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’s 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 Republic.²

(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 communities.³

(4) Unless this Act provides otherwise, the use of the languages of national minorities and ethnic groups are governed by separate regulations.⁴

2 State Language and Its Protection

(1) 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 create appropriate conditions for scientific research of the state language, research of its historical development, research of its local and social dialects, shall take care of the codification of the state language, and enhancement of the language culture;

(2) The codified form of the state language shall be approved and published on the basis of proposal of specialised slovakistic linguistic institutes and specialists in the area of the state language by the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter “Ministry of Culture”) on its website.

(3) Any interference with the codified form of the state language that is contrary to the regularities shall be inadmissible.
3 Use of the State Language in Official Communication

(1) The state authorities, territorial self-government authorities, other bodies of public administration, the legal persons established by such public authorities and the legal persons established by law shall use the state language and their employees, civil servants, members of municipal police corps, members of the armed forces of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter “armed forces”), armed security corps, other armed corps and Fire and Rescue Corps must have a command of and 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 and the use of other languages in official communication with foreign countries in accordance with the established practice in international communication practice.

(2) The state language:

a) shall be the language of laws, government ordinances and other generally binding legal regulations, including those issued by the territorial self-government authorities, as well as the language of decisions and other public documents; this provision shall be without prejudice to the use of the languages of national minorities and the use of the foreign languages pursuant to the separate regulations,

b) shall be the language of negotiation at the authorities and legal persons referred to in subsection (1), this provision shall be without prejudice to the use of the languages of national minorities pursuant to a separate regulation,

c) shall be the language of entire official paperwork (birth, marriage and death register, minutes, resolutions, statistics, records, balances, official records, information intended for the public, etc.) and the paperwork and documents of churches and religious communities intended for public; this provision shall be without prejudice to the use of the languages of national minorities pursuant to a separate regulation,

d) shall be the language of municipal chronicles; an other language mutation, if any, shall be contentually identical with the version in the state language, this provision shall be without prejudice to the use of the languages of national minorities pursuant to a separate regulation,

(3) The authorities and legal persons referred to in subsection (1) shall use the state language in all their information systems and mutual communication; apart from the state language, another language can also be used in such information systems whenever a separate regulation so provides.
(4) In official communication with the authorities and legal persons referred to in subsection (1), a natural person or legal person shall use the state language, unless this Act, separate regulation or an international treaty promulgated in a way set down by law provides otherwise. Any person whose mother tongue is a language that meets the criterion of basic comprehensibility in relation to the state language can use their mother tongue in official communication with the authorities and legal persons referred to in subsection (1). The authorities and legal persons referred to in subsection (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 super-legalized by the competent authorities of the Czech Republic.

(5) 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. Citizens belonging to the national minorities shall use his/her forename and surname in official communication within the conditions assigned by separate regulation.

3a Use of the State Language in Geographical Names

The names of municipalities and their parts, the names of streets and other public areas, other geographical names, as well as data contained in the official maps and cadastral maps shall be presented in the state language; this provision shall be without prejudice to the use of the languages of national minorities pursuant to a separate regulation.

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 teaching language and the testing language to the extent set down in separate regulations.

(2) Pedagogical staff 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 establishments shall be kept in the state language. In the schools and school establishments, providing upbringing and education in the language of national minorities, the entire pedagogical documentation shall be kept bilingual, it means in the state language and language of national minority. The range of other documentation which do not have to be kept in the state language in the schools and school establishments providing upbringing and education in
the language of national minorities shall establish generally binding legal regulation issued by the Ministry of Culture after agreement with The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic.

(4) The textbooks and teaching books used in the upbringing and educational process in the Slovak Republic shall be issued in the state language, except for the textbooks and teaching books for teaching in the languages of national minorities, ethnic groups and other foreign languages. Their issuance and use is governed by separate regulations.

(5) The provisions of subsections (1), (2) and (4) do not apply to the use of the state language in teaching at higher education institutions, teaching of other languages, or upbringing and education in other languages than the state language nor do they apply to the use of textbooks and teaching books at higher education institutions.

