



HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO  
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET  
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

Konstantin Zamyatin, University of Helsinki

Presents his work

## Official Status for a Minority Language: a Remnant from the Past, a Temporary Solution or a Vision for the Future

at the CEREN Colloquium

Monday 1 June, at 16.15 – 18.00

at Pohjoinen Hesperiankatu 15 A (Buzzer “SSKH”)

WELCOME!

The official language can be an instrument of state language policies, which may encourage minorities to maintain their languages, or may force minorities to abandon them. Konstantin Zamyatin is concerned with the phenomenon of the official languages of minorities and tackles the problem of a possible controversy in the application of the concept of ‘official status’ to minority languages. He wonders, if such concept is an empty construction, which is meant to demonstrate symbolically a “visible diversity”. It might be that despite the proclaimed diversity, the official status is only a result of previous policies, which does not reflect current ethno-political situation, or a temporary compromise in policies directed at change in ethno-political regime and further elimination of differences. What are the differences in the official statuses of a language of majority and a minority language? When does an official status given to a minority speech community indeed promote diversity in deeper sense? Is there a minimum composition of domains of language status, which allows maintaining differentiation and promoting minority language use, and what elements are crucial to it? Answers are sought in the context of the language situation of Swedish in Finland and Udmurt in the Udmurt Republic of the Russian Federation. A case study can depict the amount of measures, institutions and domains in public sphere, which provide a minority language with a vision for the future beyond a mere official recognition.

*Konstantin Zamyatin is a PhD student in Finno-Ugrian Studies, Helsinki University. His areas of speciality are nationality policies in the Russian Federation and ethno-political developments concerning the minority peoples speaking Finno-Ugric languages.*

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