

**Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan as of July 11,1997 № 151-I
On Languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan**

(as amended as of 05.06.2006)

Chapter 1. General Provisions (Article 1 - 7)

Chapter 2. Language in the Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations and Local Government Authorities (Articles 8 - 15)

Chapter 3. Language in the Field of Education, Science, Culture and Mass Media (Articles 16 - 18)

Chapter 4. Language in the Names of Inhabited Localities, Proper Names, Visual Information (Article 19 - 22)

Chapter 5. Legal Protection of Languages (Article 23 - 26)

Chapter 6. Use of Languages in Relations with Foreign Countries and International Organizations (Article 27)

No table of contents is provided for in the original version

This Law establishes the legal basis of the languages functioning in the Republic of Kazakhstan, obligations of the state for creation of conditions for study and development thereof, ensure equally respectful attitude to all languages used in the Republic of Kazakhstan without any exceptions.

In the text the figures “I – VI” after the word “Chapter” are replaced by figures “1 – 6” as appropriate in accordance with the Law of RK as of 20.12.04 № 13-III (the law came into force as of 01.01.2005) (see the old version)

Chapter 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1 is amended according to the Law of RK as of 20.12.04 № 13-III (from 01.01.2005) (see the old version)

Article 1. Main Terms

The following main terms are used in this Law:

diaspora is the part of a nation (ethnic community), residing beyond the country of its historical origin;

onomastics is a section of linguistics studying proper names, history of occurrence and transformation thereof;

orthography is spelling, the system of rules determining the uniformity of the methods of speech (words and grammar forms) transfer in writing;

toponymy is a section of onomastics studying the names of geographical objects, laws of occurrence, change and functioning thereof;

transliteration is transfer in letters of texts and individual words of one graphic system with the tools of other graphic system.

Terminology commission is the advisory and consultative body developing the offers in the field of terminological vocabulary of the Kazakh language in all branches of economy, science, engineering and culture;

Onomastics commission is the advisory and consultative body developing the offers for generation of the uniform approach to naming and re-naming of the geographical objects, regulation of use and registration of toponymic names, restoration and preservation of the historical names as the component part of historical and cultural heritage of the Republic of Kazakhstan;

Authorized body is the central executive body responsible for implementation of the uniform state policy in the field of languages development.

Article 2. Subject Regulated by this Law

The subject regulated by this Law is the public relations arising in connection with use of the languages in the activities of the governmental, non-governmental organizations and local government authorities.

This Law does not regulate use of the languages in the interpersonal attitudes and in **religious communities**.

Article 3. Legislation on Languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan

The legislation on languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan is based on the **Constitution** of the Republic of Kazakhstan and consists of this **Law**, other regulatory legal acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan relating to use and development of the languages.

The legislation on languages shall apply to the citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan, foreigners and stateless persons permanently residing in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Article 4. The State Language of the Republic of Kazakhstan

The state language of the Republic of Kazakhstan is Kazakh. The state language is the language of state management, legislation, legal proceedings and document management applied in all spheres of the public relations on the entire territory of the state.

The duty of every citizen of the Republic of Kazakhstan is to learn the state language, being the most important factor for consolidation of people of Kazakhstan.

The government, other state and local representative and executive bodies shall provide the utmost development of the state language in the Republic of Kazakhstan, consolidate the international reputation thereof, create all necessary organizational, material and technical conditions for free learning of the state language by all citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan; render assistance to the Kazakh diaspora in preservation and development of the native language.

Article 5. The Russian Language Use

The Russian language shall be officially used in the governmental organizations and local government authorities evenly with the Kazakh language.

*According to the **Resolution** of the Constitutional Council of RK as of May 8, 1997 № 10/2: "This constitutional provision shall be understood unambiguously that the governmental organizations and local government authorities shall equally and evenly use the Kazakh and the Russian languages regardless any circumstances".*

Article 6. State Care about the Languages

Every citizen of the Republic of Kazakhstan shall have the right to use the native language, for free selection of the language of communication, up-bringing, training and creation.

