

# ROMANSH

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Cover design:

APART CAV GmbH, Zurich

Design and layout:

Fotosatz Graf, Chur

Plates, printing and finishing:

Südostschweiz Print AG, Chur

This publication is based on manuscripts, articles and reports as listed in the bibliographies for each of the individual sections. It is available in its entirety on the website of the Lia Rumantscha ([www.liarumantscha.ch](http://www.liarumantscha.ch)).

The Lia Rumantscha would like to thank all the above-mentioned for their greatly valued inputs and, in particular, Gion-Giachen Furer, Roveredo, for meticulously reading the draft text and for numerous useful suggestions and proposed improvements.

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ISBN 3-03900-037-3

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Language minorities can be compared with sensitive ecosystems, in that they react to the slightest change in their environment. The Romansh-speaking minority, whose 60000 or so native speakers could all be fitted into a single sports stadium (and it would not even need to be a really big one), is no exception. This language has been eking out an existence for many hundreds of years, tucked away in the valley communities of the Swiss canton of Graubünden, surrounded on all sides by bigger and more powerful language groupings and left to its own devices with no linguistic “hinterland” anywhere else in the world.



Isolationism between the different districts of its territory was the outcome of historical, geographical, political and religious factors and, although the Romansh-speaking territory was at least geographically intact up until the nineteenth century, all these factors have prevented the development of a single sense of identity even right up to the present. So taking a strict view, there is no such thing as a single “Rumantschia”, but five separate, more or less introverted language groupings, which, since time immemorial, have all been complacently singing the praises of their own particular dialect and written language. A feeling of oneness – through elements such as a common written language or a daily newspaper serving the whole Romansh community – might thus appear to be a pure luxury.

One of the targets set by the Lia Rumantscha, which was created in 1919 as the Romansh umbrella organisation, is to channel all the available efforts and to fight together to prevent the threatened erosion (i.e. Germanisation) of the Romansh-speaking territory. What really matters is to make sure that Romansh speakers themselves are convinced of the need to campaign actively for their language, to make full use of the right to read and write it and to use it whenever and wherever possible in both its spoken and written form. For this to happen, there is a need not only to promote and foster the dialects and idioms (i.e. traditional regional written forms) but also to ensure the much more widespread use of the modern standardised written language, namely Rumantsch Grischun, since, in the final analysis, it is only the latter that can ensure the much-desired general presence of Romansh in all walks of life.

The legal basis which exists for Romansh in Switzerland today is, of course, the precondition for a systematic and efficient policy for maintaining the language. Laws to protect minority languages can, however, only have a practical impact if the speakers of the language themselves are willing to maintain and promote Romansh. They must be ready to broaden their horizons, to put their traditional narrow perspectives behind them and, at least in part, to abandon their own particularism for the sake of strength through unity.

Romansh is one of Europe’s endangered languages. A purely statistical view would suggest that it is likely to disappear from the language map of Switzerland in only a few decades. Forecasts about language trends are, however, notoriously difficult. At one stage, the final demise of Romansh was predicted for the second half of the twentieth century – a forecast which, fortunately, turned out to be wrong. As long as Romansh speakers want to speak their language and as long as they never tire of seeking out new horizons, Romansh is here to stay as a living language.

*Manfred Gross*

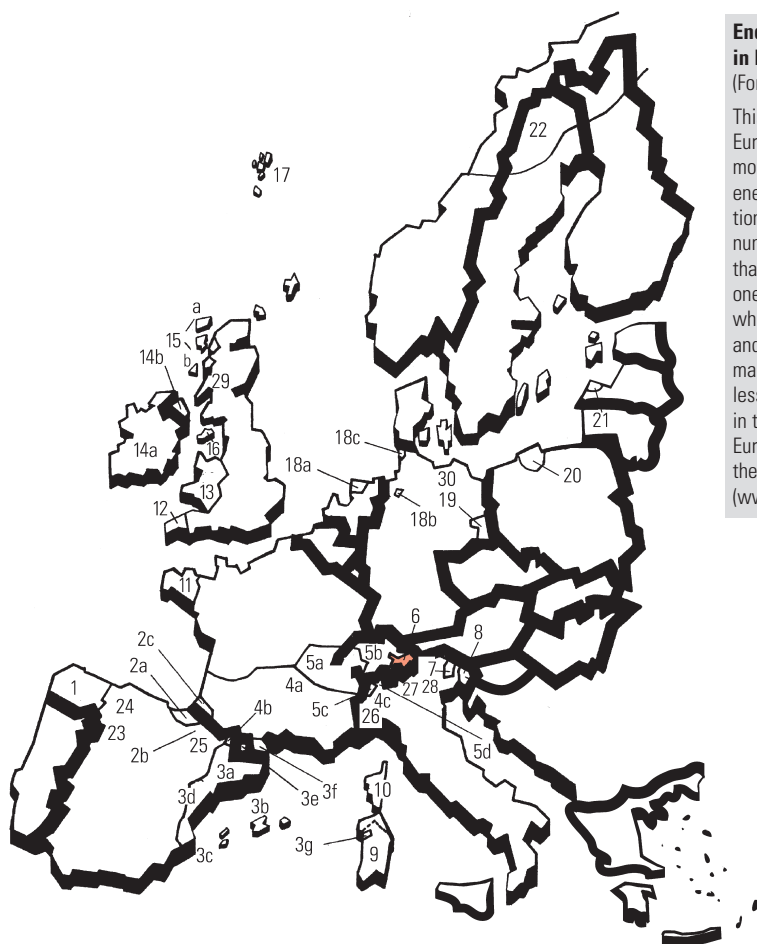
## Language minorities in Europe

There are more than a hundred indigenous languages in use in daily life throughout the countries of the European Union (EU). However, only twenty of these are recognised as official working languages of the Union: Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish and Swedish. Each of these languages is also the official language of one or more of the twenty-five EU member states. Of the approximately 450 million EU citizens, around 100 million speak a language other than the official national language of the member country in which they live, which means that roughly one EU citizen in seven is a member of a language minority. These "lesser used" languages can be subdivided into five major categories:

### Endangered languages in Europe

(For Legend, see pp. 10, 11.)

This map includes those European languages that are more or less seriously threatened throughout their traditional territories as well as a number of other languages that are regarded as separate ones by their speakers, but which are generally viewed and treated as dialects. This map only partly includes the lesser-used languages spoken in the ten central and eastern European countries that joined the European Union in 2004 ([www.eurominority.org](http://www.eurominority.org)).



- the national languages of two of the smaller EU member states that are not official working languages of the Union: Irish and Luxemburgish;
- the languages spoken by communities in just one EU member state; examples are Breton in France, Friulian and Sardinian in Italy or Welsh in the United Kingdom;
- the languages spoken by communities in two or more EU member states; examples are Catalan in Spain, France and Italy, Basque in France and Spain, Occitan in France, Italy and Spain and Saami in Finland and Sweden.
- the languages of communities that form a minority in one country, although they may constitute the majority in another; examples are German in Belgium, Danish in Germany, Finnish in Sweden and Swedish in Finland;
- languages that are not linked to a particular territory but which have been spoken traditionally in one or several countries and which can thus not be assigned to clearly defined geographic limits; examples are the languages of gypsies and Jews (Romani, Yiddish, Judaeo-Spanish and Ladino).

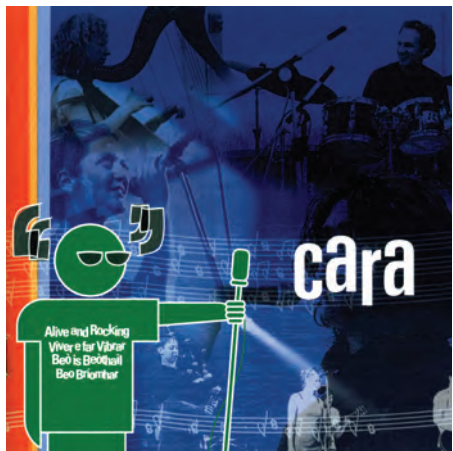
The extent to which lesser used languages are recognised and promoted, the status they enjoy and the use that is made of them vary greatly from one country to another. It is often the case that, compared with other languages that are employed in all facets of public life, these particular languages are only used to a limited extent and may even be completely marginalised.

The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms outlaws any discrimination based on language or association with a national minority (article 14). In 1992, the Council of Europe (of which Switzerland is also a member) adopted its European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Its central purpose is to safeguard and promote linguistic diversity as one of the most valuable elements of European cultural life. According to its own definitions, the Charter only encompasses those languages that have grown up historically and whose existence is threatened; in other words: regional or minority languages that are traditionally used by the citizens of the country concerned in a particular territory thereof and whose numbers are smaller than the rest of the population. It does not include dialects of the official language(s) nor the languages of immigrants.

The area in which most of the protective and promotional measures are applied is restricted to the language's traditional territory. In addition, the Convention also mentions the criterion of the number of people using a minority language as justification for introducing particular promotional measures, which may extend outside of its traditional territory. Each country (which, in the case of Switzerland, means each canton) can decide for itself which promotional measures are applicable for which linguistic group as a function of its own specific situation.

The individual European states are increasingly recognising and promoting minority languages. Examples are Spain, where the Catalans have been granted an autonomous statute, Italy, with special measures applicable in the French-speaking Val d'Aosta and the Trento–Alto Adige (South Tyrol) region, as well as France, which now permits some use of its regional languages in schools. In response to a call from representatives of the minority languages in the European Parliament, the European Community has set up a Bureau for Lesser Used Languages, and this has already been able to implement interesting projects to support Breton in France and Friulian in Northern Italy.





“Cara” (= “friend”): a joint Gaelic/Romansh musical production (CD), supported by the British Council Switzerland, GiuRu (the Romansh youth organisation) and the Lia Rumantscha.

Generally speaking, Switzerland complies with the minimum protection and promotional requirements laid down in the **European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages** (<http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/en/treaties/html/148.htm>) and it ratified it in September 1997. In autumn 1999, the Swiss federal government (Federal Council) approved the first report on implementation of the Language Charter in Switzerland and in December 2002 the second report too, and these were submitted to the Council of Europe for its consideration. Both reports deal with general aspects of the application of the Language Charter from the point of view of the federal authorities with added contributions from the cantons of Graubünden and Ticino, which play a central role in implementing it (<http://www.kultur-schweiz.admin.ch>).

Since 1848, Switzerland’s multilingualism has been included in the Confederation’s constitution. In 1938, Romansh was recognised as a **national** language

in addition to French, German and Italian (but it did not become an **official** language of the Confederation). With the recognition of Romansh as a partially official language in 1996 (see section on Legal Position of Romansh, pp. 38 ff.), it has now been placed on the same footing as Switzerland’s other three official languages as far as certain matters are concerned. The Federal Constitution’s “language article”, number 70, (article 116 before the wholesale amendments of 1999) places a duty on the Confederation and the cantons to work proactively and in a better-targeted manner in future to safeguard and strengthen the language minorities. At the same time, they are also to promote the multilingualism of individuals as the basis for a better understanding between Switzerland’s various language communities.

Language	Position (in region)	Position (in country)
<b>1 Galician</b>	strong	weak
<b>2 Basque</b>		
a Spain (Basque provinces)	strong	weak
b Spain (Navarra)	weak	weak
c France	weak	very weak
<b>3 Catalan</b>		
a Generalità	very strong	relatively weak
b Balearic Islands	very strong	relatively weak
c Valencia	relatively strong	relatively weak
d Aragon	relatively weak	relatively weak
e Andorra	very strong	very strong
f France	weak	very weak
g Italy (Sardinia)	weak	very weak

Language	Position (in region)	Position (in country)
<b>4 Occitan</b>		
a France	weak	very weak
b Spain (Aran)	strong	weak
c Italy	weak	very weak
<b>5 Franco-Provençal</b>		
a France	very weak	very weak
b Switzerland	(very) weak	very weak
c Italy (Val d'Aosta)	relatively strong	very weak
d Italy (other parts)	very weak	very weak
<b>6 Romansh</b>	strong to very weak	strong in theory, relatively weak in practice
<b>7 Central Ladin</b>		weak
a South Tyrol/Alto Adige	strong	
b Trento	relatively weak	
c Belluno	very weak	
<b>8 Friulian</b>	relatively weak	very weak
<b>9 Sardinian</b>	weak	very weak
<b>10 Corsican</b>	very weak	very weak
<b>11 Breton</b>	weak	very weak
<b>12 Cornish</b>	Died out once, revived in the 1970s and now (2002) with around a thousand speakers	
<b>13 Welsh</b>	strong	weak
<b>14 Irish Gaelic</b>		
a Republic of Ireland	relatively weak	strong in theory, relatively weak in practice
b Northern Ireland	very weak	very weak
<b>15 Scots Gaelic</b>		very weak
a Hebrides	strong	
b Other areas	weak to relatively strong	
<b>16 Manx</b>	very weak	very weak
<b>17 Faeroese</b>	very strong	weak (in Denmark)
<b>18 Frisian</b>		
a West Frisian	strong	weak
b Central Frisian	very weak	very weak
c North Frisian	relatively weak	very weak
<b>19 Sorbian</b>	relatively strong	weak
<b>20 Kashubian</b>	relatively weak	very weak
<b>21 Livonian</b>	very weak	very weak
<b>22 Saami (Lappish)</b>	relatively strong	weak
Claims for separate-language recognition have been made, inter alia, by: 23 Leonese, 24 Asturian, 25 Aragonese, 26 Piedmontese, 27 Lombard, 28 Venetian, 29 Scottish (Scots English), 30 Low German (Plattdeutsch).		

## 12 Europe's Romance languages

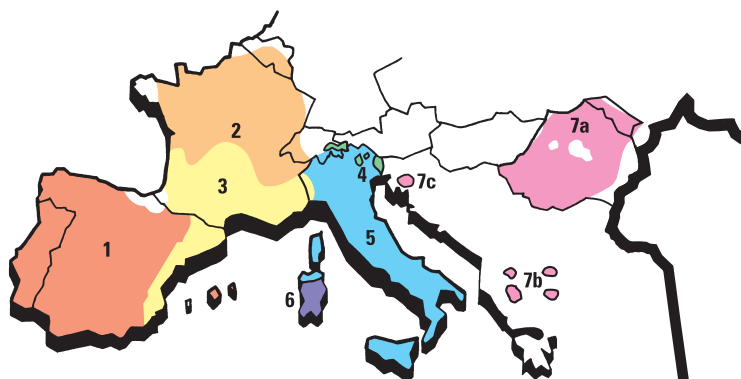
"Orbis romanus" is the name given to the area that had been conquered by the Romans by the start of the third century AD and which they had, at least partially, Romanised. The Vulgar Latin that was spoken by Roman soldiers, officials and merchants began to spread and to fuse with the languages that were there before it. Over different periods of time and under different circumstances, the following Romance languages eventually formed: Portuguese, Spanish, Catalan, Aragonese, Asturian, Gallegan, Occitan, French, Franco-Provençal, Rhaeto-Romance (Swiss Romansh, Dolomitic Ladin with Cadorino, Comelico and Friulian), Italian, Sardinian, Dalmatian (a language formerly belonging to the Eastern Romance group, extinct since 1898) and Romanian.

Taking the degree of closeness between the individual languages as a criterion, it is possible to divide the Romance world into three main groups: **A. Western Romance:** (Ibero-Romance, Gallo-Romance, Rhaeto-Romance and Northern Italian); **B. Eastern Romance:** Central and Southern Italian, Dalmatian and Romanian; **C. Sardinian**



**The Romance World at the beginning of the third century AD**

- 1 Western Romance
- 2 Eastern Romance
- 3 Sardinian
- 4 Territories not completely Romanised



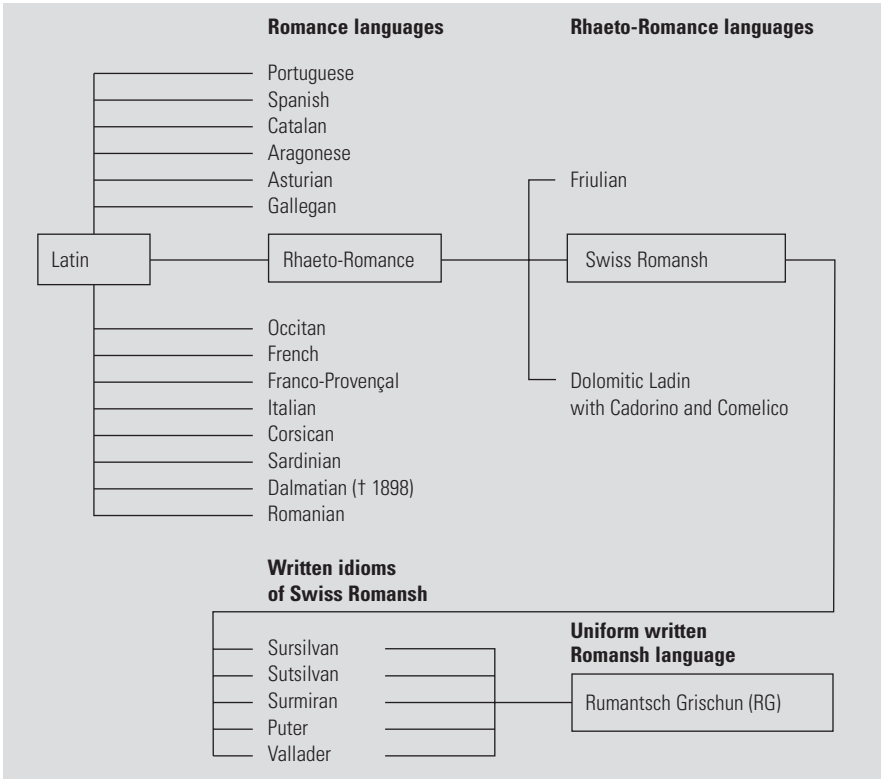
**The Romance World today**

(Based on W. von Wartburg, "La fragmentacion..." p. 11)

- 1 Ibero-Romance
- 2 Gallo-Romance
- 3 Occitano-Romance
- 4-6 Italo-Romance
- 4 Rhaeto-Romance
- 5 Italian
- 6 Sardinian
- 7 Balkan Romance
- 7a Daco Romanian (Romania and Moldova)
- 7b Macedo Romanian and Megleno Romanian
- 7c Istro Romanian

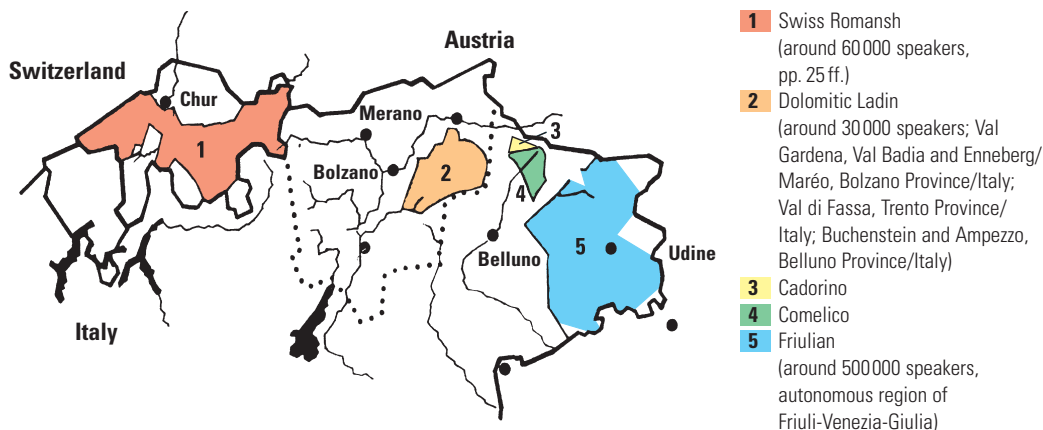
**Genealogy of the Romance Languages**

Latin, the multifarious vehicle of Greco-Roman and Christian culture, gradually developed through phonetic, morphological and syntactic shifts and replacements into a series of more or less standardised Romance (or Neo-Latin) languages of regional, national and even trans-national importance:



**Use of terms such as “Rhaeto-Romance”, “Romansh” and “Swiss Romansh”**

The term “Rhaeto-Romance” has two main meanings. In Switzerland, people in general use it (and a number of related terms) to refer to one of the Romance language spoken in parts of Graubünden (the other being Italian). In scientific circles, however, the term “Rhaeto-Romance” has had a different significance for over a hundred years, which coincides precisely with “Ladino” as used scientifically in Italian. Since 1883 (Theodor Gartner), linguists have taken it to include a whole group of languages (“unità”), encompassing the spoken Romance languages of the Romansh parts of Graubünden, the Ladin-speaking territories of the Dolomites and Friulia. This group division was originally postulated by Graziadio Isaia Ascoli back in 1873 and is based on the “particular combination” of a number of (internal) linguistic characteristics throughout the territories where these languages were spoken that



Ascoli laid down as if it had the force of law. Since around 1910, Italian researchers, in particular, have challenged or at least questioned this view for various motives (nationalism, a policy of divide-and-rule, semantic misinterpretation of the Italian “unità” as “unity” rather than “unit”, and so on and so forth). From this perspective, Swiss Romansh and Dolomitic Ladin are considered as conservative outlying dialects of Lombard or Venetian, whilst Friulian is sometimes even granted the status of an autonomous Romance language. More recent classifications carried out using statistical linguistic instruments (such as dialectometry) would appear to confirm the adequacy of the essential contents of the Ascoli/ Gartner definition.

### Romansh as a language in its own right

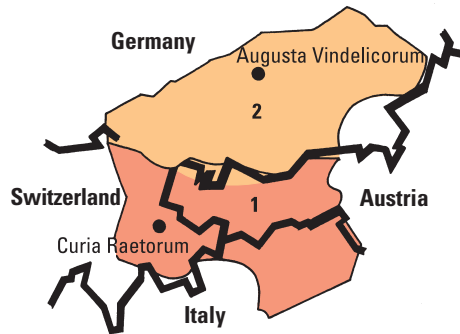
That Romansh is a language in its own right was recognised scientifically by linguistics back in the middle of the nineteenth century. Despite that, there have always been individual voices and whole tendencies ready to dispute Romansh's position as a separate language. The first really massive attack against a separate Romansh language came in the middle of the First World War from groups of Italian language researchers. Their thesis, that Swiss Romansh ought to be regarded as a spoken dialect very close to Alpine Lombard, was very clearly disproved as one-sided and tendentious by Swiss Romanists.

What is decisive in settling the issue as to whether or not to count Romansh as a dialect of Italian is not the relative proximity or remoteness of Swiss Romansh and the Italian dialects of the Lombardy Alps. The decisive factor is the self-perception of the Romansh people in Graubünden, which is rooted in Graubünden's independent historical and cultural development (Liver, 1999, 22).

For a number of Romance languages, the table demonstrates both relationships and differentiation and shows what gives Swiss Romansh its originality within this family:

Romansh (RG)	Italian	French	Spanish	Portuguese	Catalan	Romanian	Dol. Ladin	English
dumengia schaner otg um emblidar chaussa tetg fraid a revair grazia bun di  buna saira buna notg	domenica gennaio otto uomo dimenticare cosa tetto freddo arrivederci grazie buon giorno  buona sera buona notte	dimanche janvier huit homme oublier choses toit froid au revoir merci bonjour  bonsoir bonne nuit	domingo enero ocho hombre olvidar cosa techo frío hasta luego gracias buenos días  buenas tardes buenas noches	domingo janeiro oito homem esquecer coisa teto frio até logo obrigado bom dia  boa tarde boa noite	diumenge gener vuit home oblidar cosa sostre fred fins aviat gràcies bon dia  bona tarda bona nit	duminica ianuarie opt om uita lucru acoperiş rece la revedere multumesc buna ziua  buna seara noapte buna	domenia jené ot el, om desmentié cossa tet freit assevedei dilan bon di  bona seira bona nuet	Sunday January Eight man forget thing roof cold good-bye thank you good morning/ afternoon good evening good night
baselgia cotschen mellen alv Bumaun Tschuncaisma	chiesa rosso giallo bianco Capodanno Pentecoste	église rouge jaune blanc Nouvel An Pentecôte	iglesia rojo amarillo blanco Año Nuevo Pentecostés	igreja vermelho amarelo branco Ano-Novo Pentecostes	església roig, vermell groc blanc Cap d'any Pentecosta	biserica rosu galben alb Anul Nou Rusalii	glieja cucen ghel blanch An Nuef Pasca de Mei	church red yellow white New Year Whitsun

Bibliography: Lerclerc, J.: Les grandes familles linguistiques du monde, Québec, Université Laval, [www.tifq.ulaval.ca/axl](http://www.tifq.ulaval.ca/axl); Decurtins, A.: "Das Rätoromanische in der Sprachforschung" in: Decurtins, Rätoromanisch, vol. 1, Romanica Raetica 8, Chur, 1993, pp. 27-86; Jud, Jakob, A Linguistic and Ethnographical Atlas and Italian Speech Domain of Switzerland and of Upper and Central Italy. In: Romanic Review, New York, Vol. 14, pp. 489-494; Goebel, H.: "Methodische und wissenschaftliche Bemerkungen zum Diskussionskomplex 'Unità ladina'" in: Ladinia 14 (1990), pp. 219-257; Goebel, H.: "Giovane Battista und Ascolis Methode der 'Particular combinazione'" in: Ladinia 23 (1999), pp. 139-181; Haarmann, H.: Kleines Lexikon der Sprachen, Verlag C.H. Beck, Munich, 2001; Haarmann, H.: Lexikon der untergegangenen Sprachen, Verlag C.H. Beck, Munich, 2002; Holtus G. et al. (eds.): Lexikon der Romanistischen Linguistik, Vol. 8, Max Niemeyer, Tübingen, 1999 (with bibliography)

Period	Historic event
15 BC	<p>The Romans conquered the territory between the Rhaetian Alps and the River Danube. Up until around 400 AD, the <b>Province of Raetia</b>, which covered this region, underwent intensive Romanisation. Vulgar Latin, as spoken by Roman soldiers, officials and merchants fused with the region's former languages to become a <b>Vulgar Latin with a Rhaetian imprint</b>. Through processes of sound shifts and linguistic differentiation, it has gradually developed into Rhaeto-Romance as it still exists today.</p> <p>Apart from numerous surviving names of places and other geographic features, we know virtually nothing about the language of the pre-Roman inhabitants of the Alpine region. The Romans regarded the ancient Rhaetians ("Raeti" in Latin) as tribal relatives of the Etruscans, who had been driven out of the Po Valley in Northern Italy by the invading Celts (around 400 BC) and had sought refuge in the part of the Alps that is still named after them today.</p>
300 AD	<p>As part of the reorganisation of the Roman Empire, the province of Raetia was divided in two. What is today Eastern Switzerland, Graubünden, Vorarlberg, the neighbouring portion of Tyrol, the Venosta Valley and parts of Central Switzerland were grouped together to form <b>Raetia Prima</b>, with Curia Raetorum (the present-day Chur) as its capital. The Bavarian and Swabian Uplands to the north of Lake Constance as well as the northern parts of Tyrol became <b>Raetia Secunda</b> with Augusta Vindelicorum (the present-day Augsburg) as its capital. Christianity started to spread.</p>  <p>The map illustrates the division of the Roman province of Raetia into two parts: Raetia Prima (red) and Raetia Secunda (orange). Raetia Prima is located in the south, covering parts of modern-day Switzerland, Austria, and Italy. Its capital, Curia Raetorum, is marked near Chur. Raetia Secunda is located to the north, covering parts of modern-day Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Its capital, Augusta Vindelicorum, is marked near Augsburg. The map also shows the borders of Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and Italy.</p>
500	<p>Collapse of the Roman Empire. At the time of its <b>greatest extent</b> in the course of the fifth century AD, "Rhaeto-Romania" covered a territory stretching from the upper Danube to the Adriatic.</p>
536	<p>As a more or less autonomous state under ecclesiastical sovereignty (<b>Raetia Curiensis</b>), "Raetia Prima" became part of the Kingdom of the Franks.</p>
806	<p>Charlemagne introduced the <b>Franconian system of administration</b> into Raetia. The former Rhaetian <i>Presis</i>, with his seat in Chur, was replaced by a German count. German-speaking nobles and officials moved into the lower parts of the valleys (Lindenbauer et al., 1994, 45), the consequence of which was that German became the language of anything to do with administration and the like and Romansh was hardly used in writing.</p>
843	<p>The Diocese of Chur ceased to be suffragan to the Archdiocese of Milan and became suffragan to the Archdiocese of Mainz. It was the decisive <b>final step in giving Raetia a northerly orientation towards the German-speaking world</b>.</p>
5 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup> C.	<p>Starting in 496 AD, numerous Alemannian groups colonised territories between Lake Constance and the Glarner Alps. To begin with, the process of Germanisation was slow. Other German groups (both Alemannian and Bajuvarian) penetrated as far as Northern Italy and drove wedges between what became three language islands: Swiss Romansh, Dolomitic Ladin and Friulian (see page 14).</p>

Period	Historic event
9 <sup>th</sup> /10 <sup>th</sup> C.	The Rhaeto-Romance language territory came under the German king or Holy Roman Emperor. Alemannian feudal lords and vassals took over power. This is the time of the <b>oldest surviving written document in Rhaeto-Romance</b> (the so-called “Würzburg manuscript”).
11 <sup>th</sup> /12 <sup>th</sup> C.	This was the time of the so-called <b>Einsiedln Homily</b> , a Rhaeto-Romance translation of part of a Latin sermon, written in-between the lines of the original.
13 <sup>th</sup> /14 <sup>th</sup> C.	German-speakers from the Upper Valais (known as “Walsers” or “Gualsers”) colonised several of the higher Graubünden valleys: Rheinwald (Valragn), Vals (Val Sogn Peder), Stussavgia (Safien), Avers (Avras), Obersaxen (Sursaissa), Schanfigg (Scanvetg), Prättigau (Partenz) and Davos (Tavau).
14 <sup>th</sup> /15 <sup>th</sup> C.	<b>Graubünden</b> slowly matured to <b>political autonomy</b> . Developments started away from the feudal system towards democracy in the form of autonomous communes and high courts, which later (1471) came together in a loose confederation known as the (Free) State of the Three Leagues.
15 <sup>th</sup> C.	A large fire destroyed <b>Chur</b> in 1464, and it was <b>completely Germanised</b> when it was rebuilt. The Romansh people thus lost their linguistic and cultural centre.
16 <sup>th</sup> /17 <sup>th</sup> C.	Romansh developed into a <b>written language</b> . The decisive drive for the creation of a literary language came from the Reformation (which started in the Upper Engadin) and the Counter-Reformation as well as the country's political developments (see section on Romansh Literature, pp. 71 ff.).
1794-1892	Up until this time, German was, for practical reasons, regarded as the official language of the individual leagues and also of the State of the Three Leagues as a whole. In the 16 <sup>th</sup> , 17 <sup>th</sup> and 18 <sup>th</sup> centuries, state diets repeatedly insisted that any document submitted to them as well as all official records had to be in the German language. It was the Assembly of Estates in 1794 that first broke with this tradition and proclaimed the <b>trilingualism of the Free State of the Three Leagues</b> . In 1803, the Three Leagues adopted the name Graubünden and joined the Swiss Confederation. The new canton subsequently adopted a benevolent attitude towards the Romansh and Italian languages. Every delegate in the cantonal parliament was entitled, at his discretion, to use his own native tongue. Official decrees were recorded and printed in German, Romansh and Italian. The 1880 and 1892 versions of the cantonal constitution contained the <b>express guarantee for all three of Graubünden's languages as cantonal languages</b> . That meant basically the same <i>status</i> for the three national languages. However, in practice, the state authorities attempted to Germanise the Romansh-speaking districts in the nineteenth century.
19 <sup>th</sup> C.	The facilitation of access to the mountain regions (building of railways and roads) and the increasingly prosperous tourist business began to pose a new threat for Romansh. Native speakers came to regard their language as an economic impediment. So it was replaced with German in schools, churches and public offices. In the face of such threats, various leading personalities made appeals to the Romansh people to defend their language. This reaction brought about the so-called “Rhaeto-Romance Renaissance”.
1885-1946	Setting up of a number of organised bodies to promote Romansh culture and language (see section on the Lia Rumantscha, pp. 84 ff.).



