as well as an expression of sovereignty of the Slovak Republic and a general vehicle of communication for all its citizens, which secures their freedom and equality in dignity and rights¹ in the territory of the Slovak Republic, the National Council of the Slovak Republic has resolved to adopt the following Act:

§1

Introductory Provision

- (1) The Slovak language shall be the state language in the territory of the Slovak Republic².
- (2) The state language shall have priority over other languages used in the territory of the Slovak Republic.
- (3) This Act does not regulate the use of liturgical languages. The use of such languages is governed by the regulations of churches and religious communities³.
- (4) Unless this Act provides otherwise, the use of the languages of national minorities and ethnic groups are governed by separate regulations⁴.

¹ Article 12, para 1, of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic.

² Article 6, para 1, of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic.

³ Act No. 308/1991 on the Freedom of Religious Belief and on the Position of Churches and Religious Associations.

⁴ For example, §18 of the Code of Civil Judicial Procedure, as amended by Act No. 341/2005, Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 191/1994 on the Denomination of Municipalities in the Languages

- (5) This Act shall apply to state authorities, authorities of municipal administration, other bodies of public administration, legal persons, self-employed natural persons and private individuals to the extent and under the conditions set forth herein.

§2

State Language and Its Protection

- (1) State authorities, authorities of municipal administration and other bodies of public administration are obligated to protect the state language. For that purpose they are obliged to access actively to the control of observance of assessments of this act.
- (2) The State:
- a) shall create appropriate conditions in the educational, scientific and information systems to enable every citizen of the Slovak Republic to master and use the state language in oral and written communications;
 - b) shall promote scientific research of the state language, research of its historical development, research of its local and social dialects, codification of the state language, and enhancement of the language culture;
- (3) The codified form of the state language shall be approved and published by the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter “Ministry of Culture”) on its website.
- (4) Any interference with the codified form of the state language in conflict with its rules shall be inadmissible.

§3

Use of the State Language in Official Communication

- (1) The state authorities, authorities of municipal administration, other bodies of public administration, the legal persons founded by such public authorities and the legal persons established by the operation of law⁵ shall use the state language in their official communication; this provision shall be without prejudice to the use of the languages of national minorities in official communication pursuant to a separate regulation^{5aa} and the use of other languages in official

of National Minorities, Act No. 184/1999 on the Use of the Languages of National Minorities, §5 para 1(e) of Act No. 619/2003 on The Slovak Radio, as amended, §5 para 1(g) of Act No. 16/2004 on The Slovak Television, as amended, §2 para 20 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, §2 para 2 of Act No. 167/2008 on Periodical Press and New Agency Service, which also amends certain other acts (Press Act), §11 para 2, §12 para 3 and §18 para 3 of Act No. 245/2008 on Education and Training (Schools Act), which also amends certain other acts.

⁵ For example, §120 of Act No. 461/2003 on Social Insurance, as amended, §2 of Act No. 619/2003, as amended, §2 of Act No. 16/2004, as amended, §2 and §17 of Act No. 581/2004 on Health Insurance Companies and Healthcare Supervision, as amended.

^{5aa} Act No. 184/1999

international communication in accordance with the established international practice.

- (2) The employees and civil servants of the authorities and legal persons referred to in paragraph 1, as well as those employed in the transport, postal and telecommunication services, members of the armed forces of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter “armed forces”), armed security corps, other armed corps and fire brigades, must have a command of and use the state language in official communication.
- (3) The state language:
 - a) shall be the language of laws, government ordinances and other generally binding regulations, including those issued by the authorities of municipal administration, as well as the language of decisions and other public documents, except for school certificates issued by the schools that use the language of a national minority or a foreign language as the language of instruction;^{5a} the manner in which such certificates are issued is governed by a separate regulation,^{5b}
 - b) shall be the language of business in the governing boards of the legal persons referred to in paragraph 1,
 - c) shall be the language of all official records (birth registers, protocols, resolutions, statistics, registers, balances, official records, information for the public, etc.) and the records and documents of churches and religious communities intended for public;
 - d) shall be the language of municipal chronicles; an other language mutation, if any, shall be deemed translation from the state language.
- (4) The authorities and legal persons referred to in paragraph 1 shall use the state language in all their information systems and mutual communication; apart from the state language, another language may also be used in such information systems whenever a separate regulation so provides.^{6a}
- (5) In official communication with the authorities and legal persons referred to in paragraph 1, a natural or legal person shall use the state language, unless this Act, separate regulation or an international treaty promulgated by the law provides otherwise.^{6b} Any person whose mother tongue is a language that meets the criterion of basic comprehensibility in relation to the state language may use

^{5a} §12 of Act No. 245/2008

^{5b} § 18(3) of Act No. 657/2008.

