

**THE EUROPEAN CHARTER
FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES¹**

– Applied to Lower Sorbian in Germany (*Land Brandenburg*) –

[...]

PART II

**OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES
PURSUED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 2, PARAGRAPH 1**

Article 7 – Objectives and principles

- 1 In respect of Lower Sorbian, within the territories in which Lower Sorbian is used and according to the situation of Lower Sorbian, Germany (*Land Brandenburg*) shall base its policies, legislation and practice on the following objectives and principles:
 - a the recognition of Lower Sorbian as an expression of cultural wealth;
 - b the respect of the geographical area of Lower Sorbian in order to ensure that existing or new administrative divisions do not constitute an obstacle to the promotion of Lower Sorbian;
 - c the need for resolute action to promote Lower Sorbian in order to safeguard it;
 - d the facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of Lower Sorbian, in speech and writing, in public and private life;
 - e the maintenance and development of links, in the fields covered by this Charter, between groups using Lower Sorbian and other groups in the State employing a language used in identical or similar form, as well as the establishment of cultural relations with other groups in the State using different languages;
 - f the provision of appropriate forms and means for the teaching and study of Lower Sorbian at all appropriate stages;
 - g the provision of facilities enabling non-speakers of Lower Sorbian living in the area where it is used to learn it if they so desire;
 - h the promotion of study and research on Lower Sorbian at universities or equivalent institutions;
 - i the promotion of appropriate types of transnational exchanges, in the fields covered by this Charter, for Lower Sorbian used in identical or similar form in two or more States.
- 2 Germany (*Land Brandenburg*) undertakes to eliminate, if it has not yet done so, any unjustified distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference relating to the use of Lower Sorbian and intended to discourage or endanger the maintenance or development of it. The adoption of special measures in favour of Lower Sorbian aimed at promoting equality between the users of Lower Sorbian and the rest of the population or which take due account of their specific conditions is not considered to be an act of discrimination against the users of more widely-used languages.
- 3 Germany (*Land Brandenburg*) undertakes to promote, by appropriate measures, mutual understanding between all the linguistic groups of the country and in particular the inclusion of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to Lower Sorbian among the objectives of education and training provided within the country and encouragement of the mass media to pursue the same objective.
- 4 In determining its policy with regard to Lower Sorbian, Germany (*Land Brandenburg*) shall take into consideration the needs and wishes expressed by the groups which use Lower Sorbian. It is encouraged to establish bodies, if necessary, for the purpose of advising the authorities on all matters pertaining to Lower Sorbian.

[...]

¹ CETS no. 148. The Charter was adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on 5 November 1992. Entry into force for Germany (*Land Brandenburg*): 1 January 1999. The provisions of the Charter adopted by Germany (*Land Brandenburg*) for Lower Sorbian are applicable in Brandenburg.

PART III
MEASURES TO PROMOTE THE USE OF
Lower Sorbian
IN PUBLIC LIFE
IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE UNDERTAKINGS
ENTERED INTO UNDER ARTICLE 2, PARAGRAPH 2

Article 8 – Education

ACCEPTED	NOT ACCEPTED
<p>1 With regard to education, Germany (<i>Land</i> Brandenburg) undertakes, within the territory in which Lower Sorbian is used, according to the situation of Lower Sorbian, and without prejudice to the teaching of the official language(s) of the State:</p> <p>a iv if the public authorities have no direct competence in the field of pre-school education, to favour and/or encourage the application of the measures referred to under i to iii above;</p> <p>b iv to apply one of the measures provided for under i to iii above at least to those pupils whose families so request and whose number is considered sufficient;</p>	<p>a i to make available pre-school education in Lower Sorbian; or ii to make available a substantial part of pre-school education in Lower Sorbian; or iii to apply one of the measures provided for under i and ii above at least to those pupils whose families so request and whose number is considered sufficient; or</p> <p>b i to make available primary education in Lower Sorbian; or ii to make available a substantial part of primary education in Lower Sorbian; or iii to provide, within primary education, for the teaching of Lower Sorbian as an integral part of the curriculum; or</p> <p>c i to make available secondary education in Lower Sorbian; or ii to make available a substantial part of secondary education in Lower Sorbian; or iii to provide, within secondary education, for the teaching of Lower Sorbian as an integral part of the curriculum; or</p>

ACCEPTED

- c iv to apply one of the measures provided for under i to iii above at least to those pupils who, or where appropriate whose families, so wish in a number considered sufficient;

- e iii if, by reason of the role of the State in relation to higher education institutions, sub-paragraphs i and ii cannot be applied, to encourage and/or allow the provision of university or other forms of higher education in Lower Sorbian or of facilities for the study of Lower Sorbian as university or higher education subjects;

- f iii if the public authorities have no direct competence in the field of adult education, to favour and/or encourage the offering of Lower Sorbian as subjects of adult and continuing education;
- g to make arrangements to ensure the teaching of the history and the culture which is reflected by Lower Sorbian;
- h to provide the basic and further training of the teachers required to implement those of paragraphs a to g accepted by Germany (*Land Brandenburg*);
- i to set up a supervisory body or bodies responsible for monitoring the measures taken and progress achieved in establishing or developing the teaching of Lower Sorbian and for drawing up periodic reports of their findings, which will be made public.