Period	Historic event
1919	Setting up of the <b>"Lia Rumantscha"</b> (LR) as an umbrella organisation for all associations dealing with Romansh language and culture (see section on the Lia Rumantscha, pp. 84 ff.).
1938	In a national referendum, the requisite dual majority of voters and cantons recognised Romansh as a Swiss national language (see section on Legal Position of Romansh, pp. 38 ff.).
1940-1980	Increasing growth of Romansh awareness; publication of dictionaries, grammars and anthologies; opening of Romansh kindergartens; integration courses for non-native speakers of Romansh; scientific research and publications; reversion of Germanised village names to Romansh; didactic materials for schools and adults; active efforts to maintain village theatres and literary creativity; promotion of Romansh choirs; preparation of language legislation; official requests to the federal authorities to make funding available for maintaining the language; Romansh children's books and publications for young people; promotion of Romansh by institutions outside of its language territory (Quarta Lingua, Stapferhaus, Pro Helvetia and various foundations and others).
1979/80	Proposals for a new language law based on the territoriality principle; various expert legal opinions.
1980/81	The Lia Rumantscha drew up a comprehensive new concept for the maintenance and promotion of the Romansh language and culture. Its central postulate was the <b>normalisation</b> of the language situation on the basis of <b>planning its corpus, status and use</b> (see section on the Lia Rumantscha, pp. 88 ff.). As a reaction to an official submission by the Lia Rumantscha and Pro Grigioni Italiano to the Federal Council (i.e. government) in 1981, the latter set up an expert working party, which reported a year later under the title of "Two-and-a-half-lingual Switzerland? Current Status and Future of Romansh and Italian in Graubünden".
1982	Working on a contract from the Lia Rumantscha, Prof. Heinrich Schmid of Zurich University drew up "Guidelines for the creation of a written Romansh language for the whole of Graubünden, Rumantsch Grischun" (see section on Rumantsch Grischun, pp. 92 ff.).
1985	The Lia Rumantscha organised the first "Scuntrada rumantscha" (a week-long Romansh get-together) in Savognin in Central Graubünden (marking the 2000th anniversary of "Rhaeto-Romania"). Similar events have followed since then at intervals of three years or more.
1986	The Federal Council issued "guidelines for translations into Romansh by the federal authorities" (see section on Legal Position of Romansh, pp. 39 ff.).
1988	Publication of a full-scale mock-up of a Romansh daily, "La Quotidiana", during the second "Scuntrada Rumantscha" in Scuol (Lower Engadin).
1989	A working party set up by the Swiss Federal Department of Home Affairs analysed the actual situation of quadrilingual/multilingual Switzerland and submitted proposals for a future Swiss language policy.
1990/91	Opponents of Rumantsch Grischun petitioned the Federal Council, calling on it to refrain from using the unified language in official publications from the federal administration. The petition led to a heated debate about the pros and cons of Rumantsch Grischun, but it also served to mobilise advocates of the standardised written language.
1993	Under the title of <b>"Pledari grond"</b> (PG), the Lia Rumantscha published its complete linguistic database in book form.

## Period Historic event

- 1994 In accordance with its revised statutes, the Lia Rumantscha started to use Rumantsch Grischun for all official and administrative texts intended for the whole of the Romansh-speaking territory. Publication of a full-scale mock-up of a **magazine, "Punts"** ("Bridges") **for all Romansh-speaking young people**. This monthly is now well-established.  
For the first time, the "Pledari grond" was published in electronic form for outside use as well. With around 200000 entries (2003), it is the most comprehensive and most up-to-date collection of terms in Romansh and German. Since 2001, it has been available on CD-ROM with integrated verb conjugations.  
A cantonal working party on the "Graubünden linguistic landscape" submitted a strategy report to the cantonal government, which contained not only a broadly-based analysis of the linguistic situation and state-of-health of the canton's languages but numerous specific proposals and measures for promoting and maintaining the use of three languages in the canton as well as particular points regarding Romansh.
- 1995 The voters of the Val Müstair and the Lower Engadin (plus S-chanf and Zuoz in the Upper Engadin) voted in favour of a **new regional/inter-communal official-language rule**, which lays down that Romansh is to be used in local public administrations, schools and public life. This example has since been followed by various communes in Surselva (Bündner Oberland) and Surmeir (Oberhalbstein).  
Publication of the results of a survey organised by the cantonal government into the acceptance of the unified language Rumantsch Grischun (see section on RG, p. 97).
- 1996 In a referendum held on 10 March, the Swiss people accepted a revision of article 116 of the federal constitution (since renumbered 70), with 76% in favour, thereby elevating the status of Romansh to that of **an official federal language of the confederation in certain fields**. It had been back in 1985 that the members of the federal parliament from Graubünden had submitted a motion to amend this article of the constitution.  
The Graubünden cantonal parliament approved a financial contribution for a Romansh press agency (see section on the Media, p. 66).  
For the first time in its history, the Swiss Federal Court (Lausanne) handed down a judgement worded in Romansh (case: BGE 122 I 93).  
Following on from a recommendation issued by a working party it had set up, the Graubünden government elevated the unified language, **Rumantsch Grischun**, to the **status of official language** (see section on Rumantsch Grischun, p. 98).  
Since 1996, the School of Applied Linguistics ([www.sal.ch](http://www.sal.ch)) in Zurich and Chur, in cooperation with the Lia Rumantscha, has been offering a diploma in the Romansh language, which is comparable with the German diploma issued by the Zurich Chamber of Commerce. Starting in 2002/03, it expanded its Romansh syllabus, offering both a preliminary and a final diploma in Romansh (see section on Schools, p. 51).  
Since December 1996, the daily "Engadiner Post/Posta Ladina" has been publishing two pages of news in Romansh.
- 1997 The **ratification of the Council of Europe's Language Charter**, which is intended to safeguard and promote regional or minority languages that are regarded as an endangered part of Europe's cultural heritage, was approved by the two chambers of the Swiss federal parliament, firstly the

Period    Historic event

Council of States and then the National Council (the latter on 18 December). As proposed by the Federal Council (government), the languages covered in Switzerland are Romansh and Italian. On 6 January, the Gasser Media company launched a Romansh daily newspaper (“La Quotidiana”). The existing weekly regional newspapers have been integrated in “La Quotidiana” (with the exception of the “Pagina da Surmeir”, which serves Central Graubünden).

In a cantonal referendum held on 2 March, the voters accepted a partial amendment of the cantonal education law, whereby at least one cantonal language must be taught as a second language at all primary schools and in all reduced-size classes catering for special needs. Several communes whose primary school has German as its language of tuition have opted for Romansh as a compulsory or optional subject.

On 18 December, the Swiss parliament completed ratification of the European Language Charter when it was accepted by the larger house, the National Council, the smaller house, the Council of States, having accepted it some time before. This charter sets out to safeguard and promote regional or minority languages as a threatened component of Europe’s cultural heritage. The Federal Council (government) proposed applying it to Italian and Romansh in Switzerland.

1999 The cantonal government authorised the communes on or near the language border to teach Rumantsch Grischun in schools as a second language.

In the amended federal constitution (referendum vote of 18 April), the language article was renumbered “70” instead of “116” (see section on “Legal position of Romansh at federal level”, p. 38). In a cantonal referendum, the Graubünden voters accepted a **law on the promotion of culture**, which includes provisions for safeguarding and promoting the canton’s trilingualism.

On 6 July, the Graubünden government adopted an ordinance on the canton’s *lycées* or *Gymnasien* (academic-type upper-secondary schools). The choice of first foreign language for German speakers has now been basically restricted to Romansh and Italian. Where Romansh is chosen, it is Rumantsch Grischun that is applicable (§3).

2000 Starting in the 1999/2000 academic year, a number of Graubünden upper-secondary schools started to offer a **bilingual “matura”** (= baccalaureate) in German and Romansh.

As of 1 January, the Graubünden cantonal government recognised the School for Applied Linguistics as a tertiary-level vocational college.

In November, the cantonal parliament decided that, in future, the systematic collection of cantonal law (the “Statute Book”) would be published in only one written form of Romansh. The government decided that that would be Rumantsch Grischun.

2001 In a cantonal referendum held on 10 June, the voters accepted a partial amendment of Graubünden’s law on the exercise of political rights (modification of article 23 and renumbering as article 66). The amendment had



Caspar Decurtius’ “Rätoromanische Chrestomathie”: a tremendously rich collection of Romansh writings over the centuries

## Period Historic event

been opposed on language grounds by an initiative founded in Surselva. Under the new law, Graubünden follows the practice previously introduced by the confederation and now issues the Romansh version of all documents to do with votes and elections only in the standardised language, Rumantsch Grischun, (whereas previously it had used both Sursilvan and Vallader) (see section on Legal position of Romansh – cantonal level, p. 41).

- 2002 The joint-chair for Romansh language and literature at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) and Zurich University finally had a new professor appointed to it as of the summer semester, following a vacancy that had lasted since 1997.

In March, around 2700 signatories submitted a manifesto about saving Romansh to the Graubünden cantonal government and the Swiss Federal Council, prompted, in particular, by the alarming decline in the number of speakers according to the 1990 and 2000 nationwide censuses. The manifesto calls for a series of urgent measures to be introduced by the communes, the canton and the federal authorities.

In November, the Romansh-speaking members of the Graubünden cantonal parliament formed a parliamentary group of their own.

The daily “la Quotidiana” was restructured. In April, its publisher, Südostschweiz Presse AG, sacked the regional editors responsible for the Engadin and Surmeir and greatly increased the amount of material it took from the ANR news agency.

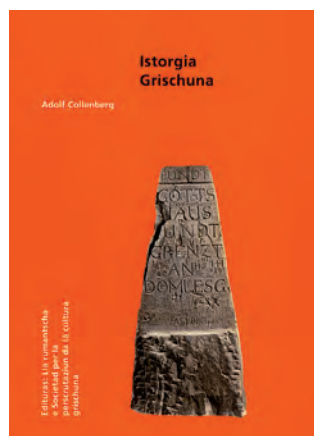
- 2003 The Lia Rumantscha drew up a **strategic concept**, which is intended to take the requirements of the communication and information society of the third millennium fully into account. A project group charged with a broadly based analysis of the internal situation (“ANINT”) at the Lia Rumantscha put forward specific proposals for each of its fields of activity.

In a referendum held on 18 May, the cantonal voters accepted a **total revision of Graubünden’s constitution**, including a clear commitment to trilingualism (see section on “Legal position of Romansh”, p. 41).

The two-volume history of the Rhaeto-Romance people in the form of a comic strip depicts the life of the early Rhaetians much better than any previous works.



The “Istorgia Grischuna” presents Graubünden’s history in an informative, lively and entertaining manner – and in Romansh.



## Period Historic event

In March, the first court judgement was handed down concerning compulsory attendance at a Romansh-speaking school in Suraua (in the Lugnez/Lumnezia district of Surselva). The Graubünden administrative court rejected the case brought by a German-speaking family that had moved into the district, wishing to send their child to the all-German lower-secondary school in Ilanz rather than the German-Romansh school in Vella, claiming the excessive dominance of Romansh was impeding their child's progress through school (see "La Quotidiana", 10 January 2003).

On 25 August, the Graubünden parliament accepted a general proposal from the cantonal government to use **only Rumantsch Grischun for all Romansh school materials as of 2005** (cf. section on Rumantsch Grischun, p. 95). The various organisations of Romansh teachers, the education authorities, the regional language and cultural associations as well as the Romansh deputies in the parliament opposed this decision and called on the cantonal government to draw up a comprehensive concept for introducing Rumantsch Grischun into schools. The deadline for the concept was set at 2005 at the latest.

On 29 November, the regional Romansh organisation for Surselva, "Romania", held a "Cumin romontsch" (popular assembly) in Disentis/Mustér, which called for the setting up of a **separate parliamentary body for the Romansh community**.

2004 On 17 January, the URB (the nationwide association for Romansh people living outside of Graubünden) called a special meeting in Zurich to present and discuss the outcome of the November "cumin" in Disentis/Mustér (cf. section on "Lia Rumantscha", pp. 89-90).

On 21 February, in the finals of the first casting show, "Music Star", organised by Swiss television (SF DRS), the Romansh speaker, Mario Pacchioli from Rabius (Surselva) finished in second place. In August, he brought out a brand new solo album called "Mario Pacchioli", partly in Romansh and partly in English, and managed to top the Swiss charts.

At its meeting on 28 April, the Swiss Federal Council (i.e. cabinet) decided not to go ahead with steering a new **federal language law** through parliament.

On 29 April, the young people's magazine "Punts" celebrated its tenth anniversary (cf. section on "Media", p. 70).

In December, a new CD appeared on the market called "Lain fabular" – an album of Beatles' hits translated into Romansh, inspired and directed by Benedetto Vigne and Gioni Fry.

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## Switzerland and its four languages

Switzerland is a nation that is the result of the expression of political will. By way of contrast to its neighbours, the fundamental element of Swiss identity is neither a single common national language nor a uniform cultural or even ethnic tradition. The Swiss perception of statehood is based on shared political convictions ascribed to by all Swiss citizens, notwithstanding their different linguistic and cultural traditions. These shared convictions include adherence to a federal form of government, direct democracy and linguistic/cultural diversity. Switzerland is a confederation, and its 26 member cantons (twenty full cantons and six half-cantons) have an extensive measure of sovereignty. Seventeen of these cantons are German-speaking, four French-speaking (Jura, Neuchâtel, Vaud and Geneva), one Italian-speaking (Ticino) and four have more than one language (Berne, Fribourg, Valais and Graubünden). Three of these are bilingual (French/German), whilst the fourth, Graubünden<sup>1</sup>, is trilingual (German, Romansh and Italian). In addition, numerous other languages that are not Swiss national languages are spoken by migrant workers and other immigrants.

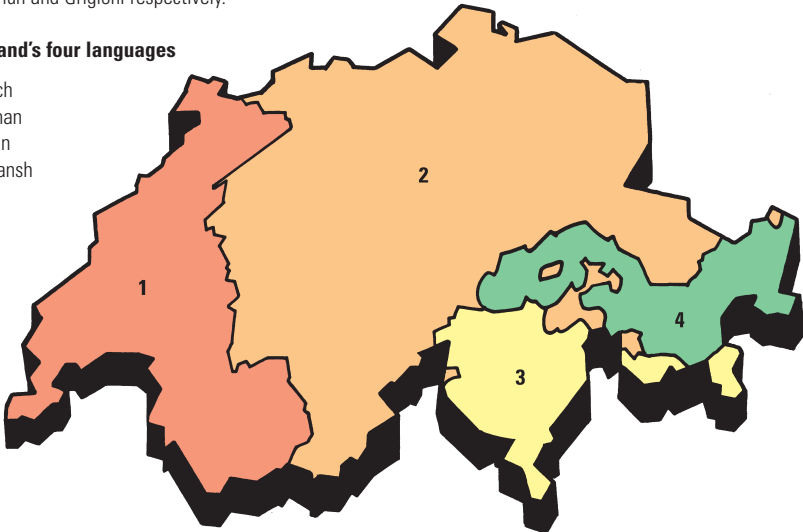
<sup>1</sup> In English, the canton of Graubünden is occasionally referred to by its French name, Grisons. In Romansh and Italian it is known as Grischun and Grigioni respectively.



The new federal constitution of 18 April 1999 includes the duty for the federal authorities and Canton Graubünden to do more to safeguard and promote the minority languages, Romansh and Italian.

## Switzerland's four languages

- 1 French
- 2 German
- 3 Italian
- 4 Romansh



Switzerland has been carrying out a regular population census every ten years since 1850, and one of the parameters appraised since 1860 has been the linguistic affiliation of its inhabitants. However, the fact that the wording of the language-related questions has been changed more than once places severe limits on the extent to which results can be compared over the decades. In 1860 and 1870, the questionnaire wanted to know about the “main language of the household” and then from 1880 to 1980 it asked about “native tongue”. In 1990 and 2000, two questions were asked:

- which is the language in which you think and of which you have the best command?  
(with only one answer permitted)
- which language(s) do you speak regularly?  
a) at home, with relatives; b) at school, at work, in your job  
(multiple answers permitted, if appropriate)

Selected census results for the whole of Switzerland between 1880 and 2000 (in brackets: percentages):

	1880	1980	1990		2000	
	NT	NT	BC	BC + MS	BC	BC + MS
DE	2 030 792 (71.3)	4 140 901 (65.0)	4 374 694 (63.6)	4 951 280 (73.4)	4 640 359 (63.7)	5 285 700 (72.5)
FR	608 007 (21.4)	1 172 502 (18.4)	1 321 695 (19.2)	2 268 499 (33.6)	1 485 056(20.4)	2 416 034 (33.2)
IT	161 923 (6.7)	622 226 (9.8)	524 116 (7.6)	998 187 (14.8)	470 961 (6.5)	971 505 (13.3)
<b>RM</b>	<b>38 705 (1.4)</b>	<b>51 128 (0.8)</b>	<b>39 632 (0.6)</b>	<b>66 356 (1.0)</b>	<b>35 095 (0.5)</b>	<b>60 816 (0.8)</b>
O	6 675 (0.2)	379 203 (6.0)	613 550 (8.9)		656 539 (9.0)	
Σ	2 846 102	6 365 960	6 873 687		7 288 010	

1880-1980: NT = Native tongue. 1990 and 2000: BC = Best-command language, spoken at home, school or work. DE = German, FR = French, IT = Italian, RM = Romansh, O = Other languages; Σ = Total population

The 1990 and 2000 census results permit a much more detailed analysis of the language situation than those of 1880-1980. However, even the most recent censuses do not do justice to the needs of Romansh-speakers either. Romansh speakers, who are all at least bilingual (with the exception of some young children and some very old people), were only allowed to specify one language in answer to the first question. Many of them thus felt obliged to indicate German as the language of which they had the best command, given that it is the one most used at work and that some of them have grown to speak it at least as well (if not better) than their native Romansh. The second question does not represent a suitable means of establishing the effective use of language either: Romansh is spoken regularly in many spheres not covered by the census. A less restrictive form of wording (not specifying the three areas) would produce a more complete picture and show Romansh to be in more widespread use than the census results suggest.

# Graubünden and its three languages

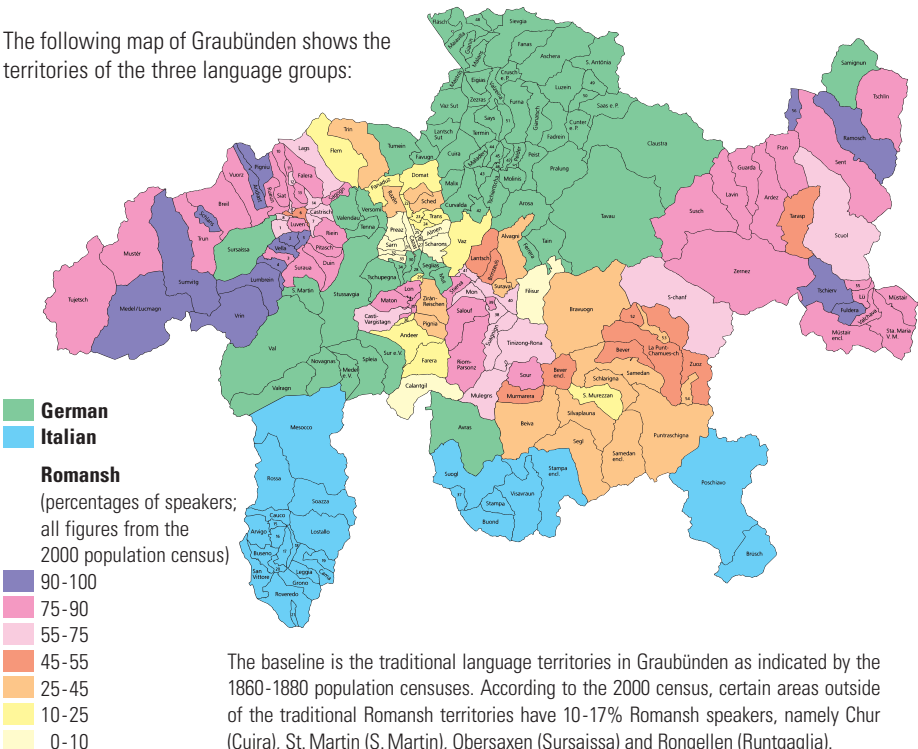
Graubünden is the only canton in Switzerland to have three official cantonal languages. To these, we should add the many different languages spoken by holidaymakers, migrant workers and residents who were born elsewhere and have moved into the canton. This results in a complex linguistic landscape, in which many forces are at work.

Since 1880/92, the Graubünden cantonal constitution has recognised the three languages, German, Romansh and Italian, as official cantonal languages. However, neither the cantonal constitution nor any other statute lays down the territories covered by each of them. These then tend to be the result of the practice of individual communes, which enjoy autonomy when it comes to determining the language to be used in schools and in their own administration. The result can sometimes be frequent fluctuations.



Inscription on the entrance to the cantonal parliament in Chur – symbolising living trilingualism

The following map of Graubünden shows the territories of the three language groups:



The baseline is the traditional language territories in Graubünden as indicated by the 1860-1880 population censuses. According to the 2000 census, certain areas outside of the traditional Romansh territories have 10-17% Romansh speakers, namely Chur (Cuira), St. Martin (S. Martin), Obersaxen (Sursaissa) and Rongellen (Runtgaglia).



**Romansh:** the territory in which Romansh has traditionally been spoken is comprised of five regions. Surselva occupies the large sector in the northwest of the canton. In Central Graubünden, Romansh used to be spoken in the Domleschg/Tumleasgta and Heinzenberg/Mantogna regions and is still spoken today in parts of the Val Schons (Schams), Surmeir (Oberhalbstein) and the Albula Valley. The Engadin and the Val Müstair (Münstertal) form the southeastern Romansh language territory.

**Italian:** The four valleys in the south of Graubünden (Mesocco, Calanca, Bergella and Poschiavo) are Italian-speaking and also have close cultural ties with Canton Ticino and Italy.

**German:** The territory in which German has traditionally been spoken includes the high Alpine valleys that were colonised by the Walsers (Rheinwald, Vals, Safien, Avers, Schanfigg, Prättigau and Davos) as well as the exclave of Obersaxen, the section of the Rhine Valley around Chur, which was Germanised from the north, and large parts of Tumleasgta/Domleschg as well as Samnaun, which were Germanised from Tyrol. In the course of time, more and more communes from the Romansh-speaking area are switching over to using principally German.

Up until 1850 or so, Romansh was still the most spoken language in Graubünden. The figures for 1880, 1980, 1990 and 2000 show a continuous increase in German (in both absolute and relative figures), an irregular increase in the absolute figures for Italian (although the question about the “best-command” languages asked as of 1990 would appear to have a more restrictive effect than the earlier question about “native tongue”) and a massive percentage decline in Romansh, from 39.8% in 1880 to 14.5% in 2000.

Selected census results for Canton Graubünden between 1880 and 2000 (in brackets: percentages):

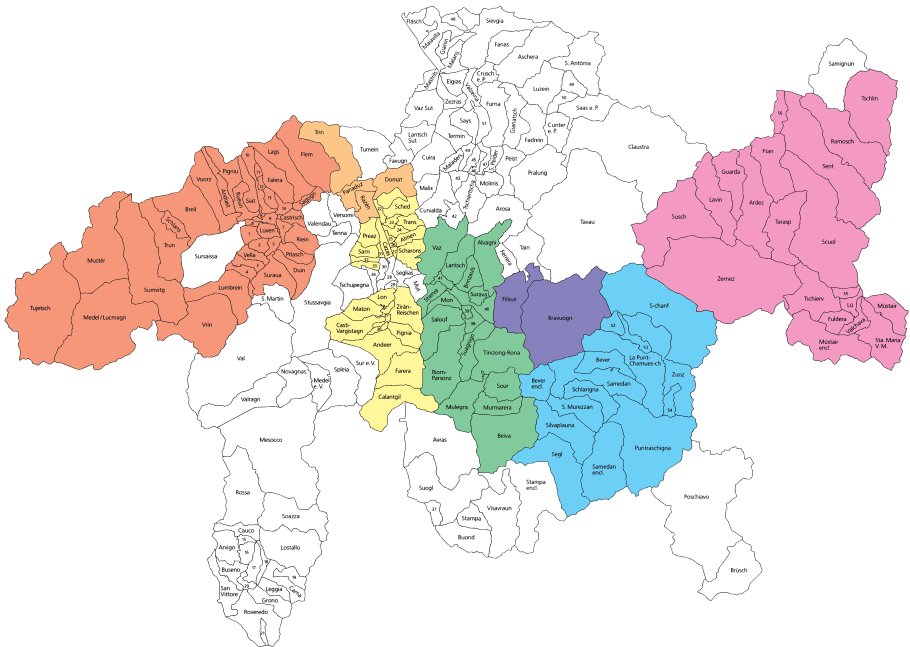
	1880	1980	1990		2000	
	NT	NT	BC	BC + MS	BC	BC + MS
DE	43 664 (46.0)	98 645 (59.9)	113 611 (65.3)	144 563 (83.1)	127 755 (68.3)	158 215 (84.6)
<b>RM</b>	<b>37 794 (39.8)</b>	<b>36 017 (21.9)</b>	<b>29 679 (17.0)</b>	<b>41 092 (23.6)</b>	<b>27 038 (14.5)</b>	<b>40 257 (21.5)</b>
IT	12 976 (13.7)	22 199 (13.5)	19 190 (11.0)	39 193 (22.5)	19 106 (10.2)	43 221 (23.1)
O	557 (0.6)	7 780 (4.7)	11 410 (6.6)		13 159 (7.0)	
Σ	94 991 (100)	164 641 (100)	173 890 (100)		187 058 (100)	

1880-1980: NT = Native tongue.  
1990 and 2000: BC = Best-command language, spoken at home, school or work.  
DE = German, FR = French, IT = Italian, RM = Romansh, O = Other languages; Σ = Total population

# The Romansh language territory

The Romansh language territory in Graubünden includes Surselva (the regions along the valley of the Rein Anterior or Vorderrhein), certain parts of Sutselva (Hinterrhein), Surmeir and the Albula Valley (Oberhalbstein), Upper Engadin, Lower Engadin and the Val Müstair. Each of these regions has its own idiom. The five idioms are considered as written Romansh languages. These written languages cannot, however, cover the whole panoply of spoken dialects. Dozens of such local **dialects** make the Romansh linguistic atlas into a confusing microcosm.

In 1982, Rumantsch Grischun, a supra-regional written Romansh language, came into being and in 1996 it was declared to be an official administrative and court language of the Swiss Confederation and Canton Graubünden (see section on “Rumantsch Grischun”, pp. 92 ff.).



## Territories on which the five written regional idioms are used:

- Sursilvan
- Communes speaking Central-Graubünden dialects but using Sursilvan as their written language
- Sutsilvan
- Surmiran
- Puter
- Communes speaking Central-Graubünden dialects but using Puter as their written language
- Vallader

### **From farming, trades and crafts to tourism**

Up until the time around the Second World War, the rich Romansh culture had deep roots in farming and rural trades and crafts, which to a large extent moulded the language too. In the time since then, the age-old sectors of the economy have disappeared in many parts of Romansh-speaking Graubünden, where a monoculture of tourism has moved in to displace them. With this economic trend, the Romansh people have also lost the roots of their language. The old language of farming and the rural trades has become alien to them, and, as the modern world penetrates the Romansh valleys, it generally does so in a German guise (and more recently even in English too).

The economic and social changes are having a devastating impact on the Romansh language: the linguistic culture is dissolving, Romansh is becoming peppered with foreign expressions, the language skills of native speakers are declining, and their linguistic awareness is rapidly dwindling too. On top of the phenomenon of territorial loss (cf. "Current state of Romansh", p. 32), comes a form of "disintegration from within", which is having an even more severe impact than the statistical decline from decade to decade as brought out by the census returns.

### **No generalised feeling of Romansh identity**

Protected by the mighty Alps, five Romansh idioms evolved over the centuries. Some of these are so different from one another that even native speakers have severe comprehension problems on first encounter. It takes some practice, for instance, for a person from the Engadin to be able to converse intelligibly in Romansh with a person from Surselva without resorting to the German, which both of them speak fluently today.

The centuries-old seclusion of the idioms and the infrequency of contacts between valley communities meant that no real feeling of identity with Romansh as a whole ever developed – and that still holds true today. Despite the enormous impact of modern communications, the various Romansh groups still remain "foreign" for one another. This lack of a unifying identity shows up most blatantly when proposals are put forward for "pan-Romansh" projects to promote the language, such as a standardised written language or a daily newspaper for all to share. It is, however, precisely this sort of project that Romansh needs most, namely: the daily "La Quotidiana" (see p. 65) for regular reading (known to be the best means for sustaining a language) and the standardised written language, Rumantsch Grischun, to mediate between the various linguistic regions and the modern world and as the vehicle for keeping the language up to date with new terms and expressions.

### **50% of Romansh spouses are not native speakers**

Nearly half of all married Romansh speakers have chosen a spouse whose native tongue is not Romansh, and the percentage of such "mixed marriages" is increasing. In those territories where the Romansh language is still intact, most spouses from the outside are integrated and learn the language. In other areas, especially those dominated by tourism and/or industry, such integration is today very much the exception. People who move into Romansh territory for professional rather than marital reasons always have a negative impact on Romansh too, since there is no compulsion for language integration in Romansh-speaking Graubünden.

## Sample texts

### Sursilvan:

L'volp era puspei inagada fomentada. Cheu ha ella viu sin in pegn in tgaper che teneva in toc caschiel en siu bec. Quei gustass a mi, ha ella tertgau, ed ha clamau al tgaper: «Tgei bi che ti eis! Sche tiu cant ei aschi bials sco tia cumparsa, lu eis ti il pli bi utschi da tuts».

### Sutsilvan:

La gualp eara puspe egn'eada fumantada. Qua â ella vieu sen egn pegn egn corv ca taneva egn toc caschiel ainten sieus pecel. Quegl gustass a mei, â ella tartgiu, ed ha clamau agli corv: «Tge beal ca tei es! Scha tieus tgânt e aschi beal sco tia pareta, alura es tei igl ple beal utschi da tuts».