^{6a} For example, §3 para 6 of Act No. 530/2003 on the Companies Register, which also amends and supplements certain other acts, in the wording of Act 24/2007.

^{6b} For example §42 of Act No. 162/1995 on the Real Este Cadastre and on Registration of Titles and Other Rights Pertaining to Property (Cadastral Act), as amended, §11 of Act No. 200/1997 on Student Loan Fund as amended by Act No. 231/2000, §2 para 3 of Act No. 184/1999, §109 of Act No. 725/2004 on Conditions for Use of Vehicles in Road Traffic, which also amends and supplements certain other acts, §11 of Act No. 193/2005 on Phytosanitary Care as amended by Act No. 295/2007.

their mother tongue in official communication with the authorities and legal persons referred to in paragraph 1. The authorities and legal persons referred to in paragraph 1 shall be obliged to accept any document executed in a language that meets the criterion of basic comprehensibility in relation to the state language, insofar as such document has been issued or authenticated by the competent authorities of the Czech Republic.

- (6) Every citizen of the Slovak Republic shall have the right to modification of his/her forename and surname into the Slovak orthographic form free of charge.

§3a

Use of the State Language in Geographical Names

The names of municipalities and their parts,^{7a} the names of streets and other public areas, other geographical names,^{7b} as well as information contained in the official maps and cadastral maps shall be presented in the state language; the denomination of municipalities and streets and other local geographical designations in the languages of national minorities is governed by a separate regulations.^{7c}

§4

Use of the State Language in the Educational System

- (1) The teaching of the state language shall be mandatory at all primary and secondary schools. A language other than the state language may be used as the language of instruction and testing to the extent laid down in separate regulations.^{5a}
- (2) The pedagogues in all schools and school establishments in the territory of the Slovak Republic, except for foreign pedagogues and lecturers, must have a command of the state language and use the state language in oral and written communications.
- (3) The entire pedagogical documentation and other documentation in the schools and school institutions shall be kept in the state language. In the schools and school institutions, providing upbringing and education in the language of national minorities,^{8a} the entire pedagogical documentation shall be kept bilingual, it means in the state language and language of national minority.^{8b} In the schools

^{7a} §1a of Act of the Slovak National Council No. 369/1990 on Municipal Administration, as amended by Act No. 453/2001.

^{7b} §18 of Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 215/1995 on Geodesy and Cartography, as amended.

^{7c} Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 191/1994 and Act No. 184/1999.

^{8a} § 12 para 5 of Act No. 245/2008

^{8b} § 11 para 2 of Act No. 245/2008

and school institutions, providing upbringing and education in the language of national minorities,^{8a} other documentation shall be kept bilingual, it means in the state language and language of national minority.

- (4) The textbooks and teaching texts in the educational and training process in the Slovak Republic shall be issued in the state language, except for the textbooks and teaching texts for tuition in the languages of national minorities, ethnic groups and other foreign languages. Their issuance and use is governed by separate regulations.⁹
- (5) The provisions of paragraphs 1, 2 and 4 do not apply to the use of the state language in teaching at universities, teaching of other languages, or education and training in other languages than the state language^{5a} nor do they apply to the use of textbooks and teaching texts at universities.

§5

Use of the State Language in Certain Areas of Public Communication

- (1) The broadcast of the radio service and television service in the territory of the Slovak Republic shall be in the state language, except for the broadcast of:
 - a) television programmes^{9a} in another language with subtitles in the state language or with their immediately subsequent rebroadcast in the state language;
 - b) radio programmes in another language with their immediately subsequent rebroadcast in the state language and radio programmes in regional broadcast or local broadcast designed for members of national minorities including events in live transmission;
 - c) cultural and information programmes broadcast by the Slovak Radio abroad;¹⁰
 - d) television and radio language courses and programmes of related orientation;
 - e) musical works with original texts;

⁹ §13 of Act No. 245/2008

^{9a} §2 para 5 of Act No. 220/2007 on the Digital Broadcasting of Programme Services and on the Provision of Other Content through Digital Transmission, which also amends and supplements certain other acts (the Digital Broadcasting Act).

