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## **Ordinance on the Federal Administration Language Services (Language Services Ordinance, LangSO)**

of 14 November 2012 (Status as of 1 July 2022)

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*The Swiss Federal Council,*

on the basis of Articles 43 paragraph 2 and 47 paragraph 2 of the Government and Administration Organisation Act of 21 March 1997<sup>1</sup>, and  
in implementation of the Languages Act of 5 October 2007<sup>2</sup>,

*ordains:*

### **Section 1      Subject Matter**

#### **Art. 1**

<sup>1</sup> This Ordinance regulates:

- a. the organisation of the Federal Administration language services;
- b. translation and the other linguistic services provided by the language services;
- c. cooperation among the language services and between the language services and other administrative units as well as coordination with clients.

<sup>2</sup> It therefore regulates how the language services contribute:

- a.<sup>3</sup> to guaranteeing the high quality of the form and content of the federal texts that are published;
- b. to the activities of the Confederation in providing information and in communicating in several languages;
- c. to promoting multilingualism and to the internal functioning of the Federal Administration as a multilingual organisation.

AS 2012 6457

<sup>1</sup> SR 172.010

<sup>2</sup> SR 441.1

<sup>3</sup> Amended by Annex No 1 of the O of 10 Nov. 2021, in force since 1 July 2022 (AS 2021 692).

## **Section 2      Organisation and Coordination**

### **Art. 2              Organisation**

<sup>1</sup> The Federal Administration language services include all units that provide translation and other linguistic services in the Central Language Services of the Federal Chancellery and in the departments.

<sup>2</sup> They are organised according to language.

<sup>3</sup> They work with the Parliamentary Services Language Service on professional and organisational matters and consult with the same on matters of common interest.

### **Art. 3              Federal Chancellery units**

The Central Language Services of the Federal Chancellery comprise a separate unit each for German, French, Italian, Romansh, English and terminology, each with its own head.

### **Art. 4              Departmental units**

<sup>1</sup> The language services in the departments comprise units for German, French, Italian and, where appropriate, for English and for further languages, each with its own head responsible for the language concerned.

<sup>2</sup> Each department has at least one central unit each for German, French and Italian that plans and coordinates the work in the language concerned within the department.

<sup>3</sup> The head of a central unit may issue instructions and request information within the department insofar as this is required for planning and coordination of its work.

### **Art. 5              Cross-departmental coordination**

<sup>1</sup> The Federal Chancellery shall coordinate translation and other linguistic services in the Federal Administration; in doing so, it shall respect the requirements for manageability, the connection between the various tasks, the balance between the languages and their status.

<sup>2</sup> The Conference of Language Services (COLS) shall support the Federal Chancellery in ascertaining the needs of the language services and in guiding and coordinating their activities.

<sup>3</sup> The COLS is a consultative body. It comprises representatives of the Central Language Services of the Federal Chancellery and the departmental language services. The Parliamentary Services Language Service may participate in the COLS.

<sup>4</sup> The Federal Chancellery oversees the COLS. It approves its regulations.

### Section 3 Linguistic Services

#### Art. 6 Individual linguistic services

Linguistic services include in particular:

- a. the translation of texts into one or more languages;
- b. the proofreading of translations and other texts to assure their quality and their compliance with formal requirements (revision);
- c. terminology work in certain areas and the provision and maintenance of terminological aids for the language services themselves or for the entire Federal Administration;
- d. the provision and maintenance of language tools;
- e. advice on linguistic matters.

#### Art. 7 Quality standards

<sup>1</sup> The linguistic services shall meet quality standards that in particular contribute to making texts precise, coherent, simple, understandable and gender-neutral.

<sup>2</sup> The quality standards are set out in the directives mentioned in Article 2 paragraph 2 of the Languages Ordinance of 4 June 2010<sup>4,5</sup>

#### Art. 8 Languages

<sup>1</sup> The languages in which the translation and the other linguistic services are provided are determined primarily by the legislation on languages and official publications.

<sup>2</sup> Texts that do not fall within paragraph 1 and which are intended to be read by the general public and texts that are intended to aid the internal functioning of the Federal Administration and to be read by its employees shall be made available in several languages, provided their importance and the range of addressees so require.

