

# **T A J I K I S T A N**

## **SECTION A**

### **Capital**

Dushanbe 582,400 (1989 est.)

### **Area**

143,100 sq km (55,300 sq mi)

### **Form of government**

Republic

### **GDP—per capita**

Purchasing power parity—\$1,020 (1999 est.)

### **Population**

6,440,732 (July 2000 est.)

### **Ethnic composition**

|         |       |
|---------|-------|
| Tajik   | 64.9% |
| Uzbek   | 25.0% |
| Russian | 3.5%  |
| Other   | 6.6%  |

### **Official language**

Tajik (Farsi)

### **Other languages**

Russian, Uzbek, Kyrgyz, German, Crimean Tatar

### **Legislation dealing with the use of languages**

*The Constitution*, adopted on November 6, 1994

The new Tajik Constitution declares Tajik as the state language of the Republic. However, Russian is established as a language of inter-ethnic communication. All ethnic groups are provided with the right to use their native languages freely.

*Language Act of the Tadzhik Soviet Socialist Republic (July 22, 1989)*

The Law contains 37 articles dealing with rights of citizens to choose/use language and guarantees for protection of such rights. Russian is given the status of the language of inter-ethnic communication and also can be used in all spheres of social life. The Law recognizes the equality of all languages, provides legal guarantees and respectful treatment of all languages spoken in the territory of the country. It also protects the inalienable right of citizens of any ethnic group to protection and the free development of their languages and culture.

*Resolution #459 "On the Program of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan on Development of the State language and of other languages in the Territory of the Republic of Tajikistan", (October 21, 1997)*

"Approves the Program; orders all ministries, governmental committees and state, institutions, heads of local executive branches to initiate special arrangements in accordance Government with the Program within a month period and to present to the their proposals regarding their needs in accomplishing these arrangements; authorizes the Commission on Language under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan to carry out the control over the implementation of the Program."

*Program of the Republic of Tajikistan on Development of the State Language and of Other Languages in the Territory of the Republic of Tajikistan (adopted by the Resolution #459)*

"The Program revises all the measures, already carried out in pursuit of implementation of the Law on State Language during the period of 1989-1997; Program consists of two parts: Part One - Tajik (State) Language, Part Two -Other Languages. In Part One the Government designs special arrangements, aimed on fuller and further development of Tajik, such as organization of courses of Tajik, special educational programs, introduction of Tajik into business documentation, executive and judicial decisions and acts. It imposes certain obligation in this respect on various governmental bodies, and introduces special terms for this. Part Two concentrates on special arrangement, aimed on maintaining and harmonized development of all other languages, including courses of those languages at educational institutions, TV and radio broadcasts, etc."

## **Background notes**

Tajikistan is a multi-lingual country. Tajiki, a language of Iranian roots, is the most widely spoken. During the Soviet period, Russian was the lingua franca amongst the various ethnic groups in Tajikistan and Central Asia. While many of the ethnic Russians have fled Tajikistan during the last decade, the Russian language is still spoken by much of the native population. There are also a large number of Uzbeki speakers in Tajikistan, especially in the Leninabad Province and in the southwestern part of the country. To the east there are several Iranian based languages, named the Pamir languages that differ from Tajiki.

Tajik, like the other Central Asian languages, underwent a two-stage alphabet reform by order of the Soviet regime. First, the Arabic alphabet was abandoned in 1929 in favor of the Latin. Then, in 1940 Moscow declared Cyrillic the official alphabet of the Tajik language.

## **SECTION B**

### **Where does one observe language to be a problem in the country?**

During the Soviet era the central government tried to increase the number of Russian workers in Tajikistan through bonuses and scholarships. Many people were also relocated as political prisoners so that by 1940 roughly half of the republic's industrial work force belonged to non-indigenous nationalities; mainly Russians. Between 1926 and 1959 the proportion of Russians among Tajikistan's population grew from less than 1% to 13%. During the same period, the proportion of Tajiks dropped from 80% to about 50%.

Dushanbe, the capital, became a predominantly non-Tajik city. According to the 1989 census, Tajiks constituted 39.1%, Russians 32.4%, Uzbeks 10%, Tatars 4.1%, and Ukrainians 3.5% of Dushanbe's population of about 602,000.

The Language Law from 1989 made Tajik the sole state language by 1996, giving Russian the status "the language of interethnic communication". An amended version of the Language Law drafted in the summer of 1992 eliminated altogether the status of Russian as a language for conducting official business. While the educational system continued to conduct classes in Tajik, Russian and Uzbek language, government workers had to use Tajik in all written and oral work by the year 1994.