¹⁰ §5 para 1(k) of Act No. 619/2003

- f) programmes in the languages of national minorities and ethnic groups broadcast by the Slovak Radio;¹¹
 - g) audiovisual works or audio recordings of artistic performances broadcast in the original language mutation that meet the criterion of basic comprehensibility in relation to the state language;^{11a}
 - h) audiovisual works the dubbing of which, in the language that meet the criterion of basic comprehensibility in relation to the state language, was produced prior to entry into force of a separate regulation^{11b} and which were screened in the territory of the Slovak Republic prior to entry into force of that separate regulation;
 - i) original renditions by individuals using the language that meets the criterion of basic comprehensibility in relation to the state language, delivered as part of the news, reports, current affairs and entertainment television or radio programmes;
 - j) events broadcast live with simultaneous interpretation into the state language within the framework of a programme in a language other from the State language.
- (2) An audiovisual work in another language intended for minors below the age of 12 that is disseminated by broadcasting must be dubbed into the state language, except for the audiovisual works intended for minors below the age of 12 in the languages of national minorities within the framework of programs in another language referred to in paragraph 1 (a).
- (3) Announcements for the public aired through a municipal address system or similar technical means shall be broadcast in the state language; these announcements may also be broadcast in another language once aired in the state language.
- (4) Unless a separate regulation^{11c} provides otherwise, the state language shall be used in
- a) periodical press or news agency service^{11d} or
 - b) non-periodical publications.^{11e}

¹¹ §5 para 1(e) of Act No. 619/2003

^{11b} § 46 para 6 of Act No. 343/2007

^{11c} §2 para 8 of Act No. 212/1997 on Compulsory Copies of Periodical Publications, Non-periodical Publications and Audiovisual Works

^{11d} §2 paras 1 and 4 of Act No. 167/2008 on Periodical Press and New Agency Service, which also amends and supplements certain other acts (Press Act).

^{11e} § 2 para 3 of Act No. 212/1997

^{11f} Act No. 49/2002 on the Protection of Monuments and Historical Sites, as amended by Act No. 479/2005.

- (5) Occasional book posts (booklets) designed for publicity for cultural purposes, gallery catalogues, museums, libraries, cinema programmes, theatres, concerts and other cultural events are issued in the state language except those which are issued in the language of national minorities, this book post (booklet), catalogue or programme issued in the language of national minority must contain also contentually identical version in the state language. The book posts, catalogues and programmes according to previous sentence issued in the state language may contain also versions in other languages in the necessary range which are basically contentually identical with the version in the state language and follow after the version in the state language.
- (6) Cultural and educational events shall be held in the state language, except for the cultural events of national minorities and ethnic groups, cultural events of hosting artists from abroad and educational events focusing on language training, as well as musical works and theatre plays with original texts. The accompanying verbal presentation of these programmes shall be performed also in the state language, except for the verbal presentation of the programmes referred to in the second sentence of this paragraph provided that such programmes are held in a language that meets the criterion of comprehensibility in relation to the state language.
- (7) The inscriptions on monuments, memorials and memorial plaques shall be in the state language. If they contain the text in other languages, the texts in another language shall be presented after the text in the state language and shall, in terms of their content, be identical with the state language text. The text in another language shall be presented in the same or smaller font than the state language text. A construction permit holder shall be obliged to request a binding opinion from the Ministry of Culture on compliance with this Act of the inscription on a memorial, monument or a memorial plaque. This provision does not apply to historic inscriptions on memorials, monuments and memorial plaques which are subject to protection under a separate regulation.^{11f}
- (8) Every participant in a public assembly or public event held in the territory of the Slovak Republic shall have the right to deliver his/her speech in the state language.

§ 6

Use of the State Language in the Armed Forces, Armed Corps and Fire Brigades

- (1) All service communication in the armed forces, Police Force, Slovak Information Service, Prison and Justice Guard Corps of Slovak Republic, Railway Police, Fire and Rescue Corps and in municipal police corps shall be compulsory in the state language.