The state cares about creation of conditions for learning and development of the languages of the people of Kazakhstan.

In the places of compact living of the national groups the languages of such groups may be used for carrying out of any undertakings.

Article 7. Inadmissibility of the Languages Functioning Inhibition

In the Republic of Kazakhstan it is not allowed to infringe with the citizens rights on the grounds of language.

Any actions of the officials inhibiting functioning or study of the state and other languages represented in Kazakhstan shall entail the liability provided for by the **legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan**.

Chapter 2. LANGUAGE OF THE GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

Article 8. Use of Languages

The language of work and document management of the governmental bodies, organizations and local government authorities of the Republic of Kazakhstan is the state language, evenly with Kazakh the Russian language shall be applied.

Non-governmental organizations may use the state language and if required any other languages in their work.

Article 9. The Language of the State Bodies Acts

The acts of the state bodies shall be developed and adopted in the state language, providing that if necessary the development of such acts may be conducted in the Russian language and if possible with translation to other languages.

*Article 10 is amended according to the **Law** of RK as of 05.06.06 № 146-III*

Article 10. The Language of Documentation

Accounting, statistical, financial and technical documentation in the system of the governmental bodies, organizations of the Republic of Kazakhstan regardless the patterns of ownership shall be maintained in the state and Russian languages.

The participants of the regional financial center in Almaty shall be entitled to keep documentation in the state and (or) Russian and (or) English languages.

Article 11. The Language of Response to the Citizens' Applications

The Responses of the governmental and non-governmental organizations to the citizens' applications and other documents shall be provided either in the state language or in the language of application.

Article 12. The Language of the Armed Forces and Law-Enforcement Authorities

The Armed Forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan and in all types of military and militarized formations, in the organizations of state control and supervision, legal protection of citizens and the law-enforcement authorities shall provide functioning of both the state and Russian languages.

Article 13. The Language of Legal Proceedings

The legal proceedings in the Republic of Kazakhstan shall be conducted in the state language and if necessary, the Russian language or other languages may be used in the legal proceedings evenly with the state language.

Article 14. The Language of Administrative Offense Cases

The proceedings under the administrative offence cases shall be conducted in the state language and if necessary in other languages.

Article 15 is amended according to the Law of RK as of 05.06.06 № 146-III

Article 15. The Language of Transactions

All transactions of physical persons and legal entities in the Republic of Kazakhstan concluded in writing are stated in the state and Russian languages attached with translations to the other languages, if necessary.

See: Letter of the General prosecutor Office of RK as of May 16, 2003 № 1-20-8066-03 "Explanations on the Law in the order of Article 26 of the Law of RK "On the Prosecutor's Office"

The transactions with foreign physical persons and legal entities concluded in writing are stated in the state or any other language acceptable for the parties.

The participants of the regional financial center in Almaty shall be entitled to conclude transactions in the state and (or) Russian and (or) English languages.

Chapter 3. THE LANGUAGE IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, CULTURE AND MASS MEDIA

Article 16. The Language in the Field of Education

Creation of the children pre-school institutions functioning in the state language, and in the places of compact living of any national groups – in the languages of such groups is provided for in the Republic of Kazakhstan, .

The language of education and upbringing in the orphanages and institutions equated to them shall be determined by the local executive bodies taking into account the national composition of community thereof.

The Republic of Kazakhstan ensures getting secondary, secondary professional and higher education in the state, Russian and if necessary and possible in other languages. Both in the governmental and non-governmental educational institutions the state language and the Russian language are the compulsory school subjects and are included in the list of disciplines stated in the document confirming education.

Article 17. Language in the Field of Science and Culture

In the Republic of Kazakhstan in the field of science, including drawing-up and presentation of dissertations functioning of the state and Russian languages is ensured.

The cultural events shall be conducted in the state and if necessary in other languages.

Article 18. The Language of Press and Mass Media

The Republic of Kazakhstan ensures functioning of the state and other languages in the press and **mass media**.

