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Multilingualism A Governmental Perspective

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Overview

The Challenge of Public Policies – Theory versus Practice

- The Swiss Situation
- The Swiss Government Language Policy
- Situation in the Swiss Public Administration
- The Revised Regulation – 1 October 2014
- Overview of Aims of 2014 Revision
- Framework for Implementation
- Challenges
- Conclusions

The Needs of Public Policies – Aiming for Good Practice



The Swiss Situation

- Swiss multilingualism is characterized by
 - 17 German speaking Cantons, 4 French speaking Cantons, 1 Italian speaking Canton, 3 bilingual G-F Cantons, 1 trilingual R-G-I Canton
- This situation is the result of
 - a historical process
 - a willingness of 26 Cantons to live together and not through unification
- Swiss identity comes from coexistence and the cohabitation of different languages, cultures and religions



The Five Pillars of Swiss Language Policy

- **Develop** institutional plurilingualism, especially through:
 - translations of official documents
 - procurement policy
- **Promote** official languages (G/F/I) in the public administration
- **Encourage** comprehension and exchange between language communities
- **Support** the bilingual cantons financially
- **Protect and promote** the Italian and Romansh languages and cultures in the cantons of TI and GR



The Situation in the Swiss Public Administration

- The Swiss Public Administration should be
 - a microcosm of Switzerland
 - a mediator between different parties
 - active in developing «Willensnation»



Target Values (Art. 7, Regulation)

The representation of the linguistic communities should aim at the following ranges:

- German: 68.5 % - 70.5 %
- French: 21.5 % - 23.5 %
- Italian: 6.5 % - 8.5 %
- Romansh: 0.5 % - 1.0 %

The ranges are based on 2010 Swiss Population Census

They apply to: the Federal Administration, Departments, Federal Offices, and their top managers



Distribution of civil servants (cs) by language, 2008-2014

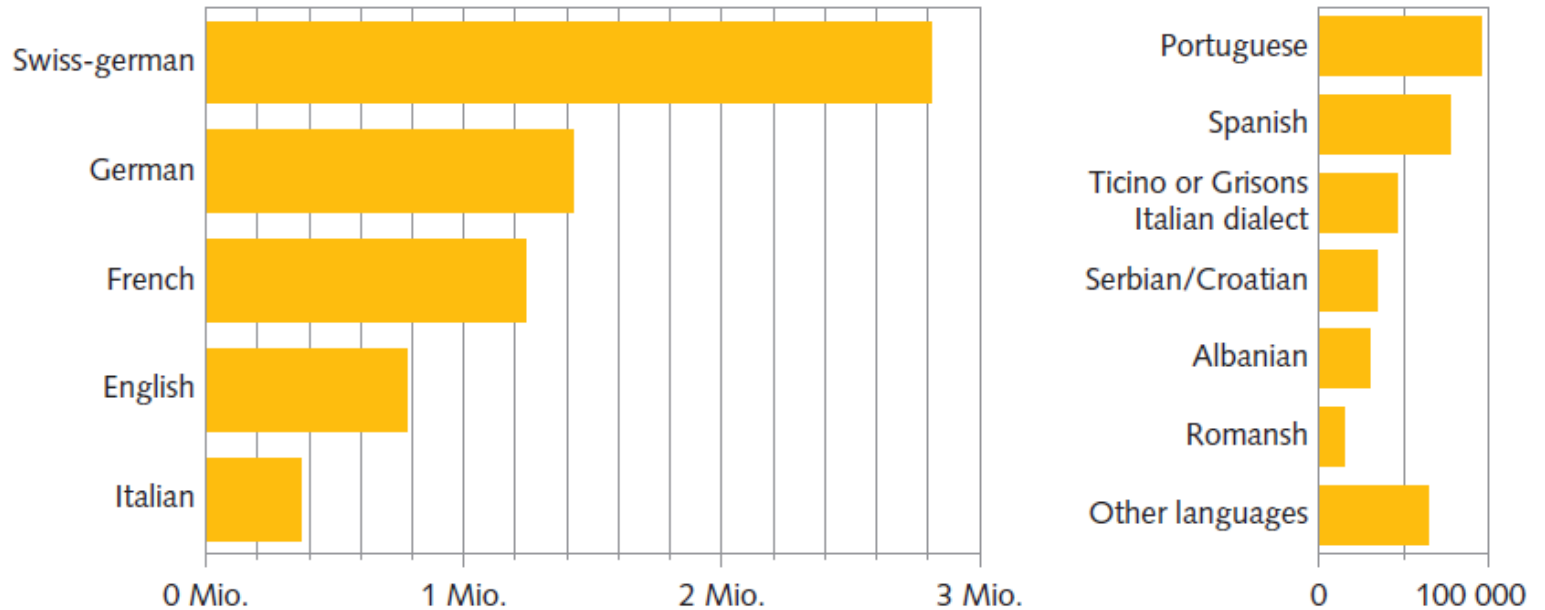
	2008	2012	2013	2014
Total number of cs	34,293	34,559	35,259	35,853
German	72.6 %	71.6 %	71.4 %	71.3 %
French	20.4 %	21.4 %	21.5 %	21.6 %
Italian	6.7 %	6.7 %	6.8 %	6.8 %
Romansh	0.3 %	0.3 %	0.3 %	0.3 %