NOT ACCEPTED

- d i to make available technical and vocational education in Lower Sorbian; or
- ii to make available a substantial part of technical and vocational education in Lower Sorbian; or
- iii to provide, within technical and vocational education, for the teaching of Lower Sorbian as an integral part of the curriculum; or
- iv to apply one of the measures provided for under i to iii above at least to those pupils who, or where appropriate whose families, so wish in a number considered sufficient;
- e i to make available university and other higher education in Lower Sorbian; or
- ii to provide facilities for the study of Lower Sorbian as university and higher education subjects; or

- f i to arrange for the provision of adult and continuing education courses which are taught mainly or wholly in Lower Sorbian; or
- ii to offer Lower Sorbian as subjects of adult and continuing education; or

ACCEPTED

NOT ACCEPTED

- 2 With regard to education and in respect of territories other than those in which Lower Sorbian is traditionally used, Germany (*Land Brandenburg*) undertakes, if the number of users of Lower Sorbian justifies it, to allow, encourage or provide teaching in or of Lower Sorbian at all the appropriate stages of education.

Article 9 – Judicial authorities

ACCEPTED

NOT ACCEPTED

- 1 Germany (*Land Brandenburg*) undertakes, in respect of those judicial districts in which the number of residents using Lower Sorbian justifies the measures specified below, according to the situation of Lower Sorbian and on condition that the use of the facilities afforded by the present paragraph is not considered by the judge to hamper the proper administration of justice:
- a in criminal proceedings:
 - ii to guarantee the accused the right to use Lower Sorbian; and/or
 - iii to provide that requests and evidence, whether written or oral, shall not be considered inadmissible solely because they are formulated in Lower Sorbian; and/or

if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations involving no extra expense for the persons concerned;

 - b in civil proceedings:
 - iii to allow documents and evidence to be produced in Lower Sorbian, if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations;
 - c in proceedings before courts concerning administrative matters:

- a i to provide that the courts, at the request of one of the parties, shall conduct the proceedings in Lower Sorbian; and/or
- iv to produce, on request, documents connected with legal proceedings in Lower Sorbian,
- b i to provide that the courts, at the request of one of the parties, shall conduct the proceedings in Lower Sorbian; and/or
- ii to allow, whenever a litigant has to appear in person before a court, that he or she may use Lower Sorbian without thereby incurring additional expense; and/or
- c i to provide that the courts, at the request of one of the parties, shall conduct the proceedings in Lower Sorbian; and/or

ACCEPTED

NOT ACCEPTED

- iii to allow documents and evidence to be produced in Lower Sorbian,
if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations;
- 2 Germany (*Land* Brandenburg) undertakes:
 - a not to deny the validity of legal documents drawn up within the State solely because they are drafted in Lower Sorbian; or

- ii to allow, whenever a litigant has to appear in person before a court, that he or she may use Lower Sorbian without thereby incurring additional expense; and/or
- d to take steps to ensure that the application of sub-paragraphs i and iii of paragraphs b and c above and any necessary use of interpreters and translations does not involve extra expense for the persons concerned.
- b not to deny the validity, as between the parties, of legal documents drawn up within the country solely because they are drafted in Lower Sorbian, and to provide that they can be invoked against interested third parties who are not users of Lower Sorbian on condition that the contents of the document are made known to them by the person(s) who invoke(s) it; or
- c not to deny the validity, as between the parties, of legal documents drawn up within the country solely because they are drafted in Lower Sorbian.
- 3 Germany (*Land* Brandenburg) undertakes to make available in Lower Sorbian the most important national statutory texts and those relating particularly to users of Lower Sorbian, unless they are otherwise provided.