- (2) The entire administrative paperwork and documentation of the armed forces, armed security corps, other armed corps and fire brigades shall be kept in the state language.
- (3) The provision of paragraph 1 shall not apply to air-force communications in air traffic and to the international activities of the armed forces and armed corps.

§ 7

Use of the State Language in Judicial Proceedings, Administrative Proceedings and Proceedings before Law Enforcement Authorities

- (1) Mutual communication between courts and citizens, communication in judicial proceedings, administrative proceedings, proceedings before law enforcement authorities, as well as the rulings and protocols of courts, administrative authorities and law enforcement authorities, shall be performed and issued in the state language.
- (2) This provision shall be without prejudice to the rights of the persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups and the rights of the persons who do not have command of the state language, as laid down in separate regulations¹².

§8

Use of the State Language in Other Areas of Public Communication

- (1) In the interest of consumer protection, the use of the state language shall be mandatory in the labelling particulars of products, whether domestic or imported, in instructions for the use of products, particularly foodstuffs, medicinal products, consumption electronic and drugstore goods, in warranty terms and conditions, as well as other information for the consumer in the range and in the conditions assigned by separate regulations¹³
- (2) All documents and written communication with legal effect in the employment or a similar working relationship shall be executed in the state language; other language mutations of the text in the state language of identical content may also be executed.

¹² For example §18 of the Code of Civil Judicial Procedure, as amended by Act No. 341/2005, Act No. 382/2004 on Experts, Interpreters and Translators, as amended, §2 para 20 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

¹³ For example, § 9 of the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 152/1995 on Foodstuffs, as amended, §24 of Act No. 140/1998 Coll. on Drugs and Medical Aids, on amendments to Act No. 455/1991 on Licensed Trade (the Trades Act), as amended, Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 220/1996 on Advertising, §13 of Act No. 250/2007 on Consumer Protection and amendment to Act of the Slovak National Council No. 372/1990 on Minor Offences, as amended.

- (3) The financial and technical documentation, bylaws of associations, societies, political parties, political movements and companies shall be executed in the state language; other language mutations of the text in the state language of identical content may also be executed. The use of the state language in the Slovak technical standards is governed by a separate regulation.¹⁴
- (4) The administrative paperwork of healthcare facilities and facilities for social services shall be kept in the state language. The personnel of these facilities communicate with their patients or clients usually in the state language; if a patient or client does not have a command of the state language, the communication may be in a language in which the patient or client can communicate. If the facility is located in a municipality where the language of a national minority is used in official communication pursuant to a separate regulation¹⁵, the patients or clients belonging to that national minority may use their mother tongue in communication with the personnel. The personnel are not obliged to speak the language of the national minority.
- (5) In proceedings before the authorities and legal persons referred to in §3(1) concerning contracts, only the state language version of contracts shall be recognised.
- (6) All signs, advertisements and notices intended to inform the public, particularly in retail shops, sporting facilities, restaurants, in streets, by and above roads, at airports, bus stations and railway stations, as well as in public transport vehicles, shall be presented in the state language. If they contain the text in other languages, the texts in another language shall be presented after the text in the state language and shall, in terms of content, be identical with the state language text. The text in another language shall be presented in the same or smaller font than the state language text.

§9

Supervision

- (1) Compliance with §3 - §4, §5 paragraph 3, paragraph 4(b) and paragraphs 5-7, §6, §7 in administrative proceedings and proceedings before the law enforcement authorities, §8 paragraphs 2–6 except the communication of the personnel of healthcare facilities and facilities of social services with their patients or clients and except for advertising, which shall be supervised by authorities pursuant to a separate regulation¹⁶ and §11a, shall be supervised by the Ministry

¹⁴ Act No. 264/1999 on Technical Requirements for Products and on Conformity Assessment, which also amends and supplements certain other acts, as amended

¹⁵ § 2 para 2 of Act No. 184/1999

¹⁶ §3 para 6 and §11 para 3(b) of Act 147/2001 on Advertising, which also amends and supplements certain other acts

§ 16 (g) and § 67 para 2 (m) of Act 308/2000, as amended

of Culture. In performing this supervision, the Ministry of Culture shall also take due account of the codified form of the state language pursuant to §2, paragraph 3.

