

**The Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO
Russian Committee of Information for All UNESCO Program**

**Report
by the Russian Federation to the General Conference
on
Measures Taken to Implement
The Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism
and Universal Access to Cyberspace**

**Moscow
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The Recommendation Concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace is a well known document in Russia. The Russian Committee of “Information for All” UNESCO Program published this document twice in Russian within the collection of UNESCO materials in 3,000 copies and distributed it to Russia’s major public and scientific libraries. The Recommendation was discussed several times at the representative conferences dedicated to various issues of information society, and was also placed on the website of the Russian Committee of “Information for All” UNESCO Program <http://www.ifapcom.ru>.

The fundamental ideas of this Recommendation exerted a strong influence on the views of the Russian executives in the field of culture, science and education as to the principles of a fair and inclusive information society.

Support and Development of Multilingualism in Russia

Encouragement of multilingualism is important for contemporary Russia not only with a view to preserving and developing languages as the foundation of the cultural heritage of the different nations inhabiting Russia; it has been and remains important also in terms of addressing political, economic, social and other cultural problems, primarily those of interethnic communication in polyethnic environments.

The population of Russia according to the 2002 census is 142.4 million people. In addition to the Russians (79,8 %) there are more than 180 other nations, which speak more than 100 languages and dialects belonging to the Indo-European, Altaic, and Ural language families, the Caucasian and Paleo-Siberian language groups.

The official language of Russia is Russian, which is almost universally used as a language of interethnic communication, too. Arguably, almost all the adult population of Russia is fluent in Russian. More than 127 million people (of whom 120 million are Russians) consider the Russian language their mother-tongue; for over 16 million people it is their second language.

Therefore, unlike many countries with polyethnic populations Russia knows little or no language barriers.

Preservation and development of the languages of the peoples of Russia, and the development of writing in the languages of many small indigenous peoples was an important goal and task of the Russian state throughout the last century, particularly in the Soviet period. It can certainly be considered an achievement of Russia.

Despite the fact that the USSR was separated from the West by an 'Iron Curtain', cultural exchange inside the USSR (and inside Russia as part of the USSR) was quite intensive. It was greatly encouraged and supported by the state, being a national policy priority. Cultural diversity was supported and advocated.

The change in the political and economic life of Russian society and the development of the democratic bases of Russian statehood made for the growing role of national and cultural factors, among which language is one of the chief attributes of ethnic identity and fosters the consolidation of ethnic communities in a polyethnic environment. As they significantly influenced the growth of national consciousness, these developments gave point to the question

of the preservation and development of the national (native) languages of non-Russian peoples and the expansion of their scope of application.

The 1990s saw intense efforts, at the federal level and in Russian Federation republics, towards creating and developing language legislation, designed to regulate the functioning of official and native languages, and the development of ethnic education and culture.

Article 68 of the Russian Federation Constitution says that:

1. The Russian language shall be the state language of the Russian Federation across its territory.

2. The republics that form part of the Russian Federation have a right to establish their own state languages. They shall be used alongside the state language of the Russian Federation by their public authorities, local governments, and public offices.

3. The Russian Federation shall guarantee to all its peoples the right to maintain their native language and conditions for its study and development.

The constitutional provision establishing the status of Russian as the official language inside the Russian Federation is elaborated on in Federal Law On the State Language of the Russian Federation of 1 June 2005. This is typical of multinational states such as Canada, Switzerland, or India.

In a multinational state the question of the official language is very important, indeed. Such a state requires unity and consistency in communication and a universally recognised means of intercourse between people in society, in public authorities, local governments, etc. In Russia, this means is, naturally, Russian, the language of the most numerous ethnic group, the Russians, which makes up over 80% of the total population. Most members of the other nations are equally (and often more) proficient in Russian as in their ethnic languages. For example, such people make up 71.8% of the Bashkirs, 70.8% of the Tatars, 72.1% of the Buryats, 85.3% of the Kalmyks, etc.

The status of Russian as an official language means its compulsory use and application by all the public authorities and local governments inside the country, during referendums and elections, in the official publication of laws and other statutory acts, in judicial procedure, record keeping, etc. This fact imposes upon the state, primarily public educational institutions, certain obligations with respect to the learning, development and dissemination of the Russian language.

The Law On the Languages of RSFSR Peoples constates that the Russian language shall be learned without fail in general educational institutions and vocational training institutions, and that in those which are accredited institutions, the learning of Russian as the state language shall be subject to state educational standards (Pt 2, Art.10).

The Law states in addition that:

- the languages of the Russian Federation peoples are the Russian state's national patrimony;
- the languages of the Russian Federation peoples shall be under the shelter of the state;
- the state shall promote the development of national languages, bilingualism, and multilingualism inside the Russian Federation territory.

The republics (constituent entities of the Russian Federation) have a right to establish their own state languages, as recorded in their constitutions. .

According to the Law On the Languages of Russian Federation Peoples (Pt 2, Art.3) the highest agencies of the state in the Russian Federation must encourage the development of the languages of the republics that are part of the Russian Federation (Art. 6); they can be employed in the work of the public authorities of republics and local governments alongside the Russian language (Pt 1, Art 11); it can be used in the publication of federal and republic-wide legal acts inside the republics (Arts 12, 13); it can be used alongside the state language of Russia in preparing and holding elections and referendums (Art. 14), in the running of enterprises, organisations, and institutions (Art. 15), in judicial procedure (Art. 18), and so on.

Russian citizens who do not know Russia have a right to speak at meetings, conferences, or assemblies in government institution, organisations, enterprises or institutions in the language they know; if necessary proper interpretation is provided (Pts 2 and 3, Art. 15 of the Law On the Languages of the Russian Federation Peoples).

As a general rule, the official languages of a republic will be Russian and the language of the title nation that has lent the name to the republic, even though the title nation, which lent the name to the republic, may represent an ethnic majority in it. In several republics, two or more languages in use inside the republic are recognised as state languages.