Article 10 – Administrative authorities and public services

ACCEPTED

NOT ACCEPTED

- 1 Within the administrative districts of the State in which the number of residents who are users of Lower Sorbian justifies the measures specified below and according to the situation of Lower Sorbian, Germany (*Land* Brandenburg) undertakes, as far as this is reasonably possible:

- a
 - i to ensure that the administrative authorities use Lower Sorbian;
or
 - ii to ensure that such of its officers as are in contact with the public use Lower Sorbian in their relations with persons applying to them in Lower Sorbian; or
 - iii to ensure that users of Lower Sorbian may submit oral or written applications and receive a reply in Lower Sorbian; or

ACCEPTED

NOT ACCEPTED

- a
 - iv to ensure that users of Lower Sorbian may submit oral or written applications in Lower Sorbian; or
 - v to ensure that users of Lower Sorbian may validly submit a document in Lower Sorbian;

- 2 In respect of the local and regional authorities on whose territory the number of residents who are users of Lower Sorbian is such as to justify the measures specified below, Germany (*Land Brandenburg*) undertakes to allow and/or encourage:
 - b the possibility for users of Lower Sorbian to submit oral or written applications in Lower Sorbian;

 - g the use or adoption, if necessary in conjunction with the name in the official language(s), of traditional and correct forms of place-names in Lower Sorbian.

- 3 With regard to public services provided by the administrative authorities or other persons acting on their behalf, Germany (*Land Brandenburg*) undertakes, within the territory in which Lower Sorbian is used, in accordance with the situation of Lower Sorbian and as far as this is reasonably possible:
 - b to allow users of Lower Sorbian to submit a request and receive a reply in Lower Sorbian; or
 - c to allow users of Lower Sorbian to submit a request in Lower Sorbian.

- 4 With a view to putting into effect those provisions of paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 accepted by them, Germany (*Land Brandenburg*) undertakes to take one or more of the following measures:

- b to make available widely used administrative texts and forms for the population in Lower Sorbian or in bilingual versions;
- c to allow the administrative authorities to draft documents in Lower Sorbian.

- a the use of Lower Sorbian within the framework of the regional or local authority;

- c the publication by regional authorities of their official documents also in Lower Sorbian;
- d the publication by local authorities of their official documents also in Lower Sorbian;
- e the use by regional authorities of Lower Sorbian in debates in their assemblies, without excluding, however, the use of the official language(s) of the State;
- f the use by local authorities of Lower Sorbian in debates in their assemblies, without excluding, however, the use of the official language(s) of the State;

- a to ensure that Lower Sorbian is used in the provision of the service; or

ACCEPTED

- a translation or interpretation as may be required;
- c compliance as far as possible with requests from public service employees having a knowledge of Lower Sorbian to be appointed in the territory in which Lower Sorbian is used.
- 5 Germany (*Land* Brandenburg) undertakes to allow the use or adoption of family names in Lower Sorbian, at the request of those concerned.

NOT ACCEPTED

- b recruitment and, where necessary, training of the officials and other public service employees required;

Article 11 – Media

ACCEPTED

- 1 Germany (*Land* Brandenburg) undertakes, for the users of Lower Sorbian within the territories in which Lower Sorbian is spoken, according to the situation of Lower Sorbian, to the extent that the public authorities, directly or indirectly, are competent, have power or play a role in this field, and respecting the principle of the independence and autonomy of the media:
 - b ii to encourage and/or facilitate the broadcasting of radio programmes in Lower Sorbian on a regular basis;
 - c ii to encourage and/or facilitate the broadcasting of television programmes in Lower Sorbian on a regular basis;
 - d to encourage and/or facilitate the production and distribution of audio and audiovisual works in Lower Sorbian;
 - e i to encourage and/or facilitate the creation and/or maintenance of at least one newspaper in Lower Sorbian; or

NOT ACCEPTED

- a to the extent that radio and television carry out a public service mission:
 - i to ensure the creation of at least one radio station and one television channel in Lower Sorbian; or
 - ii to encourage and/or facilitate the creation of at least one radio station and one television channel in Lower Sorbian; or
 - iii to make adequate provision so that broadcasters offer programmes in Lower Sorbian;
- b i to encourage and/or facilitate the creation of at least one radio station in Lower Sorbian; or
- c i to encourage and/or facilitate the creation of at least one television channel in Lower Sorbian; or
- e ii to encourage and/or facilitate the publication of newspaper articles in Lower Sorbian on a regular basis;

ACCEPTED

NOT ACCEPTED

- 2 Germany (*Land Brandenburg*) undertakes to guarantee freedom of direct reception of radio and television broadcasts from neighbouring countries in a language used in identical or similar form to Lower Sorbian, and not to oppose the retransmission of radio and television broadcasts from neighbouring countries in such a language. It further undertakes to ensure that no restrictions will be placed on the freedom of expression and free circulation of information in the written press in a language used in identical or similar form to Lower Sorbian. The exercise of the above-mentioned freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.

- f i to cover the additional costs of those media which use Lower Sorbian, wherever the law provides for financial assistance in general for the media; or
ii to apply existing measures for financial assistance also to audiovisual productions in Lower Sorbian;
g to support the training of journalists and other staff for media using Lower Sorbian.

