



Brussels 20/09/2019

**The State Council of the Udmurt Republic,
Izhevsk, 426074, Udmurt Republic.**

Dear Mr Alexei Prasolov, Chairman of the State Council of the Udmurt Republic,

Re. The death of Udmurt activist Dr. Albert Razin and Udmurt language protection and promotion

On behalf of the European Language Equality Network (ELEN), the European NGO for the protection and promotion of lesser-used languages, we are writing to you to express our shock over the death of Dr. Albert Razin who died after protesting against amendments to the Federal Law on Education which will make the teaching of Udmurt in the Udmurt Republic non-mandatory. As a consequence, and in support of Dr Razin's campaign, we are writing to support Udmurt language activists in their call for new measures that will help to protect and promote Udmurt and all the indigenous languages in the Russian Federation.

In ELEN's view, and considering that Russia is also participating in UNESCO's International Year for Indigenous Languages, Russia's linguistic and cultural diversity is one of its strengths and is there to be celebrated and not undermined.

After consulting with Udmurt experts and following examples of best practice in lesser-used language revitalization from across Europe, ELEN supports the call for the following measures be put into place so as to support Udmurt language revitalization, including:

- Introduce Udmurt-medium education at the primary level in Udmurt-speaking areas. Currently there is no Udmurt-medium education in the Udmurt Republic at any level despite indigenous language medium education being one of the most effective measures to develop the language;

- Open more Udmurt language classes in Izhevsk in the regular school programme covering not less than 40% of the schools;
- Open Udmurt language classes in other cities in the Republic;
- Open polylingual schools in Izhevsk (c.f. the polylingual schools in North Ossetia and Tatarstan);
- Open more Udmurt language kindergartens in Izhevsk and other cities;
- Open more Udmurt language classes at the schools of the district capitals such as Mozhga, Igra, Balezino, Zavyalovo;
- Develop a language plan for Udmurt promotion and usage in public life and in state-run organizations;
- Establish a publicity campaign calling for the equality of languages, the respect for Udmurt language and the importance of protecting it;
- Introduce bilingual signage for place-names and on road signs;
- Provide institutional support and state funding for the creation of IT infrastructure for the Udmurt language (applications, e-dictionaries, online courses and so on);
- Provide support for Udmurt language media. At the moment local radio has only 3 hours of Udmurt language broadcasting and the local TV station "Moya Udmurtiya" (My Udmurt Republic) only broadcasts for 2 hours per day at the most;
- Develop a comprehensive language plan, with financing, covering all sociolinguistic domains for the long-term development of the language.

In terms of all the indigenous languages of Russia, ELEN supports:

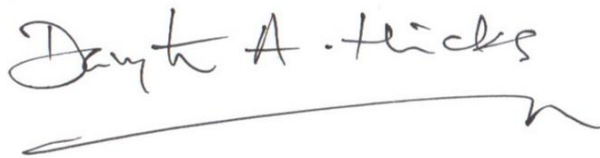
- Making amendments to the Federal Law on Education making the study of the State languages of Autonomous Republics obligatory in their schools;

- Including the State languages of the Autonomous Republics in the mandatory part of the Federal educational standard;
- Making amendments to Federal standards to include the permission to have indigenous language medium education at 10th and 11th grades;
- Introducing the option to take the national annual examinations in indigenous languages;
- Introducing the option to pass final university graduation exams in indigenous languages;
- Ratifying the Council of Europe's Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) so as to give indigenous language protection and development some oversight from the Council of Europe.
- Noting that it is already obligatory to study Russian at every school in the Russian Federation, therefore we see little need to have Russian included on the list of indigenous languages that may be chosen.

ELEN gathers a huge amount of expertise from across Europe in lesser-used language protection and development and would be able to work with the Udmurt Republic, and other Republics with indigenous languages, in developing effective measures and best practices to protect and develop the Udmurt language - as well as Russia's other indigenous languages.

We look forward to your reply.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Davyth A. Hicks". The signature is written in a cursive style and is followed by a long, horizontal flourish line.

Davyth Hicks, ELEN Secretary-General