In order to create the required language environment and full-scale functioning of the state language the volume of programs in the television and radio broadcasting channels regardless the pattern of ownership thereof, in the state language by times shall be not less than the aggregate volume of programs in other languages.

Chapter 4. LANGUAGE IN THE NAMES OF INHABITED LOCALITIES, PROPER NAMES, VISUAL INFORMATION

Article 19. Procedure of Use of Toponymic Names, Names of Organizations

The traditional, historically formed Kazakh names of the inhabited localities, streets, squares and other physical and geographical objects in other languages shall be reproduced according to the rules of transliteration.

Names of the state organizations, structural divisions thereof shall be provided in the state and Russian languages. The names of joint ventures and foreign organizations shall be provided with transliteration to the state and Russian languages.

*See the **Letter of the State Onomastics Commission under the Government of RK as of November 16, 2004 № 05.2-03/218**, the **Letter of the Ministry of Information of RK as of September 20, 2004 № 01-20/02.1-08-2095**.*

Article 20. Spelling of Personal Names, Patronymics and Surnames

Spelling of personal names, patronymics and surnames in the official documents must comply with the requirements set by the legislation and **regulatory legal acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan**.

Article 21. The Language of Requisites and Visual Information

The texts of seals and stamps of the state authorities shall contain their names in the state language.

The texts of seals and stamps of the organizations, regardless the pattern of ownership thereof shall be made in the state and Russian languages.

The letterheads, signboards, announcements, **advertisement**, price-lists, price tags, other visual information shall be stated in the state and Russian languages and if necessary in other languages.

Goods labels (tags) with special data, making, instructions for the goods manufactured in Kazakhstan must contain the **necessary information in the state and Russian languages**.

The goods labels (tags) bearing special information, marking, instructions for the goods of foreign manufacture shall be provided with translation into the state and Russian languages at the expense of the importing organizations.

All texts of visual information shall be placed in the following order: on the left or on the top – in the state language, on the right or on the bottom – in Russian, and shall be written in same size letters. As may be necessary the texts of visual information may be additionally translated into other languages. The size of font shall not exceed the requirements determined by the regulatory legal acts. Any verbal information, announcements, advertisement are provided in the state, Russian and if necessary in other languages.

Article 22. The Language of Postal and Telegraphic Sending

The postal and telegraphic sending within the Republic of Kazakhstan shall be made in the state or Russian languages, and beyond the Republic of Kazakhstan – in accordance with the established international rules.

Chapter 5. LEGAL PROTECTION OF THE LANGUAGES

*Article 23 is amended according to the **Law of RK as of 20.12.04 № 13-III (came into force from 01.01.2005) (see the old version)***

Article 23. State Protection of Languages

The state and other languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan are under the state protection.

The state bodies create the necessary **conditions** for functioning and development of these languages.

Development of the languages is ensured by the **State Program**, providing for the priority of the state language and staged **transfer of documents management to the Kazakh language**.

The list of professions, specialties and positions, for which the knowledge of the state language is necessary and according to the qualification requirements is determined by the laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan establishes the **terminological** and onomastics commission and if necessary any other structures.

*See the **Concept of the state terminological work in RK**.*

Article 24. Liability for Violation of the Legislation on Languages

The chief executive officers of the state bodies, organizations of any pattern of ownership and legal entities and physical persons guilty for violation of the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Refusal by any official to accept the applications of the citizens explained by lack of the state language knowledge, and any inhibition on use of the state language and other languages in the field of functioning thereof shall entail the liability provided for by the **legislation** of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

*Article 25 stated in the edition of the **Law of RK as of 20.12.04 № 13-III (came into force from 01.01.2005) (see the old version)***

Article 25. Competence of the Authorized Body

The Authorized Body shall:

- 1) provide implementation of the uniform state policy in the field of the languages development;
- 2) develop the program of functioning and development of the languages and other regulatory legal acts;
- 3) control compliance with the **legislation** of the Republic of Kazakhstan on languages in the central and local executive bodies of the regions (cities of the Republican importance, capitals);
- 4) give recommendations on elimination of violations of the requirements determined by the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan on languages, make proposals to the corresponding bodies on application of disciplinary punishment measures to the officials guilty in violation of the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan on languages;
- 5) organize information, methodical support of activities connected with implementation of the uniform state policy in the field of the languages development;
- 6) coordinate the activities of terminological and onomastic commissions.

