

## PRELIMINARY CHAPTER

### **General Principles**

#### **Article 1**

##### *The object of this Act*

1. The object of this Act is to develop article 3 of the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia, in order to protect, promote and normalise the use of Catalan in all fields, and the use of Aranese in the Aran valley, and to guarantee the normal and official use of Catalan and Castilian.
2. The main aims of this Act are:
  - a) To protect and promote the use of Catalan by all citizens.
  - b) To provide effectiveness in the use of Catalan and Castilian, without any citizens being discriminated against.
  - c) To promote the normal use of Catalan in administration, education, mass media, cultural industries and in the socio-economic world.
  - d) To ensure that proficiency in Catalan spreads to all citizens.
3. A further aim of this Act is to reach equality regarding the linguistic rights and duties of citizens, promoting whatever actions are needed and removing the obstacles that at present make this difficult.

#### **Article 2**

##### *Catalonia's own language*

1. Catalan is Catalonia's own language and distinguishes it as a people.
2. Catalan, as Catalonia's own language, is:
  - a) The language of all institutions of Catalonia, and particularly of the Administration of the Generalitat, local authorities, and public corporations, companies and public services, institutional media, education and place names.
  - b) The language preferentially used by the State Administration in Catalonia in the manner that it lays down, by the other institutions and, generally, by companies and entities offering services to the public.
3. That set forth in para 2 implies a special commitment by the institutions to promote the knowledge and use among citizens, without detriment to the official nature of Catalan and Castilian.

#### **Article 3**

##### *Official languages*

1. Catalan is the official language of Catalonia, as is Castilian as well.
2. Catalan and Castilian, as official languages, may be used indiscriminately by citizens in all private and public activities without exception. Legal procedures carried out in either of the two official languages have, as far as the language used is concerned, full validity and effect.

#### **Article 4**

##### *Linguistic rights*

1. In accordance with article 3 of the Statute of Autonomy, and within the context of an active policy by the Generalitat to create a situation which allows linguistic rights and duties to reach full equality, everyone in Catalonia is entitled:
  - a) To be proficient in both official languages.
  - b) To express themselves in either of the two official languages, verbally or in writing, in their relations as well as in private and public procedures.
  - c) To be served in either of the two official languages in the manner laid down by this Act.
  - d) To freely use either of the two official languages in all fields.
  - e) Not to be discriminated against on account of the official language they use.

2. Everyone may address the courts and tribunals in order to obtain legal protection for the right to use their language.
3. Everyone may address the Generalitat and the *Síndic de Greuges*<sup>5</sup> requesting that, within the scope of their authority, they act in order to guarantee linguistic rights in a specific manner.

#### **Article 5.**

##### *The guiding principles of the policy of the Generalitat*

1. The Generalitat shall guarantee the linguistic rights of citizens, the normal and official use of Catalan and Castilian, the teaching of both languages to the whole population, the linguistic ability and capacity of staff in service of the Authorities and full equality of citizens regarding their linguistic rights and duties, in all fields.
2. The Generalitat shall take steps to safeguard, protect and promote the use of Catalan in all fields, by adopting the required measures and providing adequate resources.

#### **Article 6**

##### *Unity of the Catalan language*

1. The Catalan language is a heritage that is shared with other territories forming the same linguistic community. The Generalitat shall ensure the protection of the unity of Catalan and shall promote the use and dissemination of Catalan abroad and communication between different Catalan-speaking areas.
2. Pursuant to legislation in force, the *Institut d'Estudis Catalans*<sup>6</sup> is responsible for linguistic authority.

#### **Article 7**

##### *Acknowledgement and Protection of Aranese*

Aranese, the Aran valley's own variety of the Occitan language, is governed, as regards its use, by Act No. 16 of 13th July 1990, concerning the special treatment in the Aran valley, and, additionally, by the provisions of this Act, which are never to be interpreted in such a way as to limit the use of Aranese.

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<sup>5</sup> An Ombudsman appointed by the Parliament of Catalonia to defend fundamental rights and public liberties.

<sup>6</sup> Institute of Catalan Studies, higher scientific institution one of whose roles is to act as the Academy of the Catalan language.