### Surmiran:

La golp era puspe eneda famantada. Co ò ella via sen en pegn en corv tgi tigniva en toc caschiel an sies pecal. Chegl am gustess, ò ella panso, ed ò clamau agl corv: «Tge bel tgi te ist! Schi ties cant è schi bel scu tia parentscha, alloura ist te igl pi bel utschel da tots».

### Puter:

La vulp d'eira darcho üna vouta famantada. Co ho'la vis sün ün pin ün corv chi tгнаiva ün töch chaschöl in sieu pical. Que am gustess, ho'la penso, ed ho clamau al corv: «Chel bel cha tü est! Scha tieu chaunt es uschè bel scu tia apparentscha, alura est tü il pü bel utschè da tuots».

### Vallader:

La vulp d'eira darcheu üna jada fomantada. Qua ha'la vis sün ün pin ün corv chi tгнаiva ün toc chaschöl in seis pical. Quai am gustess, ha'la pensà, ed ha clamà al corv: «Che bel cha tü est! Scha teis chant es uschè bel sco tia apparentscha, lura est tü il plü bel utschè da tuots».

### Rumantsch grischun:

La vulp era puspè ina giada fomentada. Qua ha ella vis sin in pign in corv che tegneva in toc chaschiel en ses pichel. Quai ma gustass, ha ella pensà, ed ha clamà al corv: «Tge bel che ti es! Sche tes chant è uschè bel sco tia parita, lur es ti il pli bel utschè da tuts».

**English:** The fox was once again hungry. Suddenly, it saw a crow on a pine tree, holding a piece of cheese in its beak. I would find that really tasty, it thought to itself and called out to the crow: "What a pretty creature you are! If your song is as beautiful as your looks, then you must be the prettiest bird of all".

Phonetic differences

Latin	Sursilvan	Sutsilvan	Surmiran	Puter	Vallader	RG	English
AURUM	aur	or	or	or	or, aur, ar	aur	gold
DURUS	dir	dir	deir	dür	dür	dir	hard
OCULUS	egl	ɿl	ɿgl	ögl	ögl	egl	eye
LEVIS	lev	leav	lev	liger	leiv	lev	light, easy
TRES	treis	tres	treis	trais	trais	trais	three
NIVE	neiv	nev	neiv	naiv	naiv	naiv	snow
HORA	ura	ura	oura	ura	ura	ura	hour
ROTA	roda	roda	roda	rouda	rouda	roda	wheel
CASEOLUS	caschiel	caschiel	caschiel	chaschöl	chaschöl	chaschiel	cheese
CASA	casa	tgeasa	tgesa	chesa	chasa	chasa	house
CANIS	tgaun	tgän	tgang	chaun	chan	chaun	dog
CAMBA	comba	tgomba	tgomma	chamma	chomma	chomma	leg
GALLINA	gaglina	gagliegna	gagligna	gillina	giallina	giaglina	hen
CATTUS	gat	giat	giat	giat	giat	giat	cat
TOTUS	tut	tut	tot	tuot	tuot	tut	everything
FORMA	fuorma	furma	furma	fuorma	fuorma	furma	shape
EGO	jeu	jou	ia	eau	eu	jau	I

The variants spoken in the upper Rhine valleys (Sursilvan and Sutsilvan) differ in certain respects from the Inn-Valley or Ladin variants (Puter, Vallader) not only in terms of phonetics, but also in terms of syntax and vocabulary. Surmiran often represents a bridge between the other two groups. In 1982, Rumantsch Grischun was created as a compromise written language between the five regionally different written forms (see section on Rumantsch Grischun, pp. 92 ff.).

## Economic transformation and demographic trends

The nineteenth century was a period of evolution, bringing with it many changes that had a deleterious effect on the Romansh language and culture. Over the last hundred years or so, the opening up of the Alps through the construction of railways and roads as well as transformations in society have led, in some locations at least, to an extensive mixing of the Romansh population with immigrants speaking other tongues. Industry and the tourist trade have attracted in particular German-speaking immigrants. At the same time, changes in the structure of the economy (the shift from the primary to the tertiary sector) have caused many Romansh people to leave their homeland for the industrial and administrative centres of German-speaking Switzerland, resulting in the over-aging of village populations.

The 2000 nationwide census revealed that those who indicated that they spoke Romansh were divided over the individual language territories as follows:

Territory using the indicated idiom as its written version of Romansh	Total population	With best command of Romansh	As a percentage of total population	Romansh as "best command" or "most spoken" language at home school or work **	As a percentage of total population **
<b>Sursilvan</b>	32 645	13 879	42.5	17 897	54.8
<i>including Imboden*</i>	13 663	1 346	9.9	3 004	22.0
<b>Sutsilvan</b>	7 205	571	7.9	1 111	15.4
<b>Surmiran</b>	6 904	2 085	30.2	3 038	44.0
<b>Puter</b>	18 296	2 343	12.8	5 497	30.0
<i>including Bravuogn/Filisur*</i>	986	69	7.0	173	17.5
<b>Vallader</b>	8 145	5 138	63.1	6 448	79.2
Total traditional territory	73 195	24 016	32.8	33 991	46.2
<b>Graubünden</b> <i>including German/Italian-speaking territories</i>	<b>187 058</b>	<b>27 038</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>40 168</b>	<b>21.5</b>
	113 863	3 022	2.7	6 177	5.4
<b>Switzerland</b>	<b>7 288 010</b>	<b>35 095</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>60 561</b>	<b>0.8</b>
Switzerland (excluding Graubünden)	7 100 952	8 057	0.1	20 393	0.3

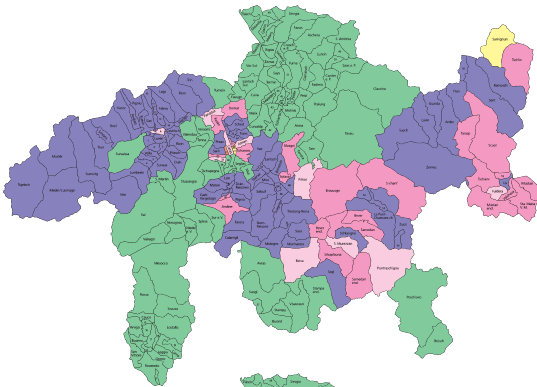
The total traditional Romansh territory is taken to be the 116 Graubünden communes (adjusted for the mergers up to 2003) where Romansh was recorded to be the majority language in the first nationwide population censuses (including Fürstenu/Domleschg, where 26.6% were Romansh speakers in 1888).

\* Dialect, geographic and administrative borders do not always tally with the territories on which the various idioms are used. Insofar as the five Romansh-speaking communes in the district of Imboden (still) use Romansh, Sursilvan is/was their traditional written form, although, with the exception of Films, they all speak/spoke Central-Graubünden dialects. In the same way, Filisur and Bergün speak/spoke Central-Graubünden dialects, but their written language is/was that of the Upper Engadin, Puter.

\*\* These figures have been adjusted to ensure compatibility between 1990 and 2000, Swiss Federal Statistical Office, May 2004

A real cause for concern is the decline in Romansh indicated as the language of which respondents have the best command; on the other hand, it is gratifying to see its resilience as a language spoken regularly. The maps printed on page 32 illustrate the serious decline in the statistical position of Romansh since the first census in Switzerland that asked about language usage. That census still reflected a picture that had remained virtually unchanged from the sixteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth century. As far as today's situation is concerned, the maps clearly show where the Romansh-speaking population is concentrated (Romansh as the language of which people have the best command). They also show the limits of the territory on which Romansh is spoken, but these are only very rough, given that a census with only two questions about language (Romansh as the language

of which respondents have the best command and/or the language spoken in at least one of the areas surveyed) cannot document the situation with any great accuracy. The actual territory on which Romansh is spoken and understood is much more extensive, as is brought out in the findings of regular surveys performed during the past decade by the Swiss broadcasting organisation, SRG, and Romansh Radio and Television (RTR). These have shown that some 2/5 of the population of Romansh and German-speaking parts of Graubünden understand Romansh and around 1/3 speak it regularly.

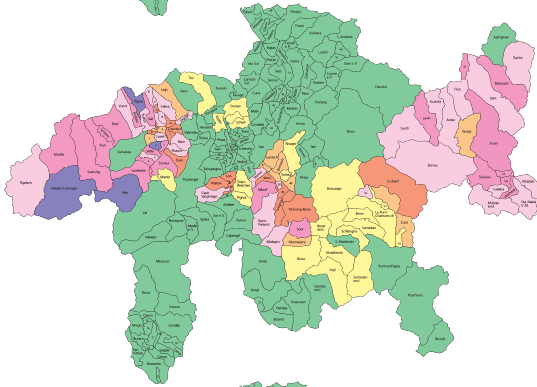


Percentage of speakers indicating that Romansh was the principal language of their household in 1860



For certain communes, the language data from this early census must be regarded as dubious. The data for Marmorera and Bivio, which was manifestly manipulated in favour of Italian, has been corrected on the basis of the 1880 census findings.

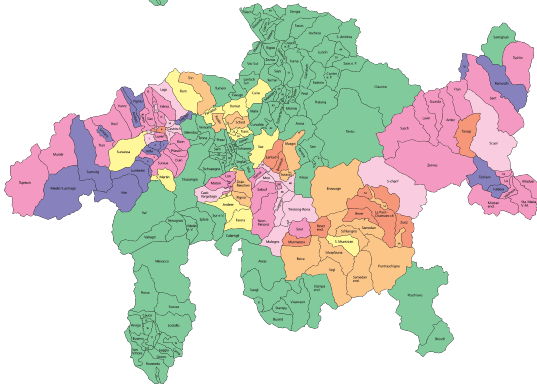
(Source: 1860 population census)



Percentage of the population indicating Romansh as the language of which they had the best command in 2000.



(Source: 2000 population census)



Percentage of the population in 2000 indicating Romansh as the language of which they had the best command and/or which they used at home, school and/or work.



(Source: 2000 population census)

In **Surselva** (defined as the Vorderrhein/Rain Anterior valley to the west of and including Laax), the percentage of the population indicating Romansh as the language of which they have the best command is 66%. In the upper part of the valley and in the villages at higher altitudes, Romansh has maintained a stronger position (Cadi district: 78.1%, Lumnezia district: 82.0%), whereas in the central and lower regions there is increasing Germanisation. Here, the share of people with Romansh as the language of which they have the best command ranges from 29.9% (in Ilanz) to 95.6% (in Vrin). Taking the question of the language spoken at home, school and/or work, the average distribution of Romansh in Surselva is 78.5%, with a minimum of 51.4% (in Ilanz) and a maximum of 100% (in Pigniu).

Germanisation is already extremely advanced in the five communes comprising the district of Imboden, with only 9.9% of the population indicating Romansh as the language of which they have the best command (with values ranging from 5.4% in Bonaduz to 19.8% in Trin). The figures for Romansh as a spoken language place it at 22% for the district as a whole (ranging from 11.8% in Bonaduz to 41.3% in Trin).

All the communes of the **Lower Engadin** are Romansh-speaking, but there is a perceptible German influence there too. In 2000, 60.4% stated that Romansh is the language of which they have the best command (and 77.4% indicated that they use Romansh regularly at home, school and/or work). The only exceptions here are Scuol and Tarasp, where the percentage of respondents indicating Romansh as the language of which they have the best command has now fallen below the 50% mark. In Scuol, where tourism has a major impact, the figure now stands at 49.9% (which, however, increases to 70.3% if the spoken language is included as well). In Tarasp, the presence of a non-Romansh private school (a Rudolf Steiner school) has a big impact. The figures for Romansh for the same two criteria are 38.4% and 46.6% respectively, although the small commune itself is, at heart, still thoroughly Romansh-speaking.

In the **Val Müstair (Münstertal)**, which is linguistically part of the Lower Engadin catchment area, the figures are even more positive: 74.1% of census respondents indicated Romansh as the language of which they have the best command, and 86.4% use it regularly at home, school and/or work. Taking the latter criterion, all six of the valley's communes report figures higher than 80% (with Fuldera the highest, at 92.2%).



Trun in Surselva:  
the cultural and economic centre of the region



Ftan in the Lower Engadin: the "Hochalpinas Institute" ([www.hif.ch](http://www.hif.ch)) at 1709 metres above sea level is the oldest private school in Graubünden.





Rona in Surmeir/Oberhalbstein with Piz Mitgel in the background

In the territory using Romansh in **Central Graubünden** (Surmeir/Oberhalbstein and the Albula Valley) the situation of Romansh is a mixed one. Whilst most of the communes in the Albula Valley today have a majority of German speakers, the sub-region of Surses/Oberhalbstein is still relatively strong as far as Romansh is concerned. The share of Romansh ranges from 9% (Vaz/Obervaz) to 77.6% (Salouf/Salux) taking the “best-command” criterion or from 18.9% (Vaz/Obervaz) to 86.3% (Salouf/Salux) combining the language of which people have the best command with the language actually spoken.

In the **Upper Engadin** (which the Swiss federal authorities classified as an “agglomeration” in 2004), Romansh has declined to a critically small minority language as a result of the influence of tourism. Taking all the communes together, only 13% of the population indicated Romansh as the language of which they have the best command, whereas 30.8% is the figure if the two census criteria are taken together. It is only in S-chanf that there is still a Romansh majority with 51.8% (“best-command” criterion) or 67.9% (“best-command” and “spoken-language” criteria together). In Zuoz, Romansh is also continuing to lose ground and now stands at 25.8% (“best-command” criterion), whereas in 1980 it still held a relative majority of 38.9% as the native tongue in the commune (ahead of both German and Italian). Of the two communes in the Albula Valley, Filisur has now become completely Germanised, and Bergün/Bravuogn is moving the same way (with Romansh scoring 7.3% and 26.7% respectively in the two communes taking the combined criterion).

The smallest Romansh idiom is **Sutsilvan**, which is spoken in the Hinterrhein/Rain Posterior Valley. In 2000, only 571 individuals still indicated Romansh as the language of which they have the best command (1111 if the spoken language is included too). In percentage terms, Romansh is strongest in the Val Schons/Schamsertal (scoring 20.1% and 35.8% on the two criteria, and only the four tiny communes on the Muntogna da Schons/Schamserberg still have a narrow Romansh majority (the 355 inhabitants responded with 53.8% and 76.1% to the two census questions).

Taking the **whole of the traditional Romansh language territory**, one third (32.8%) of the population indicated Romansh as the language of which they have the best command. In only 63 of the 116 traditionally Romansh-speaking communes (out of the total of 208 communes in the whole canton of Graubünden) is there a Romansh-speaking majority. It is important to bear in mind that these communes do not represent a single closed language territory. Many of the individual villages in which Romansh is still the majority language are suffering from population decline and over-ageing. On the other hand, most of the regional centres that are economically important for the Romansh people are already predominantly German-speaking (Chur, Thusis, etc.) or are on the way to total Germanisation (Ilanz, Domat, Andeer, Samedan, St. Moritz, etc.). Those regions in which there is still a clear Romansh-speaking majority (Surselva, Surmeir/Oberhalbstein, Lower Engadin, Val Müstair/Münster-tal), however, have a strong integrative force. It is impossible to lead an active social life there without being able to speak Romansh.

### Inroads by German and other languages

The language culture of Graubünden is subject to strong, incessant change – probably more so than that of any of the other Swiss cantons. German is becoming stronger on account of demographic and linguistic developments. The erosion of the Romansh territory is a process that has been continuing. Italian has also lost some ground as the language of which the Graubünden people have the best command, but it has made big gains as a second language, so that all-in-all its share has increased slightly.

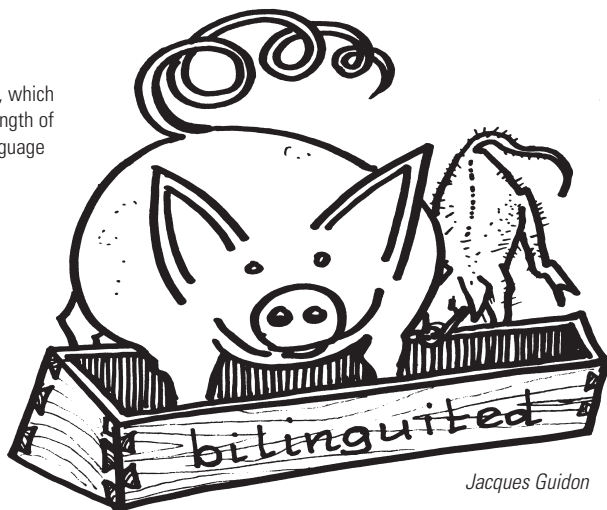
Taking all the languages spoken in Switzerland today according to the “best command” criterion of the 2000 nationwide census, Romansh is in eleventh position, coming after German, French, Italian, Serbian, Croatian, Albanian, Portuguese, Spanish, English and Turkish.

Since 1990, the German-speaking population in Graubünden has increased by 12.4%, and the share of German as people’s principal language has grown by 4.5% from 65.3% to 68.3% of the total. The Italian-speaking population has remained more or less stable, but Italian’s role as the principal language has declined by 7.4% from 11.0% to 10.2%. Over the past decade, the Romansh population has lost as much as 8.9%, and its share as principle language has declined by 15.3% from 17% to 14.5%. In 1950, 56.2% of Graubünden spoke German, 29.3% Romansh, 13.2% Italian and 1.3% French and various non-national languages. Over a period of fifty years or so, German’s share has increased by a fifth, whilst Romansh has lost more than half of its percentage share and Italian approximately a quarter. Over the same period, the share of non-national languages has increased by a factor of five.

In five of the traditionally Romansh Graubünden communes, the majority shifted in favour of German (using the “best command” criterion) between 1990 and 2000. They are Laax, Surcuolm, Alvaschein, Brienz and Patzen-Fardün. The last named, however, merged with Donath in 2003 and thus retained its Romansh majority.

Of the 208 communes in Graubünden (2004), 116 are on traditional Romansh-speaking territory, but only just over half of them, i.e. 64, still have a Romansh-speaking majority (2000 figures).

Romansh and German:  
An age-old relationship, which  
is now sapping the strength of  
Romansh in several language  
districts.



### Reasons for the decline in Romansh

Over and above the changed structure of the economy, discussed earlier on, the arrival of new inhabitants, speaking other languages and not necessarily always willing to seek integration, and the emigration of Romansh speakers themselves, there are several other weighty reasons worth mentioning for the language's decline:

- the lack of an economic/cultural centre within the Romansh-speaking area,
- the lack of any wider community speaking the same language (no external support in questions of language development and planning),
- economic dependence on the German-speaking part of Switzerland,
- the major influence of the German-language electronic media, periodicals and publications (see section on Romansh Media, pp. 64 ff.),
- the inadequate Romansh presence in public life and private industry,
- the linguistic fragmentation of Romansh itself into several written idioms (encouraging local identities and particularistic tendencies),
- the lack of a standard written Romansh language (up to 1980) facilitating a certain presence for the language (see section on Rumantsch Grischun, pp. 92 ff.).

Attempting to find means of compensating for these shortcomings is not only the task of the Romansh umbrella organisation, the Lia Rumantscha, but of all official departments and offices concerned – ranging from federal and cantonal authorities through the mass media and schools to the various institutions, organisations and private associations, not to forget the individual Romansh speakers themselves.

A number of specific measures to maintain and promote Romansh have already been implemented; others are at a planning stage or have been presented in the form of projects. Here is a selection worth mentioning:

- upgrading of Romansh to the status of partially official language of the Swiss Confederation (see section on the Legal Position of Romansh, pp. 38 ff.),
- financial assistance for language planning in the context of the Swiss federal law of 6 October 1995 on financial assistance for the maintenance and promotion of the Romansh and Italian languages and cultures,
- the creation and dissemination of a unified Romansh language (see section on Rumantsch Grischun, pp. 92 ff.),
- systematic extension of the Romansh language (keeping its vocabulary up to date, provision of didactic materials, etc.),
- broadening the range of available literature (especially books for children and young people, strip cartoons, etc.),
- increase in the time allotted to Romansh radio and television broadcasts (see section on Romansh Mass Media, pp. 67 ff.),

- strengthening the Romansh press thanks to the existence of a Romansh daily, “La Quotidiana” (launched in 1996), and the Romansh news agency, “Agentura da novitads Rumantscha” (ANR),
- promotion of Romansh in schools (bilingual school models, upgrading the position of Romansh in vocational colleges, strengthening Romansh tuition in schools in linguistic border regions, etc.),
- partial implementation of the territoriality principle on the basis of regional and inter-communal arrangements,
- use of the Romansh language in the new media (videos, computer programs, Internet, etc.),
- promotion of youth work (support for the young people’s organisation “Giuventetgna Rumantscha” (GiuRu), the young people’s periodical, “Punts”, as well as organised events for young people),
- promotion of mutual understanding and interchange between the various Romansh-speaking districts and between Graubünden’s three language communities (inter alia through jointly organised events, cultural exchange schemes, and so on).

### Bilingualism and language assimilation

Although Switzerland has been a multilingual country for a long time, most of the individuals living there are not bilingual or multilingual. The term “quadrilingualism” can only be applied to the country – i.e., it is a social phenomenon. The only truly bilingual (adult) community is the Romansh one, since all its members speak German as well. Many Romansh people also speak or understand at least the other two Swiss national languages (Italian and French). For a long time, bilingualism was viewed as a threat – first of all, to the purity of the first language and, secondly, as a stepping-stone towards Germanisation. Creeping Germanisation is indeed a threat for the Romansh community, should it not prove possible to consolidate the indigenous language as the first language on its traditional territory and to place it on the same footing as German in economic life. No effort should be spared in encouraging all residents to learn Romansh so as to achieve language integration.

It is going to be the job of a policy devised to maintain the language to consider bilingualism in Romansh and German as functionally valuable and culturally enriching. To attain this, it is necessary to promote the value of Romansh at school, at work and in public life and to motivate speakers of other languages to learn Romansh.

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# Legal position of Romansh

## Legal position within the Swiss Confederation

In Switzerland, the principal statutory measures concerning languages are article 70 of the federal constitution and unwritten constitutional law as interpreted by the Federal Court. Freedom of language has different contents depending on whether it refers to the relations between private individuals or to the relations between private individuals and the state. In the first instance, it comprises the right for the individual to use the language of his or her choice. In the second instance, it constitutes the minimum right that a national minority language has to be used in certain areas, for instance as the language of tuition in schools or as the language of administration. The Swiss Federal Court places only a relative interpretation on the concept of territoriality (the fact of belonging to a language territory) and considers it more as a constitutional principle than a constitutional right.

On 26 February 1938 there was a historical referendum vote to amend the constitution of 29 May 1874 to recognise Romansh as a Swiss national language. From then up until the 1996 amendment, **article 116 of this “old” federal constitution** (as it is called in Switzerland) used to define the country's national and official languages as follows:

- 1 German, French, Italian and Romansh shall be the national languages of Switzerland
- 2 German, French and Italian shall be declared the official languages of the Swiss Confederation.

On 10 March 1996, the Swiss people accepted an amendment to this article, with 76% voting in favour. The new version read:

- 1 German, French, Italian and Romansh shall be the national languages of Switzerland
- 2 The Swiss Confederation and the Cantons shall promote understanding and interchange between the language communities.
- 3 The Swiss Confederation shall support measures adopted in the Cantons of Graubünden and Ticino to maintain and promote the Romansh and Italian languages.
- 4 The official languages of the Swiss Confederation shall be German, French and Italian. For the purpose of dealings with persons of Romansh tongue, Romansh shall also be an official language of the Confederation. The details shall be settled by Act of Parliament.

In a referendum held on 18 April 1999, the Swiss people accepted a total recast of the federal constitution, and this **“new” federal constitution** (as the Swiss call it) now contains its detailed language provisions in **article 70**. The principle of quadrilingualism is laid down in its **article 4 (“National Languages”)**:

The national languages are German, French, Italian and Romansh.

These clear principles and numerous parliamentary initiatives have served to redefine what is expected of the federal and cantonal authorities in the field of language policy (in short: a greater commitment). Important federal publications, such as laws and explanatory statements accompanying legislative proposals are printed in Romansh too, and people with that language as their native tongue have the right to use it in contacts with the federal authorities.

With the revised language article firmly anchored in the new federal constitution, the Swiss Federal Office of Culture worked between 1999 and 2004 on measures to put it into practical effect. These envisage a new **federal language law**, promotional measures for language minorities, exchanges between the language regions and various organised events, such as symposia (see: [www.kulturschweiz.admin.ch](http://www.kulturschweiz.admin.ch)).

In the spring of 2004, the Swiss Federal Council (i.e. cabinet) – in a new composition after two of its seven members had been replaced – took the unexpected decision of not going ahead with a new language law for financial reasons and thus of not submitting a statement of its legislative intentions to the federal parliament. As of 2008, the new law would have meant additional annual federal expenditure of CHF 17 million, and the Federal Council would have had the duty to provide financial support to multilingual cantons, such as Berne, Fribourg, Graubünden and Valais for projects such as exchange schemes for pupils, students and teachers, the production of school materials, the organisation of language courses for immigrants and the running of news agencies. In addition, multilingualism was to have been promoted by a scientific body funded jointly by the confederation and the cantons. The decision not to enact a federal language law after so much preparatory work had gone into it deprives Switzerland of one of the pillars that had been planned to give it a proactive language policy. The negative decision by the Federal Council led to expressions of disappointment and regret from the cantons, language organisations and Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK/CDIP). The latest state of play at the time of going to press (autumn 2004) was that individual members of the federal parliament from the multilingual cantons along with the EDK/CDIP had started campaigning to have a bill for a new federal language law included in the schedule of planned legislation for the 2004-08 legislature.

The new federal constitution that took effect on 1 January 2000 now provides a **constitutional basis for the Swiss Confederation to promote culture** (article 69). In doing so, it must “take into account the cultural and linguistic diversity of the country”. This new provision fills a legal void that used to exist in practice between the constitution and the actual support of culture by the federal authorities. It forms the basis for the planned detailed law on support for culture and offers an opportunity of rethinking and reorganising federal cultural policy and of fitting it in better with cantonal, communal and private initiatives in the field.

In addition to articles 4 and 70 of the new federal constitution, there are a number of other articles that have a bearing on Switzerland’s national and official languages:

**Article 8 of the new federal constitution** (“equality before the law”) outlaws discrimination on grounds that include origin and language.

**Article 18** (“freedom of language”) guarantees freedom of language.

**Article 31** (“deprivation of liberty”) states that “All persons deprived of their liberty have the right to be informed immediately, and in a language that they understand, of the reasons for their detention, and of their rights...”

**Article 188** (“position of the Federal Supreme Court”) states (in §4) that, in electing the judges to the Federal Supreme Court, the Federal Assembly shall take the representation of the official languages into account.

Apart from the constitution, a number of other federal statutes are of relevance too:

**Article 15 of the Federal Law on the collection of codified law and its publication in the official gazette** (statute: SR 170.512 of 18 June 2004): “Federal legislative acts that have a particular relevance shall be published separately in the Romansh language. The Office of the Federal Chancellor shall decide on such acts in consultation with the Graubünden Cantonal Chancellery.”

**Article 11 of the “Ordinance on the use of translation in the general federal administration – section 3: translations into the official languages”:**

- (1) The Federal Council shall lay down directives for translation into Romansh.
- (2) The translation into Romansh of important texts and acts of federal law shall be carried out in cooperation with the Graubünden Cantonal Chancellery

**Article 153 of the “Law on the Organisation of the Federal Judiciary”** (statute: SR 173.110, as amended up to 13 April 2004): (§1) “The costs of hearings to be paid for by parties appearing before the Federal Supreme Court shall be court fees and expenditure on translations except for those into and/or out of national languages (...).”

**Article 4 of the “Federal Law on Procedure in Civil Cases”** (statute: SR 273 of 4 December 1974, as amended up to 23 January 2001):

- (1) The judges and the parties shall use one of the national languages of the Confederation.
- (2) If necessary, the judge shall order translations.

**Article 1** of the same law deals with those cases in which the **Federal Supreme Court** is the only instance empowered to hand down a judgement as specified in **articles 41 and 42 of the “Law on the Organisation of the Federal Judiciary” of 16 December 1943**. In accordance with article 40 of that law, however, it shall be applicable to all cases heard before the Federal Supreme Court, unless the law contains specific provisions to the contrary. In accordance with articles 116 and 37 of that same law, the Federal Supreme Court’s written judgements shall be in an official language, generally that of the disputed official act. Other provisions which refer only to the official languages of the Confederation with the exclusion of Romansh as the language of the court shall also be applied in accordance with **article 97 of the Federal Criminal Procedure** and **article 95 of the Federal Military Criminal Procedure**, in combination with **article 14 of its Implementing Ordinance**. In accordance with **article 37 of the Law on Federal Administrative Procedure**, federal authorities shall communicate decisions in the official language in which the parties have or would have submitted their case. The highest cantonal courts shall use the official language provided for by cantonal law for the same purpose.

**Articles 1 and 2 of the “Federal Law on Financial Assistance for the Maintenance and Promotion of the Romansh and Italian Language and Culture”** (enacted on 6 October 1995, as amended up to 1 October 1996):

- (1) Within the limits of the approved appropriations, the Confederation shall be authorised to make financial grants available to the cantons of Graubünden and Ticino in order to support:
  - a. general measures to maintain and promote the Romansh and Italian language and culture;
  - b. organisations and institutions that actively take charge of supra-regional responsibilities for maintaining and promoting the Romansh and Italian language and culture;
  - c. the activities of publishing houses in Romansh and Italian-speaking Switzerland.
- (2) It shall also be authorised to assist the Romansh press as a means of supporting the maintenance and promotion of the Romansh language.
- (3) The provision of financial assistance shall be dependent on a commensurate contribution by the cantons of Graubünden and Ticino themselves [at least 25% of the total costs].

...

5. The Federal Council shall be authorised to pay federal financial grants at differential rates.

### Legal Position within the Canton of Graubünden

In Switzerland, language sovereignty is vested in the individual cantons. The canton of Graubünden basically leaves it up to the communes to decide on their official and school languages (but since 2003 they have been required to liaise with the canton on this matter). It was the cantonal constitution of 1880 that first formally established the three languages, German, Romansh and Italian as “national languages” and laid down rules for their use in the cantonal administration, legislative procedure and the judiciary. **Article 46 of the old cantonal constitution** (originally adopted on 2 October 1892 and in force until 2003) merely guaranteed the three languages of the canton, German, Romansh and Italian, as national languages. Up until 1996, the national languages of Canton Graubünden were German, Italian and the five idioms of Romansh, Sursilvan, Sutsilvan, Surmiran, Puter and Vallader. With the resolution of the Graubünden cantonal government of 2 July 1996, Rumantsch Grischun became an official language of the canton whenever it was addressing the whole of the Romansh community (see section on “Rumantsch Grischun”, pp. 93 ff.). **Article 3 of the new cantonal constitution** (adopted on 15 May/14 September 2003 and in force since 1 January 2004) builds on three pillars: “National and official languages”, “Safeguards for minority languages” and “Administrative and school language(s)”. Such was the status as per 1 October 2004 (for information in German, follow the link: [www.gr.ch](http://www.gr.ch) > Departemente/Dienststellen > Amt für Kultur > Publikationen > Gesetzessammlung > Bündner Rechtsbuch > Suchen: Sprachen).

