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Foreign language uses and language management in company locations in Russia

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Since the collapse of the Soviet Union Russia has become a very attractive market for many international companies. A number of companies from all over the world are cooperating with Russian partners or maintain representative offices or branches in the Russian Federation. A common language – either that of the country of origin, Russian or a lingua franca (primarily English) – is indispensable in order to communicate and cooperate successfully. Various measures can be applied to cover foreign language needs in a company, e.g. hiring staff with language skills, language training in the company or the use of interpreters and translators. Forward planning in language management can bring considerable economic benefit, yet this aspect of management appears to be neglected in most companies. Research on this topic with regard to Russia is still rather scarce.

Within a Joint Project in collaboration with the University of Saratov and additionally financed by an *Erste-Bank-MOE*-grant, some explorative steps have been taken. Based on preliminary, semi-structured interviews an online-survey was constructed. 158 companies with locations in Russia took part in the survey which included questions about language uses, measures to cover language need, and the practice of language management. The most striking findings concern the theoretical and practical uses of a company language, the diversity of languages used in specific communicative situations, and the uses of English and Russian as *linguae francae*. Purposeful language management and awareness of its relevance are still rather rarely found.

Therese Garstenauer has studied sociology, Russian language and literature, and history in Vienna, Moscow and Edinburgh. She has worked as freelance researcher, as a research and teaching assistant at the Department of Economic and Social History (University of Vienna) and has been a fellow at the International Centre “Work and Human Life Course in Global History” at HU Berlin. Presently, she is research associate in the Russian-Austrian project „Russian Corporate Communication: A Discourse Analysis“ at the Institute of Slavic Studies, Vienna University of Economics and Business.