<sup>3</sup> The Federal Chancellery shall set out the details in directives.

#### Art. 9<sup>6</sup> Joint planning

The Federal Administration language services and their clients shall jointly determine in their planning process the time required for individual linguistic services. They shall fix deadlines so that:

- a. quality assurance can be carried out; and
- b. when texts are published in more than one language, they can be published in all the required languages at the same time.

<sup>4</sup> SR 441.11

<sup>5</sup> Amended by No II 1 of the O of 27 Aug. 2014, in force since 1 Oct. 2014 (AS 2014 2987).

<sup>6</sup> Amended by Annex No 1 of the O of 10 Nov. 2021, in force since 1 July 2022 (AS 2021 692).

**Art. 10** Provision of linguistic services

<sup>1</sup> Translation work and the other linguistic services for the Federal Administration are normally carried out by the Federal Administration language services.

<sup>2</sup> The units that provide linguistic services within a department normally translate and revise their department's texts.

<sup>3</sup> The units that provide linguistic services in the Federal Chancellery are normally responsible for:

- a. translating and revising Federal Chancellery texts;
- b. translating and revising texts relating to the duties of the President of the Swiss Confederation;
- c.<sup>7</sup> the final linguistic revision of texts published under the legislation on official publications, with the exception in particular of the texts to be published by reference and explanatory reports on ordinances.

**Art. 11** External assignments

<sup>1</sup> At times when capacity to deal with the workload is exceeded or in cases of urgency, if all internal resources have been exhausted, individual translation assignments or assignments for other linguistic services may be issued to external translators or other external linguistic specialists with the agreement of or via the unit that is responsible for the relevant linguistic service.

<sup>2</sup> The unit concerned is responsible for assuring the quality of the linguistic services provided by external specialists in accordance with paragraph 1.

<sup>3</sup> The Federal Chancellery shall set out the details in directives.

**Section 4** Special Provisions**Art. 12** Italian

<sup>1</sup> The Italian unit in the Federal Chancellery is responsible for the Italian version of texts that are published in the Official Compilation of Federal Legislation or in the Official Federal Gazette; it shall coordinate the planning of such work.

<sup>2</sup> It may by mutual agreement delegate translation work to the central Italian units in the departments.

<sup>3</sup> It acts as the Italian Language Service for the Federal Assembly.

<sup>4</sup> The Italian units in the departments normally translate the parliamentary proposals assigned to their department, together with the corresponding responses and statements from the Federal Council.

<sup>7</sup> Amended by Annex No 1 of the O of 10 Nov. 2021, in force since 1 July 2022 (AS 2021 692).

**Art. 13** Romansh

<sup>1</sup> The Romansh unit in the Federal Chancellery coordinates the translation of documents into Romansh.

<sup>2</sup> The publication of Romansh texts is governed by Article 3 of the Languages Ordinance of 4 June 2010<sup>8</sup>.

**Art. 14** English

<sup>1</sup> The English unit in the Federal Chancellery translates texts of particular importance or of international interest into English, and in particular selected items of Swiss legislation.

<sup>2</sup> It coordinates and revises translations of important texts into English made outside the Federal Chancellery.

**Art. 15** Terminology

<sup>1</sup> The terminology unit in the Federal Chancellery organises and coordinates terminology work in the Federal Administration.

<sup>2</sup> It operates the TERMDAT central terminology database.

<sup>3</sup> It conducts its terminology projects in cooperation with the departments.

**Section 5** **Final Provisions****Art. 16** Repeal of current legislation

The Ordinance of 19 June 1995<sup>9</sup> on Translation Work in the General Federal Administration is repealed.

**Art. 17** Amendment of Current Legislation

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**Art. 18** Commencement

This Ordinance comes into force on 1 January 2013.

<sup>8</sup> SR 441.11

<sup>9</sup> [AS 1995 3632, 2008 5153 Annex No 3, 2010 2653 Annex No II 2]

<sup>10</sup> The amendment may be consulted under AS 2012 6457.