It is **article 3 of the new Graubünden cantonal constitution** (statute: BR 110.100 of 18 May/14 September 2003) that contains the language provisions. Here they are in full:

- (1) German, Romansh and Italian shall all equally be the canton’s national and official languages.
- (2) The Canton and the communes shall provide support for the Romansh and Italian languages and shall adopt the necessary measures to maintain and promote them. They shall foster understanding amongst the language communities and interchanges between them.
- (3) The communes and districts shall determine their official languages and school languages in accordance with their powers and in cooperation with the Canton. In so doing, they shall give consideration to their historic language composition and shall cater for the indigenous language minorities.

The new cantonal constitution contains a clear avowal of trilingualism. Its wording is inspired by that of the federal constitution. It expressly declares the three cantonal languages to be of equal standing. The pragmatic wording gives due consideration to the concerns of the indigenous language minorities.

**Article 90 of the new cantonal constitution** deals with culture and research. It states that the canton and the communes are to promote artistic, cultural and scientific activities as well as cultural exchanges. In doing so, they are to consider language diversity and the regional peculiarities.

**Article 25 of the “Law Governing the Exercise of Political Rights in the Canton of Graubünden”** (statute: BR 150.100 as accepted by the people on 1 October 1996) states that all cantonal documents pertaining to votes and elections are to be written in German, Romansh and Italian and distributed to the communes according to their linguistic affiliation. Voters have the right to tell their communal authorities in which language they wish to receive documentation about votes and elections (adopted by referendum on 10 June 2000, still going through consultation). On 20 June 2001, the cantonal government adopted an ordinance on the use of Rumantsch Grischun for the Romansh versions of documents relating to votes and elections as well as the Cantonal Statute Book (statute: BR 180.110), acting



on the basis of articles 25 and 4 of the cantonal parliament's "ordinance regarding a new Statute Book for Graubünden and the continuation of the official collection of legal texts". Article 1 of the above-mentioned government ordinance states that "Rumantsch Grischun shall be used for the Romansh version of cantonal documents pertaining to votes and elections", and its article 2 states that "Rumantsch Grischun shall be used for the Romansh version of the Cantonal Statute Book". (This ordinance came into force on 1 July 2001.)

**Article 59 of the Rules of Procedure of the Cantonal Parliament** (statute: BR 170.140): "Every deputy shall be free to address Parliament in whichever of the cantonal languages he/she desires. Every deputy shall have the right to demand translations of any motions tabled into the language he/she understands."

**Article 20 of the "Law on the Administrative Jurisdiction"** (statute: BR 370.100): "The languages of the court shall be the national languages recognised by the cantonal constitution."

**Article 28, §1 of the Ordinance on the Organisation and Administration of the Cantonal Court (statute: BR 370.110):** "The languages of the courts shall be the cantonal languages as laid down in the Cantonal Constitution. Written judgements shall be in the German language. An Italian translation shall be appended for parties in the Italian-speaking part of the Canton. In terms of legal effect, the German version of judgements and decisions shall be the binding one." This makes it quite clear that for cases heard before the Cantonal Administrative Tribunal and before the Graubünden Cantonal Court, Romansh must be regarded as a language of the court on account of an explicit statutory provision. At the communal, circuit and district levels, Romansh is an official language and, hence, also a judicial language within its traditional territory on account of the constitutional provision referred to in the same statute (cf. Viletta, 1978, p. 231).

**Article 87, §4 of the Code of Criminal Procedure** (accepted by the people on 8 June 1958, as amended up to 8 July 2004): "Written records of any **statements** made by suspects or witnesses shall usually be made in a cantonal language with which they are familiar as defined in article 3 of the Cantonal Constitution<sup>1</sup> [...]." (This addition was made in a referendum vote on 12 March 2000).

**Article 13 of the "Ordinance on the Organisation, Administration and Fees of the Administrative Tribunal"** (statute: BR 173.300): Court hearings shall be conducted in German. Insofar as parties or witnesses attending a hearing only have a command of a different language, the presiding judge shall call upon a translator as necessary.

**Article 14 (idem.): "Written judgements and decisions** shall be in the German language. An Italian translation shall be appended for parties in the Italian-speaking part of the canton."

**Article 10 of the "Implementing Ordinance on Public Registry Offices"** (statute: BR 213.100): The Register shall be kept in the German or Italian language (article 9 §1). In the registry districts within the Romansh-speaking area, the Romansh language shall be given due consideration in accordance with federal law. The cantonal government shall settle details in an ordinance.

**Article 1, §2 of the "Ordinance regarding a new Statute Book for Graubünden and the continuation of the official collection of legal texts"** (Statute: BR 180.100): "The Graubünden Statute Book shall be kept in the German, Romansh and Italian languages". According to a government decision of 2 July 1996, the Romansh version of the Statute Book is to be in Rumantsch Grischun only in future.

**Translation activities:** On 21 January 1991, the Graubünden cantonal government first issued guidelines for the translation of official texts into the Italian and Romansh languages. These were partially amended in December 1996. They laid down specific provisions governing the use of Italian and Romansh in the cantonal parliament, government and administration.

Article 2 had a new point “k” added, making it compulsory to translate inscriptions on all the canton’s official buildings. Article 4, first paragraph, finally declares Rumantsch Grischun to be the medium for translating texts that are of importance for the whole of the canton. The use of the idioms is settled in article 4, second paragraph. In April 2003, the Graubünden cantonal government expressed its agreement with proposed amendments to the federal law on official publications. During the period allowed for official consultations, it has, however, been lobbying the office of the federal chancellor to make sure that the Romansh version of any official edict would be just as binding as the versions in the other three official languages.

**Languages of tuition:** Distinctions are made between German-medium, Italian-medium and Romansh-medium primary schools in Graubünden’s new education law (which was adopted on 26 November 2000 and entered into force on 1 August 2001, statute: BR 421.000), in the ordinance implementing that law (statute: BR 421.010) and in the school curricula. The communes themselves decide on what language is to be the tuition medium for their primary school. The “Romansh-medium” schools have, however, been effectively bilingual for as long as it is possible to trace their history back. Article 15 of the implementing ordinance lays down that there is to be compulsory tuition in the children’s native tongue as the first language and also tuition in a second language. Article 15bis, second paragraph, states that Romansh tuition normally starts in the first year of primary school (or in the first reduced-size class for children with special learning needs) and must be offered at the latest as of the fourth year in both cases. Its third paragraph states that in schools where there is a choice between Romansh or Italian as the compulsory second language, it is the parents or guardians of the children who have the right to take the decision. The fourth paragraph of the same article allows the canton to encourage the provision of Romansh instruction with suitable expert guidance in German-medium schools in administrative districts with a Romansh majority as the “language of the neighbourhood” and as a “language of encounter”. Article 16, first paragraph, defines the compulsory language subjects. German, Romansh and Italian are to be the first compulsory language taught in schools that use them as their medium, and one of the other two cantonal languages is to be the second compulsory language, to be decided on by the school’s governing body. The three paragraphs of article 8 of the cantonal school law (reference given above) give more detail as to how the second language is to be used:

- (1) In primary schools, at least one cantonal language is to be provided as a compulsory subject.
- (2) The second language in both Romansh-medium and Italian-medium schools (and special reduced-size classes) is to be German. In German-medium schools (and special classes) it is to be Italian. The second language in German-medium schools, etc. already offering Romansh is to be Romansh, unless the commune takes a deliberate decision to replace it with Italian.
- (3) It is also possible for a commune to decide to replace Italian with Romansh in German-medium primary schools, etc. It is also possible for communes to offer both Italian and Romansh with a compulsory choice between them, and in the case of Romansh it is also possible, initially, to provide it as a compulsory subject in the first three years of primary school.

The canton provides the necessary teaching materials in Romansh for the Romansh-medium primary schools. These are handled by the canton’s own committee on didactic materials and its own publishing house for didactic materials. The canton also ensures the training of primary-school teachers who can

speak Romansh. With the amendment of the cantonal law on upper-secondary education and the adoption of the law to set up the new “university of applied educational sciences”, PHS/HEP (statute: BR 427.000) on 27 September 1998, the training of teachers for the primary level has now been moved to Graubünden’s PHS/HEP (as of the 2003/04 academic year). Primary-school teachers are thus now to be trained at tertiary level rather than at upper-secondary level as had been the case before (in a traditional “teachers’ seminary”). To ensure that there is adequate training for Romansh-speaking primary-school teachers, much more attention is going to be given to Romansh in the academic stream of upper-secondary education. In these schools (*lycées, Gymnasien*, etc.), Romansh can now be chosen as a fully-fledged first language. Trainee Romansh teachers whose Romansh knowledge is still inadequate at the start of training in the PHS/HEP are given additional coaching to enable them to catch up.

As far as the **last three years of compulsory education** in Graubünden (GR) are concerned (which may be in an ordinary lower-secondary school, a secondary intermediate school or the lower classes of an academically demanding *lycée, Gymnasium*, etc.), the rules on what languages are to be taught can be summarised as follows:

	German-speaking GR	Romansh-speaking GR	Italian-speaking GR
Compulsory subjects	German, Italian (or Romansh) English	Romansh, German, English	Italian, German, English
Optional subjects	Romansh (or Italian)	Italian, French	Romansh, French

**Guidelines on the running of schools in two languages:** in addition to the usual forms of German-medium, Romansh-medium and Italian-medium schools, models with two languages of tuition are also possible. A school of this nature can be helpful for communes with mixed languages to promote and maintain both of them. This eliminates the need to take a decision in favour of one of them and against the other. Canton Graubünden’s department of education, culture and the environment issued guidelines on 9 November 2001 on how to run whole schools or particular streams in two languages in the sense of partial immersion. The details are available in the cantonal languages at: [www.avsg-gr.ch](http://www.avsg-gr.ch) (the website run by the cantonal office for compulsory education and kindergartens).

As far as **intermediate (upper secondary) schools** are concerned, article 5 of the regulation (statute: BR 425.015) governing the school-leaving/university-qualification examination, “Matura” (baccalaureate) makes a special reference to the native tongue as a key subject. Its second paragraph reads: “German, Italian and Romansh are to be examined as the students’ native tongue. Students whose native tongue is Italian shall be examined in German as a foreign language. Students of Romansh shall be examined in Romansh in combination with the language of tuition defined as the native tongue for the purposes of article 9a of the Swiss National Ordinance on Recognition of the Matura [statute: SR 413.11]”. This provision was repealed in 2003 when the previous “Matura” ordinance was replaced with a new “Matura” regulation. Graubünden amended its cantonal law on upper-secondary schools (statute: BR 425.000) on 27 September 1998, including a massive upgrading of the position of Romansh. In the 1999/2000 academic year, it became possible to sit a bilingual (Romansh/German) “Matura”. In addition to Romansh itself, at least two other fundamental subjects must be taught in Romansh. The amended law on upper-secondary education now makes it possible to choose Romansh as the student’s first language (with the full complement of lessons), as a foreign language, as a major subject or as a voluntary option. Within the division of powers that exists in Switzerland, it is the job of the Confederation to determine the **vocational-training curricula** for the vast majority of professions. It has not been considered necessary to attach much weight to teaching Romansh in these curricula. At the commercial colleges

in Ilanz and Samedan, Romansh students have a compulsory one hour a week of Romansh. At the commercial vocational colleges in Samedan, tuition is in German as a matter of principle, but Romansh trainees do have the opportunity to keep up their native tongue in special block courses organised for them.

## Political measures for maintaining Romansh

### Confederation

According to the terms of the revised language article (70) in the new federal constitution (which came into force on 1 January 2000), the federal authorities have a duty to support measures adopted in Graubünden to maintain and promote the Romansh and Italian languages. The status of Romansh has been enhanced to that of a “partially official” language. What that means, in particular, is that, in its dealings with Romansh people, Romansh is also regarded as an official language of the Confederation (cf. p. 38).

### Canton Graubünden

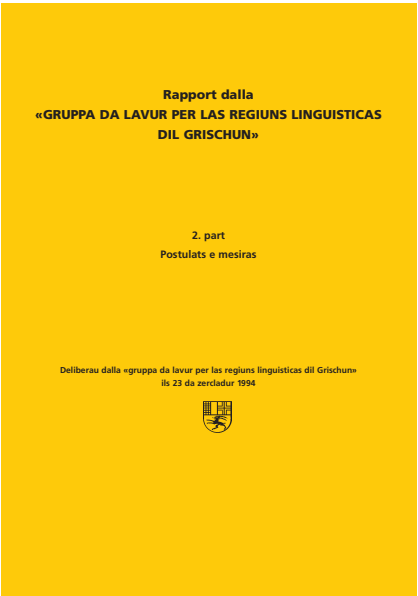
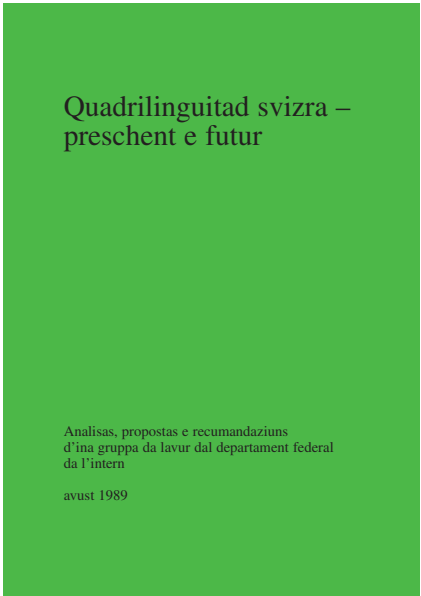
The decisive element in language policy within the canton of Graubünden is the issue of the Romansh and Italian languages, which are running an increasing risk of being displaced by German. In 1987, the cantonal government set up a working party to look into the “Graubünden linguistic landscape”, including clarification of any questions that might arise in connection with a possible language law and to propose specific measures for maintaining and promoting the threatened Romansh and Italian-speaking minorities. In its final report in June 1994, the working party suggested that the government consider each of the following postulates for the maintenance of trilingualism in the canton and that it also initiate the appropriate measures:

Parliament, administration, judiciary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enactment of a language article (achieved in 2003) and a law on the promotion of language/culture for all three cantonal languages and their written idioms and dialects (achieved in 1999);</li> <li>• Binding determination of language territories on the basis of inter-communal or regional accords (achieved as of 1995 for the Val Müstair and the whole of the Lower Engadin, including S-chanf and Zuoz in the Upper Engadin, as well as for individual communes in Central Graubünden and Surselva);</li> <li>• Establishment of a <i>single</i> official Romansh language (definitively achieved with the cantonal referendum vote of 10 June 2001 accepting a partial amendment of the law on the exercise of political rights; cf. sections on “Legal position of Romansh”, p. 41, and “Rumantsch Grischun”, p. 93);</li> <li>• Consistent use of all three cantonal languages in the cantonal parliament, administration and courts as well as for inscriptions on public buildings, museums, schools, building sites, general public information boards, signposts, road signs, forms, etc. (achieved in part in 2003);</li> <li>• Provision of support for an applied-language unit at the Lia Rumantscha (reality since 2000);</li> <li>• Creation of a unit for the promotion of languages within the cantonal department of culture (one half-time post was set up in 1995 and since 2003 it has been a part of the new office of culture, <a href="http://www.afk.gr.ch">www.afk.gr.ch</a>);</li> </ul>
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Parliament, administration, judiciary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trilingualism to be one of the factors considered in the recruitment of cantonal civil servants.</li> <li>• Devolution of parts of the cantonal administration into the various language territories and cantonal employees to learn the language of their place of work; language courses for people working for the administration.</li> </ul>
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experimentation with immersion models in years 7-9 of German-medium schools;</li> <li>• Measures to maintain the existing Romansh-medium schools in communes with a mixed language community (Samedan ran a pilot bilingual school from 1996 to 2000; in 2002 the cantonal government approved the model, and in 2003 Pontresina introduced it too);</li> <li>• French to be taught from the Romansh perspective (rather than via German);</li> <li>• Bilingual school classes (Romansh/German and Italian/German) to be introduced in the cantonal capital, Chur (reality since 1999);</li> <li>• Promotion of class and teacher exchanges throughout the canton;</li> <li>• Promotion of trilingualism through the provision of suitable didactic materials;</li> <li>• Publication of a journal for schoolchildren written in all three cantonal languages;</li> <li>• Opportunities to learn all three cantonal languages at lower and higher secondary schools and at vocational college;</li> <li>• Encouragement for teachers to have at least an understanding of all three languages ("passive trilingualism");</li> <li>• Introduction of Romansh as one of the compulsory options in the German-speaking department of the former Graubünden teachers' seminary (this was actually implemented, but then not initially taken over into the PFH/HEP/university of applied educational sciences in Chur when this first opened for business in the 2003/04 academic year);</li> <li>• Creation of didactic materials in Romansh for "intermediate"/"upper secondary" schools in Graubünden (implemented in part);</li> <li>• Promotion of Romansh in all vocational colleges throughout Graubünden.</li> </ul>
Mass media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of radio programmes in several languages into the SRG's broadcasting schedule (achieved in part);</li> <li>• Broadcast of separate radio programmes in each of the three cantonal languages capable of being received throughout the whole canton (achieved in part);</li> <li>• Priority to be given to the canton's own languages for those nationwide television broadcasts that are transmitted with two sound channels;</li> <li>• Duty for private broadcasters to observe a balance between the three languages (partially complied with);</li> <li>• Support for the Romansh press as a means of encouraging the organic development and systematic dissemination of the language (achieved with the creation of the daily "La Quotidiana" and the news agency ANR).</li> </ul>
Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business planning to give due consideration to negative impacts on language regions of the canton that are under threat;</li> <li>• Romansh to be used more widely by private industry (product labels, instructions for use, advertising materials, etc. – now partially assured thanks to the standardised language, Rumantsch Grischun).</li> </ul>

Sensitisation	• Enhancement of the awareness of the value of trilingualism for the canton.
Mutual understanding	• Promotion of the mutual understanding of the various language communities within the canton; • Promotion of trilingual and interregional Romansh youth work (which was initiated as far as the media are concerned in 1993 with the monthly magazine "Punts"); • Publication of an information periodical in all three languages.

Whilst fully respecting the principle of subsidiarity and the autonomy of the individual communes, the canton of Graubünden ought to provide support for measures introduced by them to maintain and promote language minorities where the communes are not able so to do solely with their own resources. It behoves the Graubünden cantonal government, in giving full consideration to these objectives and measures of language policy, to appraise the feasibility of the postulates listed above and to instruct the appropriate offices of government to introduce the necessary steps for their implementation.



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# Areas in which Romansh is used

## Education

The Graubünden education system is based on the cantonal education law (statute: BR 421.000) and the official curricula for the various levels of education. In Graubünden, the communes have the autonomy to determine their own administrative and school languages. The canton provides the necessary didactic materials in the Romansh language for the Romansh primary schools. The competent bodies are the canton's committee on didactic materials and its own publishing house for didactic materials. The cantonal education law (which came into force in an amended form on 1 August 2001), its implementing ordinance and the schools curricula now make a distinction between German-medium, Italian-medium and Romansh-medium primary schools. Romansh may be either a language of tuition or a subject taught. There are 208 communes in Graubünden (following the 2003 mergers). Of these, 116 are located on traditional Romansh-speaking territory. The different ways in which they use Romansh and/or German in their schools are detailed below:

### From kindergarten to university

School level	LT	Number of hours/lessons, comments
Kindergarten	RM	Taking the Romansh-speaking territory of Graubünden as a whole, 80 communes run a Romansh kindergarten and ten a Romansh-German one. In communes on the borders between language territories (some of which have two more or less equal languages and others which are Romansh communes that have not yet been completely Germanised), parallel kindergartens are run in Romansh and German, with isolated instances of both languages together. In Chur, the cantonal capital, the Lia Rumantscha has been running a kindergarten of its own since 1954, with support from the city. The Romansh kindergartens play a crucial role in maintaining and promoting the language and also in integrating the children of parents with other languages. The canton contributes to these kindergartens by providing training for Romansh-speaking kindergarten teachers.



The language world is still intact in the Romansh kindergartens, although it gradually dawns on the children that a second language exists in the form of German and that they are not going to be able to get far through life without it.

Education level	LT	Number of hours/lessons, comments
<b>Primary school</b> (Years 1-6)	R	Number of communes in Graubünden occupying the traditional Romansh territory (after the 2003 changes): 116 (out of a total of 208 Graubünden communes). Of these:
	RM	78 run a “Romansh school” (with Romansh as the language of tuition at primary level, in some communes, however, only up to year 3, German as a subject in years 4-6);
	RM/DE	two run a “bilingual school” (Samedan, Pontresina);
	DE	17 run a school with German as the language of tuition and Romansh as a subject (2-5 lessons per week, in most cases throughout the whole of compulsory education, but in isolated cases only up to year 3);
	DE	17 run a German-language school with no Romansh at all;
	DE/IT	one runs an Italian-German school (Bivio).

**The various compulsory-school models in Canton Graubünden and the different roles for Romansh**

		Kindergarten		Primary school					Lower secondary-school
				Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Romansh as a language of tuition		Romansh (100%)		Romansh (100%)		Romansh (87/85%)			Romansh (14/12 – 50%)
	German								
Romansh as a subject		Romansh		Romansh					
		German		German					

Romansh on the move: The newly created five-volume manual for sports teachers in Romansh symbolises vitality.





Education level	LT	Number of hours/lessons, comments
<b>Lower-secondary level</b>	DE	Starting with the 2002/03 academic year, those communes that have Romansh as the language of tuition at primary level have three lessons per week of Romansh as a compulsory subject in their lower-secondary schools. In those communes that have German or Italian as their language of tuition in the second and third year at this level, it is possible to offer 3-5 lessons of Romansh per week as either an optional subject or as one of the listed options from which students have to choose one or several subjects.
<b>Vocational college</b>	DE/ RM/ IT	One lesson in Romansh on each day of classes (compulsory for trainees whose native tongue is Romansh). Before the introduction of the new framework syllabus for the general-education element at the vocational colleges in 1996, trainees whose native tongue was Romansh used to study Romansh instead of German at the vocational college in Chur. This arrangement lapsed when the new framework syllabus took effect. Tuition that is not subject-specific is fundamentally held in Romansh and German at the vocational colleges in Chur and Ilanz. For the general-education element, the so-called splitting model has been on offer since April 2004. Chur's commercial college offers Romansh as an additional subject whenever there is sufficient interest. Specialist tuition continues to be held as before-hand in the vocational college responsible for a particular catchment area. The splitting model is running as a pilot project until 2008. At the 'Plantahof' agricultural college in Landquart, two subjects (veterinary medicine and business skills) used to be taught in Romansh too (abandoned in 1997 due to lack of interest). At the commercial colleges in Samedan and Ilanz, correspondence and one further subject are taught in Romansh.
<b>Academic upper secondary (i.e. preparing for the "Matura")</b>	DE/ RM/ IT	Up until the end of the 1990s, students of Romansh native tongue at these schools followed precisely the same curriculum as those of German native tongue. Romansh tuition was in two additional lessons per week. Graubünden's law on academic upper-secondary education was amended on 27 September 1998, bringing with it an appreciable upgrading of Romansh. Starting with the 1999/2000 academic year, the canton's upper-secondary schools now offer a bilingual "Matura" (baccalaureate) in Romansh and German. Romansh is taught as a subject and is also used as the language of tuition for two other fundamental subjects. Following the reform of the academic upper-secondary level ( <i>lycées, Gymnasien</i> , etc.), students can choose Romansh as their first language, with a full complement of lessons, or as a foreign language, a major subject or an optional subject.
<b>Diploma middle school</b>	DE/ RM/ IT	At the "diploma middle school" in Chur, Romansh now has the same position as German and Italian as a first language in the latest syllabus. (A "diploma middle school" is an upper-secondary stream leading to a diploma that is less academically demanding than the "Matura").

Education level	LT	Number of hours/lessons, comments
<b>Graubünden's PFH/HEP ("University of applied educational sciences")</b> <a href="http://www.pfh-gr.ch">www.pfh-gr.ch</a>	DE/ RM/ IT	As part of a massive reform of higher education throughout Switzerland, this institution has replaced the former teacher-training college in Chur (with its Romansh section), the Graubünden women's college and the teacher's seminary section of the upper-secondary school in Schiers. Switzerland's "universities of applied educational sciences" ( <i>pädagogische Fachhochschulen</i> , <i>hautes écoles pédagogiques</i> ) train teachers for the kindergarten and primary levels (diploma courses) and also provide in-service further training for established teachers, summer study weeks, second-language tuition and intensive advanced courses. As a branch of the more general "universities of applied science", research and development is also part of the programme. The general syllabus for the foundation subjects at this institution in Chur is based on the cantonal law of 27 September 1998 creating the "university of applied educational sciences" (statute: BR 427.200) as well as the law of 26 November 2000 on compulsory-level education (statute: BR 421.000) and various inter-cantonal agreements and regulations. Romansh is adequately covered in the "kindergarten" course (first language and language integration, second cantonal language) and the "primary-school" course (first language, second cantonal language) as well as in the field of study called "departmental/specialist didactics in the form of specialist training reflecting the school syllabus". At the time of writing, however, this has not regained the level it had at the individual schools and colleges that Graubünden's PFH/ HEP in Chur has replaced. A working party was set up in May 2002 to look intensively into the question of making adequate arrangements for Romansh and Italian at this institution.

Pädagogische Fachhochschule Graubünden  
Scuola universitaria pedagogica dei Grigioni  
Scol'auta professiunala da pedagogia dal Grischun



<b>School of Applied Linguistics (SAL)</b> <a href="http://www.sal.ch">www.sal.ch</a>	DE/ RM/ IT	An "advanced vocational college" offering both beginner and advanced courses. It is based in Zurich and has an outpost in Chur. It works closely with the IMK (Institute for the Media and Communications) in Chur ( <a href="http://www.ikmchur.ch">www.ikmchur.ch</a> ). The SAL also uses the Romansh language for its preparatory, foundation and diploma courses.
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Education level	LT	Number of hours/lessons, comments
Universities	DE/ FR/ IT/ RM	<p>A wide-ranging curriculum concerning the Romansh language and literature in Zurich, at both the University and the Federal Institute of Technology, ETH, (lecturing posts; an extraordinary professorial chair in the Romansh language and literature (since 1985 but vacant from 1996 to 2001), assistant posts; <a href="http://www.unizh.ch/rose">www.unizh.ch/rose</a>), also at the University of Fribourg (lecturing posts since 1991; one professorial chair in Romansh philology, assistant posts, <a href="http://www.unifr.ch/fs-phil-rom@unifr.ch">www.unifr.ch/fs-phil-rom@unifr.ch</a>) and at Geneva University (ordinary professorial chair for Romansh language and literature, <a href="http://www.unige.ch/lettres/roman">www.unige.ch/lettres/roman</a>) and Berne University (as part of comparative linguistics, <a href="http://www.roma.unibe.ch">www.roma.unibe.ch</a>).</p> <p>The University of Fribourg is the only place where it is possible to study Romansh as a major subject. It provides training not only for Romanist students but also for Romansh-speaking secondary and upper-secondary teachers. A separate training programme has been drawn up for the latter in cooperation with the teacher-training unit of the university's pedagogical institute. At Zurich University, it is possible to take Romansh as a first or second subsidiary subject.</p>

LT= Language of tuition, RM = Romansh, DE = German, FR = French, IT = Italian

**Romansh-medium schools**

Contrary to what the name might suggest, the traditional Romansh school is not a monolingual institution, but is one of the oldest and most successful bilingual school systems to be found anywhere in the world. By way of contrast to most of the other bilingual school models that have come into being since the 1970s, the use of two languages in Romansh-medium schools came about more or less incidentally in the course of the nineteenth century, given the situation pertaining in Graubünden as regards language policy and culture. It is thus possible to see the Romansh school as one that naturally became bilingual. Very unfortunately, most present-day anthologies of bilingual schools still make no mention of the schools in Graubünden that use Romansh as their language of tuition. It was only in the course of the 1990s, as part of a study project, that it emerged clearly that these schools fit the model of strongly bilingual schools, such as have been propagated, for instance, in Canada. Schools using Romansh as their language of tuition are capable of fulfilling two eminently important tasks, namely of attaining strong bilingualism and of guaranteeing a protective function for the minority language as such.

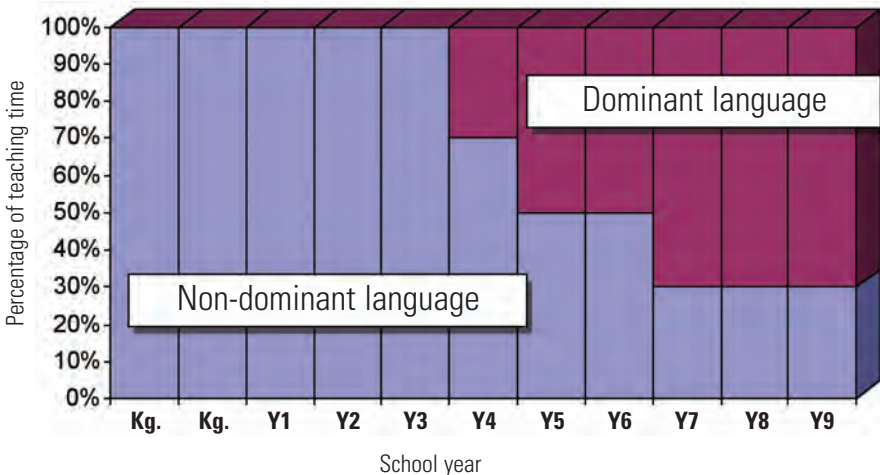
### Bilingualism

All students who have made their way through a school of the type using Romansh as a language of tuition are at least bilingual, and that does not depend on their language origins. Up until the fourth year of school, tuition is in Romansh. In years 4-6, German is taught as a subject. Early total immersion is beneficial, for instance, for children whose native tongue is not Romansh; they not only learn the language, but it is the vehicle through which they learn about the subject matter. In lower secondary school (i.e. years 7-9 of compulsory education), German takes over as the principal language of tuition, and it is only Romansh itself and biology that are taught in Romansh. The change in the language of tuition makes it possible for the Romansh-speaking students to be immersed in German. An empirical study commissioned by Switzerland's National Science Foundation, showed that these schools are highly efficient in making their students bilingual in Romansh and German.

### Protective function for the minority language

Alongside helping students acquire strong bilingualism in Romansh and German, the role of Romansh-medium schools in protecting the minority language is self-evident. At kindergarten and from the first to the fourth years of primary school, all the tuition is in Romansh. Non native-speakers start to learn the language from the very first day. This early and intensive concentration on the non-dominant language, Romansh, ensures that the linguistic structures are genuinely consolidated in all the pupils involved and lays the foundation for balanced bilingualism without Romansh coming under too much pressure too early from the dominant language, German.

