The official language of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic shall be Estonian. In Estonia, the ancient territory of the Estonians, the State shall accord special care and protection to the Estonian language. Through the institution of Estonian as the official language, a firm foundation has been laid for the preservation and development of the Estonian people and its culture.

In the Estonian SSR every individual as well as every institution, enterprise, and organization shall be guaranteed the right to use Estonian in both speech and writing.

The Estonian SSR shall guarantee the teaching of and research in the Estonian language in Estonia, as well as promote the teaching of and research in the Estonian language outside Estonia.

In its treatment of the Russian language, the present Law proceeds from the needs of all-Union communication, as well as from the fact that after Estonian it is the most frequently-used native language in the Estonian SSR.

The status of Estonian as the official language shall not infringe upon the civil rights of those persons, whatever their mother tongue may be. In according State protection to the Estonian language, the Estonian SSR acknowledges the inalienable right of the citizens of all other nationalities to use their native language and culture, as well as the equality of all citizens before the law irrespective of their native language.

Article 1. In accordance with Article 5 of the Constitution of the Estonian SSR, the official language of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic shall be Estonian.

The use of the official language of the Estonian SSR, that of Russian, and other languages shall be regulated by the present Law.

THE INDIVIDUAL

Article 2. On the territory of the Estonian SSR, an individual has the right to communicate and conduct his or her affairs in the Estonian language in all institutions of State power and authority, as well as in other institutions, enterprises, and organizations.

* Translation revised by William B. Simons, Documentation Office for East European Law, Leiden University Faculty of Law
The above provisions shall likewise apply to those institutions of State power and authority as well as institutions, enterprises, and organizations that use other languages in conducting their business.

**Article 3.** An individual shall likewise be guaranteed the possibility of conducting his or her affairs in Russian in the institutions of State power and authority of the Estonian SSR, as well as in institutions, enterprises, and organizations of the Estonian SSR.

Business with an individual shall be conducted in other languages in accordance with the possibilities as well as the goals of such activity.

**Article 4.** Requirements as regards fluency in languages shall be established for persons whose job requires communication with individuals, *i.e.*, for all executives and administrators, the staff of institutions of State power and authority, social organizations, the judicial system, law enforcement and supervision agencies, medical personnel, journalists, employees in the area of services, trade, and communications, the personnel of accident and rescue services, etc. Fluency in and the use of Estonian, Russian, and other languages shall be obligatory within the limits of the requirements set forth in Article 37 of the present Law.

**Article 5.** In communication with their subordinates, executives and administrators shall use the language chosen by the former, although they are not required to exceed the required limits of language fluency.

**Article 6.** In the area of services and trade, those performing such functions shall be obliged within the required limits of language fluency, to use the language chosen by the customer.

**Article 7.** The inhibition or disparagement of an individual's choice of language shall be forbidden and shall be punished in cases provided for by legislation.

**INSTITUTIONS OF STATE POWER AND AUTHORITY**

**Article 8.** The official language in the institutions of State power and authority of the Estonian SSR shall be Estonian. The sessions and meetings of the institutions of State power and authority of the Estonian SSR shall be conducted and the minutes kept in Estonian.

The official documents of the bodies State authority and government of the Estonian SSR shall be adopted and published in Estonian and in a Russian translation.

Russian may be used as the official language in local institutions of State power and authority in accordance with Article 36 of the present Law.