These proposed changes in the Language Law would have a serious negative impact on a large portion of the population. More than 25% of the population is Uzbek, and there are other sizable minorities in Tajikistan who speak little or no Tajik. Russian had been the dominant language used in official institutions in Tajikistan.

**To what extent are minority groups in this country disadvantaged by their language?**

The first draft of the Constitution of Tajikistan was published in the spring of 1992. Its Preamble begins with the words "We Tajiks..." and Article 2 states that, "the official language of the Republic of Tajikistan will be the Tajik (Farsi) language." The entire draft, and especially the language provision, which reinforced the Language Law of 1989, drew immediate protests from members of Tajikistan's national-ethnic communities. These communities, including Armenians, Georgians, Jews, Germans, Koreans, Ossetins, Russians, Tatar-Bashkirs, Uzbeks and Uighurs, are represented by the Coordinating Council of National Association (Communities) of the Republic of Tajikistan. As the Council pointed out, "as it is clear from the Preamble, over 40% of the non-Tajik population is not recognized by the authors of the draft of the new Constitution of Tajikistan."

**The use of language in everyday life e.g. education, broadcasting and other**

During the Soviet era Russian was the official language, dominating in all spheres of public life. However, Tajik was not abandoned entirely. The policy in Tajikistan differed from that of Kyrgyzstan. Schools with Russian, Tajik or Uzbek as the language of instruction depended on the ethnic composition residing in the certain territory. Literature, theatre, all forms of art based on linguistic form of expression, existed in Tajik, and were in fact flourishing and popular among Tajiks. Programs at both the professional and higher education institutions were available in the Russian and Tajik languages. This situation was possible mostly due to the fact that Tajiks comprised a majority of the population, with Russian speakers living predominantly in urban areas. The majority of Tajiks were bilingual, especially in urban areas. This is still the case, notwithstanding the dramatic change of the ethnic composition that took place due to the Civil war of 1990's.

The Russian speaking population was comprised of Russians as well as Ukrainians, Belorussians and Germans. They used the advantages that came with being the Russian speakers and knowledge of Tajik was not widely spread among them. Although Tajik was in the curricula of all non-Tajik schools, the level of teaching was insufficient. On the other

hand, the status of Russian as the language of official business and science resulted in the situation that very little importance was attached to learning the Tajik language at schools.

## UZBEKS

Ethnic Uzbeks make up approximately one quarter of the population but lack substantial representation in official positions. The number of Uzbek language newspapers, television broadcasts, and schools has declined significantly since 1992. With the exception of the trilingual (Tajik/Uzbek/Russian) school structure, the Uzbek language has no official status. Although the Government permits a daily Uzbek radio broadcast, Tajik and Russian language programs dominate. A weekly television broadcast in Uzbek ceased in August.

## RUSSIANS

In practice Russian is the language of interethnic communication and is widely used in government. While the government has repeatedly expressed its desire for the ethnic Russian and Slavic population to remain in the country, economic conditions provide little incentive for them to do so. Some local Russians and other Slavs perceive an increase in negative social attitudes toward them. A Slavic University (established in 1995) and a Russian high school operate in Dushanbe with Russian as the language of instruction, but also include Tajik and Uzbek students. An agreement ratified by the Russian Duma in December 1996 allows for dual Russian and Tajik citizenship.

## EDUCATION

The languages of instruction in the state system were Tajik, Uzbek, Kyrgyz, and Russian. When Tajik became the state language in 1989, schools using Russian as the primary language of instruction began teaching Tajik as a second language from the first through the eleventh grade. After independence, school curricula included more Tajik language and literature study and classical Persian literature. However, few textbooks were available in Tajik so that by the end of the 1980s, only 10 to 25% of students attending Tajik-language schools had textbooks or other teaching materials in their own language.

The pre-independence government of Tajikistan made some provision for the distinctive needs of minority nationalities living within the republic's borders. It provided education, mass media, and cultural offerings in Russian. In 1988 state radio began broadcasting in German, Kyrgyz, and Crimean Tatar. There were several Uzbek-language bookstores in the Republic. Late in the Soviet era, Dushanbe had cultural centers for Uzbeks, Ukrainians, and members of other nationalities as well as

restaurants that provided ethnic foods for Uzbeks, Tatars, Koreans, and Germans.

### **What else can be found out about languages and minorities?**

August 1990 - A declaration of sovereignty was adopted on August 25. Although the declaration emphasized the equality of all nationalities living in Tajikistan, the growth in Islamic influence, the rediscovery of the Tajiks' Iranian heritage and language and the uncertain political situation, all contributed to an increase in emigration from the Republic, mainly by Europeans and educated Tajiks.