5 Use of the State Language in Several 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 in another language or another components of television service in another language with subtitles in the state language or immediately preceded or immediately followed by broadcast in the state language;

b) radio programmes in another language or another components of radio service in another language immediately preceded or immediately followed by broadcast in the state language and radio programmes or another components of radio service of in regional broadcast or local broadcast designed for members of national minorities including events in live broadcast;

c) radio service of The Radio and Television Slovakia to broadcast cultural and information programmes abroad;

d) television and radio language courses and programmes of related orientation;

e) musical works with original texts;

f) radio programmes in the languages of national minorities and ethnic groups broadcast by the Radio and Television Slovakia;

g) audiovisual works or phonograms of artistic performances transmitted by broadcasting in the original language mutation that meet the criterion of basic comprehensibility in relation to the state language.
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 before 1. January 2008 and which were screened in the territory of
the Slovak Republic before 1. January 2008;

i) original renditions by individuals using the language that meets the criterion
of basic comprehensibility in relation to the state language, inserted as part of
the news, publicistic and entertainment television or radio programmes;

j) events in live broadcast with simultaneous translation into the state language
within the framework of a programme in another language.

(2) An audiovisual work in another language intended for minors below the age of 12
that is transmitted 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 or another components of television service in another language
referred to in subsection (1)(a).

(3) Provisions of subsections (1) and (2) do not apply to broadcaster, which Council
for Broadcasting and Retransmission under the conditions set by special
regulation\(^{11b}\) granted a licence to the broadcast of programme service exclusively
in one or in several official languages of the European Union, which is not the
state language of Slovak Republic.

(4) Notices intended to inform for the public disclosed through a municipal address
system or other technical means shall be disclosed in the state language; these
notices can also be disclosed in another language once disclosed in the state
language.

(5) 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.\(^{11e}\)

(6) Occasional printed matters intended for the public for cultural purposes, the
catalogues of galleries, museums or libraries, programmes for films, plays,
concerts or other cultural events are issued in the state language except those
which are issued in the language of national minorities, such printed matters,
catalogue or programme issued in the language of national minority must also
contain the basic information in the state language. The printed matters,
catalogues and programmes according to previous sentence issued in the state
language can also contain versions in other languages in the necessary range
which are in principle contentually identical with the version in the state language
and follow after the version in the state language.

(7) Cultural and upbringing and educational events shall be held in the state
language. Exceptions are for the cultural events of national minorities and ethnic
groups, cultural events of hosting artists from abroad and upbringing and educational events focusing on language training, as well as musical works and theatre plays with original texts and recitations of literary works in the original language. 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 subsection provided that such programmes are held in a language that meets the criterion of comprehensibility in relation to the state language.

(8) 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 be contentually 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 developer can 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. On monuments, memorials and memorial plaques with text of the inscriptions in the language of national minority and in the state language in municipalities where the language of the national minority is used in official communication pursuant to a separate regulation, the order of texts is not specified.

(9) 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, the Police Corps, the Slovak Information Service, National security authority, the Prison and Justice Guard Corps of the Slovak Republic, Railway Police and the Fire and Rescue Corps shall be used 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 subsection (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 minutes 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 regulations 12.

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 regulations 13.

(2) All documents and written communication with legal effect in the employment or a similar working relationship shall be executed in the state language; beside the version in the state language contentually identical version in another language can also be executed.

(3) The state language shall be the language of account 13a and financial statement 13a, technical documentation whose drafting or submission is required for proceeding under separate regulation 13b and bylaws of associations, societies, political parties, political movements and companies, which are necessary for registration; beside the version in the state language contentually identical version in another language can 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 social service facilities shall be kept in the state language. The staff of these facilities communicates with their patients or clients usually in the state language; if a patient’s or client’s mother tongue is different from the state language, the communication can be conducted in any language in which the patient or the client can be comprehended. The staff is not obliged to have a command of the foreign language or the language of a national minority. If the facility is located in a municipality where the language of a national minority is used in official communication pursuant to a separate regulation 11g, patients or clients belonging to that national minority can use their mother tongue in communication with the staff.

