

Official Languages Act

2012 Cap 1

Made 1 December 2012
Coming into force 31 December 2012

This is a verified English version. According to the *Government Instruments Act 2009 Cap 14*, verified version of an act or a statutory instrument should be gazetted in the *Central Government Gazette* promptly.

According to this Act, English version is the sole authoritative version of all acts and statutory instruments. In the event of discrepancy and inconsistency, the English version of this Act prevails.

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BE IT ENACTED by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

Part I

Preliminary

0. Preliminary

- (1) This *Official Languages Act* can be cited as the *OLA*.
- (2) This Act is enacted, in order to —
 - a) promote the concept of equal status among different ethnic groups and people of different language regions,
 - b) simplify the sophisticated situation and confusion of the use of different official languages, and to
 - c) preserve the unity by means of regulating the use of official languages nationwide.
- (3) In this Act, —
 - a) ***concept of equal status among different ethnic groups*** means the equality of races and ethnic groups. *[cf. 2017 Cap 0 A. 1]*
 - b) ***freedom*** means the citizens' freedom to use their desired official language. *[cf. 2018 Cap 18 A. 2]*
 - c) ***designation of government agency*** indicates that government agency in charge of languages affairs and related particular issue shall be designated by the Cabinet in accordance with laws. *[cf. 2017 Cap 0 A. 34]*
 - d) ***nationwide road transport*** represents motorways.
 - e) ***commencing date*** means the date that this Act coming into force.
- (4) Right to interpret this Act shall fall on the Supreme Court, and the right to amend this Act shall be resulted by a parliamentary resolution. *[cf. 2017 Cap 0 A. 27/P. VI]*
- (5) Commencing date shall be the date when Royal Assent of this Act is signed.

Part II

Official languages and their use

1. Official languages

- (1) Official languages of the Kingdom shall be English, French and Chinese.
- (2) The Government is responsible to promote the equal and normative use of official languages by all individuals and organisation.

2. National authorities

- (1) Working language of national authorities, regardless of sector, shall be English solely.
- (2) All official instruments shall be drafted in English initially.
- (3) Other languages are permitted to be used in special situations including —
 - a) related to local administrative issues,
 - b) instruments directed at any particular ethnic group or regional or county authorities,
 - c) instruments directed at any countries which use other Rabian official languages as theirs, and
 - d) other circumstances regulated by law or executive orders.

3. Local authorities

- (1) Local authorities shall appoint own working languages at their disposal regarding specific circumstances in accordance with law and local ordinances.
- (2) Regulations regarding use of official languages shall be enacted by the local legislature.
[cf. 2017 Cap 0 A. 48]

4. Transport

- (1) Signage of nationwide road transport shall be English solely in order to achieve the convenience of all users with different language-using abilities.
- (2) English is a compulsory language at display in signages in nationwide railway and aviation facilities.
- (3) Use of languages in signages of expressways, highways and ordinary roads shall be regulated by local legislations in accordance with law.

5. Education

- (1) It is compulsory for Rabian citizens to master English as a first or second language, as it is also a obligation for educational organisations to observe.
- (2) To learn and master other official languages besides English is recommended, thereupon the Government with this purpose, shall —
 - a) provide financial support, and to
 - b) enact legislations and regulations dedicated to this promotion.

6. Interregional communications

- (1) Whereas interregional communications and co-operations are required in various fields, and to achieve convenience in related activities, English shall be used in aforementioned occasions.

Part III

Designation of government agency in charge and its responsibilities

7. Designation and responsibilities

- (1) Government agency in charge of language affairs shall be the Official Languages Directorate, and it is its responsibilities to —
 - a) co-operate with other governmental authorities,
 - b) supervise the enforcement of this Act, and to
 - c) perform the governmental obligations in aforementioned clauses.