January 1994 - The Russian community in Tajikistan has sent a letter to President Yeltsin, suggesting the introduction of dual citizenship for local Russian-speaking residents, and the creation of a united economic as well as spiritual space.

July 20, 1994 - Tajikistan's parliament rejected a proposal to make Russian an official language alongside the state language of Farsi. A second proposal to grant Russians and other ethnic minorities dual citizenship was shelved.

September 7, 1995 - Tajikistan and Russia signed an agreement on dual citizenship and a declaration on greater integration between the two countries. The declaration also contained a promise from both countries to prevent discrimination against ethnic minorities, and to provide full civil, social, economic and cultural rights to all citizens of both countries irrespective of an individual's nationality.

May 2, 1996 - A new weekly newspaper called "Press Panorama" was registered by the Tajik Ministry of Culture and Information. The weekly will be published in five languages - Tajik, Russian, Uzbek, Persian and English. The main aim of its founders was "to propagate the ideas of democracy, humanity and friendship among peoples".

April 23, 1999 - An agreement on the procedure for and conditions of broadcasting of Russian TV-companies' programs in Tajikistan was signed within the framework of the country's president Emomali Rakhmonov's visit to Russia. The Russian language of the broadcasting was an important part of this agreement.

According to the estimates 380,000 ethnic Russians left the country. The new language policy is not considered to be the major reason for the emigration from the country, but more likely they have left seeking greater economic opportunities.

## APPENDIX A

### MAP OF TAJIKISTAN



## **APPENDIX B**

### **TAJIKISTAN - CONSTITUTION**

Constitution as adopted on November 6, 1994

#### **Article 2**

The state language of Tajikistan is Tajik. Russian is a language of inter-ethnic communication. All nations and peoples residing on the territory of the republic have the right to use freely their native languages.

#### **Article 17**

All persons are equal before the law and the courts. The government guarantees the rights and freedoms of every person regardless of ethnicity, race, sex, language, faith, political beliefs, education, or social or property status. Men and women have equal rights.

#### **Article 65**

The President is elected for a term of five years by the citizens of Tajikistan on the basis of general, equal, and direct voting rights by secret ballot. Any citizen who is age 35 to 65, is fluent in the state language, and has been resident on the territory of Tajikistan for at least the previous ten years may be nominated as a candidate for the office of President of the Republic. A candidate for the office of President of the Republic is any person who has so registered and has collected the signatures of nomination of no less than five percent of the voters. No one may be President for more than two consecutive terms.

#### **Article 88**

Judges review cases both on panels and individually. The judicial process is exercised on the basis of the principle of the adversarial nature and equality of parties. Hearings in all courts are open, except in cases anticipated by law. Judicial proceedings are carried out in either the state language or in the language of the majority of the people of a given locality. Persons who do not speak the language of the judicial proceedings are provided with the services of an interpreter.



# **LANGUAGE ACT OF THE TADZHIK SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC**

The Language Act of the Tadzhik Soviet Socialist Republic (hereinafter only "TSSR") defines the legal position of the Tadzhiki (pharsi) language, declares its usage to the whole territory of the TSSR and provides guaranties so that the Russian language may be used for the communication among the nations of the USSR and so that the minority languages used in the territory of the TSSR may also be used.

Proclamation of the Tadzhiki language to be the state language in the TSSR does not decrease nor limit constitutional rights of citizens whose mother tongue is a different language. The TSSR declares equality of languages, provides legal guaranties and fair treatment to all languages used in its territory and protects the indisputable right of all citizens of any nationality for their cultural and language development and for their legal equality regardless their mother tongue.

## **CLAUSE I**

### **GENERAL PROVISIONS**

#### **Article 1**

The state language in the TSSR is the Tadzhiki language (pharsi).

#### **Article 2**

The Russian language is freely used in the territory of the TSSR as a communication means between the USSR nations.

#### **Article 3**

The TSSR establishes good conditions for a free development and usage of Gorskobadaschan (Pamir) languages and for presevation of the Jagnob language.

The Highland Badaschan Autonomous Region sets regulations for the usage of local languages independently.

#### **Article 4**

This Act defines the legal status and areas of usage of the Tadzhiki, Russian, Uzbek, Kirghiz, Turkmen and other languages and sets citizens' rights and guaranties for their free choice and language protection.

This Act does not provide for the usage of languages in public places, everyday life, communication in work teams, enterprises, institutions and organisations listed by the Council of Ministers, nor at religious worship, rituals and festivals.

