

PROPER NOUNS OF THE STATE LANGUAGE AND THEIR SPELLING

Summary

Proper nouns, like common nouns, are a part of speech written in the same letters, with the same inflections, suffixes, prefixes, roots, genders, according to the same rules accentuated, inflected and equally subject to the language system.

The Lithuanian alphabet, like the alphabet of many other Western European languages, is based on the Latin alphabet. There were 23 letters in classical Latin and 32 letters in Lithuanian. In Lithuanian, there is one separate letter for each sound in the language, so there are no letters *x* and *q* denoting two sounds. There is also no letter *w*, which in recent times has been taken over from Germanic languages by Latin. The letters *v* and *w* denote the same sound, so it makes no sense to denote **one** sound in speech by **two** different letters.

In Lithuania (and in many other countries) traditional place names and personal names are considered to be those that have been used for a very long time by the local population and are completely rooted in the local language. In Lithuania, most place names are of the Lithuanian origin, as they were named by the locals and only after that the place names came into writing in various languages. The majority of personal names (as in other languages) in Lithuania are not entirely of local origin, as many Christian and similar names and surnames originated from other languages and by non-Lithuanian scribes were usually first recorded in other languages. But even those personal names now have Lithuanian vowels, consonants, inflections, suffixes and are considered Lithuanian proper nouns by the locals.

It is incorrect to suggest that the supposedly “non-Lithuanian” names and surnames of the citizens of the Republic of Lithuania and foreign countries would be written in the documents of the Republic of Lithuania in “non-Lithuanian Latin characters”. Then three new letters would appear in the Lithuanian language, and by writing letters based on the Latin alphabet of all countries – about 150 new letters, and thus the Lithuanian alphabet would be changed. For those who wish to use “foreign letters”, this can be entered in additional document records, without violating Article 14 of

the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, the state language system and the rights of the majority of citizens to read and pronounce an unusual personal name accurately. It is also useful for anyone with a personal name written "foreign", as it would be spoken correctly and not distorted in this case. In addition, then the rights of those Lithuanians, who live in Lithuania, received unusual names and want to maintain their nationality, to be well-understood and loyal citizens of the Republic of Lithuania, are inviolable.

It is unreasonable to demand the provision of special (privileged) legal protection of "foreign" names and surnames "as the main signs of personal identity" in Lithuania. Personal names who came to Lithuania during a thousand years used to take roots in the Lithuanian language and to become a part of it. The main personal identifier is the personal code, and there are thousands of many identical names and surnames. They can also be changed, written in the alphabets of other languages, but no person's identity changes from then on. A personal name is part of a language, not the private property of any person. It is wrong to think that there are no Lithuanian (Baltic) personal names abroad. Lithuanians have lived and are living in many countries of the world, and the Baltisms are found between Berlin and Moscow, because the Balts, from whom Lithuanians originated, lived there before.

There is no reason to officially write Lithuanian personal names, place names, street names in foreign language alphabets and in distorted forms. Proper nouns are not translated into other languages.

It is unreasonable to require the names of juridical persons in Lithuania to be written in non-Lithuanian and therefore to change the laws. This would also violate the rights of most citizens to accurate information, and would deprive these bodies of some of their interest. Nothing prevents Lithuanian juridical entities from advertising in the desired language abroad.

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