For example, in Kabardino-Balkaria, two more languages in addition to Russian have the status of official -- Kabardian and Balkar; in Dagestan, all the languages of its constituent nations. However, lack of knowledge of a state language in the constituent republics of the Russian Federation must not be a discriminatory measure in exercising the rights and freedoms of man and citizen.

The introduction of their own official languages lays upon the respective republics an obligation to provide conditions for their learning to anyone who wishes so that lack of knowledge of a language would not play a discriminatory role in employment, education, use of benefits of culture, etc. The Republic of Buryatia Law On the Languages of the Peoples of the Republic of Buryatia No. 221-XII, of 10 June 1992, contains a provision under which anyone wishing to learn the Buryat language is guaranteed the teaching of the language to the level consistent with the job content. This law uses a differentiated approach to the use and application of the two state languages, Russian and Buryat. For instance, the law says that the texts of republic-wide laws shall be published in Buryat and Russian and shall have equal legal force; the two languages, Buryat and Russian, are used to print voting papers, in judicial procedure; documents (resolutions) are passed by local authorities in either Russian or Buryat depending on the composition of the population; record keeping in institutions and public organisation is done in the Russian language, the official language of the Russian Federation.

The public language policy in the Russian Federation aims at guaranteeing to all its nations the right to maintain their native languages and creating conditions for their study and development, which is fully consistent with commonly recognised international standards.

The right of every nation irrespective of size to maintain, study, use, and develop its vernacular is defined and guaranteed not only in the Law On the Languages of the Russian Federation Peoples, but also in a number of other federal laws pertaining to education, culture, national and cultural autonomy, and so on. Language equality and means of protection of languages feature prominently in constitutions (statutes), specialised laws and other regulatory acts of constituent members of the Russian Federation.

Thus, the provisions of Pt 3 of Article 68 of the Russian Constitution clearly show that the establishment of state languages does not mean neglect of the languages of the other nations

populating Russia. All of them are guaranteed the right to preserve their native language and condition for its learning and development.

In line with international legal standards the Law On the Languages of the Russian Federation Peoples guarantees their equal rights and means of protection (social, economic, and legal); provides for the funding of respective government programmes, opportunities to create a writing culture in native languages, to conduct investigations of all languages of Russian peoples, to organise education and teaching in a native language irrespective of the size of the ethnic community and according to its needs; in communities compactly populated by ethnic groups speaking a foreign language, legitimates the use in official communication (record keeping at public authorities and local governments, at enterprises, institutions, and place names) of the language of that population group.

Federal Law On Education of 13 January 1996 determines that the language(s) in which the education and upbringing in general educational institutions are conducted shall be determined by the founder(s) and/or statute of the institution; the state shall assist in the training of specialists required for educational services to be conducted in Russian peoples lacking their own statehood (Pts 3 and 7, Art. 6).

Fundamentals of Russian Federation Cultural Legislation of 9 October 1992 allocate to national cultural centres, national associations and communities the right to organise libraries, circles, and studios for the learning of their native languages (Art. 21). Government protection measures for national (native) languages – which are rather similar to those specified in the above-mentioned federal laws – are also quoted in Federal Law On National and Cultural Autonomy of 17 June 1996.

Therefore, if implemented, the provisions of Pt 3 of Article 68 of the Russian Federation Constitution furnishes the necessary framework for the individual's language sovereignty irrespective of their origin, social and property status, race and nationality, gender, education, religious affiliation, and place of residence; real exercise by every citizen of the Russian Federation of their right to use their native language, to choose their language of communication, education, teaching, and creativity; and the counteraction of the advocacy of language superiority.

Statutory and other regulatory acts addressing linguistic issues have been passed by many constituent members of the Russian Federation.

As our case studies we consider the situation in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) and the Republic of Buryatia.

Language Policy in the Republic of Yakutia

In terms of territory, 3,103,200 square kilometres, it is the largest member of the Russian Federation and the largest political unit in the world. Yakutia stretches across three time zones. Its population is 950 000 people (2005). Population density, 0.3 per. per sq. km, is the lowest in the Russian Federation.

According to the Russian census of 2002 Yakutia is populated by members of 127 nationalities. The principal ethnic communities are Yakuts, 433 000 people (45.6%) and Russians (41.1%). Small northern ethnic groups total about 33 000 people, among them 18 232 Evenki, 11 657 Evens, 1097 Yukagirs, 1272 Dolgans, and 602 Chukchis. Their compact locations are 69 population centres, mainly in the Far North. In addition, there are 238 registered nomadic tribal communities, which include 74 deer farming ones.

Pursuing an ethnocultural policy in such a multinational republic demands special care and attention not only on the part of the state but from civil society institutions as well. In this respect a great contribution is being made by national cultural centres, diasporas, and communities. At present, there are about 50 national communities and associations. The republic has maintained stable interethnic peace and harmony, for which due credit must be given to the Assembly of the Peoples of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) and the Department for Yakuta's Peoples and Federal Relations. Revival of national languages, culture, customs, and tradition is the main thrust of the efforts of national and cultural associations, which are busy communicating, sharing their experience and expertise.

UNESCO has been instrumental in influencing the activities of the Assembly of the Peoples of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) and other institutions.

It is an ethnographic feature of Yakutia that the nation that lent its name to the republic was an ethnic minority in terms of size and share before 2000, but presently it ranks first in the national composition of the population. The growth of the Yakut population is 12.1% from the 1989

census, which is due not only to the intensification of migratory processes but also a relatively high natural increase of the Yakut population.

On 27 September 1990, the Declaration of State Sovereignty of the republic was passed, which promulgated the state status of the Yakut and Russian languages on a parity basis and the official status of Northern peoples. On 16 October 1992, the Law on the Languages in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) was passed, which brought to the fore the need for a new language policy.