## CLAUSE II

### CITIZEN'S RIGHTS AND GUARANTIES TO CHOOSE A LANGUAGE

#### **Article 5**

The TSSR ensures a right to every citizens to choose a language for communication with State Authorities and Administration and with enterprises, organisations and institutions (including public institutions) and to receive information and documents in the state language, Russian language or any other accepted language.

#### **Article 6**

Employees of the State Authorities and Administration, public organisations as well as Judicial bodies, health institutions, cultural and trade organisations, services, transportation industry, social security institutions, real estate offices and those, who are, due to their working circumstances, in regular contact with citizens of other nationalities are required to speak the state and Russian languages sufficiently to manage their professional duties.

## CLAUSE III

### STATE AUTHORITIES AND ADMINISTRATION AND PUBLIC ORGANISATIONS

#### **Article 7**

State Authorities and Administration of the TSSR and Public Organisations manage all their agenda in the state language.

Sessions, meetings, conferences, workshops are held in the state language while speakers may choose another language. Should there be people who do not speak the state language, translation is arranged into Russian and, if possible, also to other languages.

Local Authorities and Administration and local Public Organisations in areas, where a minority language is used by the majority of population, may use the state language and the minority language.

Local Authorities and Administration and local Public Organisations in Dushanbe use the state language to manage their agenda within deadlines and by means specified by the Council of Ministers of the TSSR.

### **Article 8**

Acts of the highest bodies of the TSSR are adopted in the state language and published in the Thadziki, Russian and Uzbek languages.

Acts of the highest bodies of the TSSR and documents of the Republic Public Organisations are adopted in the state language and published in the Thadziki and Russian languages.

Acts of the Local Authorities and Administration and documents of Public Organisations are adopted in the state language and published in the Thadziki language and other languages, if needed.

Acts of the Local Authorities and Administration and documents of Public Organisations in regions with a majority population of another nationality are adopted and published in both the state and national languages.

### **Article 9**

The communication between the State Authorities and Administration and Public Organisations of the TSSR with the State Authorities and Administration of the USSR, union bodies of Public Organisations and with other Union Republics is held in the Russian language.

The communication with other countries is held in the language accepted by both parties.

### **Article 10**

The communication of State Officials of the State Authorities and Administration and Public Organisations is held in the state language, or Russian language or a translation is furnished.

State Officials of the State Authorities and Administration of the TSSR and Public Organisations respond to citizens' requests and complaints in the state language, or Russian language or another acceptable language.

## **CLAUSE IV**

## **ENTERPRISES, INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS**

## **Article 11**

Enterprises, institutions and organisations (including the public organisations) maintain their agenda in the state language.

Enterprises, institutions and organisations where most of employees do not speak the Tadjiki language maintain their agenda in Russian or in a language used by the majority of employees, while these enterprises, institutions and organisations shall create conditions, including necessary finance, to allow its employees manage the Tadjiki language and translate all their agenda into the state language.

## **Article 12**

Enterprises, institutions and organisations located in the TSSR communicate with the State Authorities and Administration and Public Organisations of the TSSR as well as between themselves in the state language, with foreign enterprises, institutions and organisations in Russian or any other language acceptable for both parties.

Enterprises, organisations and institutions which held their agenda in minority languages may communicate with the State Authorities and Administration and Public Organisations of the TSSR as well as between themselves in both the state and minority languages.

## **Article 13**

Officials in enterprises, institutions and organisations, including public organisations, respond to citizens' requests and complaints in the state language, Russian or other acceptable language.

## **Article 14**

Documents issued to citizens by the State Authorities and Administration, enterprises, institutions and organisations, including public organisations are written in Tadjiki or Russian or both Tadjiki and Russian, upon citizen's request.

## **Article 15**

Mail and telegraph service in the TSSR is held in the state or Russian language.

## **CLAUSE V**

**JUDICIAL BODIES, STATE ARBITRATION, NOTARY AND MATRIMONIAL OFFICES**

## **Article 16**

In accordance with the Article 160 of the Constitutions of the Tadzhik SSR, court action in the TSSR is held in the Tadzhiki language or in the language used by the majority of the population.

Should there be a person in the court who does not speak the language, the person has a full right to study the court documentation and take part in the court employing an interpreter and is entitled to speak in the mother tongue.

## **Article 17**

Misdemeanour action is held in the state language or in the language used by the majority of the population.

People charged for an administration offence and other participants are entitled to speak in their mother tongue and, if they do not understand the language of court, they shall be assigned an interpreter.

The Minutes of an administration offence is written in the state language. If the person charged of an administration offence does not speak the state language, a minute is issued in Russian or translated into another acceptable language.