*The law is supplemented with Article 25-1 according to the **Law of RK as of 20.12.04 № 13-III (from 01.01.2005)***

Article 25-1. Competence of Onomastics Commission

1. **The republican Onomastics Commission** is established by the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan for the purpose of:

- 1) submission of conclusions to the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan on naming and re-naming of the regions, districts and cities, and change of its name transcription;
- 2) submission of conclusions to the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on naming and re-naming of physical and geographical, toponymic, industrial and other objects included in the sphere of its competence.

2. The regional onomastics commission shall be established by the local executive bodies of the regions for preparation and submission of the following conclusions on naming and re-naming of:

- 1) auls (villages), settlements, aul (rural) districts and change of its names transcription;
- 2) physical and geographical, toponymic, industrial and other objects included in the sphere of competence of the local executive bodies of the region.

3. The city onomastics commissions are established by:

- 1) the local executive bodies of the city of the republican importance, capital for preparation and submission of the following conclusions on naming and re-naming of: the city districts, squares, avenues, boulevards, streets, lanes, parks, public gardens, bridges and other component parts of the city and change of its names transcription; physical and geographical, toponymic, industrial and other objects included in the field of competence of the local executive bodies of a city of republican importance or capital;
- 2) the local executive bodies of a city of the regional importance for preparation and submission of the following conclusions on naming and re-naming of: the city districts, squares, avenues, boulevards, streets, lanes, parks, public gardens, bridges and other component parts of the city and change of its names transcription.

The Law is supplemented with Article 25-2 according to the Law of RK as of 20.12.04 № 13-III (from 01.01.2005)

Article 25-2. Competence of the Local Executive Body of the Region (city of republican importance, capital)

The local executive body of the region (city of republican importance, capital) shall:

- 1) develop and approve the regional program of functioning and development of the languages and provide fulfillment thereof;
- 2) control compliance with the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan on languages, territorial division of central executive bodies and district executive bodies;
- 3) give recommendations on elimination of violation of the requirements determined by the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan on languages, submit proposals to the appropriate bodies on application of disciplinary punishment measures to the officials, guilty for violation of the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan on languages;
- 4) perform the set of measures of the regional importance aiming at development of the state and other languages;
- 5) ensure the activity of the regional (city of the republican importance, capital) onomastics commission.

The law is supplemented with Article 25-3 according to the Law of RK as of 20.12.04 № 13-III (from 01.01.2005)

Article 25-3. Competence of the Local Executive Body of the District (city of regional importance)

The local executive body of the district (city of regional importance) shall:

- 1) develop and provide fulfillment of the plan of measures for implementation of the regional program for functioning and development of the languages on the territory of a district (city of regional importance);
- 2) conduct the undertakings of regional level (city of regional importance) aiming at development of the state and other languages;
- 3) make proposals to the executive bodies of the regions on naming or re-naming of auls (villages), settlements, aul (rural) districts, and change transcription thereof.

Article 26. Excluded according to the Law of RK as of 20.12.04 № 13-III (*came into force from 01.01.2005*) (see the old version)

Chapter 6. USE OF LANGUAGES IN RELATIONS WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Article 27. Language in the International Activities

The activities of the diplomatic representations of the Republic of Kazakhstan and representative offices of the Republic of Kazakhstan under the international organizations shall be conducted in the state language using, if necessary, any other languages.

Bilateral international contracts shall be concluded as a rule in the state languages of the contracting parties, multilateral contracts shall be concluded in the languages determined by agreement of the contract parties.

The official receptions and other events with the representatives of other states in the Republic of Kazakhstan shall be conducted in the state language subject to interpretation to the other languages.

**President of the
Republic of Kazakhstan
N. NAZARBAYEV**