Russian is spoken by 93.3% of the population in the republic. Their national language is considered to be their mother-tongue by 87.4% of Yakuts, 37.7% of Chukchis, 20.7% of Evens, 19.5% of Yukagirs, and 6.5% of Evenkis. Recent studies suggest that the number of people in Yakutia speaking their native language is declining. A contributing factor is the rising status of Russian as a language of interethnic communication, a carrier of international information, and a language of learning at higher levels of education. Yakuts who considered their national language to be their native one made up 96.3% of the population in 1970, 95.3% by the 1979 census, 94.8% by the 1989 census, and 94.2% by the 2002 census. According to the last census, the number of Evenkis who consider their national language native decreased by 8.6%, and the number of Evens, by 27%.

Many researchers point to insufficient communication motivation for language learning. Urbanisation makes for increased reluctance to learn and speak one's own language and culture. This is characteristic of almost all the industrial *uluses* but particularly of the capital city, Yakutsk, where every fourth non-Russian child is not learning in his/her native language. A language excluded from school curriculum is inevitably endangered. As evidenced by research and practice, language teaching techniques need to be upgraded, too.

It follows that promulgating a language the state or official one does not in itself take care of its development. If the Law On the Languages of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) is to be implemented in practice, efficient steps must be taken to provide required financial support.

A resolution of the Government of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) of 4 March 2005 approved a State Target Language Development Programme of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) for 2005-2007. Other programmes were developed as well, which reflected problems in the functioning of state and official languages. Steps are being taken in support of intercultural dialogue and creation of a favourable language situation.

Language-wise, television broadcasting in the republic is 62% Russian, 38% Yakut, and 1% languages of small indigenous ethnic groups. Publication of Yakut books is growing annually. Some rudiments of bilingualism have appeared in forms of worship, the Bible has been translated into Yakut, which is beginning to be used in public worship. At the same time, Russian-language programmes about the culture and history of the peoples of Yakutia are on the increase.

In the system of institutions ensuring the preservation and development of national languages, a leading position is held by the National Library of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), the largest collection of books in the languages of indigenous peoples (<http://nlib.sakha.ru>).

Its book holdings are about 2 million items, of which 48 000 books in Yakut and 1688 book in the languages of Northern peoples; the collection tends to grow thanks to more active acquisition efforts. In 1990-1994, the growth of the Yakut book collection was 16.1% and the book collection in the languages of Northern peoples grew by 32.4%; in 1995-1999, the figures were 9.3% and 9.5%; and in 2000 – 2004, 14.8% and 14.4% respectively.

Good progress is being made by the republic target programme Yakutia's Memory, which was approved by Decree No 116 of the Government of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) of 2 March 2001. The programme aims to preserve and popularise the documentary heritage of the peoples of Yakutia, to make it more democratically accessible through the Internet, and to create a State Register of Unique and Valuable Documents and a joint web-site, "Yakutia's Memory".

The programme is a joint effort between the National Library, the National Archive of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), the Yakut State Museum of History and Culture of Northern Peoples, and the State National Repository of Cinedocuments on the Republic of Sakha.

The programme envisions selecting particularly valuable documents highlighting important aspects of the history and culture of Yakutia, digitising them and putting them on the Web. Work is in progress to digitise rare Yakut books and local history books, archival documents, rare gramophone recordings of Yakut performers, which are of cultural and historical value. With Soros Foundation support a Web-museum was created called "Yakutia's Book Monuments 1812-1916".

The Yakutia's Memory programme (2002-2006) made possible several expeditions to locate and acquire rare books, photographs, and motion pictures important for area studies for major film repositories, libraries, and archives in Russia, and contacts with owners of private collections. The State National Repository of Cinedocuments on the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) established contacts with Harvard University, **Museum of Modern Art of the Cinema Department (New York)**, Georgetown University, and the state archives of Kazakhstan and Kirghizia. As a result, films relating to the history and culture of Yakutia were found and included in institutional holdings. Under the Voices of the Age project, an expedition went to Verkhnevilyuisk and Nyurbinsk *uluses* with the purpose of study and collection of records. The voices of folk singers in Verkhnevilyuisk *ulus* were recorded and some folk songs in Vilyuisk *uluses* were recorded anew. Expeditions also travelled to the cities of Chita and Irkutsk with the purpose of locating rare pre-revolutionary photographs related to Yakutia's history.

The programme resulted in a Web information portal, Yakutia's Memory, which provides access to the unique documentary heritage of the nations of Yakutia. The portal is structured as follows:

1. *Book monuments of Yakutia*. This section presents book monuments that are part of Yakutia's heritage as well as part of the culture of the global community: early books in Yakut (1812-1858), books published by the Yakutsk Oblast Printing House (1861-1917).

2. *National Bibliography*. This section takes care of the problem of access to bibliographic information relating to books that appeared in the indigenous languages of the Republic since early publications.

3. *Unique and Particularly Valuable Archival Documents of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)*. This section deals with the preservation, and access to, the unique archival documents of the Yakut Voyvodship Office (1701-1823), Yakutsk Provincial Office (1778-1892), Yakutsk Governor (1862-1919), as well as documentary monuments of socio-political thought of Yakutia in the 18th to early 20th centuries.

4. *Film Chronicle of Yakuria* envisions the updating, preservation, and access to film documents about Yakutia that are of great historical, cultural, scientific, and educational value. The State National Repository of Cinedocuments about the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) holds more than 2500 motion pictures, fragments, and plots describing different periods in the history and culture of Yakutia. .

5. *Photo Chronicle of Yakutia* is geared to preserving, and providing access to, photo documents reflecting the most significant events and facts in the socio-political life of the Yakut region, the cultural life of Yakutia, etc. The most interesting photographs are those showing the

traditional beliefs of the indigenous peoples of Yakutia, the spread of Orthodoxy, and Yakut studies.

6. *Voice of the Age: Musical and Sound Heritage of the Peoples of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)* provides for protection against deterioration and oblivion of valuable and rare sound recordings and free access to them. The project includes the digitisation of folklore performed by folk artists and singers (olonkhosuts, toiuksuts, khomusists, declamators), voices of authors, and culture and art workers representing Yakutia's peoples.