## **Article 18**

Arbitration bodies in the TSSR settle business disputes between enterprises, institutions and organizations in the state or Russian language.

## **Article 19**

Notary records in state Notary Offices and in Executive Committees of Municipal and Local Soviets of People's Deputies of the TSSR are written in the state language or Russian or in the language acceptable for the majority of the population.

## **Article 20**

Records in Matrimonial Offices of the TSSR are written in the state and Russian languages.

CLAUSE VI

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND CULTURE

## **Article 21**

The TSSR guarantees the freedom to all citizens to choose an educational language for achieving general secondary education in the Tadzhiki, Russian, Uzbek languages and, in territories with compact population of another nationality, in their mother tongue.

## **Article 22**

To all citizens living in its territory, the TSSR ensures the education of Tadzhiki and Russian at general schools, secondary modern schools, secondary industry schools, universities and other educational institutions.

Head officers at pre-school establishments and schools, as well as teachers and tutors are obliged to speak the language used in their establishment.

## **Article 23**

At all secondary modern and industry schools and at all universities in the TSSR, regardless the specialization, the education process is carried out in the state language.

At secondary modern and industry schools and at universities, groups are established using the Russian and Uzbek language.

## **Article 24**

The state ensures that the Tadzhiki language is taught at all schools and in all study groups, regardless their specialization, which use another educational language.

The graduates from secondary modern schools, industry schools and from universities are required to manage the state language so that they can carry out all their professional duties, in respect of their final exam.

## **Article 25**

In the TSSR, post-graduate studies are carried out in the state, Russian or Uzbek language.

## **Article 26**

In the area of scientific research, two languages, Tadzhiki and Russian, share equal rights to be used.

Scientific studies and theses for achieving a scientific degree are written and presented in Tadjiki or Russian, and/or other languages with regard to Committee members and institutional resources.

#### **Article 27**

The TSSR creates good conditions for the research of the Tadjik script based on the Arabian alphabet and for publishing literature using the aforementioned script.

#### **Article 28**

The TSSR ensures production of films, TV films, video films and other pieces of art in the state language and their follow-up translation into other languages. It also ensures translation of the aforementioned pieces of art from other languages to the state language.

#### **Article 29**

The TSSR gives attention and supports the language, culture and educational development of the Tadjiks living abroad.

### **CLAUSE VII**

#### **NAMES AND INFORMATION**

#### **Article 30**

Names of ministries, state committees, central offices, enterprises, institutions and organizations, including public organizations, as well as of their bodies and departments shall be in the state language, and accompanied by a translation to the Russian or other languages.

#### **Article 31**

The TSSR ensures the preservation of the Tadjik names and historical toponyms in its territory and guarantees a public supervision over the proposals for new names, names of cities and villages and of historical and cultural monuments.

Citizens of the TSSR are entitled to use their names in accordance with their national traditions. They are also entitled to spell their first name, father's name and surname to the principles of their mother tongue.

## **Article 32**

All texts in forms, seals, stamps, prints, and letterheads of enterprises, institutions and organizations are written in Tadzhiki and Russian.

All texts in notice boards, announcements, decrees, advertisements, which are displayed publicly, are written in the state language and, in inevitable circumstances, accompanied by a translation to the Russian or other language.

## **Article 33**

All products manufactured by companies operating in the TSSR shall bear labels and instructions in the state language with a translation into Russian.

Sales or trade companies shall provide labels in the state and Russian languages for products imported from other countries of the USSR or from abroad.

## **CLAUSE VIII**

### **SUPERVISION AND PROSECUTION**

## **Article 34**

The Council of Ministers of the TSSR, local Soviets of People's Deputies and their executive bodies, ministries, state committees, central offices as well as head staff in enterprises, institutions and organizations shall ensure the supervision, regardless their position and rank, over the observance of this Act.

## **Article 35**

Advertising animosity to any national language, any act of defamation or degradation motivated by language usage, or of setting obstacles and limits to free language usage, or of restricting citizens' constitutional rights and freedoms as well as any breach of the language equality shall be prosecuted.

## **Article 36**

This law shall become effective in several stages. These shall be specified by the Highest Soviet of the Tadzhik SSR.

The Council of Ministers of the TSSR shall carry out measures to put this Act into practice.



**Article 37**

The Highest Soviet of the Tadzhik SSR shall carry out supervision over the observance of this law.

Chair of the Presidium of the Highest Soviet of the TSSR – G. Pallajev

Secretary of the Presidium of the Highest Soviet of the TSSR – A. Kasymova

July 22, 1989

Dushanbe

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