Languages usually spoken at work in Switzerland

Languages usually spoken at work, 2013

In number of speakers



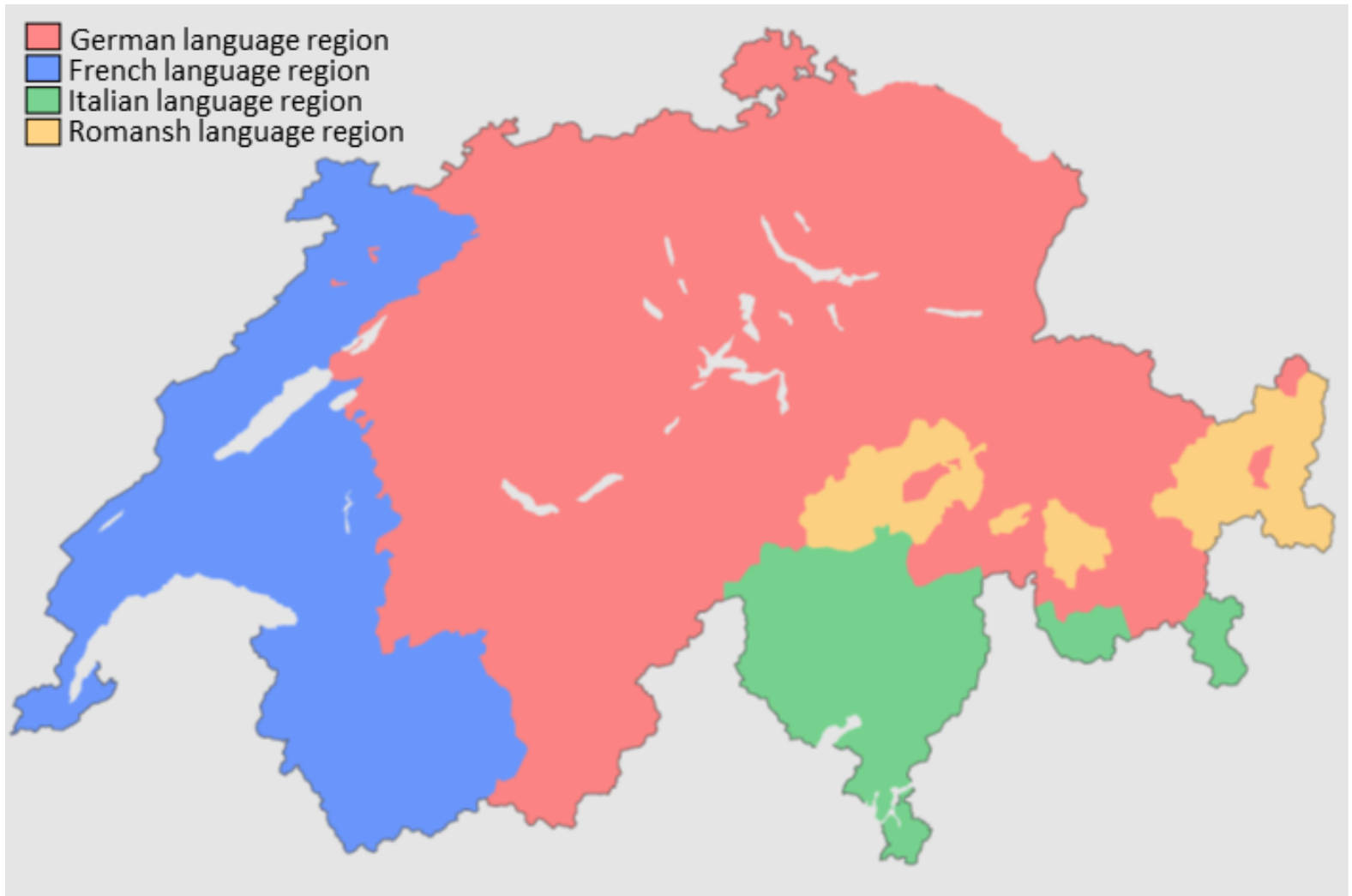
Employed persons, persons interviewed could indicate more than one language.