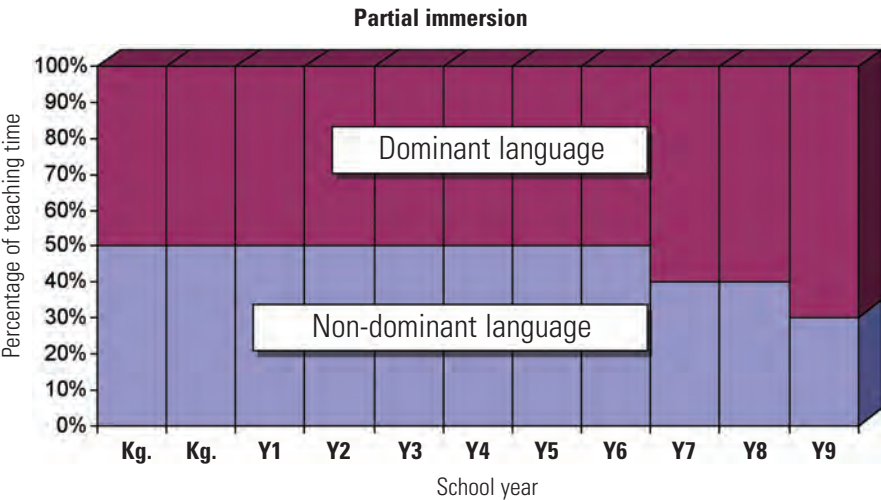
Early total immersion



This procedure also offers a certain guarantee that non-Romansh families living in Romansh territories will really make the effort at integration. Despite the “delayed” introduction of tuition in German, research results show that, by the time students reach the end of Romansh-medium schools, their skills in German are virtually on a par with those of their fellows who attended all-German schools, and the latter are deprived of the felicitous side-effect of acquiring such skills in a second language at the same time.

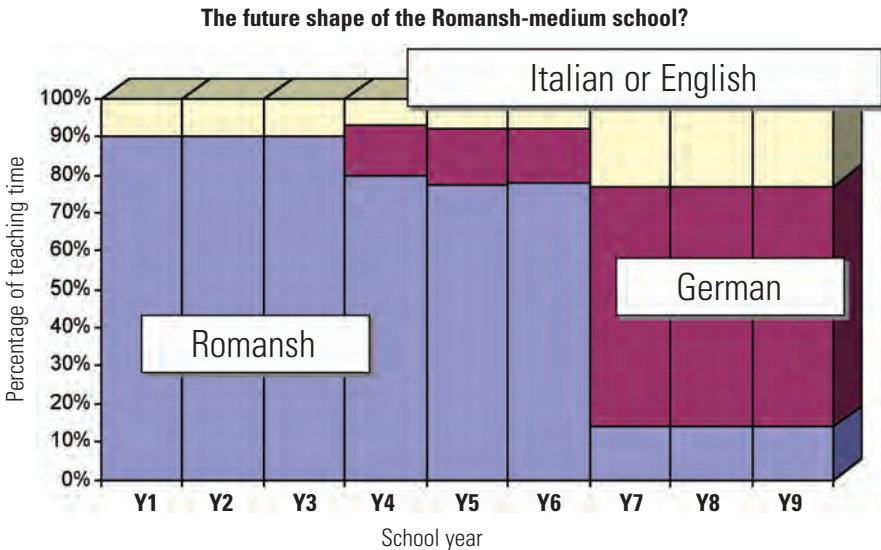
The Romansh-medium school has evolved organically over time. It is not surrounded by a nimbus of newness. It was not created by a group of parent and/or teacher activists. It quite simply reflects a normal situation, and the result is that the people as a whole and the public authorities do not realise (or scarcely so) what a magnificent, extraordinary asset they possess.

The situation is different as regards “newer” forms of bilingual schools, such as the one created in connection with Samedan’s school project. These are generally the focus of much more attention. The early total immersion of the traditional Romansh-medium school has been replaced with a system of partial immersion. Wrongly, it is often only this form that is viewed as a “bilingual school”. Schools with early partial immersion are widely regarded as schools with a strong bilingual model, but it must not be forgotten that they were originally devised for “big” and “strong” languages (such as French and English), so that they cannot fulfil the necessary protective function for the minority language or can only do so with great difficulty. The general rule is that the weaker the minority language is in everyday life, the stronger must be the efforts to protect it and the greater the number of lessons held in it. Compared with the traditional Romansh-medium schools, the new models are generally characterised by a strengthening of the German component. The early introduction of tuition in German (sometimes at kindergarten even) also has the effect of weakening the incentive to seek language integration.



Despite all these considerations, it would be wrong to forget that the more recent bilingual schools with partial immersion were introduced as a means of “warding off something worse”. Traditional Romansh schools in communes on the language boundary with a majority of German speakers growing all the time have faced increasing pressure to introduce German tuition at an early stage or even to switch to all-German (monolingual) tuition. In the past, the only way out of this deadlock was to move to a German-language school. Research that has accompanied Samedan’s school project shows that the creation of the partial-immersion school has led to a much more heightened awareness of bilingualism amongst the commune’s inhabitants, on a scale not observed in communes with traditional Romansh schools.

It would be feasible to develop the traditional Romansh-medium school further from two languages to three and even more. Instead of early tuition in the all-dominant German language, a different foreign language could be learnt earlier on and it would not be in direct competition with Romansh. It would be possible to think of Italian or English being introduced in the lower primary-school classes (as an ordinary subject for several years to begin with and then intensively later on). Italian and English do not pose a direct threat to Romansh, and offering them could make the Romansh school (even) more attractive. It is perfectly conceivable that the future of Romansh schools could lie in helping their pupils attain trilingualism.



### Pilot projects with schools using two languages of tuition

The syllabus for Graubünden's primary/lower-secondary schools did not in the past contain provisions for schools run bilingually on a "partial immersion" basis as opposed to the "total immersion" of the traditional Romansh-medium school (cf. pp. 52 ff.). As mentioned earlier on in this section, this is a situation confronting Romansh-language schools located on the Romansh/German language border. The new syllabuses do now make allowance for school experiments with partial immersion.

#### *The Samedan pilot school (Upper Engadin)*

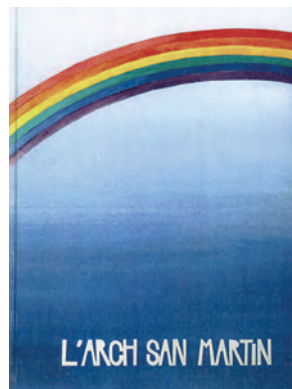
One such experiment was conducted by the commune of Samedan in the years 1996-2000. Its declared purpose was to promote Romansh-German bilingualism at kindergarten and throughout the period of compulsory education and, at the same time, to protect and strengthen Romansh effectively. The aim is for pupils to experience bilingualism as something enriching. They are to acquire an advanced understanding of language such as is scarcely feasible through a monolingual school education. Romansh and German ought to be on an equal footing at the end of nine years of school (balanced multilingualism). The results were positive and so, in 2002, the Graubünden government authorised the commune of Samedan to turn its kindergarten and primary/lower-secondary schools into permanent bilingual establishments along the lines of the successful experiment. It is, incidentally, worth mentioning that Samedan's "scoula cumünela" is the only school run by a local authority (commune) in Switzerland that is bilingual right from the very beginning.

#### *The Pontresina pilot school (Upper Engadin)*

Starting with the 2003/04 academic year, another commune in the Upper Engadin, Pontresina, also launched a pilot project with a bilingual model of school (communal decision of 18 March 2003, endorsed by the cantonal government on 11 April 2003). It has the same stated objectives as Samedan, but is less consistent in its implementation.

#### *The Chur pilot school*

Another bilingual school project started in one of Chur's schools ("Stadtschule") with the 2000/01 academic year. This pilot is also being scientifically monitored. In two selected classes, tuition is being given in German and Italian and in one selected class in German and Romansh. The results from the first few years have been positive and in 2003/04 36 pupils in years 1-4 attended classes in Chur with tuition in two languages.



"L'arch San Martin": a language textbook for the first year of school

### Foreign-language tuition at primary and lower-secondary level

The Graubünden cantonal parliament has decided that as of the 2002/03 academic year, the languages of tuition in all the language regions are to be characterised by the following identical elements.

- one cantonal language as the language of tuition (years 1-9)
- one further cantonal language as a compulsory first foreign language (years 4-9)
- compulsory English (classes 7-9)
- special programmes of optional subjects for those national languages (French, etc.) not provided as compulsory subjects.

In the Romansh-medium schools, Romansh is the language of tuition at primary level and German is the first foreign language. At compulsory lower-secondary level, Romansh is a compulsory subject, alongside German and English. In the German-medium schools, it is possible to choose Romansh as the second language at primary level. Several communes on the traditional Romansh language territory which have selected German as their language of tuition are making use of this option: St. Moritz, Bravuogn/Bergün, Surava, Obervaz, Zillis, Andeer, Rhäzüns, Domat/Ems, Flims and Ilanz. One German-speaking commune, Obersaxen, has introduced Romansh as the first foreign language, whereas two other communes on the border between Romansh and German (Vals and Samnaun), have preferred Italian. Two Romansh-speaking communes with a German-medium primary school (Scheid and Feldis) as well as one German-speaking commune (Valendas), where the first foreign language is Romansh, have now replaced Romansh with compulsory Italian in their lower-secondary schools on the basis of the new cantonal educational concept.

### The CGLs online didactic centre

In 2002, the Conferenza Generala Ladina, the association of the teaching profession in the Engadin and the Val Müstair, set up an online didactic centre making modern, up-to-date and attractive teaching materials and ideas available for creative tuition ([www.rumantsch.ch/didacta/cgl](http://www.rumantsch.ch/didacta/cgl)).

### Surselva's "Learning-to-read kit"

The CCM ("center da cumpetenza e management", the regional office of the Lia Rumantscha's agent in Surselva) in Laax has produced a "learning-to-read" kit for the territory using Sursilvan. It is in the form of a case containing numerous games in Romansh, which are intended to help pupils (re)discover the joys of learning that language. The project is the follow-on to a diploma thesis submitted in 2001 by three students training to teach children with special needs at the "university of educational sciences" (PFH/HEP) in Zurich, in which they proposed a prototype for such a learning-to-read kit.

Bibliography: Baker, C. and Pyrs Jones, S.: *Encyclopedia of Bilingualism and Bilingual Education*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 1998; Carigiet, W. and Cathomas, R.: "Immersion und kaum einer merkt's. Von der Zweisprachigkeit der SchülerInnen romanischsprachiger Schulen" in: *Babylonia*, Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Sprachenlernen und Sprachenunterricht, Fondazione Lingue e Culture, Comano 1997; Gregori, G. P.: "Romanisch vor und nach der Mittelschulreform" in: *Babylonia* 6 (1998), pp. 57-58; Engi, P.: *Die Volksschule im dreisprachigen Kanton Graubünden*; [www.punts-info.ch/organisationen/organisation\\_ErziehungGR.htm](http://www.punts-info.ch/organisationen/organisation_ErziehungGR.htm)



## ***Legal matters***

### **Federal and cantonal level**

At cantonal level since 1880/92 and at federal level since 1938, Romansh as a national language has, in formal terms at least, been on an equal footing with the other Graubünden/Swiss national languages. In practice, however, true equality for Romansh has still not been attained. The new federal constitution of 18 April 1999 (with its language article, number 70) and the amended version of the cantonal constitution of 18 May 2003 (with its language article, number 3) provide the legal bases for the consistent promotion of language minorities in Switzerland. It is intended that specific laws be enacted at federal and cantonal level governing the use of Romansh in detail.

According to the periodic reports which the Swiss federal authorities submitted to the Council of Europe in the years 2001 and 2002 in accordance with the European Charter, its language minorities are adequately protected thanks to federalism and the guarantee of constitutional rights, outlawing discrimination. In its reports, the Federal Council (i.e. government) makes the point that most of the powers concerning language policy reside with the cantons.

In a strategy document that was approved by its assembly of delegates on 25 October 2003, the Lia Rumantscha called on Canton Graubünden to adopt all the measures it can to promote Romansh.

In 2001, the Romansh-speaking members of the cantonal parliament formed their own parliamentary group. At the first "popular assembly" ("Cumin romontsch") organised by "Romania" (the language organisation that looks after Surselva) on 29 November 2003, there were clear calls for the creation of a separate political platform for Romansh affairs.

### **Communal level**

It is the communes that hold the power to decide on their own essential official language or languages. In some cases where communes have formed regional cooperative groupings, this decision is also taken regionally. So Romansh communes and regional organisations can also declare Romansh to be their official language. In Romansh-speaking communes, official documents are usually published in Romansh, although a few of them use Romansh and German in parallel. In communes with a high percentage of Romansh-speaking residents, council meetings are conducted in Romansh too. This is, however, more difficult in those communes where there is a greater mixture of languages. Generally, it is German that is the language of deliberations. As one of its measures to promote the language, Canton Graubünden provides financial contributions for language services to assist communes and other organisations in the use of Romansh.

### **Schools**

The cantonal school regulations permit schools to be run in Romansh on Romansh territory. However, it is the communes that have the last word as regards the school language(s), which they decide on in consultation with the canton. The use of language in schools is dealt with in a special section (pp. 48 ff.).

## Courts of law

With the referendum vote of 2 March 2000, Canton Graubünden's system of law courts underwent a fundamental reorganisation. The circuit courts have now become district courts, but what language(s) they are to use is not determined in any cantonal law. Basically, it is one of the powers of the districts to decide on which language(s) are essentially to be used in their courts. If a district covers Romansh-speaking territory, it can make Romansh into the language of the court, and cases will be heard in Romansh too. This procedure is in line with the Swiss Federal Court's case-law on the territoriality principle. In practice, the question of the essential language of the court has not been explicitly fixed. It is, however, customary that a Romansh-speaking party appearing before a court on Romansh territory is able to use Romansh.

Since Romansh is regarded as a court language, motions and evidence in Romansh are admissible too. According to article 20 of Graubünden's law on the administrative jurisdiction, the languages of the administrative court are the cantonal languages as recognised in its constitution. Any party summonsed to appear before the administrative court, thus also has the right to be heard in Romansh. It is also possible to use Romansh for any legal transaction and also for notarisations. [According to Switzerland's report submitted to the Council of Europe in accordance with the European Charter in December 2002.]

## The media

According to article 3 of the Swiss Federal Radio and Television Law ("RTVG", statute: SR 784.40), it is part of the mission of the electronic media to give due consideration to the diversity of the country and its people and to convey such a content to the public at large. According to article 27 (1) of the same law, as well as article 2 (1)(a) of its broadcasting licence, the Swiss Radio and Television Company (SRG), as a presenter of national programmes and programmes for the language regions, has a duty to broadcast its own radio programmes in all of the national languages, which expressly includes Romansh. The Romansh Radio and Television Company, which is a regional member of the SGR thus provides a dedicated Romansh radio channel (see section on Radio and Television, pp. 67 ff.). The two local radio stations which the federal authorities have licensed to operate in Graubünden, Radio Engiadina and Radio Grischa, both have specific provisions in their contracts whereby their schedules are to include "an adequate proportion of daily news bulletins as well as regular programmes about social and cultural matters in the Romansh and Italian languages".

Article 27 (2) of the law just referred to makes it a duty for the Federal Council (government) to lay down the principles for determining the needs of the Romansh language in the programmes broadcast to the regions using the various official languages. Article 2 (1)(b) of the SRG's broadcasting licence places a duty on the broadcaster to give due consideration to the needs of the Romansh language in the television programmes of the other language regions. It thus regularly broadcasts programmes in Romansh interspersed with the German-language programmes, and these Romansh broadcasts are subsequently repeated on the nationwide French and Italian channels too. The federal and cantonal authorities have both contributed funding towards the setting up of a Romansh news agency, whose role is to guarantee the expansion of top-quality, up-to-date offerings in the Romansh-language media.

Since 5 December 1996, the “Engadiner Post” has been appearing three times a week with the subtitle “Posta Ladina” and at least two pages of editorial content in Romansh.

Since 6 January 1997, the Südostschweiz Mediengruppe AG has been publishing a daily newspaper called “La Quotidiana” in Romansh (combining the five idioms and Rumantsch Grischun).

## Culture

On 1 January 1998, Graubünden’s new law on the promotion of culture (“KFG”) came into force and it also requires proper consideration to be given to the canton’s linguistic diversity and its various regions and population groupings (maintaining and looking after trilingualism, especially the minority languages). So the cantonal promotion of culture also includes promotion of Romansh culture (support for forms of expression selected by the Romansh people on their own initiative, translations into Romansh of works written in other languages and translation of Romansh works into other languages).

The collection and publication of works in the fields of theatre, music and literature is carried out mainly by the Romansh language organisations. In addition to these institutions, Graubünden’s cantonal library has the task of collecting and facilitating access to media which are in some way related to Graubünden, which includes media in the Romansh language or about that language and its culture.

## Names of places, districts and communes

Most of the districts, communes and places in the Romansh language territory use their Romansh names. Such names and any modifications to them are governed by the federal ordinance of 30 December 1970 (statute: SR 510.625).

## Private individuals

Individuals who speak Romansh have the right to use their language in contacts with communal, cantonal and federal bodies. Responses are usually drafted in the same language as the original communication.

Bibliography: European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.  
Switzerland’s second report, [www.kultur-schweiz.admin.ch](http://www.kultur-schweiz.admin.ch).

Star-gazing: does anyone else speak Romansh out there?

*Photo: Schweizerisches Jugendschriftenwerk*



## ***Administration and public services***

### **Federal level (cf. [www.ch.ch](http://www.ch.ch))**

Officialdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documents and publications: banknotes, passports, identity cards, decrees, laws and ordinances (including the federal constitution and explanatory statements on voting proposals), information brochures issued by federal offices, etc.</li> <li>• Military: for the period 1988-1995, four infantry companies based in Graubünden were commanded in Romansh on an experimental basis. Training materials and personnel documents in Romansh.</li> <li>• Federal administration: use of Romansh in contacts with Romansh speakers (see section on Legal Position of Romansh, pp. 38 ff.). Severe under-representation of Romansh speakers (and French and Italian speakers too) in the top echelons of the federal administration.</li> <li>• Judiciary: see section on Legal Position of Romansh (pp. 38 ff.).</li> </ul>
Private organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisations (of a social, cultural, environmental nature, etc.) use Romansh on their letterheads, websites and for selected actions.</li> <li>• Insurance companies: forms and general documentation.</li> <li>• Banks: a few banks with several branches on Romansh territory use Romansh too.</li> </ul>
Manufacturing and distribution industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For advertising purposes on Romansh territory; for inscriptions and for labelling certain products (especially retailers with several outlets in Graubünden).</li> </ul>
Public services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Swiss Post Office and Federal Railways also make sporadic use of Romansh in their printed publications and inscriptions. The Romansh information pages in the telephone directory and the Romansh speaking clock (161) were scrapped when Swisscom Directories AG took over these services.</li> </ul>
Newspapers and periodicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numerous magazines and newspapers published by private firms (such as the Coop) and Swiss institutions sometimes include articles in Romansh.</li> </ul>



Schweizerische Lebensrettungs-Gesellschaft SLRG  
Société Suisse de Sauvetage SSS  
Società Svizzera di Salvataggio SSS  
Societad Svizra da Salvament SSS  
Postfach 161, 6207 Nottwil

Numerous institutions and organisations use Romansh on their letterheads, websites and so on.

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**Cantonal level**


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Officialdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cantonal administration: for contacts with the Romansh-speaking population (see section on Legal Position of Romansh, pp. 38 ff.). But the electronic tax declaration (2002) only in German and Italian!</li> <li>• Public buildings used by the canton must have their inscriptions translated.</li> <li>• Schools: see section on Schools, pp. 48 ff.</li> <li>• Chancelleries and other public offices: in accordance with the guidelines for translating official texts of the cantonal parliament, government and administration (see section on Legal Position of Romansh, p. 34).</li> <li>• A knowledge of Romansh is often not a necessary qualification for employment by the canton, even in the Romansh-speaking regions!</li> </ul>
Private organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cantonal organisations and institutions (similar to the federal level).</li> </ul>
Manufacturing and distribution industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For advertising and labelling products (similar to the federal level).</li> </ul>
Public services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Post Office: for forms, advertising materials, etc.</li> <li>• Telephone directory: professional and company designations in Romansh, if requested.</li> </ul>

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**Regional level**


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Daily private life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For life in the home and within the village, within private associations and amongst friends, Romansh is often the main language.</li> </ul>
Public affairs and professional activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In public and professional matters, Romansh is the usual language of oral communication; for correspondence, either Romansh or German is used depending on the addressee.</li> </ul>
Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bible, liturgical texts, religious instruction material and sacred music in Romansh.</li> <li>• Church services are generally conducted in Romansh in parishes with an overriding Romansh majority. In parishes with mixed languages, Romansh and German are used alternately.</li> <li>• In the main tourist centres during the peak tourist seasons, church services are held alternately in Romansh and German.</li> <li>• The missive for the “federal day of prayer” is delivered in Romansh in Romansh-speaking parishes.</li> </ul>
Communal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the Lower Engadin and the Val Müstair (including S-chanf and Zuoz in the Upper Engadin) the use of Romansh in the administration is a mandatory requirement (official-language rule introduced in 1995). The same has applied since 1996/97 for the majority of communes in Surselva and Central Graubünden.</li> </ul>

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The so-called “Romansh regulative” is in effect in: (Surselva) Andiast, Breil, Cumbel, Degen, Falera, Flond, Laax, Lumbrin, Medel, Pigniu, Pitasch, Ruein, Schlans, Sumvitg, Suraua, Surculm, Trun, Tujetsch, Vignon, Vrin and Vuorz/Waltensburg); (Sutselva) Casti-Wergenstein; (Central Graubünden) Cunter, Mon, Mulegns, Riom-Parsonz, Salouf, Savognin, Stierva, Sur and Tinizong-Rona. The so-called “bilingual regulative” is applicable in (Sutselva) Donath, Domat/Ems, Rhäzüns and Trin; (Central Graubünden) Tiefencastel.

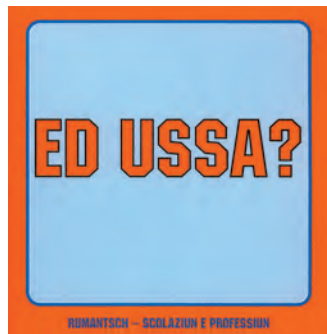
- In communes with a mixed-language population: Romansh and German.

Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See section on Schools, pp. 48 ff.</li> </ul>
Commercial businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For tenders, invoices, correspondence, labelling products, corporate image, etc.</li> <li>• A brochure published by the Romansh young people's organisation, GiuRu, in 2002 called “Ed ussa?” (What next?) provides information on job opportunities where a knowledge of Romansh is a precondition.</li> </ul>
Service operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rhaetian Railway: partial use of Romansh for general announcements, ticket inspections, timetables, inscriptions, etc.</li> <li>• Tourist offices: partial use of Romansh for advertising matter and general information.</li> </ul>
Fire brigades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partial use of Romansh for documents, training and everyday oral communication.</li> </ul>
Public registry offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the public registry offices in the Romansh-speaking districts, Romansh is used for forms, excerpts from the registers and general announcements. Marriage ceremonies can be conducted in Romansh upon request.</li> </ul>
Mass media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See section on The media, pp. 64 ff.</li> </ul>
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rich culture in five written idioms, dynamic popular theatre, choirs, adult education, libraries, various organised public and private events, etc. (See section on Culture, pp. 71 ff.)</li> </ul>



The Swiss Post Office (formerly “PTT”) was a pioneer in using Romansh.

“Ed ussa?”:  
this brochure provides  
practical information on  
job opportunities using  
Romansh.



## The media

### Press and other publications

The Romansh press dates back to the early nineteenth century when the former Three Leagues were transformed into the canton of Graubünden with its uniform organisation. It was a time of great upheaval and the people had lost their overview of the situation and their general feeling of being in control of it. They needed independent information, and only a free press could provide them with it. The press was, however, also subject to party-political and denominational interests, but it was the only available reading and the only educational source up until around 1850 (apart from ecclesiastical writings). In the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, innumerable newspapers and periodicals saw the light of day in the Romansh-speaking parts of Graubünden. Just a few of these have survived to the present. Up until as late as 1996, there were four Romansh newspapers. Two of these appeared twice weekly: the **Fögl Ladin** (1941-96, Engadin/Val Müstair) and the **Gasetta Romontscha** (1857-1996, Surselva). The other two used to be published once weekly: **Pagina da Surmeir** (1946-...., Surmeir/Albula valley) and **Casa Paterna/La Punt** (1920-96, Sutselva and the protestant communes of Surselva). There are numerous publications appearing with different periodicities, of which it is worth singling out various yearbooks, almanacs and vade mecums: **Calender Romontsch** (Surselva), **Chalender Ladin** (Engadin and Val Müstair), **Sulom Surmiran** (Surmeir/Oberhalbstein and Albula Valley) **Calender per mintgagi** (protestant communes of Surselva and Sutselva), **Annalas da la Societad Retoromantscha** (a demanding scientific series) and **Litteratura** (organ of the Union for Romansh Literature).



"Punts": a product that brings young Romansh speakers closer together, whatever boundaries may exist between them.

### The young people's magazine "Punts"

1994, a handful of young idealists from the various valley communities of Romansh-speaking Graubünden launched a monthly magazine called "Punts" ([www.punts.ch](http://www.punts.ch)). It was both the first supra-regional periodical in Romansh and Graubünden's first periodical targeted on young people. The idea for a young people's magazine emerged from the cooperation between "La Talina" ("Romania"'s periodical for students), "il Corv" (a periodical published by "Ladinia", the Engadin students' union) and "igl Zundirgn" (a periodical published by "Meirana", the association of Surmeir students) under the overall auspices of the Romansh young people's organisation, Giuventetgna Rumantscha (GiuRu, [www.giuru.ch](http://www.giuru.ch)). "Punts" means "bridges", and it is the project's declared aim to build bridges between young Romansh speakers and to provide a vehicle for supra-regional communication, releasing new energies and enabling young people to have fun as they experience their language. "Punts" is a member of ASPJ (the Swiss association of print media for young people).



### “La Quotidiana” – promoting Romansh through journalism

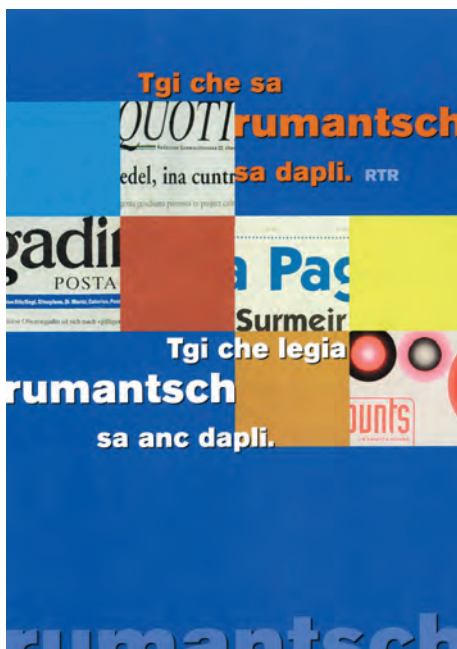
On 6 January 1997, at the end of a veritable cloak-and-dagger operation, the publishing house, Gasser Media AG, launched a Romansh daily newspaper, **La Quotidiana** (LQ, [www.laquotidiana.ch](http://www.laquotidiana.ch)). It is to be considered sensational that it had managed to integrate all the Romansh regional newspapers referred to above (with the exception of “Pagina da Surmeir”) as well as the Romansh supplement “La Nova”, which the German-language daily “Bündner Tagblatt” had introduced in 1994. At least for the language planners, this was a long-cherished dream that had become reality. Following the assimilation of the “Fögl Ladin” with its strong Engadin tradition in “La Quotidiana”, another Engadin newspaper, the German-language “Engadiner Post”, came up with the idea of adding two pages in Romansh and of rechristening its weekday publication **“Engadiner Post/Posta Ladina”**.

The birth of “La Quotidiana” had been a particularly lengthy affair. Although the need for a Romansh daily had been recognised decades before and had never been challenged, the Romansh people had a very long wait before the idea came to fruition. One special press commission followed the other, and there were dummy runs of a daily newspaper in 1988 and 1992, but neither of these was followed by a regular publication. An association called Pro Svizra Rumantscha (PSR, [www.rumantsch.ch](http://www.rumantsch.ch)) which was created in 1992 set out, in particular, to find means of strengthening the Romansh press as a whole, but failed in this particular endeavour and, since 2001, has moved its activities more and more into new fields (such as information, awareness campaigns and didactic materials). A key precondition for the establishment of a daily newspaper came in 1996 when the Swiss Confederation and Canton Graubünden agreed to share in the funding for a Romansh news agency, the **Agentura da**

**Novitads Rumantscha** (ANR). The ANR helped to create a daily newspaper to be proud of: professionally produced, attractively laid out, printed with modern machinery and in the hands of a small, but motivated and dedicated editorial team. The paper, which serves the whole Romansh community, encourages better comprehension of the others’ idioms, bringing the inhabitants of the various valleys closer to one another, and encourages the formation of a shared identity.

“La Quotidiana” is the mouthpiece of all the Romansh people. It provides coverage of all the districts where Romansh is used, but by no means closes its eyes to what is going on in the world outside. Whereas reports from or about particular districts use the local idiom, articles about Switzerland or the rest of the world are generally printed in Romansh Grischun.

Romansh Radio invented the slogan: “Those who know Romansh know more.” The Romansh print media have now topped this with “Those who can read Romansh know even more.”







*"Agentura da Novitads Rumantscha"*

The Romansh news agency supplies the Romansh media regularly with topical contributions.

Both La Quotidiana (LQ) and the ANR have their central base in Chur (Südostschweiz Print AG), but they also have editorial outposts in each of the Romansh-speaking districts (LQ: Ilanz, Donath, Stierva, Susch; ANR: Disentis-Mustér, Zernez, Savognin, Cunter, St. Moritz, Ardez) as well as in Berne and Schmerikon (ANR). From the very beginning, the mass distribution of La Quotidiana has proved difficult. Regionalistic attitudes are still preventing growth in the number of subscribers. There are certain matters of fact over which the newspaper's editors have little influence. Today, all Romansh speakers are equally fluent in German too and hence do not rely on a newspaper in Romansh to satisfy their need for news. There is still a lack of an overall Romansh identity, and the readiness to seek to understand the other written idioms and Rumantsch Grischun remains relatively low.

In January 2003, the business situation led the proprietor, Südostschweiz Print AG, to reconstruct "La Quotidiana" and to more or less force the ANR to contribute more. The Romansh press seems to have arrived at a decisive crossroads: if it is left to the rules of the market economy, its chances of survival are slim. The continued existence of a daily Romansh newspaper is going to depend on a combination of several measures: a concentration of all the editorial forces available to the print media and stronger public support (under the heading of "language promotion"), plus a greater willingness amongst the Romansh people themselves to support "La Quotidiana", to subscribe to it, to read it and to advertise in it.

