

Ina Druviete (University of Latvia)
Jānis Valdmanis (Latvian Language Agency)

The role of national language policy institutions in implementation of *Law on Official State Language* in Latvia

The Republic of Latvia embodies the “language as heart and core” approach both in official language policy and in public opinion. There are obvious historical, geopolitical, and psychological reasons for it. Since the restoration of independence in 1991 the well-coordinated system of official language policy institutions has been created in order to cover legal, educational and linguistic issues for language maintenance. The development of linguistic legislation and the establishment of responsible bodies had been grounded in serious sociolinguistic research. Though many institutions of the state (as ministries, universities etc.) are indirectly involved in language issues and policies, there is a marked hierarchy of responsible bodies.

The Official State Language Commission (*president.lv*) under the aegis of the President of the State identifies strategic directions for language policy and supervises the implementation of the State Language Policy Programme (2015-2020). The Commission’s members are experts in various areas of linguistics, the world of culture, science, and education, as well as other members of the society.

In 1992 Amendments and Additions to the LSSR Language Law (1989) were passed, reflecting the changes in the status of the state of Latvia and the legal hierarchy of the languages. **The State Language Centre** (*vvc.gov.lv*) under the Ministry of Justice had been established in order to ensure the implementation of the Law and to develop terminology and translation of the EU documents. The Centre includes *Latvian Language Expert Commission* in order to develop norms for Standard Latvian and to advance its development, as well as the *Commission for Toponyms* for maintenance of historical place names.

The Latvian Language Agency (*valoda.lv*) under the Ministry of Education and Science; enhances the status and promotes the sustainability of Latvian by conducting research on the sociolinguistic processes in Latvia and providing support for the development and acquisition of Latvian in Latvia and abroad.

Research on Latvian takes place in higher education institutions. The main research institution is **the University of Latvia Latvian Language Institute** (*lulavi.lv*). **Terminology Commission** (*termini.lza.lv*) under the Latvian Academy of Sciences is in charge of terminology issues. Progress of Latvian in the new technologies is ensured both by state institutions and private companies, as **Tilde** (*tilde.lv*).

Right and consistent language policy exercised by the state and its institutions is of huge importance for a language of limited diffusion in conditions of strong competition with larger and economically stronger languages. The presentation will deal with both sociolinguistic and political aspects of activities of language policy institutions in a complex language situation in Latvia.