Future development of Yakutia's Memory portal will involve the widening of its coverage. Other sections may be established at subsequent stages, such as Prominent Individuals in the History and Culture of Yakutia, etc.

In the purposeful government policy in the sphere of national relations in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), a place of importance belong to questions of national and cultural revival of small indigenous peoples of the North. The indigenous peoples of Yakutia living in the inhospitable climate of the North created their unique mode of life and have an interesting and instructive history, traditions, and original culture. Globalisation and the pressure of mass culture endanger not only their languages but all their traditional culture.

The main source for the implementation of the government policy with respect to small indigenous nations of the North is still the Grant for National and Cultural Revival of Small and Endangered Ethnic Communities in Places of their Compact Habitation. Among other programmes there are Children of the Arctic Revival of the Languages of Small Indigenous Peoples of the North.

With a view to preserving the original languages of small indigenous peoples of the North in the framework of the Northern Peoples' Memory programme, the National Library of Yakutia is collecting Talking Book audio cassettes with recorded voices of Enenki and Even authors, folklore scholars, scientists, Even scholars, etc. It has prepared and produced disks on Evenika, Yukagirica, Evenkica and Dolganica, which include not only bibliographies of the literatures of indigenous nations of the North but also full-text databases of originals. It also maintains thematic databases of authors and researchers who represent Northern peoples, and donated collections of well-known Northern scholars.

At present, the National Library jointly with Arctic State Institute of Culture and Art has developed a programme, “Development of the Arctic-Info-Centre Information Portal”, which envisions the development of a common information space of Arctic territories of the Republic and the Russian Federation. Jointly with colleagues in the Far-Eastern Region and the city of Fairbanks, Alaska, Yakut specialists took

With support from the Moscow Unesco office, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture and Spiritual Development of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) has developed a multilingual portal, www.kuyaar.ru, in the Yakut, Russian, English, and Even languages.

Language Policy in the Republic of Buryatia

The resident population of the Republic of Buryatia, according to the 2002 census, is 981 238 people. The Republic of Buryatia is populated by members of more than 100 nationalities. Russians make up 67.82%, Buryats 27.81%, Ukrainians 0.98%, and other nationalities, 3.39% of the total.

Russian and Buryat are state languages in the Republic of Buryatia. Their state status is defined by the Constitution of the Republic of Buryatia and the Republic of Buryatia Law On the Languages of the Peoples of the Republic of Buryatia. The laws promulgate the equality of the languages and the language rights of citizens unless otherwise provided by federal law. On the other hand, there are still no clearly defined enforcement mechanisms for these guarantees both in respect of the Buryat language and the languages of ethnic minorities and, occasionally, in respect of the Russian language.

The body responsible for current questions directly or indirectly affecting interethnic relations is Committee for Interethnic Relations, Relations with Public, Religious Associations, and Information attached to the Presidential administration and the Government of the Republic of Buryatia. Besides, a number of advisory bodies have been set up at the Government of the Republic of Buryatia: the Council of Nationalities attached to the President of the Republic of Buryatia and the Council for Communication with Religious Associations attached to the President of the Republic of Buryatia.

The government of the Republic approved the Concept of State National Policy in 1997. At present, the Republic Targeted Programme to implement this Concept for 2006-2007 is in progress.

Buryatia has the Law On the Languages of the Peoples of the Republic of Buryatia, according to which Buryat and Russian are the state languages of the Republic of Buryatia.

With a view to preserving and developing the Buryat language the republic is implementing several projects. In 2006, the *Electronic Manual of the Buryat Language* was published, the result of three-years work of a large group of authors. The Manual is not just the biggest to date collection of dictations, exercises, and texts. It includes 14 electronic dictionaries. Other sections of the manual provide a wealth of materials on Buryat history, art, geography, customs, and religious beliefs, a total of 500 articles and more than 1000 photographs. The manual is addressed not only to students at national schools but also to adults speaking their native language.

The manual was produced by a creative team at the Informatisation Centre, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Buryatia, which included philologists and journalists, religious scholars and businessmen, photographers, designers, and programmers.

The summer of 2006 saw the presentation of a new web-site of Buryat literature, www.nomoihan.org. The electronic collection of texts has several parts: Early Literature, Medieval Literature, Modern Literature, and Contemporary Literature.

The projects were implemented with financial backing of Presidential administration, the government of the Republic of Buryatia, and the East Siberia Metals company. The manual was recommended for use at schools in the republic by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Buryatia.

The Web-site www.buryadxelen.org in Buryat and Russia is devoted to the Buryat language. It is designed in support of the Electronic Manual of the Buryat Language. The designers intend, some time in the future, to create a portal based on this web-site addressed to all those who take in interest in the Buryat language.

The National Library of the Republic of Buryatia is creating integrated bibliographic and full-text databases and electronic collections on objects of cultural and natural heritage of the republic's peoples. It uses both the techniques of digitisation and Web searches to locate necessary documents.

The principal information resource is the library's electronic catalogue, one part of which, EK "Area Study", comprises more than 5000 records, of which about 700 are in Buryat. To collect and classify information pertaining to Lake Baikal and the Baikal Natural Area a Web portal was created, called Baikal-Lake (<http://www.baikal-center.ru>). The portal is bilingual, in Russian and English, and it has a system of links to regional, Russian, and foreign resources (more than 120 links).

To assist in more effective study and use of the cultural heritage of the peoples of the Republic of Buryatia, the National Library is implementing an integrated project, "Buryatia: A Territory of Culture", which seeks to produce a series of reference-bibliographic CDs and DVDs. The project was prepared and implemented in the framework of the Presidential Programme "Preservation and Development of the Culture and Art of the Republic of Buryatia (2004-2007)". In building electronic collections for the "Buryatia: A Territory of Culture" series, use was made of documents from the collections of libraries, museums, archives, and national cultural centres of Buryatia.