Bibliography: Cantieni, A.M.: "Geschichte der romanischen Presse in Graubünden", Vaz, 1984; Deplazes, G.: "Funtaunas 3", Chur, 1990, pp. 16-35. Publications concerning "La Quotidiana": Pro Svizra Rumantscha "Die romanische Tageszeitung. Das Projekt", 1993; Cabalzar, M.: "La Quotidiana – Sprachförderung mit publizistischen Mitteln" in: Die Südostschweiz, 27 January 2003; Lebrement, H.P.: "Es braucht nur etwas Marktwirtschaft. Ein Vorschlag zur Sanierung der romanischen Presse in Graubünden" in: Die Südostschweiz, 14 February 2003, p. 9.

**Radio and television****Radio e Televisiun Rumantscha****The mission of the broadcast media**

**Radio e Televisiun Rumantscha (RTR)** is one of the business units making up the Swiss nationwide broadcasting enterprise, "SGR SSR idée suisse". According to the Swiss federal law on radio and television ("RTVG", statute: SR 784.40), the SRG is required to provide at least one radio channel for Romansh-speaking Switzerland. On top of that, the Swiss Federal Council (i.e. government) lays down the principles to be observed in order to satisfy the radio and television needs of this language region\*. For RTR, this means creating a journalistic vehicle that offers the Romansh people comprehensive information, education and entertainment in their own language. This service ought to be up-to-date, properly-informed, independent and clearly focused on its listeners' and viewers' needs and expectations.

(\* The term used throughout Switzerland is "service public", i.e. the provision of broadcasts to satisfy the various needs and interests of the population in all four language regions.)

There is no doubt whatsoever about the importance of the electronic media for any minority-language group. That the Romansh people have a very considerable Romansh radio and television schedule today is thanks to this "idée suisse", which is based on the principle of solidarity with minorities and respect and esteem for those who speak other languages. The federal law already envisages a growth in Romansh radio and television services in the years to come.

**The individual channels: Radio Rumantsch and Televisiun Rumantsch, [www.rtr.ch](http://www.rtr.ch)**

**Radio Rumantsch (RR)** Today (2004), Radio Rumantsch broadcasts from 06.00 in the morning (08.00 on Saturdays and Sundays) to 21.00 in the evening. Its programmes aim to appeal to a broad public with many different entertainment elements, local, regional, national and international news and sport, all embedded in music of different genres, from the latest worldwide chart-toppers and international standards to traditional popular and ethnic numbers. Radio Rumantsch, of course, also broadcasts every conceivable form of music in the Romansh language, from choirs, through brass bands to pop and rock; many of these tunes are its own exclusive recordings and cannot be heard

**Radio Rumantsch**

anywhere else. Radio Rumantsch is targeted on a very broad public, which naturally includes young people, with rock and pop music, with competent background information, trends, tips, various services, new interpretations, live performances and much more.

Romansh radio and television cultivate the variety that makes up Romansh, but are also open for innovations, such as the use of the standardised written language, Rumantsch Grischun. Presenters and reporters always speak their own idiom, and no attempt is made to hide "local colour". The pan-Romansh written language, Rumantsch Grischun, is going to be used more in future in contributions that are read. It is RTR's declared objective to contribute to maintaining Romansh and enhancing all Romansh speakers' understanding of the other idioms. Another important RTR function is to maintain bridges between Romansh speakers still living in their separate valleys and those who have left Graubünden to live in the "diaspora" in other parts of Switzerland and even abroad. RTR also looks after communication with Switzerland's other language regions.

It is possible to receive Radio Rumantsch as follows:

- via UHF/FM transmissions throughout the Romansh-speaking parts of Graubünden,
- via the Eutelsat Hotbird 3 satellite (throughout Europe),
- via cable in many parts of Switzerland,
- via Internet (live stream and selected recordings) worldwide.

### Televisiun Rumantscha (TvR)



### Televisiun Rumantscha

Today (2004), Televisiun Rumantscha (TvR) occupies the German-language television channel, SF DRS 1 (with repeats on SFInfo), six times a week at prime time, with a news programme, "Telesguard" from Monday to Friday and a magazine programme, "Cuntrasts", on Sunday. "Telesguard" reports on events in Graubünden and matters of general Romansh interest, with material filmed up to a few hours before air time. "Cuntrasts" is not only the name but the nature of the magazine programme that portrays Graubünden in all its variety. Four times a year there is also a religious broadcast called "Pled sin via" (a word on life's path) and there are occasional programmes from Berne with the title of "Controvers" with the latest ins and outs of politics at the federal parliamentary level. Late every Sunday afternoon, there is a short good-night story in Romansh, "Istorgia da buna notg", for very young viewers. All these broadcasts on the principal German-language channel, SF 1, can be seen throughout Switzerland. Each of them is repeated on Switzerland's Italian and French-language channels too (TSI and TSR).

Each Romansh programme has subtitles (that can be activated with Teletext, page 777) in the language of the channel on which they are broadcast. This regular window is very important for reminding the rest of Switzerland about its smallest national-language group. Films produced by TvR meet

with interest beyond the confines of the Romansh community and some of them have been awarded national and even international prizes.



SRG SSR broadcasts its television programmes via Eutelsat too, but for copyright reasons they have to be encoded. Swiss people living in other parts of Europe can view them if they have the appropriate SAT access card, which is issued in Switzerland to authorized licence-holders.

**www.rtr.ch**

Romansh television and radio (RTR) also makes use of the multimedia gateway to the world and provides a multi-faceted Internet presence, including selections from recently broadcast radio and television programmes, Radio Rumantsch live, up-to-date supplementary information about broadcasts and RTR as an organisation and a broad range of services, especially streaming its radio transmission and information about times and frequencies.

**Key statistics**

**Headcount:** Approximately 120 (93 full-time-equivalent posts)  
 Annual operating expenditure: CHF 20.5m (TvR: 5.7m; RR: 14.8m)  
 (The SRG SSR as a whole receives 75% of its funding from licence money and 25% from advertising; resources are provided for its various units on the basis of a solidarity coefficient in accordance with the principle of internal financial equalisation.)

**Audiences:** *Radio Rumantsch*  
 An average of 27 000 listeners tune in daily.  
 Since the Romansh people also understand German, they can listen to SRG SSR's German-language station, SR DRS, too, as well as two Graubünden-based broadcasters, Radio Grischa and Radio Engiadina.

*Televisiun Rumantscha*  
 "Telesgaurd" has 200 000 viewers on average.  
 "Cuntrasts" has 50 000 viewers on average.  
 Thanks to subtitling (activated with TXT, page 777), original Romansh productions can be enjoyed by a very much bigger audience.

**Central studio in Chur** Radio e Televisiun Rumantscha (RTR)  
 CH-7002 Cuira/Chur (as of autumn 2005 in the new Media Centre)  
 Tel. +41 (0)81 2557575; Fax: +41 (0)81 2557500

**Correspondents:** Scuol, Samedan, Savognin, Ilanz, Disentis-Mustér and Berne (federal parliament)

**History**

- 1925 First Romansh-language wireless broadcast from the Zurich studio
- 1931 Creation of the SRG SSR
- 1943 Commencement of regular Romansh broadcasts (once a month on the first Friday)
- 1946 Creation of the CRR (Cumunanza Rumantscha Radio e Televisiun) as the vehicle for promoting the use of electronic media in Switzerland's fourth national language; it was accepted as a member of SRG SSR in 1954
- 1963 First Romansh television broadcast with the title "Balcun tort"
- 1966 First programming unit in Chur  
 At that time, the Romansh radio broadcasts were prepared in Chur and transmitted directly on the second channel of Swiss Radio DRS

- 1976 Opening of the regional studio for Graubünden at the (still) current address of "Theaterweg 1" in Chur.
- 1980 First broadcast of the television programme "Telesguard"  
At that time, it was broadcast weekly (on Saturdays)
- 1984 Increase in the length of Romansh radio broadcasting per day from 40 minutes to 2½ hours.  
Commissioning of the chain of UHF transmitters in Canton Graubünden for the broadcast of Romansh programmes.
- 1987 Increase in the length of daily Romansh radio broadcasting to 4 hours.
- 1991 Increase in the length of daily Romansh radio broadcasting to 6½ hours.
- 1992 Radio Rumantsch made into a separate, autonomous business unit within SRG SSR with its own director.
- 1993 Increase in the length of daily Romansh radio broadcasting to 10 hours.
- 1994 Increase in the frequency of the "Telesguard" television programme to three broadcasts per week.
- 1995 Televisiun Rumantscha was taken out of the organisational structure of Swiss television, SF DRS, and placed directly under the director of RTR.
- 1997 Increase in the length of daily Romansh radio broadcasting to 13 hours. First Internet presence at [www.rtr.ch](http://www.rtr.ch).
- 1999 Increase in the frequency of the "Telesguard" television programme to five broadcasts per week (Monday-Friday).
- 2003 Decision to build a completely new media centre ("Center da medias") at a central location in Chur.
- 2004 "Cuntrasts" first year without a summer break and with a total of around 50 productions.
- Plans More air time is planned for both Romansh radio and television in the course of coming years.

### Independent local radio stations

Two commercial local radio stations, both belonging to the Südostschweiz Radio/TV AG, *Radio Grischia* (set up in 1988 and broadcasting to the whole of Graubünden) and *Radio Engiadina* (set up in 1990 as *Radio Piz* until it changed its name in 1993 and broadcasting to the south of Graubünden) produce a small percentage of their output in Romansh.

### Internet, videos, mobile telephony

For Romansh in the Internet, the best portal is [www.rumantsch.ch](http://www.rumantsch.ch). For further reading, see Kattenbusch, D. "Die Rätoromanen im Internet" in Wunderli, P., Werlen I. and Grünert M. (eds.) *Italica – Raetica – Gallica*, Franke Verlag, Tübingen and Basel, 2001, pp. 81-87.

It was actually someone from the United Kingdom who ensured that, at the end of February 2004, mobile-phone fanatics with a Swisscom mobile contract could also play games in Romansh (Rumantsch Grischun). Cocosoft of Ljubljana, Slovenia, has so far designed three such games. To access them, go to [www.swisscom-mobile.ch](http://www.swisscom-mobile.ch), select "fun and info" and the "Vodafone-live portal", where the games can be downloaded from the Italian version. They are "Eon the dragon" (a jump-and-run game), "Mobile Grand Prix" (a car race) and "Pathum" (a board game).

## Culture

### Literature

The oldest known written records of Romansh dating from the period before 1500 are the so-called “Würzburg manuscript” (tenth century), the “Einsiedeln Homily” (an attempted between-the-lines translation of a Latin sermon into the language of the people (11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> century) and the Müstair “linguistic monument” (a fragment of a document describing grazing rights on common land written in the Val Müstair dialect and dated 1389). The majority of specialists date the commencement of the written Romansh tradition within the period 1527–62 and equate it with the three names of Gian Travers, Jachiam Bifrun and Durich Chiampel. No-one challenges that it was the Engadin where the pioneering work was done to make Romansh into a written language. However, recent findings (cf. Decurtins, in BM 1/2004, 51–61) put this date back several decades by drawing inferences from the language situation (the Romansh-German diglossia), which, at the time, affected the Lower Engadin, the Upper Inn Valley (Nauders), the Val Müstair and the Upper Val Venosta (where only Romansh was spoken up to around 1500).

Year	Author	Work	Type of text	Idiom	Comments
1508	Noder in dem Engedein	Stattütt e trastütt da queus dad Engadinna d'suott	Criminal law	Vallader	Wagner and Salis: Sources of law, authenticated in 1508 but disappeared since then
1519	Noder in dem Engedein	“Contrat da l'an 1519”	Legal deed	Vallader	Statutory contract between the Emperor Maximilian, the Counts of Tyrol and the Bishop of Chur
1527	Gian Travers	La chianzun dalla guerra dagli chiaste da Müs	Historical, political song	Puter	Traditionally, this has been regarded as the work that first made Romansh into a written language
1552	Jachiam Bifrun	Üna cuorta et christiauna fuorma	Catechism	Puter	First book in Romansh
1560	Jachiam Bifrun	L'g Nuof Sainc Testamaint	Biblical text	Puter	The work that established the written language in the Upper Engadin
1562	Durich Chiampel	Cudesch da psalms	Hymnbook	Vallader	The work that established the written language in the Lower Engadin
1601	Daniel Bonifaci	Curt mussameint	Catechism	Sutsilvan	First book in Sutsilvan
1611	Steffan Gabriel	Ilg vër sulaz da pievel giuvan	Christian doctrine, catechism, religious songs	Sursilvan	Protestant variant of the written Sursilvan language
1611	Gion Antoni Calvenzano	Curt mossament	Catechism	Sutsilvan and Sursilvan	First Catholic work in Romansh

Even if it is extremely difficult to pinpoint the timing of Romansh's breakthrough as a written language on account of difficulties in dating hand-written documents (Decurtins, 2004, 52-53), it is certain that, in addition to Rhaeto-Latin documents from the early middle ages, two Romansh documents have survived that are several decades older than Bifrun's catechism (1552) and obviously older too than Travers' "Chanzun dalla guerra dagl chiaste da Müs" (1527). One of these is the text of a **criminal law for the Lower Engadin** ("Statütt e trasütt da queus dad Engadinna d'suott", authenticated in 1508, the existence of which was recorded in 1519, since when it has disappeared) and well as a **statutory contract** concluded in 1519 between the Emperor Maximilian, the Counts of Tyrol and the Bishop of Chur, Paul Ziegler. However, it is still quite evident that the main reasons for Romansh's breakthrough as a written language were the conflicts at the time of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation and the political happenings within the State of the Three Leagues (cf. "Handbuch der Bündner Geschichte", Vol. 1, pp. 280-291, Vol. 2, pp. 141-235).



The Romansh people have a rich belletristic literature in all their idioms and in Rumantsch Grischun.

The translation and printing of the "New Testament" in Puter (the spoken language of the Upper Engadin) by Jachiam Bifrun in 1560 and Durich Chiampel's translation and printing of a "Book of Psalms" in Vallader (the spoken language of the Lower Engadin) in 1562 mark the actual point of change in attitudes towards everyday language: God's word was too important for it not to be preached and printed in the language of the indigenous population as well. Within only a few decades, no fewer than four different written variants of Romansh developed on the territory of the present-day Graubünden. During the course of the seventeenth century, a rich religious literature (both protestant and catholic) for use by common people evolved in all of them.

The two written variants used in the Engadin as well as Sursilvan were adopted relatively quickly for non-religious writings too (especially for documents of a legal nature and, later on, also for literary works and in school). In the cases of Sutsilvan and Surmiran, the development of the written language took somewhat longer. An independent Sutsilvan literature as such was not created until the years 1916/1917, and Sutsilvan itself as a separate written language was not established until 1943. The origins of the Surmiran written idiom are similar. It is true that a number of religious works appeared in this language back in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and that schools also issued textbooks in it around 1850. No literary text in the local dialect of Central Graubünden, however, was published until the 1920s. In parallel with the religious writings, court statutes and village by-laws in particular were translated from Latin, and more so from German, and adapted to the prevailing regional conditions. These "sources of law", compiled by Andrea Schorta, belong to the most important documents for any attempt to reconstruct the life and culture of the inhabitants of the Graubünden valleys in times gone by.

**Literary writings** in Romansh in the **belletristic** sense of the term did not appear until the second half of the nineteenth century. The numerous poetic and narrative testimonies praising the Mother Tongue led to a rediscovery of what was so specifically Romansh about the way the Romansh people lived and their traditions. The use of myths and epics about their origins acted as a counterweight to

the perceptible shrinkage in the Romansh-speaking territory, which was then already in clear evidence. The new Romansh awareness, which led to the setting up of regional and supra-regional language and cultural associations, was one of the main forces that stimulated literary creativity in the first half of the twentieth century. Even though many of the writers must be classified as authors of casual, amateur poetry, many Romansh writers certainly deserve to be known beyond their immediate circles of readers on account of the sensitive perceptiveness that is the hallmark of their works. Following the Second World War, a new form of literature grew up, and one of its central themes was the crisis in the world in which the authors themselves lived and the gradual collapse of a culture that had grown up over the centuries. Various writers have succeeded in opening up Romansh literature to the cultural currents of the big languages surrounding it.

The younger generation of writers is moving more and more away from grappling with Romansh reality as such and is focusing primarily on more general issues confronting modern society. Several authors have also started to make use of the new unified language, Rumantsch Grischun.

In addition to this, literary works from other languages are sometimes translated into Romansh too. A recent example of this is “Angelo und die Möwe”/“Angelo e la muetta”, written by Vincenzo Todisco and illustrated by Rudolf Mirer. It is an unusual project that Procap Grischun launched on the occasion of the European Year of People with Disabilities, in that it shows in a playful and poetic way how those who do not suffer disabilities can live in the greatest harmony with those who do.

In 1946, a Romansh writers’ union (“USR”) was set up as a subsidiary of the Lia Rumantscha. In 2004, it changed its name to ULR (“Union for Romansh Literature”). The ULR publishes an official organ, the periodical “Litteratura”, which generally appears once or twice a year and which affords writers a platform to comment not only on particular literary issues but also on current affairs in general and where they can also publish literary texts, translations, reviews and critical commentaries. Since 1990, the USR/ULR has been organising an annual Romansh literary convention (“Dis da Litteratura”), a three-day gathering for everyone interested in Romansh literature living in Graubünden or elsewhere.

Finally, Romansh literature is sporadically included in **reference works** and Swiss **literary periodicals** (such as “Orte”, [www.orteverlag.ch](http://www.orteverlag.ch), and “Feuxcroisés”, [www.culturactif.ch](http://www.culturactif.ch)). The Solothurn literary festival (held annually since 1978) also offers Romansh authors the opportunity of reading their work to a receptive audience.

The **Swiss National Library** collects documents and materials in the four national languages (German, French, Italian and Romansh) that deal with literature that has some bearing on Switzerland and makes it available free-of-charge for scientific, literary or journalistic work or study.

### **Romansh authors using their multilingualism and translations into German**

Many Romansh authors publish some of their works in German, since this holds out the prospect of access to a much wider readership. Others arrange for their works to be translated into German at some later date (in particular in the “CH” series involving various publishing houses). Numerous books written in Romansh or German also include a summary in the other language.

### **Useful websites with information about Romansh literature**

Union for Romansh Literature (ULR): [www.usrum.ch](http://www.usrum.ch)

Romansh language and literature studies at Zurich University: [www.unizh.ch](http://www.unizh.ch)

Swiss National Library, Berne: [www.snl.admin.ch/e/aktuell/index.htm](http://www.snl.admin.ch/e/aktuell/index.htm)

Lia Rumantscha: [www.liarumantscha.ch](http://www.liarumantscha.ch) (including online sales).



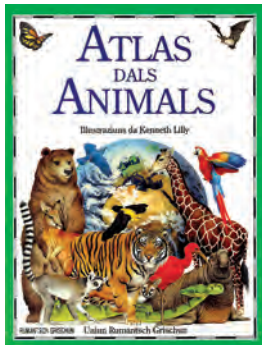
### Books for children and adolescents, fairytales and cartoons

There are numerous books in Romansh for smaller children, but the number of works especially for teenagers is rather limited. Without doubt, the most famous children's book ever written in Romansh and translated into countless other languages is "A Bell for Ursli" by Selina Chönz, with illustrations by Alois Carigiet. It tells about a very old custom, "Chalandamarz", which is still practised today in the Engadin, the Val Müstair (Münstertal) and Central Graubünden on the first day of March each year. School children parade through the village with cowbells, rattles and whips to drive out the winter (cf. DRG 3, pp. 64-172). Original texts written in Romansh for children and young people are few and far between. The vast majority of Romansh books for these age segments are translations, most of them from German. In addition to Selina Chönz and Alois Carigiet ("La naivera", "La cufra gronda", "Flurina"), other authors who have written original works for children and/or teenagers in one of the Engadin idioms include, in particular, C. D. Bezzola ("Kindels dal malom"), G. Klainguti ("Linard Lum"), L. Bardill ("Il guaffen gelg" – reproduced in the other idioms too) and D. Badraun ("Detectiva e detectiv"). One author, G. Netzer, has used Surmiran ("Martin steiler", "Annina" and "La Princessa Ioscha"). Publications in Sursilvan include those by T. Candinas ("La fuigia dil Stoffel") and C. Cadruvi ("Capuns ed il stgazi dals Franzos"). Amongst the numerous translations into one or several of the idioms, it is worth picking out Grimm's fairytales, A. de Saint-Exupéry's "Little Prince" ("Il prenci pignet"), J. Spyri's "Heidi", Kästner's famous "Emil and the detectives" ("Emil e'ls detectivs"), W. Busch's "Max and Moritz" ("Gion e Clo") and A. Lindgren's "Nils Karlsson-Pyssling" ("Nils Karlsson-poldschin").

In the Sursilvan village of Sumvitg, a fairytale circle ("Cerchel da praulas Surselva") was set up in 1999 to work with existing fairytales in Romansh and to publish its own (2003: "Zaccaria" by L. Candinas-Collenberg and J. Candinas).

In recent years, the Lia Rumantscha and the Uniuin Rumantsch Grischun have translated a number of works into the standardised written language, Rumantsch Grischun. It is worth mentioning the lovely English series "Eyewitness Guides" ("Egls averts"), published by Dorling Kindersley of London ("Mammals", "Future"/"Futur", "Birds"/"Utschels", "Amphibians"/"Amfibis") and "Flowers"/"Flurs"), two of A. Conan-Doyle's Holmes' stories ("The Speckled Band"/"Il bindel taclà" and "Black Peter"/"Peder Nair"), M. Pressler's "Step for Step" ("Pass per pass"), B. Taylor/L. Kenneth's "Animals Atlas" ("Atlas dals animals") and A. Wilkes' "My first dictionary" ("Mes emprim cudesch da plets" – in all the idioms and Rumantsch Grischun), the last two of these also published by Dorling Kindersley of London.

"Atlas dals Animals":  
the fascination of  
the animal kingdom.



"A Bell for Ursli"  
("Uorsin"):  
a Romansh book that  
has conquered  
the world over.



The cartoons and comic strips published in Romansh include numerous “Baldi” originals by P. Noutclà of the Engadin, the original “History of the Rhaeto-Romansh People” (in four of the Romansh idioms and German) by F. Giger and P. Haas, a number of Asterix books (now out-of-print) and translations of some of the French “Tintin” series.

Bibliography: Deplazes, G.: Die Rätoromanen..., Desertina Verlag, Disentis/Mustér, 1991; Gregor, D.B.: Romontsch Language and Literature – the Sursilvan Raeto-Romance of Switzerland. Oleander Press, New York, 1982; Riatsch, C.: Mehrsprachigkeit und Sprachmischung in der neueren bündnerromanschen Literatur, VBK, Chur, 1988; Riatsch, C. and Walther, L.: Literatur und Kleinsprache, two volumes, SRR, Chur, 1993; Schorta, A. (ed.) Die Rechtsquellen des Kantons Graubünden, Verlag Sauerländer, Aarau, 1980-X85. Publicaziuns rumantschas, Lia Rumantscha, Chur, 2003 ([www.liarumantscha.ch](http://www.liarumantscha.ch))

## Music

Music has a long tradition in Romansh-speaking Graubünden. It is particularly worth mentioning the numerous Romansh choirs, who put on performances both inside and outside the canton. As long as anyone cares to think back, they have played an important role in the Romansh cultural identity and in the promotion and maintenance of the language.

Romansh music is extremely varied and stretches to virtually every genre imaginable: popular songs, traditional and modern folkloristic and folk music, minnesang, musical versions of literary or socially critical texts, pop and rock, hip-hop, rave, rap and stage musicals.

For many Romansh speakers, especially young people, music is of inestimable value as a vehicle for enjoying the intricacies of their language. Two outstanding examples are “Alive and Rocking”/“Viver e far vibra” (a live show in Gaelic and Romansh also recorded as a CD) and the ambitious Romansh musical contribution to Switzerland’s national exhibition in 2002 (the successful all-star cover-song revue, “Prisas-Reprisas-Surprisas” with around 50 famous international rock and pop titles “covered” in Romansh).

A rock group and an opera chorus: two facets of the Romansh music scene.

*Photo: Jano Felice Pajarola*



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## Theatre

Romansh theatre can trace its roots back to the historic-patriotic, profane and religious-moralising dramas of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Most of the biblical dramas, which often had the whole village population performing in them, are simple translations or adaptations from the German or Latin. The first known religious play in the Romansh catholic community was “Passiuns sursilvanas” (seventeenth/eighteenth century).



Theatre plays a central part in Romansh village life

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the passion plays were joined by numerous portrayals of criminal courts (“Dretgiras nauschas”).

In the first half of the twentieth century, numerous comedies brought entertainment to the Romansh valley communities. There was hardly a village that did not arrange for at least one theatrical representation per year. For 1945 to 1977, the “La Culissa” touring company set up by Jon Semadeni in 1944 provided entertainment throughout the Engadin. His drama “Il pövel cumada”, which had its premiere in 1946, is considered as a turning point in historical theatre.

Today, it remains the case that each Romansh-speaking region has its own theatre stage, which plays an important part in promoting the language and consolidating the sense of cultural identity. It is worth singling out the highly successful Romansh passion play that was staged on a grandiose scale in the Sursilvan village of Vella (Val Lumnezia) in 2003, adapted to modern times.

N.B. The Lia Rumantscha is a member of BVV/UTP, Graubünden's popular-theatre association.

## Films

Most of the films made in Romansh are documentaries or portraits. The main producers of Romansh films are Televisiun Rumantscha ([www.rtr.ch](http://www.rtr.ch), [contact@rtr.ch](mailto:contact@rtr.ch)), regional organisations and a number of private individuals (one interesting project in 2003 involving the Sursilvan regional museum in Ilanz and the “Verein für Bündner Kulturforschung” was to take silent films about the region's traditional professions, record them on video and add commentaries). There are also several Romansh books that have been turned into films (for instance “Accord” after Oscar Peer's novella of the same name and “Levzas petras” after Gion Deplazes' novel of the same name) as well as filmed versions of theatrical representations (for example: A. Sauter and B. Studlar: “A ist eine Andere”/“A è in' autra”). No feature film has ever been made in Romansh (either as an original or a translation).

In 2001, “Movie Encarden” ([www.movie-encarden.ch](http://www.movie-encarden.ch)) launched an annual Romansh film festival in Ilanz (Surselva). The best films are awarded a film prize (“Onna”). A number of communal and regional cultural groups also organise film evenings with Romansh productions (for example, the “Cerchel cultural Castrich”).

## Cabaret

Romansh cabaret dates from two legendary programmes, “la Panaglia” and “La travaglia dal docter Panaglia” by a group built up around the Engadin writers, J. Semadeni, Cla Biert and Men Rauch. It remains well represented on the Romansh cultural scene. Cabaret entertainment from Surselva is provided especially by the small-stage double-act “Paun cun Péra” (E. Derungs and L. Livers), the “SchuSchu” group (with J. Derungs and R. Caviezel providing the scripts and C. Janett from the Engadin the music) and the Zurich-based cabaret artiste, M. Jemmi (usually with N. Schocher at the piano). This genre is represented in the Engadin, for instance, with the one-man show “Wortundton” by musician and artist, F. Caviezel, and the singer/song-writer and author, L. Bardill.

## Organised cultural events

Every year, innumerable cultural events are organised in Romansh both within the language’s traditional territory in Graubünden and elsewhere. The most common offerings are theatre, music, literature and singing. In addition, Romansh is now included more frequently than in the past in the programmes for larger national cultural events (such as Switzerland’s national exhibition in 2002 and the celebrations of Graubünden’s 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a Swiss canton).

Away from the language’s traditional territory, there is a network of Romansh associations, and one of their activities is to organise cultural events. The Lia Rumantscha has an annual budgetary allocation for supporting such initiatives.

The two most important events of this nature are the “Scuntradas rumantschas” (held at an interval of three years or more) and the annual “Dis da litteratura” (literary festival) in Domat-Ems. The “Scuntrada” is a get-together lasting several days, and the Lia Rumantscha organised the first one in 1985. Four others have followed since then, and each one has been in a different language district. The annual Romansh literary festival was first held in 1990. Romansh writers and those interested in their work spend a packed sociable weekend together, reading from their works and discussing Romansh literature as well as any other topical Romansh issue.

## Cultural activities and institutions

Canton Graubünden’s new law on the promotion of culture (“KFG”) came into force on 1 January 1998. In the second paragraph of the first article of this law, it states that, in providing public support for the canton’s cultural life, due consideration must be given to the linguistic diversity of the various districts and population groups, which, of course, includes Romansh. Grants are made for original forms of expression and initiatives in Romansh as well as for translations into and out of Romansh.



This same law also promotes the maintenance and care of the canton's trilingualism, especially its minority languages (articles 3(c) and 12(1)). The canton pays not only direct grants to support individual measures but also recurrent annual grants to the Romansh-language organisation, the Lia Rumantscha, for the promotion and maintenance of the Romansh language and culture.

Apart from the canton, it is especially the Lia Rumantscha that promotes cultural creativity in the fields of music, literature, etc. and makes it accessible to a broad public. At present, the Lia Rumantscha is also encouraging the translation of works from other languages into Romansh.

The canton's commission for the promotion of culture, which has an important part to play in implementing the 1998 law, is required as far as possible to obtain inputs from all the various languages and cultural groupings. In the recently-created Cantonal Office for Culture ([www.afk.gr.ch](http://www.afk.gr.ch)) around two-thirds of the employees speak or understand Romansh.

Two of the key multipliers for Romansh culture are Romansh radio and television, which can be received way beyond the traditional Romansh territory (cf. pp. 67 ff.).

Canton Graubünden has its own translation unit, whose activity concentrates, in particular, on legal and administrative texts. This unit cooperates very closely with the Lia Rumantscha's translation service. The regional language services, which were set up in 1996/97 for the public and semi-public institutions (communes, districts, etc.), were rationalised into a single, central language service ("Sling", [www.sling-online.ch](http://www.sling-online.ch)) in 2001.

### **Libraries, bookshops and book distributors**

Works in Romansh or about the Romansh language are collected, in particular, by the Graubünden cantonal library ([www.kbchur.gr.ch](http://www.kbchur.gr.ch)) and the Lia Rumantsch ([www.liarumantscha.ch](http://www.liarumantscha.ch)) and made accessible to the public. One of the richest physical collections of Romansh works and works about the Romansh language, literature, folklore and onomastics (especially old printed documents) but also photographs and illustrations is owned by the scientific institute of the Dicziunari Rumantsch Grischun ([www.drg.ch](http://www.drg.ch)). Numerous private libraries, bookshops and book distributors have very considerable collections (for instance, the library of the Planta Foundation in Samedan, the monastery library in Disentis-Mustér, the library of the British Museum in London(!) and the Graubünden-based online bookstore: [www.bookmarket.ch](http://www.bookmarket.ch)).

The RTR maintains a complete archive of Romansh television broadcasts, and some of these are screened again in public.

### **Traditional customs**

The Romansh-speaking territory is rich in ancient, and often sensuous, customs of a heathen, Roman or early-Christian origin that are still kept alive by many of the valley communities today. Here is a selection of some of the outstanding ones.