- 3 Germany (*Land Brandenburg*) undertakes to ensure that the interests of the users of Lower Sorbian are represented or taken into account within such bodies as may be established in accordance with the law with responsibility for guaranteeing the freedom and pluralism of the media.

Article 12 – Cultural activities and facilities

ACCEPTED

NOT ACCEPTED

- 1 With regard to cultural activities and facilities – especially libraries, video libraries, cultural centres, museums, archives, academies, theatres and cinemas, as well as literary work and film production, vernacular forms of cultural expression, festivals and the culture industries, including inter alia the use of new technologies – Germany (*Land Brandenburg*) undertakes, within the territory in which Lower Sorbian is used and to the extent that the public authorities are competent, have power or play a role in this field:

ACCEPTED

NOT ACCEPTED

- a to encourage types of expression and initiative specific to Lower Sorbian and foster the different means of access to works produced in Lower Sorbian;
 - b to foster the different means of access in other languages to works produced in Lower Sorbian by aiding and developing translation, dubbing, post-synchronisation and subtitling activities;
 - c to foster access in Lower Sorbian to works produced in other languages by aiding and developing translation, dubbing, post-synchronisation and subtitling activities;
 - d to ensure that the bodies responsible for organising or supporting cultural activities of various kinds make appropriate allowance for incorporating the knowledge and use of the Lower Sorbian language and culture in the undertakings which they initiate or for which they provide backing;
 - e to promote measures to ensure that the bodies responsible for organising or supporting cultural activities have at their disposal staff who have a full command of Lower Sorbian, as well as of the language(s) of the rest of the population;
 - f to encourage direct participation by representatives of the users of Lower Sorbian in providing facilities and planning cultural activities;
 - g to encourage and/or facilitate the creation of a body or bodies responsible for collecting, keeping a copy of and presenting or publishing works produced in Lower Sorbian;
 - h if necessary, to create and/or promote and finance translation and terminological research services, particularly with a view to maintaining and developing appropriate administrative, commercial, economic, social, technical or legal terminology in Lower Sorbian.
- 2 In respect of territories other than those in which Lower Sorbian is traditionally used, Germany (*Land* Brandenburg) undertakes, if the number of users of Lower Sorbian justifies it, to allow, encourage and/or provide appropriate cultural activities and facilities in accordance with the preceding paragraph.
 - 3 Germany (*Land* Brandenburg) undertakes to make appropriate provision, in pursuing its cultural policy abroad, for Lower Sorbian and the culture it reflects.

Article 13 – Economic and social life

ACCEPTED

NOT ACCEPTED

- 1 With regard to economic and social activities, Germany (*Land Brandenburg*) undertakes, within the whole country:
 - a to eliminate from its legislation any provision prohibiting or limiting without justifiable reasons the use of Lower Sorbian in documents relating to economic or social life, particularly contracts of employment, and in technical documents such as instructions for the use of products or installations;
 - c to oppose practices designed to discourage the use of Lower Sorbian in connection with economic or social activities;
 - d to facilitate and/or encourage the use of Lower Sorbian by means other than those specified in the above sub-paragraphs.

- b to prohibit the insertion in internal regulations of companies and private documents of any clauses excluding or restricting the use of Lower Sorbian, at least between users of Lower Sorbian;
- 2 With regard to economic and social activities, Germany (*Land Brandenburg*) undertakes, in so far as the public authorities are competent, within the territory in which Lower Sorbian is used, and as far as this is reasonably possible:
 - a to include in its financial and banking regulations provisions which allow, by means of procedures compatible with commercial practice, the use of Lower Sorbian in drawing up payment orders (cheques, drafts, etc.) or other financial documents, or, where appropriate, to ensure the implementation of such provisions;
 - b in the economic and social sectors directly under its control (public sector), to organise activities to promote the use of Lower Sorbian;
 - c to ensure that social care facilities such as hospitals, retirement homes and hostels offer the possibility of receiving and treating in Lower Sorbian persons using Lower Sorbian who are in need of care on grounds of ill-health, old age or for other reasons;
 - d to ensure by appropriate means that safety instructions are also drawn up in Lower Sorbian;
 - e to arrange for information provided by the competent public authorities concerning the rights of consumers to be made available in Lower Sorbian.

Article 14 – Transfrontier exchanges

ACCEPTED

NOT ACCEPTED

Germany (*Land* Brandenburg) undertakes:

- a to apply existing bilateral and multilateral agreements which bind them with the States in which Lower Sorbian is used in identical or similar form, or if necessary to seek to conclude such agreements, in such a way as to foster contacts between the users of Lower Sorbian in the States concerned in the fields of culture, education, information, vocational training and permanent education;
- b for the benefit of Lower Sorbian, to facilitate and/or promote co-operation across borders, in particular between regional or local authorities in whose territory Lower Sorbian is used in identical or similar form.

[...]