For three years now, the National Library of the Republic of Buryatia has been working on an electronic collection dealing with the establishment and development of Buddhism in Buryatia. A DVD-ROM named "Datsans: Past and Present" is the first electronic reference-bibliographic publication to present in a multimedia format information about the appearance and development of Buddhism in Buryatia, the life and work of **Pandito Hambo-Lamas**, and 14 datsans in Russian, English, and German.

The DVD-ROM comprises a bibliography on the history of datsans (about 200 names), an electronic library (82 texts), rare photographs, drawings, video materials, and music. In the Appendix, some of the materials are presented in Buryat.

With financial support of the Russian Federal Agency for Culture and Cinematography, a DVD called *Geser: A Buryat Heroic Epos* was produced -- a unique electronic reference-bibliographic publication, which provides information about principal oral versions of Geseriada, ekhirit-bulagat and ungin, main narrators, collectors, and researchers. .

The DVD-ROM contains a bibliography of the Buryat Geseriade (more than 500 titles), an electronic library (152 texts, six electronic books of the best-known editions of the Buryat version of *Geser* in the Russian and Buryat languages, rare photographs, audio and video materials, a video recording of A.Andreev's opera *Geser* in the Buryat language.

The DVD-ROM *Buryatia's Evenki* presents in a multimedia format information about the ethnography and material and spiritual culture of the Evenki, a bibliography (more than 800 titles), an electronic library (170 articles in Russian and Evenki, four electronic books in Evenki, and a video lesson, "Baunt's History").

Work is in progress on electronic full-text databases: *Buryatia's Writers* (more than 200 personalia, information in Russian and Buryat), *Genghiz Khan: Man of Millennium* (information in Russian, Buryat, Mongolian), and on large Buryat clans, Khori-Buryats and Khongodors.

All information about the electronic resources can be found at the National Library web-site (<http://www.nbrb.ru>).

Multilingualism in the Cyberspace

The development and utilisation of multilingualism in the Russian cyberspace is by no means targeted at the lowering of language barriers because, as already mentioned, they are almost nonexistent. At any rate, they do not pose a socially significant problems for the majority of the native Russian population. The development of local digital content and content in the languages of peoples of Russia pursues two key goals: to broaden access to information and knowledge, and the preservation, study, and popularisation of the cultural legacy and languages of peoples of Russia.

An analysis of current Russian legislation shows that these aspects are directly touched on by Federal Law On Information, Information Technologies, and Information Protection of 27 July 2006. Article 3 of this law includes, among the principles underlying the legal regulation of relations arising in the information sphere, the principles of equality of the languages of peoples

of the Russian Federation when developing and operating information systems.

Article 8 “Right of Access to Information” says that government agencies and local authorities shall undertake to provide access to information about their activities in the Russian language and the state language of the respective republic within the Russian Federation in accordance with federal laws, laws of Russian Federation members, and regulatory legal acts of local authorities. A person wishing to access this information is not required to justify the need to obtain it.

However, current law-enforcement practice still faces problems in equal and broad access to information networks (including the Internet) and information, promoting the development, preservation, and dissemination of information in all languages using all alphabets.

Nevertheless, the number of Web-sites in the languages of peoples of Russia, created by public and private entities with support of federal and regional authorities, foundations and corporations, as well as by individual fans, is steady growing. On the Russian Web, one can find even catalogues of resources presented in the cyberspace in these languages. The speed with which these resources grow and new ones appear depends on the speed at which the Internet is reaching out to remote regions and the pace at which the liberally educated intelligentsia is acquiring computer literacy. .

Web pages devoted to scholarly study of individual languages are growing, Web-sites in these languages have appeared as well as first national founts for the Internet. For example, the site <http://peoples.org.ru/font.html> offers set of 25 national character sets for the Windows platform. Founts can be freely disseminated and modified. Many university departments, faculties, and institutes engaged in the teaching and study of languages of Russian Federation peoples maintain their own Web pages.

As the Internet community in Russia is growing, the number, quality, and importance of Web-sites in all the languages of Russia’s peoples, including small ones, is steadily growing, too, and this trend will certainly hold out. Yet, there is still no unambiguous answer to the question, whether the development of the Internet and information resources in the languages of small nations of Russia contributes to the preservation of these languages or leads to continuing curtailment of their functions.

The Improvement of Access to Networks and Services.

The Development of Public Domain Content

The Constitution of the Russian Federation proclaims freedom of information collection, storage and dissemination, and prohibits censorship. Its acting law On the Mass Media was adopted more than 15 years ago. Russian regions—constituent entities of the Federation—have their bylaws On the Access to Information or On Information Right.

The federal law On Information, Information Technologies and Information Protection, adopted on July 27, 2006, specifies everything that concerns information-related rights and duties of all legal persons in the Russian Federation, and regulates relations arising in:

- exercise of the right of information search, reception, passing, creation and dissemination;
- implementing information technologies;
- protecting information.

The law contains a special clause, The Right of Access to Information.

The law settles a number of major information-related problems. One of them concerns the correlation of information access to which is applied for or provided, with the person having whatever rights to such information. Particular information can be regarded as public domain, other qualifies as state secret, yet another commercial, or pertains to private life. Different patterns of access are naturally applied to each.

On January 18, 2007, the Government of the Russian Federation submitted to parliament a draft federal bill On the Provision of Access to Information Concerning the Activities of Government and Local Self-Government Bodies.

The bill determines the procedure and general terms of public and corporate access to information about the activities of government and local self-government bodies, and aims to guarantee the openness of such information and easy access to it.

According to it, the duties of ruling bodies include guaranteeing access to information about the activities of government and local self-government bodies by all available means, including placing such information on the Internet.

The bill largely resembles related acting laws of North American and European countries.

Prior to its passing, the Russian Federation resorted to a temporary measure—Government Resolution No. 98, of February 12, 2003, which stipulates a list of information the federal executive bodies must make accessible to citizens and organizations, mainly through placing such information on the Internet.