- **Bavania/Buania.** A festival of village youth practised in the Lower Engadin and the valley of the Rein Anterior. In Ardez the “Bal da la schocca cotschna” (“dance of the red skirt”) has still survived as part of the Bavania festivities. On the afternoon of 6 January, the girls cast lots to choose a lover. The results are surprising, but fate must be obeyed! In the early evening, each girl pays a visit to her “beloved” and announces Fate’s decision to him. In order to symbolise his inescapable captivity, she ties a red ribbon round his neck. For him, it is a duty to ensure that the girl is invited to dance frequently at that evening’s ball.
- **Chalandamarz/Calonda mars.** A folkloristic children’s festival in the Engadin, Val Müstair, Bergella, Puschlav, Surmeir and the Albula Valley. It takes place on the first day of March. According to the ancient Roman calendar the “Calendae Martii” was the first day of the New Year. The school children wend their way through the village adorned with different sizes of bells (and in some places with colourful paper flowers too), singing songs of spring to drive away the winter. After nightfall, there is the Chalandamarz dance. The Chalandamarz procession corresponds to the springtime ascent of the Alps. The DRG classifies this custom as one of an ancient type of noise-making processions, whose original essence was, inter alia, to arouse fertility. The most delightful portrayal of this event is to be found in Selina Chönz’ and Alois Carigiet’s children’s book “Uorsin” (“A Bell for Ursli”).
- **Chargiada/Cargada d’Alp** (springtime ascent of the Alps) and **Schelpcha/Scargada** (autumn descent to the village). In some places these old farming traditions are still amongst the most colourful surviving customs.
- Several communes in Graubünden still maintain their historic **village assemblies** – democracy at its most basic grass-roots. In the upper valleys of the Rhine, the term used is **cumin** or **cumegn** and in the Engadin and Val Müstair, **mastraglia**. The most impressive display of original democracy anywhere in Graubünden used to be found in Disentis/Mustér, where the voters of the village turned out once every three years on 1 May in a magnificent array of finery and colours. This particular ceremony was abolished in 2003 (in the greater interests of “ballot-box democracy”).
- **Tschaiver** (carnival). Especially in the catholic parts of Romansh-speaking Graubünden. The masked parades (a custom of heathen origin to drive out the winter) have a special tradition in Domat-Ems. Carnival here ends on “gievgia grassa” (“Carnival Thursday”), almost a week earlier than Ash Wednesday as in most other places. In addition to “gievgia grassa” itself, the other big climax comes two days previously with “margis bel”. Today, the Domat-Ems carnival has lost much of its former uniqueness and merely emulates other places.

Chalandamarz: the popular Engadin custom was chosen as the motif for a special coin in 2003.





- **Hom d'strom** ("straw dummy"). A very ancient custom in Scuol. On the first Saturday of February, a straw dummy (like a "guy") is burned in front of the court building. It is not clear whether this custom originally had to do with the symbolic driving out of winter or dates back to sun worship, as once practised everywhere in the world.
- **Mattinadas** in Tschlin and Ramosch. The most important festival of the whole year for old and young alike. The "mattinadas" last three days and are still celebrated today in the same way as since time immemorial, with certain simplifications and adaptations to the modern world. Children have the biggest say. On 2 January, they make their way through the village pulling a sledge that the girls have decorated with paper flowers, collecting "mattinadas" (all sorts of home-made confectionery). Following a sumptuous midday feast, the afternoon and evening are spent dancing. At midnight, the children are summonsed back to table and fed with "fuatscha grassa" (whipped cream) and "grassins" (Engadin butter biscuits). The young men of the village also team up to collect their "mattinadas" on 2 January. Traditionally, their celebration, including a feast and dance, used to be held on 3 January; now it is usually organised on the following Saturday.
- **Mintinadas** in Surmeir/Oberhalbstein. A form of dance and merrymaking on the occasion of a wedding ceremony. The assembled youth of the village invite the bride and groom and their guests to the party.
- **Processiun dals confrars**. A custom practised in Surmeir/Oberhalbstein with its roots in the ecclesiastical All-Souls ceremony. These religious fraternities were maintained with pride up until the early 1960s. Nowadays, Sur/Sour is the only place where they are still to be found.
- **Schlitteda/Schlittada** (sledge ride). A traditional custom of Engadin youth. Origin unknown. An occasion for general merrymaking without any historical background. One January Sunday, the young local lads harness their horses up to their ornately decorated sledges and ride from village to village taking a young lady with them, stopping off at various hosteleries for a few hours of relaxation, eating, drinking and singing. Today, married couples also join in the "schlitteda", which has become a big tourist attraction, especially in the Upper Engadin.
- **New Year's Eve/New Year's Day**. In the Romansh-speaking parts of Graubünden different forms of new-year celebration are to be found. In Tinizong (Surmeir), for instance, singing is a central element. Just before midnight on 31 December, specially selected young men make their way through the village singing a song about the "paclanga" (a type of thin biscuit) and also making their other wishes known. On the morning of New Year's Day ("Bumang"), the same boys go from house to house, wishing everyone a Happy New Year.
- **Three Kings**. in Salouf/Salux and the catholic parts of the Valley of the Rein Anterior. On Epiphany (6 January), groups of young singers (dressed up as the Three Kings) go from village to village, bringing the Christmas message in song. In some villages, the original groups of three have grown into much bigger ones. Probably the most original celebration of this particular custom in the whole of Graubünden is to be found in the village of Breil/Brigels.
- **Trer schibettas**. A courtship ritual in Danis-Tavanasa and Dardin (Surselva). On the first Passion Sunday the young men and boys gather above the village after nightfall and hurl red-hot thin circular discs of timber down into the valley. Each disc is dedicated to a girl as it is thrown. The popular tradition is that the flight of the fiery discs gives an insight into incipient love affairs.

### ***Economic and social life***

The economic orientation of Romansh-speaking Graubünden towards the German-speaking north occurred very early on. This economic dependence has also had its effect on the development of Romansh as a language. Nearly all the (bigger) businesses on Romansh territory are administered in German, and Romansh is only used between employees.

It is the policy of the Lia Rumantscha to encourage and support the use of Romansh as far as possible in economic and social life (it does this, for instance, by translating websites, forms, brochures, etc., into Romansh and helping with the use of Romansh on inscriptions, letterheads, etc.). The canton gives it a special budgetary allocation for this purpose. Translations for academic institutes, businesses, public bodies and other organisations are also provided in part by regional language services funded by the Swiss Confederation and Canton Graubünden.

Between 1993 and 1996 a concept, which had been commissioned by the Lia Rumantscha, was drawn up for the use of the Romansh language in business. The very ambitious result, “Romansh 3000”, which aimed to have Romansh used as far as possible in the world of business, had to be abandoned for financial and practical reasons. The Lia Rumantscha is currently trying to find a more realistic and practical formula for promoting Romansh in economic life.

On an individual basis, numerous institutes, companies and other organisations do integrate Romansh to a greater or lesser extent in their activities. **Graubünden's Cantonal Bank**, for instance, not only presents its name in all three of the canton's languages, but prints various forms in all of them too.

As a cantonal institution, the **Rhaetian Railway** makes sure it also uses Romansh. Some of its rolling stock carries the Romansh version of its logo, many of its timetables have information in that language too, and Romansh is also used some of the time for loudspeaker announcements in trains. The tourism sector is increasingly trying to make use of Romansh and to familiarise visitors with the indigenous culture. During the World Ski Championships in St. Moritz in 2003, for instance, a befitting role was also found for the Romansh language ([www.graubuenden.ch](http://www.graubuenden.ch)).



“Viafer retica”:

The Rhaetian Railway runs in Romansh too.

© Rhaetische Bahn, Chur



## Language courses and adult learning

### Summer courses in Romansh

Every year, **summer courses** are organised in the Romansh-speaking regions by the language and cultural organisations. These courses are designed to provide participants with a basic vocabulary and understanding of the grammar of the local idiom as well as the standardised language, Rumantsch Grischun (RG), and also offer a rich and varied cultural programme.

Idiom	Information and registration
Puter:	Fundaziun Planta, Samedan Tourismus, CH-7503 Samedan Tel.: +41 (0)81 851 00 60, Fax: +41 (0)81 851 00 66
Vallader:	Scuntrada e Furmaziun Ladina, Duri Denoth, CH-7550 Scuol Tel.: +41 (0)81 860 07 61, <a href="http://www.udg.ch">www.udg.ch</a> , <a href="mailto:sfl@rumantsch.ch">sfl@rumantsch.ch</a> Scuol Information, CH-7550 Scuol, Tel.: +41 (0)81 861 22 22 Tourismus Santa Maria, CH-7536 Santa Maria, Tel.: +41 (0)81 858 57 27
Sursilvan:	Fundaziun Retoromona, CH-7031 Laax, Franchestg Friberg, CH-7163 Danis Tel.: +41 (0)81 941 24 19, <a href="http://www.frr.ch">www.frr.ch</a> , <a href="mailto:cuors.romontsch@frr.ch">cuors.romontsch@frr.ch</a>
Sutsilvan:	PILC, LR, Posta Veglia, CH-7433 Donath Tel.: +41 (0)81 630 70 50, Fax: +41 (0)81 630 70 51
Surmiran:	Savognin Tourismus, CH-7460 Savognin, Tel.: +41 (0)81 659 16 16 <a href="http://www.savognin.ch">www.savognin.ch</a> , <a href="mailto:ferien@savognin.ch">ferien@savognin.ch</a>
Rumantsch Grischun and the idioms:	Lia Rumantscha, Via da la Plessur 47, Chascha postala, 7001 Cuir Tel. +41 (0)81 258 32 22, <a href="http://www.liarumantscha.ch">www.liarumantscha.ch</a> <a href="mailto:liarumantscha@rumantsch.ch">liarumantscha@rumantsch.ch</a>

### Adult learning

Every year, adult-education courses are held in the Romansh-speaking valley communities under the title of “Scuntrada e Furmaziun” (= “coming together to learn”). These courses are attached to a nation-wide scheme of “evening classes” (Vereinigung Schweizerischer Volkshochschulen). The many varied courses on offer are tailored, in particular, to the needs of the indigenous population (language courses, hand-icrafts, general education). In addition to this, regional agents employed by the Lia Rumantscha also organise language courses for people working in communal and other public administrations.

Region:	Information and registration
Engadin/ Val Müstair:	Scuntrada e Furmaziun Ladina, Duri Denoth, CH-7550 Scuol Tel.: +41 (0)81 860 07 61, <a href="http://www.udg.ch">www.udg.ch</a> , <a href="mailto:sfl@rumantsch.ch">sfl@rumantsch.ch</a>
Surmeir:	Scuntrada e Furmaziun Surmeir, Reto Capeder, CH-7460 Savognin, Tel.: +41 (0)81 684 28 11, <a href="http://www.u-r-s.ch">www.u-r-s.ch</a> , <a href="mailto:reto.capeder@rumantsch.ch">reto.capeder@rumantsch.ch</a>
Sutselva:	PILC, Andrea L. Rassel, CH-7433 Donath, Tel.: +41 (0)81 630 70 50 <a href="mailto:renania@rumantsch.ch">renania@rumantsch.ch</a>
Surselva:	Scuntrada e Furmaziun Surselva, Martin Mathiuet, CH-7031 Laax Tel.: +41 (0)81 921 25 46, <a href="mailto:scuntradasurselva@bluewin.ch">scuntradasurselva@bluewin.ch</a>

### Language integration

The Lia Rumantscha organises and supports assimilation courses throughout the Romansh regions and in Chur, especially for the parents of children attending Romansh kindergartens and primary schools where Romansh is the only language of tuition or the principal one. Upon request, it can also help establish contacts with private teachers and can additionally provide assistance for intensive courses for new residents who need to achieve language assimilation in everyday Romansh situations as quickly as possible for professional reasons.

### Romansh languages courses outside of Graubünden

Migros-Klub School, Zurich, Tel.: +41 (0)1 311 44 10 (as of March 2007: +41 (0)44 311 44 10)  
Berne, Winterthur, St.Gallen, etc.

Volkshochschule Bern(e), Tel.: +41 (0)31 311 41 92

Volkshochschule Zurich, Tel.: +41 (0)1 205 84 84 (as of March 2007: +41 (0)44 205 84 84)

Universities of Zurich, Fribourg, Berne, Geneva and St.Gallen (see individual syllabuses)

Reisehochschule Zürich (language school), CH-8706 Meilen,

Tel.: +41 (0)1 923 20 10 (as of March 2007: +41 (0)44 932 20 10)

NSH Bildungszentrum, Basel, Tel.: +41 (0)61 270 97 97, [www.rhzsprachen.ch](http://www.rhzsprachen.ch)

Reisehochschule (language school) Zurich, Tel.: +41 (0)1 924 11 55

(as of March 2007: +41 (0)44 924 11 55), [www.rhzsprachen.ch](http://www.rhzsprachen.ch)

### Romansh and Graubünden associations throughout Switzerland

A number of Romansh and Graubünden associations organise courses of their own (information available from the Lia Rumantscha, Tel.: +41 (0)81 258 32 22).

### Knowledge about Romansh at Swiss schools

It is gratifying to observe that Swiss schools in increasing numbers are organising information events and project weeks dealing with Romansh, which is entirely in the spirit of the new regulations governing the secondary-school-leaving/university-qualification exam, "Matura".

### Dictionaries, grammars, language guides

Anyone wishing to study Romansh by themselves will find a choice of materials predominantly in the German language (enquiries and orders should be addressed to: [www.liarumantscha.ch](http://www.liarumantscha.ch)). There are also several German-Romansh language and conversation guides.

### Electronic works of reference

The Lia Rumantscha's linguistic database ("Pledari grond") is available on CD-ROM, as are the new regional school dictionaries for years 4-9 (published by LMV Graubünden, 1999-2003). There are plans to produce a digital version of A. Decurtin's Sursilvan-German dictionary ("Niev Vocabulari") by the end of 2004. In December 2003, the Lia Rumantscha unveiled a free online annotated dictionary for Romansh and English ([www.mypledari.ch](http://www.mypledari.ch)), compiled and coordinated by M. Evans. People with no knowledge of German but who understand enough English now have direct access to Romansh (all five idioms and Rumantsch Grischun). For Romansh users, myPledari is the second reference work giving direct access to the world language, English, from their native tongue, following the publication in 2000 of the "Romansch-English/English-Romansch Dictionary and Phrasebook" (Hypocrene Books, New York).

# Lia Rumantscha and its affiliated language and cultural associations

## The Lia Rumantscha's purpose and objectives

The Lia Rumantscha (LR, [www.liarumantscha.ch](http://www.liarumantscha.ch)) was founded in 1919 as an umbrella organisation for all Romansh associations in accordance with article 60 ff. of the Swiss Civil Code. The LR sees itself as an institution acting in the general public interest and is politically and denominationally neutral. It fulfils a public-service mission through its function of using funds from federal and cantonal sources for the promotion of the Romansh language and culture. From its head office in Chur, the LR supports, fosters and coordinates the activities of regional organisations that work in favour of the Romansh language and culture. It campaigns actively for the promotion and maintenance of Romansh at home and school, in the church and in public life and also sets out to represent the Romansh community in the various fields of political and social life both inside and outside the traditional Romansh-speaking territory.



The villa "Zur Heimat", now "Chasa Rumantscha", the Lia Rumantscha's head office in Chur. It was built around 1860-65 for the city administrator and later mayor, J. R. Wassali.

## The Lia Rumantscha is an active member of the following organisations

- FUEN (Federal Union of European Nationalities, [www.fuen.org](http://www.fuen.org))
- VALS/ASLA (Swiss Association for Applied Linguistics, [www.romsem.unibas.ch/vals-asla](http://www.romsem.unibas.ch/vals-asla))
- GMS (Society of Language Minorities in Switzerland, [www.gms-minderheiten.ch](http://www.gms-minderheiten.ch))
- Swiss Youth Exchange, [www.echanges.ch](http://www.echanges.ch)

## Affiliated organisations

The following regional and supra-regional language and cultural organisations are affiliated to the Lia Rumantscha:

### • Regional language and cultural organisations

*Romania/Catholic parts of Surselva* (founded 1896)

*Uniun dals Grischs (UdG)/Engadin, Val Müstair and Bergün/Bravuogn* (founded 1904, [www.udg.ch](http://www.udg.ch))

*Uniun Rumantscha da Surmeir (URS)/Oberhalbstein and Albula Valley* (founded 1921, [www.u-r-s.ch](http://www.u-r-s.ch))

*Renania/Protestant parts of Surselva and Sutselva* (founded 1922)

### • Supra-regional organisations with specialised functions

*Societad Retorumantscha (SRR)*

The oldest language society (founded 1885) and the body supporting the institute of the "Dicziunari Rumantsch Grischun" in Chur ([www.drg.ch](http://www.drg.ch)) and publisher of the national dictionary with the same name (DRG). Its main aim is to collect, look after and publish the whole wealth of the Romansh language. Its other publications are the yearbook, "Annalas da la Societad Retorumantscha", and the scientific series, "Romanica Raetica".

*Cuminanza rumantscha radio e televisiun (CRR)*

Romansh radio and television company (founded 1946, [www.rtr.ch](http://www.rtr.ch))

*Uniun per la Litteratura Rumantscha (ULR)*

(Until 2004: "Uniun da Scripturas e Scripturs rumantschs", USR)

Romansh writers' union (founded 1946, [www.usrum.ch](http://www.usrum.ch))

*Giuventetgna rumantscha (GiuRu)*

Umbrella organisation for Romansh young people (accepted as an affiliated organisation of the Lia Rumantscha in 1997, [www.giuru.ch](http://www.giuru.ch)). GiuRu receives 50% of its regular funding from the Lia Rumantscha and 50% from the regional associations, with some additional income from donations and sales of its own products. Before GiuRu was set up in 1991, Romansh youth was split up into regional groupings with little to offer in the way of cultural activities. In recent years, GiuRu has seen through a number of important projects, including its own monthly magazine, "Punts", a large Gaelic-Romansh music project, a film festival, a workshop for writing skills and another for film-making, its own website, a tenth-anniversary get-together, active involvement in international music seminars, several open-air festivals, an information brochure on young people and the job market (for Romansh speakers) and a musical tour ("cool e sexy") with two Romansh bands visiting the whole of the Romansh-speaking territory. GiuRu also supports cultural projects and promotes cultural work and training for young Romansh speakers (including films, theatre, literature and music). For 2004, GiuRu is planning to enhance the network of contacts between young people in all the Romansh language districts and to motivate them for cultural activities. In 2005, it is inviting young people's organisations from other language minorities to attend a seminar in Graubünden.

- **Extraterritorial associations**

*Uniun da las Rumantschas e dals Rumantschs en la Bassa (URB)*

Association of Romansh people living outside of Graubünden (affiliated to the Lia Rumantscha since 1991). The Romansh language is also kept in active use by numerous groups, clubs and associations. (Contact address: website LR/URB).

*Quarta Lingua (QL)*

This Zurich-based association, which was set up in 1972 and became affiliated to the Lia Rumantscha in 2003, is for friends and supporters of the Romansh language and culture, who do not necessarily speak it ([www.quartalingua.ch](http://www.quartalingua.ch)). Its purpose is to build bridges between Switzerland's various language regions, to promote exchanges and mutual understanding across language boundaries and to encourage the use of Rumantsch Grischun to bring the speakers of the various idioms of Romansh closer together.

An important event in the Lia Rumantscha's calendar is the annual assembly of delegates. Each of the affiliated language and cultural organisations has a right to a number of delegates reflecting its strength, and they total 78. One delegate per association plus the members of the executive form the so-called enlarged executive or council ("cussegl"). The Lia Rumantscha's executive ("suprastanza") is comprised of its president plus the presidents of the regional associations. For some time, the Lia Rumantscha and its regional language associations have been critically examining their structures. The situation existing at the time of writing in 2004 has been recognised as much too complicated and needs to be replaced with a much simpler form of organisation. One issue for the future is whether there is a need for regional associations that often do little more than administrative work.

### Services provided by the Lia Rumantscha

The Lia Rumantscha (LR) provides an extensive range of services and, today, it has 16 budgeted posts and employs a total of 20 people full-time and part-time to handle them:

- **Applied language**

#### **Maintaining and building the language**

It was not until 1983 that the LR set up a “language and linguistic information unit”. From then up until the year 2000, this unit was divided into two subunits, one for looking after the idioms and the other for building up Rumantsch Grischun. Since 2000, both these activities have been integrated in the LR’s applied-language service (SLAR, “survetsch per linguistica applitgada”), in line with the results of the internal operational analysis (see section on “Strategic concept”, p. 89). The unit’s function is to maintain and look after each of the individual idioms and also to broaden the use of the standardised written language, Rumantsch Grischun. It creates and disseminates neologisms and provides information and support on questions of language and terminology, undertakes the proof-reading of literary and general-purpose texts and initiates and accompanies various language-related projects.

#### **Translations**

The LR has had its own translation unit since 1983, and this has been considerably expanded in recent years. It handles both small and larger translation projects involving both the idioms and Rumantsch Grischun. It generally charges going market rates, although special prices may be available for certain types of translation. It has a very close working relationship with Canton Graubünden’s terminology service as well as with the Swiss Confederation’s central terminology unit (“Termdat”).

#### **Information and documentation**

Since 1986, the LR has been running an information and documentation unit, with the primary aims of clarifying questions relating to the Romansh language and culture and of making the corresponding information material and documentation available to interested parties. Since 2000, this unit has been integrated in the applied-language service, SLAR.

#### **Education, training and bilingualism in schools**

In 2000, the LR set up a unit to deal with education, training and questions concerning bilingualism in Romansh schools. This unit is also integrated in SLAR and its tasks include linguistic support for projects concerning school languages, accompaniment in questions of bilingualism in Romansh schools, matters of compulsory and post-compulsory education (production of didactic materials on behalf of Canton Graubünden, e-learning, and so on), general training and support for teachers and specific training and support for them in language matters.

- **Promotion of language and culture in the Romansh-speaking districts**

Since 1984, the LR has employed a number of regional agents. Their jobs include providing support for the regional language and cultural associations and for organised cultural events as well as coordination work in the field of promoting the regional idioms and dialects (From 1984 to 2000, 3.3-4.0 full-time-equivalent (FTE) posts were divided over 4-5 individuals; starting in 2001, 3.5-4 FTE posts have been divided over seven individuals).

- **Promotion of work amongst young people**

The LR promotes and supports all sorts of different forms of activity intended for Romansh young people, especially their own organisation, “Giuru”, which has launched several projects since it

was set up in 1991 (the most important being the young people's magazine "Punts") and which is currently hoping to secure a 20% job to handle administrative and organisational tasks.

- **Promotion of culture in its multifarious forms**

The LR promotes and supports Romansh culture in virtually every conceivable form. It is particularly concerned with the documentary editing of plays in Romansh (either original works or translations) and for ensuring that such works as well as Romansh songs (original productions and translations) arrive in the hands of interested groups. The LR is represented in the BVV (Bündner Vereinigung für das Volkstheater, the "Graubünden popular-theatre federation").

- **Publishing activities**

The LR does not possess its own publishing house as such, but it does publish various works, especially those of basic importance to the Romansh language, such as dictionaries (including pictorial ones), grammars, text books, anthologies, technical lexica, etc. In addition, it also publishes books for children and young people, comic strips, audio recordings and light reading. Moreover, the LR assists other publishing houses to produce works in Romansh.

- **Secretariat**

The LR's secretariat has numerous functions. These include administering the LR itself and looking after its accounts, coordinating internal and external units (including networking), maintaining contacts with public authorities, institutions, etc., communications and marketing.

- **Kindergarten**

The LR also runs a Romansh kindergarten in its headquarters building. There are two groups, one using Sursilvan and the other Vallader/Puter (each with its own teacher). This kindergarten receives a financial grant from the city of Chur.

## **Programme of activities**

In addition to the services provided by the departments listed above, the LR's very varied programme of activities includes:

- dealing with matters of language policy in the broadest sense of the term;
- fostering contacts with the federal and cantonal authorities, the churches, institutions and organisations with a language and/or cultural calling (such as Pro Helvetia, [www.prohelvetia.ch](http://www.prohelvetia.ch) and Forum Helveticum, [www.forum-helveticum.ch](http://www.forum-helveticum.ch)), political parties, universities and bodies responsible for language planning inside and outside of Graubünden and the Romansh community (such as Pro Grigioni Italiano, [www.pgi.ch](http://www.pgi.ch), the "Walser" association, [www.walserverin-gr.ch](http://www.walserverin-gr.ch)), Graubünden's institute for cultural research, [www.kulturforschung.ch](http://www.kulturforschung.ch), Pro Raetia, [www.proraetia.ch](http://www.proraetia.ch), the Dolomitic-Ladin community, [www.vejin.com](http://www.vejin.com) (over matters such as language standardisation, project weeks for school-children and so on) and the Friulian-speaking community, [www.filologicafriulana.it](http://www.filologicafriulana.it), and others as well;
- representing the Romansh community vis-à-vis the outside world (both in Switzerland and abroad) through membership of various associations (such as the Swiss Association for Applied Linguistics) and participation in conferences (such as the "Conferenza interuniversitaria rumantscha"), and so on;
- playing an active part in cantonal, national and international projects, such as the research project into Canton Graubünden's trilingualism commissioned by the canton's institute of cultural research, [www.kulturforschung.ch](http://www.kulturforschung.ch), various inter-regional ("interreg") projects in cooperation with Dolomitic

language and cultural organisations, “TermLAD II” (administrative and legal terminology), projects to promote the printed press and language-standardisation projects (Rumantsch Grischun/RG and “Ladin Dolomitan”/SPELL);

- supporting its affiliated language associations and subsidiaries;
- promoting the use of Romansh in every walk of life;
- providing organised socio-cultural activities in the Romansh-speaking districts (language courses, linguistic integration, adult education, organised cultural events, and so on);
- promoting literary creativity in Romansh as well as encouraging theatre, choirs and music generally,
- encouraging public administrations and private businesses to use Romansh for product descriptions, user manuals, inscriptions, advertising material and general information;
- providing consultancy in matters regarding the maintenance and use of the language.

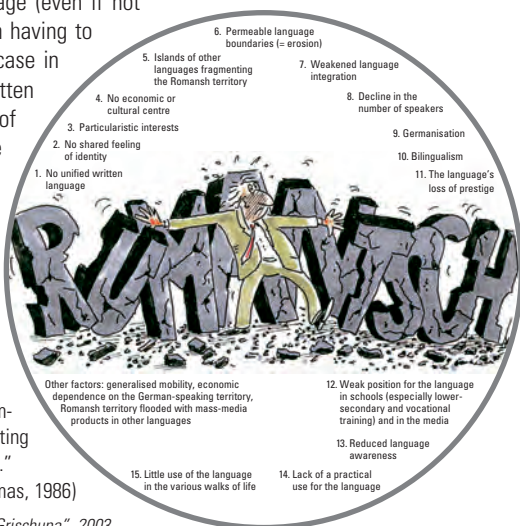
### Planning the language and the policy to promote the language

Since 1980/81, the Lia Rumantscha has been pursuing a consistent policy for promoting the Romansh language on the basis of modern language planning. The foundation for this is a broadly based concept for the planning of the language’s status, corpus and use.

As far as the first two of these are concerned, planning is progressing at an adequate pace and today there are solid foundations. “Status planning” primarily means improving the language’s legal position, whereas “corpus planning” means broadening the language, including its standardisation. The third area, “use planning” (the utilisation of the Romansh language in all facets of life), by way of contrast, has not really started yet. It has to be admitted that, thanks, in particular, to the standardised language (cf. section on “Rumantsch Grischun”, pp. 92 ff.), Romansh is being used increasingly in public life. Its native speakers, however, are still trying to come to terms with the unaccustomed situation of being able to read texts in their own language (even if not quite the familiar local form of it) rather than having to consume them in German, as had been the case in the past. The predominance of German in written correspondence and the veritable inundation of the Romansh world with German-language printed publications of all sorts, radio and television, internet, video films and so on has had a negative effect on the development of the Romansh language and has severely eroded its speakers’ linguistic skills in their own language.

“Languages that have once been neglected find themselves in a vicious circle, and the only way of extracting them from this is comprehensive language planning.”

(Bernard Cathomas, 1986)



Caricature: Peter Hass, in “Istorgia Grischuna”, 2003

If the language organisations and the political authorities fail to get the Romansh people to give their backing to innovative projects, language planning is going to drag more and more behind reality and, in the final analysis, it is going to be virtually impossible to halt the demise of the language. The actual aim of language planning, in the form that the LR has been pursuing it for more than two decades, is to break out of the “vicious circle” of displacement of the language (Bernard Cathomas, 1989) and to make increasing use of it, triggering a positive chain reaction. This involves strengthening language awareness and language skills, promoting supra-regional identity and solidarity, broadening and renewing the spoken and written language and strengthening the integrative force vis-à-vis immigrants. It is quite clear that a language that is more or less neglected and elbowed out of daily use is sooner or later going to lose the elixir of life. It is equally clear that the generalised use of a language (which ought to bring with it the desired renewal) can only be assured if a common written form is available. This common written form has existed for Romansh since 1982, when Rumantsch Grischun was created (cf. section on “Rumantsch Grischun”, pp. 92 ff.).

### **Strategic Concept for 2003-2008**

In 2001, the LR set up a project group called “ANINT” with the remit of analysing the whole working of its head office and of putting forward proposals for adapting it to the needs of the modern communication and information society. In September 2002, this project group submitted its comprehensive report, which was based on a questionnaire technique, to the LR's executive. Some of these proposals deal with the LR's strategic leadership (executive), others with operations (secretariat), and yet others with individual units or even specific jobs.

In 2003, the LR went on to draw up a strategic concept based on the recommendations of the ANINT report. This concept aims to create unity amongst the Romansh people and to pursue a more consistent and more proactive approach to promoting the language in the various spheres of activity (language policy, language planning, the language's general presence, culture, business and the media).

The internal analysis was followed by an external one the same year. The purpose of the latter was to review the structures of the regional language associations. In July 2004, the Lia Rumantscha's executive and council (enlarged executive) discussed the following streamlining proposals for the regional associations and made certain adaptations before submitting them to the assembly of delegates at the end of October 2004: 1. creation of regional centres, 2. flat operational hierarchy, 3. abolition of the council (enlarged executive), 4. greater democracy in the assembly of delegates, 5. drawing up of a sort of “mission statement” (“corporate values”) and a comprehensive marketing concept.

Given the alarming picture painted by the results of the 2000 nationwide census, “Romania” (the regional language organisation for Surselva) at its meeting of delegates on 16 February 2003 called on all concerned to make more consistent use of Romansh wherever they happened to be active and to do everything possible to guarantee the survival of Romansh as an essential component of trilingual Graubünden and quadrilingual Switzerland. The following are the central points in the “Romania” appeal:

- Romansh speakers are urged to use the language in both its spoken and written form at home, at work and in public life;
- immigrants are urged to seek integration by learning the indigenous language;
- the communes (local-government administrations) are urged to declare Romansh to be their official language and to use it in all domains of public life;



- The churches are urged to use Romansh as their language of worship and to encourage its use for religious instruction in schools;
- businesses with activities in the Romansh districts are urged to stop simply ignoring Romansh;
- bodies promoting tourism are urged to present all three of Graubünden's languages as part of its cultural uniqueness;
- the Lia Rumantscha was urged to make a formal submission to the Graubünden cantonal authorities and the federal authorities (which it did in June 2004) calling for urgent measures to strengthen and promote Romansh in all the various walks of life;
- Canton Graubünden is urged to make genuine use of the responsibility entrusted to it in language matters by its own constitution (equal treatment of all three languages) and to apply at least a moderate territoriality principle in cooperation with the communes to ensure that Romansh is guaranteed a certain language territory that will be immune from fortuitous and irreversible decisions.
- the Swiss federal authorities are urged to react positively to the 2004 submission from the Lia Rumantscha calling for additional financial support.