Source: FSO – Structural survey (SS)

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Monolingual plurilingualism?





The Inter-comprehension Strategy (Art. 8, Regulation)

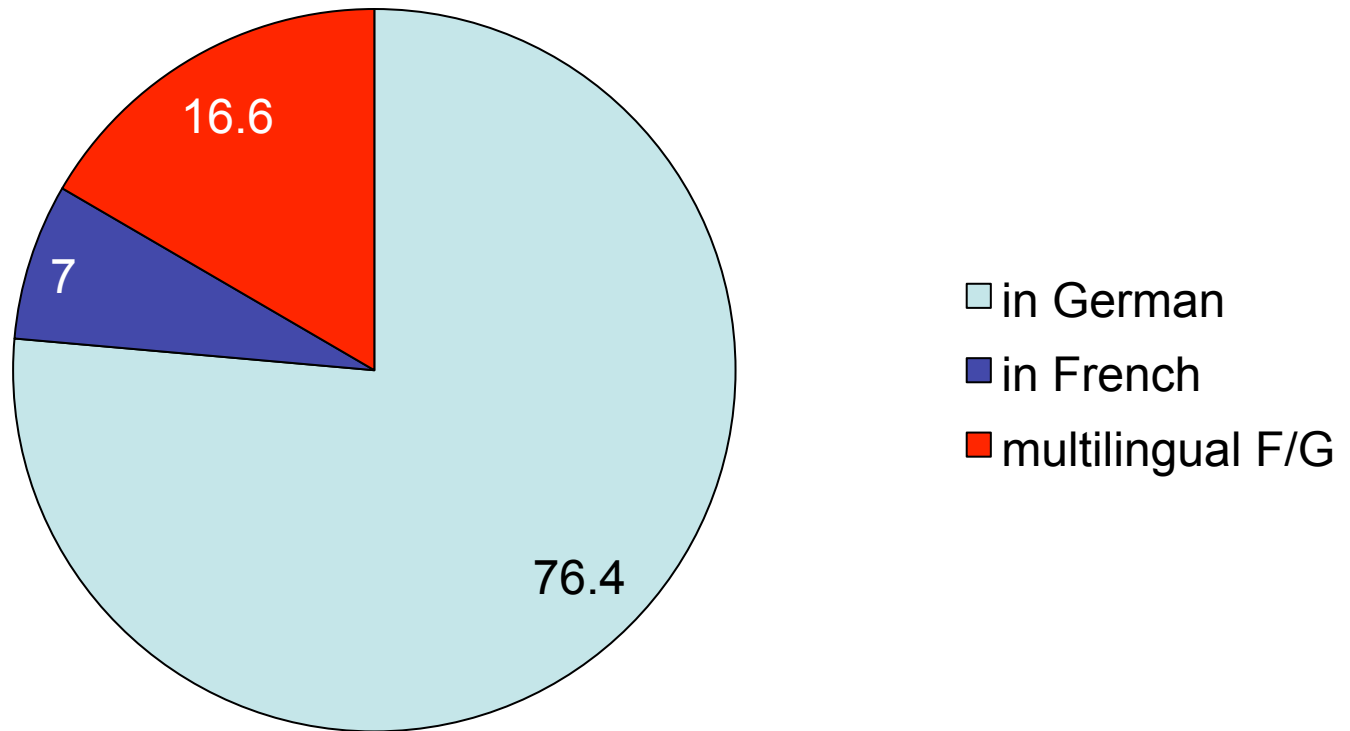
The inter-comprehension strategy within the Swiss public administration allows and requires