It must be taken into consideration, however, that information access is out of the question without a proper infrastructure. As we regard matters related to broad access to information in general and the Internet, in particular, we must consider the following: Russia presently has 45,000 remote settlements, which are not on the telephone and so are hard put implementing their information rights.

That is why Russia is drafting legislative acts and elaborating legal mechanisms to encourage telephone operators as they provide telecommunications for such remote settlements thus to provide information access. The federal law On Communications, of July 7, 2003, demands public Internet facilities for every settlement whose population exceeds 500, with access provided on tariffs regulated by the state to make them affordable—with the minimum possible charges.

The implementation of the right of access to socially important electronic information must also be regarded in close connection with general issues of using information technologies in the everyday routine of government bodies and other social institutions as content makers, and of legal and private persons as its consumers.

The Government of the Russian Federation adopted, on September 27, 2004, a concept of using information technologies in federal ruling bodies' work up to 2010, which promotes such activities.

The concept envisages implementing projects for automated information systems in electronic document circulation, and to mutually integrate government information resources as electronic administrative regulations for government services are introduced.

Databases are formed on federal government bodies' basic activities and placed on special websites for interactive information services to the public and organizations.

The development of public access to IT services is regarded as a future-oriented field. Related efforts include the establishment and development of public services in educational institutions, libraries and post offices, and through wider use of home computers.

The federal target program Electronic Russia: 2002-2010 is the basic mechanism of implementing unified and coordinated state policies in information technology use for federal government activities.

The program includes measures to develop and streamline the legislative and methodological bases of information technology use for federal government activities; of forming a unified infrastructure for information technologies provision to federal government bodies; the creation of national information resources and interdepartmental automated government information systems; and training government officers to use information technologies.

Practically every federal ruling and government body, many regional administrations, and certain local self-government bodies, especially in the larger cities, have their own websites for today.

Russian federal government bodies share a portal, <http://www.gov.ru>, which provides access to other ruling offices' websites.

Apart from that portal, government bodies unrelated to it have their own websites.

Administrative bodies provide free access to websites on particular matters of major interest.

Thus, bylaws of many levels determine the use of available official sites for information on order placement in the Russian Federation.

Federal Government Resolution No. 229-r, of February 20, 2006, appoints the address of the official Russian Federation website, which carries information about contract placement for commodity supplies, works and services for federal needs, <http://www.zakupki.gov.ru>.

Certain government offices supply and update such information in a sufficient amount and more or less regularly, while others have formal attitudes to that duty, and fail to provide the required amount of information and duly update it, with insufficient communication servicing.

Coming as an inspiring regional-level instance is the official portal of the Smolensk regional ruling bodies, <http://admin.smolensk.ru>. The regional administrative staff regularly monitors the website content of all its executive bodies. Proceeding from such monitoring, executive bodies whose site content does not meet the requirements of regional administration resolution No. 284, of November 5, 2003, On Providing Access to Information about the Activities of the Smolensk Regional Administration and Other Executive Bodies of the Smolensk Region, receive written messages demanding necessary improvements.

Such monitoring and control makes all Smolensk regional administrative departments responsible for their websites, which carry all necessary information and legal acts regulating activities. Such sites also provide application forms for organizations and private persons. There is an Internet reception room, etc.

The region arranged a Best Website contest for regional executive and municipal self-government bodies to further promote their information offers. All regional executive bodies and 23 municipal applied to compete. The contest was summed up on October 27, 2006.

The official regional administration server carries a portal on Smolensk regional government purchases, <http://gz.smolensk.ru/index.html>, and a database of legal acts, Smolensk Regional Legislation, <http://law.admin.smolensk.ru/bpa/>.

It is no exaggeration to say that Russian legal information spectacularly improved within the several preceding years. On the one hand, cardinal economic and political changes aroused an acute mass need for legal information, which concerns experts and the public-at-large alike. On the other hand, users are offered sufficiently extensive legal information databases, complete with efficient search means.

The Russian practice gave rise to a very interesting system of circulating legal information. Apart from, government bodies, private companies engaged in that sphere, such as Garant, Kodeks and KonsultantPlus, are prominent in that system.

Many government bodies regularly place legal acts they issue and/or publish on their official websites for free access without databases.

In compliance with Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 1013, of August 7, 2004, and in accordance with government policies of implementing legal information technologies, the Federal Guard Service organizes the creation, urgent servicing and support of an integrated full-text electronic database of legal information, and provides access to it for federal government bodies, ruling bodies of constituent entities, local self-government bodies, organizations and private persons.

Legal acts of the federal, regional and municipal levels are presently collected, processed and circulated on a centralized pattern by electronic means within the federal legal act circulation network.

In compliance with the acting legislation, the Federal Guard Service, through its subordinate company, the Sistema Technical Research Center, comes as the only federally authorized structure circulating the official texts of federal laws, and legal acts of the President and Government of the Russian Federation in electronic form.

The state also circulates the Electronic Official Legal Information Publications and Periodicals. Apart from collections of bylaws, the publication carries the Bulletin of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, and the Transactions of the Supreme Arbitration Court of the Russian Federation.

The private company KonsultantPlus publishes court verdicts in electronic form. Company systems comprise approximately 400,000 legal acts concerning arbitration practice, and the number increases by an annual average exceeding 50,000 verdicts. It is, for today, one of Russia's largest and most comprehensive legal reference resources on arbitration practice. The publication of general jurisdiction court decisions is also improving, though not so spectacularly as with arbitration.

The other commercial companies, Garant and Kodeks, are also successful in that field.

Apart from that, the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation and the Supreme Arbitration Court of the Russian Federation also offer information on their own websites. The Supreme Arbitration Court of the Russian Federation soon intends to fully digitalize its decisions and provide access to them through the Internet.

Internet dissemination in Russia and optimistic forecasts of its progress pose ever new questions on the goals and the means to attain them in the legal information field, including private online access to such information.

