

270/1995 Coll. Laws

LAW OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC FROM NOVEMBER 15, 1995

ON THE STATE LANGUAGE OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

The National Council of the Slovak Republic, following from the fact that the Slovak language is the most important feature of the individuality of the Slovak nation, the most precious value of its cultural heritage and the expression of sovereignty of the Slovak Republic and the universal communication mean of its citizens, that ensures their freedom and equality in dignity and rights on the territory of the Slovak Republic, has adopted the following law:

§ 1

Introductory provision

- (1) The state language on the territory of the Slovak Republic is the Slovak language.
- (2) The state language has preference over other languages used on the territory of the Slovak Republic.
- (3) Law does not treat usage of liturgical languages. The usage of these languages is treated by regulations of churches and religious communities.
- (4) Law does not treat the usage of languages of national minorities and ethnic groups. The usage of these languages is treated by special laws.

§ 2

State language and its protection

- (1) The state
 - a) creates in school, scientific and information systems such conditions that each citizen of the Slovak Republic may acquire and use the state language in word and in writing,
 - b) takes care for scientific research of the state language, its historical development, research of local and social dialects, codification of the state language and increase of the language culture.
- (2) The codified form of the state language is stated by the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic (hereafter only “the Ministry of Culture”) on the proposal of special Slovak linguistic workplaces.
- (3) Any intervention into the codified form of the state language in discrepancy with its causalities is not allowable.

§ 3

Usage of the state language in official contacts

- (1) State bodies and state organisations, bodies of territorial self-administration and bodies of public and legal institutions (hereafter only public and legal organs) use obligatorily the state language while performing their duties on the whole territory

of the Slovak Republic. Showing of adequate knowledge of the state language in word and in writing is the condition of acceptance to work or to a similar labour relation and the assumption of performing the agreed-upon work in determined working activity in legal and public organs.

(2) Employees and functionaries of public and legal organs, transport and communication employees as well as members of armed forces, armed security corps, other armed corps and fire corps use the state language in official contacts.

(3) In the state language

a) laws, governmental acts and other general binding legal regulations including regulations of organs of the territorial self-administration, decisions and other public deeds are published,

b) negotiations of public and legal organs are conducted,

c) entire official agenda (registers, minutes, resolutions, statistics, registers, balances, official records, information determined for public, etc.) and agenda of churches and religious communities determined for public is conducted,

d) official names of communities and their parts, denomination of streets and other public spaces, other geographical names as well as data on state map works including cadaster maps are stated; denomination of communities in other languages is treated by a special law,

e) chronicles of communities are written. Possible other-language wording is translation from the state language.

(4) Legal and public organs and organisations established by them are obligated to use the state language in all information systems and in mutual contacts.

(5) Written presentations of citizens determined for public and legal organs are presented in the state language.

(6) Each citizen of the Slovak Republic has the right to free adjustment of his name

(7) and surname into Slovak spelling form.

§ 4

Usage of the state language in schools

(1) Learning of the state language is obligatory at all primary and secondary schools. Other than the state language is the instructional language and examining language to extent determined by special regulations.

(2) Pedagogical workers at all schools and in school facilities on the territory of the Slovak Republic with the exception of foreign pedagogues and lecturers are obliged to speak and use the state language in word and in writing.

(3) The entire pedagogical documentation is conducted in the state language.

(4) Textbooks and instructional texts used in the education process in the Slovak Republic are published in the state language besides textbooks and instructional texts for study in the language of national minorities, ethnic groups and other foreign languages. Their publishing and use is treated by special regulations.

(5) Provisions of paragraphs 1, 2 and 4 do not refer to usage of the state language in study at universities, in study of other languages or in education in other than the state language nor for using textbooks and instructional texts in study at universities.

§ 5

Usage of the state language in mass information media at cultural events and public gatherings

(1) Broadcasting on radio and television is performed in the state language on the whole territory of the Slovak Republic. Exceptions are

- a) other language radio programmes and foreign language television programmes consisting of audiovisual works and other sound and pictorial recordings with subtitles in the state language or otherwise fulfilling the requirement of basic understandability from the point of view of the state language,
- b) foreign language broadcasting of Slovak radio for foreign countries, television and radio language courses and programmes with similar orientation,
- c) music programmes with original texts.

Broadcasting in languages of national minorities and ethnic groups are treated by special regulations.

(2) Other language audiovisual works determined for children up to 12 years must be dubbed into the state language.

(3) Operators of radio and television broadcasting, announcers, moderators and editors are obligated to use the state language in broadcasting.

(4) Broadcasting of regional or local stations, radio stations and radio facilities is performed, in principle, in the state language. Other languages may be used before a particular programme is broadcast in the state language.

(5) Periodical and non-periodical publications are published in the state language. Publishing of different language print is treated by the special regulation.