- Freedom to choose a communication and work language from among the official ones
 - Use of the first language
 - Thinking and working in different official languages
 - A very good receptive competence of the three official languages
- The public administration model is predominantly “multilingually receptive”



Inter-comprehension in reality

Legislative projects 2010-2012





Why a revised Regulation for the Federal Administration?

- It was difficult to implement the previous regulation because there was resistance to change
 - To reinforce multilingualism policy and national cohesion, the Swiss Parliament and the Swiss Government requested a revision of the Regulation
- Revised Regulation in force since 1 October 2014



Overview of Aims of 2014 Revision

	AIMS	TARGETS
1.	Represent linguistic communities	Reach target values (departments, offices, managers)
2.	Redefine recruitment strategy	Guarantee equal opportunities for speakers of all official languages
		Harmonize and improve recruitment procedures
3.	Reinforce language skills and training	Evaluate language skills
		Define new training strategy



Framework for Implementation

- The recent report *Promotion of Plurilingualism*
 - evaluates plurilingualism policy
 - presents developments of this policy from 2008 to 2014
 - provides the new framework for implementation



Policy & Approach

- Comprehensive and systemic approach
- Assessment of plurilingualism policy
- Transparency by publishing data



From words to actions ...

- Implementing the key points means we can
 - establish a clear set of priorities
 - transform recommendations into practical measures
 - develop a system where plurilingualism becomes a common thread linking implementation of various policies



The role of the Swiss Federal Delegate for Plurilingualism

Following the revision, the Delegate needs to be able to

- intervene in the key processes to promote multilingualism
- lead the implementation and follow-up of policy measures
- link the strategic and the technical levels
- connect the internal, national and international levels



Challenges of Implementation

- Motivate and convince – governing ‘by decree’ is not an option!
- Guarantee
 - the trade-off between ideals and reality
 - the coherence between internal and external strategy
- Turn priorities, aims and objectives into effective, efficient and concrete actions and results
- Build bridges between linguistic regions, external national organizations and the Swiss federal administration



Outlining the Benefits

The new linguistic requirements of the Swiss Confederation as an employer help us to:

- show the added value and the advantages of linguistic skills
- understand their economic value
- reinforce national cohesion



Working together

To reinforce the impact of our internal roles and processes we also need to be active at the international level by:

- sharing good practices
- creating a dedicated network of organisations discharging similar functions involving oversight and promotion (e.g. International Association of Language Commissioners)
- bringing together policy makers and researchers in a specific network (e.g. the recent initiative of Canadian Commissioner of Official Languages)