Russia started establishing centers and points of public legal information in 1998. They mainly base on public libraries and educational establishments to provide quality information search and servicing. More than 2,000 such centers are active for today. Close on 2.5 million clients received answers there within a few years. Center databases are replenished and updated through a government system for legal act circulation, through the Internet, and through commercial carriers.

The program for such centers was launched more than eight years ago, and their number is steadily growing. There is a great public demand for their services, and local self-government is taking an ever greater interest in them. Thus, close on 70% of centers established in 2006 base on municipal libraries, including rural.

Legal students, practicing lawyers, private entrepreneurs and pensioners are the most active users.

Apart from government bodies, private legal information companies are currently part and parcel of efforts to establish the center network, keep it going, and developing it. Also very active are the Russian Committee of the UNESCO Information for All program, and the Nonprofit Partnership of Russian Public Legal Information Centers.

Improvement of Access to Networks and Services

Russian telecommunications are developing apace, and much more rapidly than the Russian economy as a whole.

The federal law On Communications, which entered into force on January 1, 2004, bases on all Russian citizens' equal access to communication services. It either removed or, at least, spectacularly reduced obstacles in the telecommunication market, and established transparent rules, similar for all. It is now simple and easy to obtain a communication service license.

The amendments to the fiscal legislation, which entered into force on January 1, 2007, offer beneficial terms for information technological activities.

Efforts are made to bring Russian bylaws into conformity with the international law. Russia has ratified the Council of Europe Convention on protecting private persons in automated personal data procession, and passed a federal law, On Personal Information.

State regulation means to guarantee and promote honest competition in the telecommunication service market to improve such services and reduce current tariffs. Making the most rapid progress are such market segments as have no state tariff regulation, e.g., mobile telephony—unlike stationary, in which it still exists. Its number of users increases much slower. The interurban and transnational telephone market is further demonopolizing.

Blueprints are made for radio frequency conversion before 2012.

Amendments to the federal law On Communications, passed on March 3, 2006, abolished mobile incoming call payments to make mobile telephony more accessible to persons who cannot afford paying large bills. At present, roughly 60% of Russians are using mobile telephones, approximately 40% have PCs at home, and close on 20% are on the Internet.

Market interests are shifting to digital technologies and communication net convergence.

Communication operators are developing and modernizing local telephone networks, implementing leading-edge technologies, and extending the range of their services.

More than 10,000 post offices in every part of Russia had established public Internet access by the start of 2007.

55,000 schools will join the Internet on wideband channels, at minimum 128 Kb/hr, before the end of 2007 as priority national project Education is implemented. The program promises significant improvement of the country's computer literacy.

Many parts of Russia—in its North, Siberia and Far East—are sparsely populated to make their communication infrastructural progress economically inexpedient. As the result, close on 45,000 small remote settlements are not on the telephone—but Russia plans to cure the matter by the end of 2008.

Open-code Software Development

Russia has ever more enthusiasts of freely circulated open-code software circulation. Generally accessible software has support from the IBM and other Microsoft competitors, and gains ever more users in administrative bodies, universities and among programmers to offer Russia an essential alternative in the development of vocational training and the entire IT sector. Many university and interuniversity net administrators choose Linux open programs—a pragmatic choice based on their reliability, adaptability and reasonable prices. Open commercial programs are more welcome than closed in specialist training up to world standards, in student practice, independent programming, and commercial services.

Free software used for government needs dramatically cuts software legalization expenses, promotes Russian software manufacture, and so reduces Russia's technological dependence. Open software is used, for instance, in standardizing document circulation on federal program Electronic Russia.

At least 70% of Russian national Internet domain resources use the Linux, which accounts for roughly 15% of the open-code server software market, say open-code enthusiasts' statistics.

IC products are widely used in Russia, which means that more than half of accounting will shift to open software within several years.

In December 2006, the Ministry of Information Technologies and Communications determined to establish an ad hoc team that will blueprint guidelines for free software circulation in Russia.

Trailblazing work has been made to offer prerequisites for such development. Thus, a national Linux verification center has established on the basis of the Systems Programming Institute under the Russian Academy of Sciences. The center was the fullest and the most systematic in verifying the **LSB Core 3.1**. That and other center endeavors received wide acclaim in the international open-code programming community.

Russia has stored ample experience of open-code programming courses. Project www.intuit.ru has been underway for several years. It is popularly known as Online Information Technologies University. Its website offers approximately 30 curricula, each for about six months. The extramural university has 55,000 students, with free tuition.

Open software will survive and make progress as long as alternative mentality stays welcome and universities employ enthusiastic and disinterested programmers. Web development steadily increases their number as they keep on improving generally accessible programs.

Information Literacy Progress as Means to Popularize It and Win Public Confidence in ICT

Information literacy is a way to popularize ICT in Russia, and win public confidence in its implementation and use. A wide range of efforts to promote such literacy involves legislative and executive bodies, educational establishments, libraries, research institutions, and civil society.

Russia implemented government programs for education development in 2001-05, and unified education information environment development in 2001-05. Program Electronic Russia: 2002-2010 is being implemented. All those programs aim to promote the ICT normative and legal basis; information and telecommunication infrastructural development; access to open information systems through the Internet and otherwise; elaboration of the methods of ICT introduction in education, and blueprinting new educational standards and curricula. All those efforts aim to implement Russians' right of free online access to public and government acts/information.

Information literacy efforts by Russian educational establishments concern students at all levels of lifelong learning. The National Education Doctrine of the Russian Federation determines such activities. Among pivotal goals of Russian education, it highlights training well-educated persons and high-class specialists capable of professional progress and career mobility as information technologies penetrate the community and high technologies develop apace.

The Modernization Concept of Russian Education for the Period Up to 2010 and the Modernization Concept of Russian Higher Education for the Period Up to 2010—both elaborated by the Ministry of Education, pay close attention to training people for life in information society, and to substantiating the role of ICT as tool of improving education quality and access.