(5) In proceedings before the authorities and legal persons referred to in section 3(1) concerning contracts establishing binding relations, versions of such contracts in any official language of the European Union shall be recognized alongside any
version in the state language. In the event of any unclear point or any disputes, the version of the contract in the state language shall apply.

(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 be contentually 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. In all signs and notices intended to inform the public in the language of national minority and in the state language in municipalities where the language of national minority is used in official communication pursuant to a separate regulation\textsuperscript{11g}, and in advertisements the order of text is not specified.

(7) The duty established in the subsection (6) shall not apply to business names, trademarks and the names of institutions inscribed or included in registers or lists in accordance with the law in force in the Slovak republic or in another Member State of the European Union or contracting Party of the Agreement on the European Economic Area, nor to the use of a name and surname that are part of a sign, advertisement or notice intended to inform the public nor to certain well-established expressions in foreign languages that are frequently used together with trademarks in the text of advertisements, are known to the general public and are a part of an advertisement.

9 Supervision

(1) Compliance with sections 3(1) to (3), section 3a and 4, section 5(4), (5)(b) and (6) to (8), section 6, section 7 in administrative proceedings and proceedings before the law enforcement authorities, section 8(2) to (6) except the communication of the staff 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 regulation\textsuperscript{16} and section 11b, shall be supervised by the Ministry 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 section 2(2).

(2) In accordance with the regulation on controls in the state administration,\textsuperscript{17} the persons authorised to perform supervision pursuant to subsection (1), shall be:

a) obliged to present proof by their identification card issued by the supervision authority, along with their written authorization to perform supervision,

b) authorised to request the necessary cooperation, in particular the providing of information, data, written or oral explanation, documents and other relevant written materials,

c) obliged to draw up a protocol of the supervision performed.
The authorities and legal persons referred to in section 3(1), self-employed natural persons and legal persons shall be obliged to enable the persons authorised to perform supervision and cooperate with the persons authorised.

9a Fines

(1) If the Ministry of Culture finds a breach of obligations pursuant to the range of this Act and if it concerns information of the public administration intended for the public or if it concerns information regarding the threat to the life, health, safety or property of the citizens of Slovak Republic in spite of the written caution fail to eliminate an unlawful state of affairs or to remedy deficiencies within the set time limit the Ministry of Culture can impose a fine of € 50 to 2500.

(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 fine. Such additional fine may be imposed within two years of the date by which the deficiencies 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 of obligation, but no later than within three years of the date on which the breach of obligation occurred. In imposing the fine, due account shall be taken of the scope, consequences, duration and recurrence of the unlawful action concerned.

(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 governed by the general law on administrative proceedings.

(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. By preparing the report the Ministry of Culture cooperates with the scientific research institutions, educational and cultural institutions as well as the bodies of public administration and other bodies supervising the use of the state language.

(2) For the purpose of the report referred to in subsection (1), the Ministry of Culture shall be authorised to request from the authorities and legal persons referred to in section 3(1) information and written documents on the use of the state language within their competence.

(3) The Ministry of Culture shall submit its first report referred to in subsection (1) by 31st March 2012.
11 Common and Transitional Provisions

(1) For the purposes of sections 3 to 8, the term 'state language' means the Slovak language in its codified form pursuant to section 2(2); this shall be without prejudice to the use of new technical concepts and terms or naming 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.

11a Transitional Provision to edits effective as of 1st September 2009

The authorities and legal persons referred to in section 3(1), legal persons, self-employed natural persons and natural persons shall be obliged to remedy any incompliance with the provisions of sections 3(3)(d), 5(5) and (7) and section 8(6) by 31st 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 memorial plaque before 1st 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.

11b Transitional Provision to edits effective as of 1st March 2011

(1) The authorities and legal persons referred to in section 3(1), legal persons, self-employed natural persons and natural persons shall be obliged to remedy any incompliance with the provisions of sections 3(2)(d) and in the inscriptions places form the 1st January 1996 to provision of section 5(7) and section 8(6) by 31st October 2011. If it concerns the inscription on the memorial, monument or memorial plaque with the text in the language of national minority and contentually identical text in the state language, which was placed on the memorial, monument or memorial plaque before 1st September 2009, this obligation mentioned in previous sentence does not refer to this inscription.