- 2) In accordance with the regulation on controls in the state administration, the persons authorised to perform supervision pursuant to paragraph 1, shall be:
 - a) obliged to present their identification card issued by the supervision authority, along with their written credentials to perform supervision,
 - b) authorised to request the necessary degree of cooperation, in particular the provision of information, data, written or oral explanation, documents and other relevant written records,
 - c) obliged to draw up a protocol of the supervision performed.
- (3) The authorities and legal persons referred to in §3(1), natural persons-entrepreneurs and legal persons shall be obliged to give access to and cooperate with the persons performing supervision.

§9a

Fines

- (1) If the Ministry of Culture establishes a breach of obligations pursuant to §9(1) and the authorities or legal persons referred to in §3(1), or the natural persons-entrepreneurs or legal persons, fail to restore compliance with the law or remedy irregularities within the set time limit in spite of the written notice of breach, the Ministry of Culture shall impose a fine of 100 to 5000 EUR on the authorities and legal persons referred to in §3(1), or the natural persons-entrepreneurs and legal persons.
- (2) The fine-imposing decision shall contain a time limit within which compliance with this Act must be restored. Unless compliance with this Act is restored within the time limit stipulated in the decision, the Ministry of Culture shall impose an additional fine which is double the amount of the original fine¹⁸. Such additional fine may be imposed within two years of the date by which the irregularities identified in the fine-imposing decision should have been remedied.
- (3) The fine may be imposed within one year of the date on which the Ministry of Culture learnt about the breach, but no later than within three years of the date on which the breach occurred. In imposing the fine, due account shall be taken of the scope, consequences, duration and recurrence of the irregularity concerned.

¹⁸ Act No. 71/1967 on Administrative Proceedings (Administrative Code), as amended.

- (4) The fine shall be payable within 30 days of the effective date of the fine-imposing decision, unless the decision stipulates a longer time limit. The fine-imposing procedure shall be subject to the general law on administrative proceedings.¹⁸
- (5) Proceeds from the fines imposed under this Act constitute the revenue of the state budget.

§ 10

Status Report on the Use of the State Language

- (1) The Ministry of Culture shall submit the Status Report on the Use of the State Language in the Slovak Republic to the Government of Slovak Republic once every two years.
- (2) For the purpose of the report referred to in paragraph 1, the Ministry of Culture shall be authorised to request from the authorities and legal persons referred to in §3(1) information and supporting documents on the use of the state language within their remit.
- (3) The Ministry of Culture shall submit its first report referred to in paragraph 1 by 31 March 2012.

§11

Common and Transitional Provisions

- (1) For the purposes of §3 to §8, the term 'state language' means the Slovak language in its codified form pursuant to §2(3); this shall be without prejudice to the use of new technical concepts and terms or denominations of new realities in another language, the appropriate equivalent of which has not been established and codified, as well as the use of non-standardised language expressions if used for a functional reason, particularly in artistic works and journalistic features.
- (2) The cost of bringing the information boards, signs, inscriptions and other texts in line with this Act shall be borne by the relevant authorities, other legal persons and natural persons. These adjustments shall be made within one year of the effective date hereof.

§11a

Transitional Provision to edits effective as of 1 September 2009

The authorities and legal persons referred to in §3(1), legal persons, natural persons-entrepreneurs and natural persons shall be obliged to remedy any incompliance with the provisions of §3(3)(d), §5(5) and (7) and §8(6) by 31 December 2009. If it concerns the inscription on the memorial, monument or commemorative board with the text in the language of national minority, which was placed on the

memorial, monument or commemorative board before 1. September 2009 and followed by contentually identical text in the state language with the same or bigger font than the text in the language of national minority, this obligation mentioned in previous sentence does not refer to this inscription.

§12

Repealing Provisions

Act of the Slovak National Council No. 428/1990 on the Official Language in the Slovak Republic is hereby repealed.

§13

This Act shall come into effect as of 1 January 1996, except for §10 which shall come into effect as of 1 January 1997.

Finding of the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic No. 260/1997 was published in Collection of Laws of Slovak republic as of 4 October 1997.

Act No. 5/1999 (art. II.) took effect as of 21 January 1999.

Act No. 184/1999 took effect as of 1 September 1999.

Act No. 24/2007 (art. IV.) took effect as of 1 February 2007.

Act No. 318/2009 took effect as of 1 September 2009.

Pavol Paška, in his own hand