Information technologies have become a study discipline at every level of education from primary school to postgraduate and doctorate, including postgraduate personnel training in all institutions, whether specializing in sciences or humanities. That is one of the basic ways to promote information literacy in the Russian lifelong learning system. Such studies aim not only

at acquiring computer know-how and training the use of latter-day information systems but also at developing scientific world-views and perceptions, which are necessary for personal fulfillment in information society. Apart from well-established instrumental and technological aspects of information science, its philosophical bases and general scientific methods (such as information approach, information modeling and prognostication) are introduced in education alongside the socio-economic and general civilization aspects of information society development.

Russia has implemented an initiative of its Ministry of Education to get village schools on the Internet. Internet training centers are active in libraries and higher education.

The federal portal www.edu.ru offers information about implementing ICT and improving students' information literacy in Russian education.

Libraries are also prominent in the information literacy drive. They train their users, whether researchers, production personnel, cultural activists, students or others, in the ABC of information search and collection on paper and electronic carriers, making abstracts, arranging personal files, and content and structural analysis of documents on problems under study or elaboration. Ever more attention is paid to training work with information on latter-day carriers.

Research institutions (higher educational establishments, departmental research institutes, and research branches of large libraries) are also working to promote public information education. They elaborate the theoretical and methodological fundamentals of preparing the community to live in information society, and information education methods and techniques. They develop experimental efforts to implement the methods and technologies of improving information literacy of the various population groups. They arrange and host research and practical conferences and seminars, and prepare publications. Siberia, for one, possesses a Research Institute of Information Technologies in the Social Sphere. Established under the Kemerovo State University of Culture and the Arts in 2001, the institute is regional UNESCO IFAP implementation center, which specializes in the problems of personal information literacy and culture. The institute elaborated and tested a concept and technology of personal information culture formation, which educational establishments and libraries are implementing in many parts of Russia. It formed a package of curricula and teaching aids to guarantee fruitful personal information culture formation in general and vocational schools, colleges, universities, and libraries. Summing up all those many-year studies is a fundamental monograph by N.I. Gendina,

N.I. Kolkova, G.A. Starodubova and Y.V. Ulenko, published in 2006: *The Formation of Personal Information Culture: Theoretical Substantiation and Modeling of Study Discipline Content*.

Research achievements in elaborating the theoretical and methodological bases of personal information culture formation and improving public information literacy find reflection in academic theses and numerous related publications. Thus, a bibliographic index on personal information culture, made by the Kemerovo State University of Culture and the Arts research library, comprises 823 works published in 1973-2006.

The Russian Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Program, which enjoys government support, is carrying on fruitful work to promote public information literacy and culture in Russia. The Committee organized many events in all parts of Russia for that goal. Several pivotal events deserve special mention:

- The international conference, UNESCO Information for All Program: the Development of National and International Information Policies (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, 2003);
- The international conference, UNESCO Information for All Program: General Access to Information (St. Petersburg, 2004);
- The international conference, UNESCO between the Two Phases of the World Summit on the Information Society (St. Petersburg, 2005);
- The international conference, Personal Information Culture: Information Society Challenges (Moscow, 2006);
- **UNESCO IFAP Days in Kuzbas (2003, 2005 and 2006).**

Russian researchers were active in an IFLA international project probing public information literacy.

Reaffirming the Equitable Balance Between the Interests of Rights-Holders and the Public Interest

Recently, the Russian copyright and allied rights law has suffered dramatic changes. A goal of the Russian legislative bodies was to bring the national copyright laws into compliance with the international laws, inclusive of those Russia is planning to join in future, and to ensure their harmonization and concordance with the laws of the European Union.

To-date, the relations in this field are governed by the Russian Federation Law “On Copyright and Allied Rights” of July 9, 1993 (with the subsequently approved additions and amendments). The latest updates were introduced by the Federal Law of July 20, 2004. They succeeded a lot in improving the governance of the relations in creating and using the results of the creative activity in the cyberspace.

To enhance the protection, the latest version of the above Law treats as violation of the copyright and allied rights the bypass of technical means and removal or amendment of the copyright-holder information.

Additionally, on April 8, 2003, the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation was amended to harden the responsibility for violating the copyright and allied rights to the extent of imprisonment up to the 5-years term.

The latest version of the Copyright and Allied Rights Law includes the provision which is new for the Russian law and proclaims the authority of the copyright and allied rights holders to impart the result of their creative activity to the public. By doing this, the Russian law has brought its provisions in this field in compliance with the standards of the 1996 WIPO Copyright Treaty and WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty.

Even the original text of this Law ensured protection of the results of creative activity available in the digital form.

In compliance with the international treaties signed by the Russian Federation, the legislation contains several exceptions and limitations of the rights of the copyright and allied rights holders so as to enforce the constitutional rights of people to the access to cultural values, information, freedom of occupation, education, and participation in the cultural life. At that, no exceptions should cause unlawful damage to the standard use of the objects of the copyright and allied rights or incur conditions for violation of the interests of legal right-holders.

From January 1, 2008, the Copyright and Allied Rights Law and the Law of the Russian Federation “On the Legal Protection of Computer Programs and Databases” will be abrogated, and the relations in connection with the creation and use of the results of creative activity will be

governed by the provisions of Part IV of the Civil Code of the Russian Federation signed by the President of the Russian Federation on December 18, 2006. The provisions of this Part IV will repeat to a great extent those of the currently effective legislation.

Thus, computer programs are treated as copyright objects and, with respect to protection, are set equal to literary compositions; subject to protection are compositions in the digital form irrespective of their original or subsequent presentation.

Copyright is created irrespective of the formalities, though, with respect to computer programs and databases, this right may be subject to registration at the right-holder's will.

Among the novelties of the Civil Code one should mention a new allied rights subject—the database producer, though its rights are limited to 15 years.

In general, the level of the Russian copyright and allied rights law sufficiently complies with its international counterparts, though its practice still poses a problem, because the required traditions have not been formed since the drastic revision of the doctrine in the beginning of the 1990s.