(2) Act provision of the section 11a shall not be used from the 1st March 2011.

12 Repealing Provisions

Act of the Slovak National Council No. 428/1990 Coll. on the Official Language in the Slovak Republic is hereby repealed.
This Act shall come into effect as of 1st January 1996, except for section10 which shall come into effect as of 1st January 1997.


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

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


Act No. 35/2011 Coll. took effect as of 1st March 2011.

Act No. 204/2011 Coll. took effect as of 1st July 2011

Act No. 373/2013 Coll. took effect as of 1st January 2014.

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1 Article 12(1) of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic.
2 Article 6(1) of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic.
5 For example, section 120 of Act No. 461/2003 Coll. on Social Insurance, as amended, section 2 of Act No. 532/2010 Coll., as amended, section 2 of Act No. 16/2004 Coll., as amended, sections 2 and 17 of Act No. 581/2004 Coll. on Health Insurance Companies and Healthcare Supervision, which also amends and supplements certain other acts, as amended.
6a Section 3(1) and (2) of Act No. 184/1999 Coll.
6b For example, section 3(6) of Act No. 530/2003 Coll. on the Companies Register, which also amends and supplements certain other acts, as amends by Act No. 24/2007 Coll.
6c For example section 42 of Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 162/1995 Coll. on the Real Estate Cadastre and the Entries of Ownership and Other Rights to the Real Estates (Cadastral Act), as amended, section 11 of Act No. 200/1997 Coll. on Student Loan Fund, as amended by Act No. 231/2000 Coll., section 2(3) of Act No. 184/1999 Coll., section 109 of Act No. 725/2004 Coll. on the Conditions of Vehicles Operation in Traffic on Ground Roads, which also amends and supplements certain other acts, as

7 Section 7(1) of Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 300/1993 Coll. on names and surnames, as amended by Act No. 13/2006 Coll.

7aa Section 3 of Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 300/1993 Coll. as amended by Act No. 344/2007 Coll.

7a Section 1a of Act of the Slovak National Council No. 369/1990 Coll. on Municipal Administration, as amended by Act No. 453/2001 Coll.

7b Section 18 of Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 215/1995 Coll. on Geodesy and Cartography, as amended.

7c Act No. 184/1999 Coll. as amended

8 Section 12(5) of Act No. 245/2008 Coll.

8a Section 11(2) of Act No. 245/2008 Coll.

9 Section 13 of Act No. 245/2008 Coll.

9a Section 3(2) of Act No. 220/2007 Coll. 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 (Digital Broadcasting Act).

9b Section 3(3) of Act No. 220/2007 Coll.

9c Section 3(i) of Act No. 308/2000 Coll. on the Broadcasting and Retransmission, on amendments to Act No. 195/2000 Coll. on the Telecommunications, as amended.

10 Section 5(1)(m) of Act No. 532/2010 Coll.

11 Section 5(1)(b)(g) of Act No. 532/2010 Coll.

11a Section 17(5) of Act No. 343/2007 Coll. on the Conditions of Registration, Public Distribution and Preservation of Audiovisual Works, Multimedia Works and Phonograms of Artistic Performances, which also amends and supplements certain other acts (Audiovisual Act).


11d Section 2(1) and (4) of Act No. 167/2008 Coll.

11e Section 2(3) of Act No. 212/1997 Coll.

11f Act No. 49/2002 Coll. on the Protection of Monuments and Historical Sites, as amended.

11g Section 2(2) of Act No. 184/1999 Coll.


13a Act No. 431/2002 Coll. on the Account amended


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

16 Section 3(6) and section 11(3)(b) of Act No. 147/2001 Coll. on Advertising, which also amends and supplements certain other acts, as amends.

Section 16(g) and section 67(2)(m) of Act No. 308/2000 Coll., as amended.

17 Sections 8 to 13 and section 16 of Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 10/1996 Coll. on the Control in the State Administration, as amended.
Act No. 71/1967 Coll. on Administrative Proceedings (Code of Administrative Procedure), as amended.