(6) Occasional print determined for public, catalogues of galleries and museums, libraries, cinema, theatre, concert and other cultural event programmes are published in the state language. In case of need, they may contain translations into different languages.

(7) Cultural and educational events are performed in the state language, or in another language if they fulfil the requirement of basic understandability from the point of view of the state language. The exception is formed by cultural events of national minorities, ethnic groups, foreign artists appearing as guests and music works with original texts. Accompanying presentation of programmes will first be expressed in the state language.

(8) Each participant of a gathering or lecture on the territory of the Slovak Republic has the right to present his speech in the state language.

§ 6

Usage of the state language in armed forces, in armed corps and in fire corps

(1) The state language is used in official relations in the Army of the Slovak Republic, in the forces of the Home Office of the Slovak Republic, in the Police Corps, in the Slovak Information Service, in the Corps of prison and justice guard of the Slovak Republic, in Railway Police of the Slovak Republic and in communal police.

(2) The entire agenda and documentation of armed forces, armed security corps,

other armed corps and fire corps is carried in the state language.

(3) Provision of paragraph 1 does not refer to air forces during flight operation and on international activities of armed corps.

§ 7

Usage of the state language in court and administrative proceedings

(1) Mutual contact of courts with citizens, court proceedings, administrative proceedings, decisions and minutes from courts and administrative organs are carried and published in the state language.

(2) Rights of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups or rights of foreigners who do not speak the state language, following from special regulations remain untouched.

§ 8

Usage of the state language in economy, services and health system

(1) In the interest of the consumer, the usage of the state language is obligatory in marking the contents of domestic or imported goods, in instructions for usage of goods, especially groceries and medicaments, in guarantee conditions and other information for consumers.

(2) Written legal acts in public and legal relation or in similar labour relations are made in the state language.

(3) Finance and technical documentation, Slovak technical standards, statutes of associations, groups, political parties, political movements and trade companies are made in the state language.

(4) The entire agenda of health facilities is made in the state language. Contacts of health personnel with patients is usually made in the state language; if a citizen or foreigner does not speak the state language, also in the language in which it is possible to communicate with the patient.

(5) In proceedings before public and legal bodies on contracts treating binding relations, only wording in the state language is acknowledged.

(6) All notices (signs), advertisements and announcements determined for informing the public, especially in shops, at sports centres, in pubs, in streets, along roads and above them, at airports, in bus stations and railway stations, in rail wagons and in mass transport vehicles must be stated in the state language. They may be translated into other languages, but different language texts follow after the equally large text in the state language.

§ 9

Supervision

The Ministry of Culture supervises over the keeping of duties following from this law. If it finds out any shortcomings, it warns legal entities and physical persons, in which activities the shortcomings have been found out, and it is authorized to require removal of the anti-legal state.

§ 10

Fines

(1) If the anti-legal state is not removed (§9), the Ministry of Culture may impose fine

- a) to legal entities up to 250,000 Sk for breaching duties pursuant to § 4 para. 4, § 8 para. 1,3,5 and 6,
- b) to legal entities up to 500,000 Sk for breaching duties pursuant to § 5 para. 2 and 5,
- c) to physical persons authorized to do business up to 50,000 Sk for breaching duties pursuant to § 4 para. 4, § 5 para. 2 and 5, and § 8 para.1, 3 and 5.

(2) The Ministry of Culture takes into account in determining fines the weight of breached duties.

(3) Fines may be imposed not later than up to one year from the day on which the Ministry of Culture finds breached duties, but not later than till three years since breached duties.

(4) A fine imposed according to this law is due up to thirty days from the day, when the decision, by which it has been imposed, came into effect. General regulations on administrative proceedings relate on proceedings on imposing the fine.

(5) Fines imposed according to this law are the income of the state fund of culture, Pro Slovakia.

§ 11

Common and temporary provisions

(1) Usage of common other languages names, special concepts or denominations of new facts, on which there is not so far a proper equivalent expression, is not touched by this law.

(2) All heads of public and legal organs and other legal entities and physical persons are responsible for keeping the provisions of this law (§ 10 para. 1).

(3) Costs of all adjustments of information tables, names and other texts according to this law are covered by particular offices and other legal entities and physical persons. These adjustments will be done up to one year from the day of entry into effect of this law.

(4) The state language is for purposes of § 2 para. 1 letter a) and b), § 3 para. 1, 2 and para. 3 letter a), c), d) and e), § 4, § 5 para. 5 and 8, § 6 para. 2 and § 8 para. 1 to 5 understood to be the Slovak language in its codified form (§ 2 para. 2).

§ 12

Provisions of repeal

Law of the Slovak National Council No. 428/1990 Coll. on the official language in the Slovak Republic will be repealed.

§ 13

This law comes into effect on January 1, 1996 with the exception of § 10, which comes into effect on January 1, 1997.