In November 2003, "Romania" went on to organise a "Cumin romontsch" (a Romansh popular assembly) in Disentis-Mustér, and this called for a special political body to be set up for decisions affecting Romansh. This proposal is much more specific than the one that "Romania" had discussed in 1992 and which had been subsequently accepted by the LR's assembly of delegates – only to be turned down in the official consultation that followed in 1994. The idea is for there to be a separate parliament in which the Romansh people will shoulder responsibility for taking democratic decisions, notably concerning language issues.

### Financial Resources

Since shortly after it was set up, the Lia Rumantscha has received annual grants from Canton Graubünden and the Swiss Confederation. The sum of CHF 10000 paid in 1920 has been augmented in stages to today's CHF 2.4 million. It also has revenues of around CHF 850000 from translations,

donations from public and private organisations and foundations, sales of books, training courses and various miscellaneous services.

The annual grants are based on detailed expenditure proposals, which the LR is required to submit to the cantonal and federal authorities. The most recent revision of these proposals was made in 1994 and it led the Swiss federal parliament to adopt a new law on financial assistance on 6 October 1995 (see p. 40). In 2004, the earmarked payment made by the federal authorities to Canton Graubünden for measures to promote and safeguard the Romansh and Italian languages totalled CHF 4.5 million. The canton itself contributes CHF 2.5 million in subsidies, which, however, it keeps to spend itself on its own activities



The future of Romansh needs much better networking between its districts and amongst its young people.

for the benefit of the two language minorities (translation services, canton-run upper-secondary schools offering a bilingual "Matura"). A sum of CHF 4.1 million remains and this is allocated as follows: **CHF 2.39 million for the Lia Rumantscha**, CHF 841 000 million for Pro Grigioni Italiano and CHF 922 000 for the Romansh news agency, ANR. Canton Graubünden spends the remaining amount of CHF 386 000 on a project basis, such as "Sling" (Romansh translation service for the communes), film projects, publications, CDs, festivals, youth projects, and so on. In addition to the annual lump-sum allocation, the federal law in its present-day version permits the federal authorities to make additional payments in support of the Romansh language for projects that are precisely defined.

For 2003/04, the revenue side of the LR's budget showed a bottom line of around **CHF 3.25 million**. Of this, CHF 1.65 million was assigned directly to the various Romansh districts. The territorial and extraterritorial language organisations received CHF 490 000, whereas CHF 450 000 was spent on integration courses, CHF 120 000 on books, CDs, concerts, etc., CHF 60 000 on theatre, choirs and films and CHF 550 000 on the LR's own regional agents. The LR spent the residue of CHF 1.6 million on its own internal operations: language service (CHF 450 000.-), translation service (CHF 150 000.-, which is more or less self-financing, earning, for instance in 2001, CHF 160 200 from translations into Rumantsch Grischun and CHF 29 200.- from translations into the idioms), publications and sales (CHF 300 000.-, which are also partly self-financing), its kindergarten (CHF 200 000.-) and its secretariat plus miscellaneous items (CHF 480 000.-). In order to be able to stop the erosion of Romansh with a whole panoply of new measures, the LR has called on the Swiss Confederation and Canton Graubünden to make a massive increase in their annual contributions (i.e. an additional CHF 2.9 million). A part of this is the financial assistance that the LR was to have received on the basis of a new federal language law (which the Federal council [i.e. cabinet] withdrew from the parliamentary deliberation in spring 2004!). An important change is that the new measures to promote Romansh are to be appraised primarily as a function of their efficiency and/or effectiveness and no longer according to regional distribution coefficients. The following measures have already been planned in detail (status: 9 July 2004):

- **Regional centres.** Regional cooperation is to be strengthened. In return, the LR intends to deal in a more differentiated fashion with the needs of the various Romansh districts and to establish centres of linguistic and cultural competence in each of them;
- **Applied-language service** (launched in 2000). This is to grow into a centre of excellence for questions concerning the Romansh language and bilingualism and to produce the necessary materials for working to promote and maintain the Romansh language in its various districts;
- **Work amongst young people.** The LR wants to do more for young people and to coordinate these activities better. Young Romansh speakers should have the opportunity of acquainting themselves with Romansh perspectives alongside the flood of German and English-language media.
- **Publications.** The LR ought to be doing a lot more in the field of publications, even if each print run is inevitably so small that the unit costs of publications in Romansh are very high. In future it is to give much greater weight to publications in electronic form (CDs, DVDs, videos, specialist Romansh websites and so on);
- **A high Romansh profile.** The LR is aiming to have a more evident public presence of the Romansh language and culture especially in the traditional language territories, but also outside of these boundaries.

“Anyone building bridges has the abysses against them. They feel they’re being bypassed.”  
*Hans Kasper*

The absence of a uniform written language first began to be felt when Romansh started to grow in importance beyond its own strict regional territory. Between 1800 and 1930, three attempts were made at creating a supra-regional written language (cf. Darms 1989, Decurtins 1993). They all failed for various reasons. The alarming decline in the number of Romansh speakers, which has been confirmed by all the recent ten-yearly nationwide census results (cf. Furer 1981), led the Lia Rumantscha to draw up a comprehensive concept for maintaining and promoting Romansh based on a modern approach to language planning. One of the crucial components of this concept was the provision of a standardised language. In 1982, the Zurich Romanist, Heinrich Schmid, working on a contract from the Lia Rumantscha, submitted his “Guidelines for the creation of a written Romansh language for the whole of Graubünden, Rumantsch Grischun”. These guidelines are in the form of sets of rules and recommendations, each of which is individually justified, for its phonological structure as well as its morphology, syntax and word formation. It was on this basis that the Lia Rumantscha’s language unit, working on a project funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation, drew up the first RG dictionary with an integrated elementary grammar, which was published in 1985 (Langenscheidt, republished 1989). In 1993, the LR went on to publish the whole of its linguistic database in book form under the name of “Pledari grond” for external use too. In 1994, the “Pledari grond” was first published on CD-ROM as well (using Dbase). In 2001, it was enhanced by the addition of a complete verb table, including a special search routine (now using FileMaker). It is constantly updated and today contains some 200 000 entries. It is also hoped that a spellchecker for RG will be available before too long.

Linguistic structure

Linguists refer to Rumantsch Grischun as a standard, standardised or unified language. It is based to a large extent on three of the traditional written idioms used in Romansh-speaking Graubünden: Sursilvan, Vallader and Surmiran. It was created in accordance with the majority principle, i.e., wherever possible, a form that is common to the three written variants referred to above was taken. This same principle applies at all levels, i.e., for phonetics, word formation, syntax and vocabulary. In the process,

Sursilvan	Surmiran	Vallader	RG	Principle	English
pasch	pasch	pasch	pasch	3:0	peace
viadi	viadi	viadi	viadi	3:0	journey
alv	alv	alb	alv	2:1	white
notg	notg	not	notg	2:1	night
sempel	sempel	simpel	sempel	2:1	simple
siat	set	set	set	2:1	seven
ura	oura	ura	ura	2:1	hour
fil	feil	fil	fil	2:1	thread
cudisch	codesch	cudesch	cudesch	2:1	book
gie	ea	schi	gea	Sutsilvan	yes
jeu	ia	eu	jau	Jauer	I
aur	or	or (aur)	aur	*	gold

It was not possible to apply the majority principle in every case. There were a number of opportunities for considering the two numerically smallest idioms (examples: Sutsilvan “gea” = “yes” and Puter “maun” = “hand”) and even regional and local variants (for instance, the Jauer dialect of the Val Müstair: “jau” = “I”).

The standardised language, Rumantsch Grischun

particular attention was paid to the transparency and simplification of the language system and to its general comprehensibility. Some 99.99% of the linguistic substance of RG is derived from the written idioms and spoken dialects of Romansh.

### Putting Rumantsch Grischun to use

Deciding on whether to use Rumantsch Grischun instead of one of the Romansh idioms is a matter for each organisation, institution, public authority or private individual concerned. The various protagonists are currently (2004) using the standardised language as follows:

#### *Swiss Confederation*

Since 1986, it had been the practice of the Swiss Confederation to use RG for any “written document with a particular bearing on the Romansh-speaking territory”. Following on from the decision taken by Canton Graubünden on 2 July 1996, the Swiss Confederation formally confirmed this situation and has since then been using RG definitively as the official language for contacts with Romansh institutions and individuals.

#### *Lia Rumantscha and its affiliated language associations*

Since the 1986 decision of its assembly of delegates, the Lia Rumantscha has been using RG for any communication concerning more than one Romansh-speaking district. In 1994, this practice was enshrined in the amended statutes (art. 43). The affiliated supra-regional language and cultural associations have in part adopted the same practice.

#### *Canton Graubünden*

Canton Graubünden has been using RG since 1997 (government decision of 1 July 1996) for official texts, such as announcements in the canton’s official gazette, media releases, forms, notifications of decisions, and so on. In a cantonal referendum held on 10 June 2001, the Graubünden voters accepted the amendment to article 23 of the cantonal law on the exercise of political rights, which explicitly replaced the Sursilvan and Vallader idioms with RG. Since then, RG has been considered the canton’s official Romansh language and is now used for all documents pertaining to votes and elections and for the Romansh version of the canton’s codified statute book.

#### *Regions, communes and private individuals*

The political authorities, administrations, religious bodies, cultural associations and private individuals in the Romansh-speaking districts are completely at liberty to use RG or their particular traditional idiom for their own internal use and for contacts with other parts of the Romansh community. In practice, the traditional idioms still tend very much to dominate here, although RG is used in some instances where the only other alternative would be to revert to German.

**Pledari grond:** by creating new words, the Lia Rumantscha is endeavouring to keep up with the modern world.

### Media

The print media, especially the daily, “La Quotidiana”, and the young people’s monthly magazine, “Punts”, often use RG for articles that concern the whole Romansh community. Romansh radio and television use RG for all their written communications and increasingly for the spoken word too. The two local radio stations, Radio Grischa and Radio Engiadina, make only sporadic use of RG.

### School

As far as schools are concerned, it is either the canton or the communes that have the power to decide. Primary schools: Since 1997/99, Canton Graubünden has allowed German-speaking communes as well as Romansh-speaking communes that have moved over to German for school tuition to teach RG in their primary schools as the second language.

Academic upper-secondary schools (*lycées, Gymnasien*, etc.): The cantonal ordinance of 1 August 1996 regarding this school segment states that the second national language to be learnt by students should normally be one of the cantonal languages. Where Romansh is chosen, RG is used as the written language.



Opinion surveys about “Rumantsch Grischun in school” divide the Romansh teaching profession into different camps. Whereas the teachers in the Upper Engadin reject the integral introduction of RG, the majority of their colleagues in Central Graubünden are in favour of pupils learning to read and write it. A survey carried out in Surselva amongst the regional teachers’ organisation (“Conferenza generala romontscha dalla Surselva”) also showed a majority in favour of introducing RG in schools (see “La Quotidiana” of 28 May 2004). In detail: 21% were in favour of the uniform use of RG throughout the whole Romansh community; 23% in favour of the introduction of RG in parallel with the local idiom; 47% in favour of pupils acquiring a passive knowledge of RG and a mere 7.8% against RG in any form whatsoever in schools. A vast majority of those responding to the survey felt there was a need for a supra-regional Romansh identity.

(Photo: Keystone.)

Bilingual Matura (“baccalaureate”): In December 1996, the Graubünden government decided to make school materials available in RG for the bilingual “Matura” (and since 1999/2000 this has meant both a passive and active knowledge of RG). In the same year, the government called on the cantonal department of education, culture and the environment to prepare proposals for the introduction of RG at the various school levels (the so-called “Haltiner Concept”).

Bilingual classes in Chur: Since 2000/01, Chur’s Stadtschule has had bilingual classes in Romansh and German. RG is used as a language of tuition.

### *Churches*

In the Romansh-speaking regions, church sermons and masses are held in German or the particular regional idiom.

## **Dissemination and acceptance**

The Lia Rumantscha’s concept for Rumantsch Grischun has turned out to be a successful one in practice. A considerable influx of translation jobs commissioned by both public bodies and private firms are being processed by special units at both the Lia Rumantscha and the canton. These translations are by no means limited to short texts, such as advertisements, consumer instructions, brochures, customer information, forms, letterheads and inscriptions and various forms of advertising. Many much longer texts have now also been translated into RG. They include G. Deplazes’ four-volume history of literature “Fontaunas” (1987–93), the twelve-volume book series “Ars Helvetica” on visual culture in Switzerland (1991) and the “Lexicon istoric retic” (planned for 2008 as a special single-volume addendum to the “Historical Dictionary of Switzerland”, [www.hls.ch](http://www.hls.ch)). What is particularly noteworthy about this last-mentioned publication is that, with the sole exception of Cla Bierts’ “La Mūdada/Die Wende”, it is the only Romansh publication that can be read by blind or partially sighted people as well as being available on the internet ([www.e-lir.ch](http://www.e-lir.ch)). The technology for “e-LIR” was not developed just anywhere, but by an Internet company based on Romansh territory, IC Surselva of Ilanz. It is further worth mentioning the history book “Istorgia Grischuna” (2003) by A. Collenberg and M. Gross (the first history of Graubünden written in Romansh and giving particular consideration to that language), the five-volume guide for sports teachers, “Educaziun fisica” (2003), a book of birds and a book of flowers, the “Handwörterbuch des Rätoromanischen” (1994, idioms and RG), as well as various language games, comic strips, books for children and adolescents, pictorial volumes, video films, brochures and official documents pertaining to votes and elections. This list is incomplete, but it serves to show what a remarkable development stage RG has already reached. Courses in RG have been organised since 1983 – in schools and other institutions, at the Lia Rumantscha itself and to coincide with cultural events. Comprehensive teaching and learning materials are now available (some of them also suitable for “teach yourself”). In order to prepare for the introduction of RG in Graubünden’s schools, the cantonal government is to provide courses in it for Romansh-speaking teachers during the next few years.

RG has now developed an impetus all of its own and has also moved into areas such as literature, music and theatre. A number of more audacious writers have included the standardised language in their works from the very beginning and published several books in it. A considerable part of the annual literary festival in Domat-Ems, at which RG is repeatedly discussed (such as the debate in 1990 on “RG as a literary language), is held in the standardised language, and the magazine “Litteratura” allows a lot of space for RG. As far as music is concerned, artists from all the Romansh-speaking valleys have joined forces and implemented pioneering projects in RG. It is particularly worth mentioning a



live performance with the title of “Prisas-Reprisas-Surprisas – the famous Rumantsch all-star cover revue” presented at Switzerland’s national exhibition in 2002 – and the artistically ambitious culture project “Lain fabular” (recordings of Beatles’ hits in RG, scheduled for release towards the end of 2004) as well as two operas in RG (“Il Cerchel magic”, 2002, and “Tredeschin”, 2004) and two plays (“La mort stancla”, 1995, and “A. è in’altra”, 2002).

Over the years, the Romansh print media have been making increasing use of RG. It is the principal structuring element in the daily “La Quotidiana”, and most stories that are not specific to one Romansh-speaking district are printed in it. The young people’s monthly, “Punts”, also has a very considerable percentage of its contents in RG. Romansh radio and television use RG especially for any written material accompanying their broadcasts and for pre-formulated contributions whose contents are not purely local ([www.rtr.ch](http://www.rtr.ch)).

What is proving rather more difficult is convincing the ordinary Romansh people living in their valleys of the benefits of a standardised supra-regional language. It appears that their acceptance is gradually growing too, although there are still considerable reservations and fears as far as RG is concerned. Sometimes the debate and controversy can become very heated, and this reached its climax in 1991, when a petition was handed in to the Swiss federal government (the Federal Council) calling on it to desist from using RG in official national publications. This petition had the effect of mobilising advocates of RG too. A manifesto was published, writers, students and artists undertook various actions and publications in its favour and even from the depths of the Romansh valleys there were calls for the RG project to be continued. In 1991, an association called “Union Rumantsch Grischun” (URG) was set up with the mission of spreading the standardised language and making regular publications in it (such as picture books and belletristic works).

In order to find out how the Romansh people living in Graubünden really feel about RG, a scientifically based opinion survey was carried out. The cantonal government set up a special working party to



“Simsalabim”: In 2003 Radio Rumantsch produced a CD with children’s fairy stories in Rumantsch Grischun.



Rumantsch Grischun guarantees a general presence for Romansh in many spheres of life. This shows its practical benefit.

establish the basis for such a survey and also to suggest possible alternatives to Rumantsch Grischun. The body actually selected in 1994 to carry out the survey was the Cultur Prospectiv institute of Zurich. Once ready, the questionnaire was answered by 1115 Romansh speakers aged 18-80. The most important findings contained in the final report were:

1. A clear majority was in favour of a unified written language;
2. There was, admittedly, no absolute majority in favour of RG, but it was the clear favourite, way ahead of all the other potential solutions;
3. RG should only be used in addition to the idioms and should only be a written language (differing in this respect, for instance, from other written languages such as German).

The government referred these results to its working party for it to carry out an appraisal and to put forward proposals as to how to proceed from then on. At the start of July 1996, the working party reported back with a fundamental position on seeking the opinion of the Romansh-speaking population on the introduction of a common written language. From this, it derived its key recommendations as to those areas to be decided on by the canton (official language and language of education) as well as the official language of the Swiss Confederation.

The Graubünden government broadly followed the recommendations and decided to elevate RG to the rank of the canton's official Romansh language, to use only RG from then on for writing the Romansh version of the canton's statute book (collection of codified law) and to approve any pilot school projects using RG (for instance in communes on or near the language borders) that were likely to provide valuable insights into the best possible future procedure.

On 21 August 1996, the cantonal education department announced that the questions relating to RG in schools were to be tackled in the context of a multi-phase project. On 5 December 1997, it set up a working party, and this reported back with specific proposals at the end of June 1999. It urged a very cautious approach to the introduction of RG in schools, especially at primary level, where the idioms were to continue to form the foundation of the language. Primary-school children should learn no more than an initial passive knowledge of RG. At the upper-secondary level and in the vocational colleges RG should, however, be given greater weight.

On 28 April 1998, the educational council and communal executive of the village of Vaz/Obervaz (a Romansh commune with a German-language primary school) asked the education department for permission to go ahead with a pilot project to teach RG as the second language in its primary classes and special small classes for children with particular learning needs. In a decision taken on 10 July 1998, the government gave the go-ahead for the Vaz/Obervaz project. In May 1999 the government then announced a general authorisation for all German-language primary schools to introduce RG as their second language.

Following the turn of the millennium, events came thick and fast:

- In January 2001, the cantonal government had the new school-report forms for Romansh schools printed in RG;
- On 10 June 2002, the Graubünden voters accepted an amendment to article 23 of the cantonal law on the exercise of political rights. In future, all official written communications from the cantonal authorities to the Romansh community will be in RG. Romansh speakers may, however, still contact the canton in their own idiom, and the individual communes are not forced to replace the idioms with RG;



- In October 2002, the Lia Rumantscha's assembly of delegates adopted a resolution to continue to promote and spread RG as the supra-regional written language and in the medium-to-long term to introduce it to schools;
- In summer 2003, as part of a cost-cutting package, the Graubünden cantonal parliament decided that, as of 2005, all Romansh school materials would only be produced in RG ([www.gr.ch](http://www.gr.ch)). The government forwarded this instruction to the cantonal department of education. This sudden decision led to massive protests amongst teachers as well as amongst numerous groups concerned about regional policy and culture (communal and school councils, individual members of the cantonal parliament and language, cultural and regional associations). The government was lobbied from various sides to put forward a clear concept for the introduction of RG in schools, and, on 22 November 2003, it set up a working party to draw up such a concept for the phased introduction of RG in schools. The idioms are to continue to play an important role as languages of literature, languages of traditional culture, spoken languages and languages of regional identity. According to the government's current thinking, the timetable would look something like this: 2004: initial planning work, 2005: detailed concept and training of education executives, teachers, etc., 2007: introduction in the lower classes of primary school in a number of pilot regions, 2010: all primary-school children start to learn to read and write in RG.
- In March 2004, the youth section of the CVP/PPC political party in Surselva took up the fight against RG in schools. It submitted a petition for a consultative vote of those communes that have a Romansh-medium school as to whether or not they wanted to introduce RG in school by 2010 at the latest. Several communes have already used this instrument, such as Sumvitg/Somvix (which voted against), Luven and Schlans (which voted in favour) and la-Punt-Chamues-ch in the Upper Engadin (also against). According to Swiss federal law, however, there is no legal basis for such consultative votes. A number of communes have reacted to this situation by making use of the regional idiom in their schools part of their communal constitutions. The communes of Segl-Maria/Sils and Samedan in the Upper Engadin, for instance, have amended their constitutions by referendum to state that the languages of tuition in their schools are Puter and German.
- In early June 2004, a petition, which was signed by virtually all the Engadin communes as well as by Valchava in the Val Müstair and the regional language association, "Uniun dals Grischs", called on the cantonal government to look for flexible solutions to deal with the very different situations of the Romansh language and to ensure that the introduction of RG in schools did not in any way work to the disadvantage of Romansh.
- In June 2004, the Lia Rumantscha also issued a position paper on the subject of RG in schools. It calls for its introduction across-the-board, "as quickly as possible, but properly prepared". It also urges the canton to demonstrate professionalism and sensitivity during the conceptual phase and to make sure that all the groups with a vested interest are properly consulted (teachers, school authorities, parents and language and cultural associations). The project would also have to allow sufficient time for further standardisation measures to be completed, for the people as a whole to become better familiarised with RG, for good school materials to be developed and for teachers to be trained in RG. The introduction of RG across-the-board in primary schools ought to be preceded by regional and communal pilot projects under the guidance of professionals and ought also to be scientifically evaluated. There would need to be clear demarcation lines between the roles of RG and the idioms. The socio-linguistic differences between the various Romansh districts ought also to be properly taken into consideration.

- On 14 June 2004, 180 leading Romansh-speaking figures from the fields of academia, culture and education signed an open letter to the Graubünden cantonal government opposing the introduction of Rumantsch Grischun across-the-board in schools as of 2010 (cf. "Südostschweiz" of 12 June 2004 and "La Quotidiana" of 15 June 2004). They called on the government to desist from the active introduction of RG in schools, since they saw this as an erroneous development in language policy and one that would harm both the idioms and RG itself;
- On 20 June 2004, the parliamentary group of about forty Romansh-speaking deputies in the Graubünden cantonal parliament called for a pragmatic solution to the question of RG in schools – along the lines advocated by the Lia Rumantscha. In the spring of 2003, the Lia Rumantscha had called on the school authorities in the Val Müstair and the communes of Donath (Sutselva) and Trin (Surselva) to make a formal announcement of their interest in running a school pilot with RG to the cantonal department of education. The "Corporaziun regiunala Val Müstair" (teachers, schools council and communal presidents) followed this call and on 8 October 2003 applied to the competent department to be allowed to run such a pilot and entrusted the Lia Rumantscha with drawing up a concept. Given the strong resistance from the teaching profession and political circles, the department wrote back to the Val Müstair on 12 December 2003 asking it to wait until the end of the planning and preparatory phase in 2007 before introducing RG in its schools. Back in October 2002, the Sutsilvan commune of Zillis (Val Schons) had been the very first Romansh commune to speak out in favour of the introduction of RG in the last three years of compulsory education (i.e. years 7-9 at lower-secondary level).

### Rumantsch Grischun in the European context

For many decades, the standardisation of languages has been an important branch of the linguistic sciences, whereas the normalisation of the situation of a language and its use is a key component of socio-linguistics. Research into standardisation and normalisation processes started by considering the needs of developing countries, but then moved to taking an increasing interest in Europe too. From the very beginning, the Lia Rumantscha has based its language planning on scientifically validated methods and processes and has regularly participated in international seminars and congresses dealing with questions of language standardisation (such as 2002 in Urtijëi, Dolomites, organised by the Istitut Cultural Ladin (SPELL)) and has also staged such events itself (such as in Chur/Parpan in 1991 in cooperation with the national UNESCO commission, cf. Lüdi, 1994, and in Chur in 1998 in cooperation with VALS, the Swiss Association for Applied Linguistics, cf. Dazzi and Mondada, 1999). Pooling experience in this way is important and it also shows that Romansh is by no means the only language facing an issue of standardisation. It further provides language minorities with new findings, which help them, in particular, in their strategies for the dissemination of a supra-regional written language.

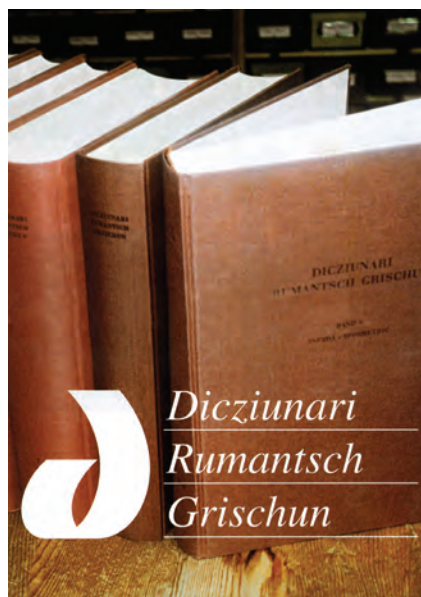
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# The Dicziunari Rumantsch Grischun – a thesaurus of Romansh

The Dicziunari Rumantsch Grischun (DRG) was set up jointly in 1904 by the Societad Retoromantscha in Chur and the Indo-Germanic scholar, Robert von Planta. The aim of the project is to collect all the information possible about the Romansh language as spoken throughout Graubünden and to process, illustrate and explain the whole vocabulary of all the dialects of the threatened language.

The vocabulary and phonetics of a representative part of the then 130 Romansh-speaking communes were recorded systematically with the assistance of correspondents and various questionnaires. The first editors, Florian Melcher and Chasper Pult, continued the jobs of collecting data and cataloguing it. They also started to work on all sorts of printed or handwritten documents (going back as far as 1560). The first DRG instalment appeared in 1939, Andrea Schorta became its editor-in-chief and the DRG was clearly starting to have a perceptible effect on the living language and self-awareness of Graubünden's Romansh speakers. The language movement has benefited increasingly over the years from the DRG Institute as a source of documentation and information to assist in the tasks of promoting the language – for instance in the drawing up of regional dictionaries and grammars and the formation of neologisms.

As a national lexicon, the DRG received most of its funding between 1975 and 1995 from the Swiss National Science Foundation and as of 1996 from SAGW/SAHS (Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences). A philological commission provides scientific support for the editorial team. Since



The "Dicziunari Rumantsch Grischun" is the most important historico-linguistic reference work in which the spoken Romansh dialects and written idioms are collected, analysed and presented according to phonetic, semantic, thematic, ethnological, sociological and etymological points of view.

the departure of Hans Stricker and the retirement of Alexi Decurtins (1948/56-75 editor and 1975-88 editor-in-chief), the editorial team has been comprised of Felix Giger (1988-2000 editor-in-chief, thereafter editor), Carli Tomaschett (editor-in-chief since 1 January 2004), Claudio Vincenz, Marga Annatina Secchi and Kuno Widmer (editors) as well as Juliana Tschuor and Anna-Maria Genelin (documentalists) and Alexa Pelican-Arquisch and Brida Sac-Arquisch (editorial assistants). Thanks to the increase in personnel, the DRG has been able to accelerate the rate of its publications and thus contribute to maintaining the language.

The word in the context of a written or spoken sentence, its meaning and use and also formations, derivations and compounds – such is the core of the scientifically focused dictionary articles, which also include idiomatic expressions, proverbs, puzzles, rhymes, and so on. The DRG's longer articles, which are monographs in their own right, elucidate the specific connections between words and things.

Each article in the descriptive DRG is introduced with a phonetic component, with precise notes on pronunciation, and concluded with etymological indications and possibly a discussion. The structure of the DRG is semasiological, i.e. starting from the word and not the thing. Its articles are clearly structured and presented in alphabetical order with German translations of the Romansh quotations and the accompanying text. The encyclopaedic DRG is based on the use of the living language as well as on old and new written sources. It is evolving into a complete inventory of the alpine language and culture of Canton Graubünden's Romansh. It provides an insight into traditional life and farming through the language in which they were expressed.

The DRG's users include scientists from various disciplines, Romanists, dialectologists, cultural historians and ethnologists. The DRG is a rich storehouse of material for the specific histories of the economy, the law and medicine as well as for history in general.

**Status autumn 2004:** "A" to "macuba", or 150 instalments, making up ten volumes and five double instalments, totalling over 8500 sides of two-column A4 paper and including numerous maps, drawings and plates.

Printed by: Südostschweiz Print AG, Chur

Editorial office: Ringstrasse 34, CH-7000 Cuira/Chur, Tel.: +41 81 284 66 42, Fax: +41 81 284 02 04, [www.drg.ch](http://www.drg.ch)

The Dicziunari Rumantsch Grischun is published by the Societad Retorumantscha with the support of the Swiss Confederation, Canton Graubünden and the Lia Rumantscha. It was created by Robert von Planta and Florian Melcher. Volumes 1-10 (Letters "A" "M") have been published in Chur between 1939 and 2004. Publication is continuing.

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## Instead of concluding remarks

“**Tamangur**” must be one of the best-known Romansh poems and one of the most powerful in its symbolism. It was penned by the Engadin poet, Peider Lansel and was first published in the “Fögl d’Engiadina” on 16 November 1923

### Tamangur

Aintasom S-charl (ingio sun rafüdat  
tuots oters gods), sün spuonda vers daman,  
schi varsaquants veidrischems dschembers stan  
da vegldüm e strasoras s-charplinats.  
Tröp sco l’ingual nu’s chatta plü ninglur,  
ultim avanz d’ün god dir: «Tamangur».

Da plü bodun quel sgüra cuvernet  
costas e spis cha bluots uossa vezzain;  
millieras d’ans passettan, e scumbain  
ch’ardenn sajettas e cha naiv terret,  
ha tantüna la vita gnü vendschur  
e verdagià trasoura Tamangur.

Mo cur umbras l’uman gnit be sdrüand,  
sainza ningün pisser sün il davo,  
schi lavinaz e boudas s’fettan pro.  
L’ajer dvantet vieplü crüj, tintant  
nu madürenn plü’ls böschs las puschas lur,  
e daspö quai al main get Tamangur.

As dostand fin l’ultim, indavoman,  
ils dschember, ün ad ün, sco schlass sudats  
chi sül champ da battaglia sun crodats,  
per terra vi schmarscheschan plan a plan –  
E scha l’agüd nu vain bainbod – Dalur! –  
svanirà fin il nom da Tamangur.

Al veider god, chi pac a pac gnit sdrüt,  
sumaglia zuond eir nos linguach prüvù,  
chi dal vast territori d’üna jà,  
in uschè strets cunfins uoss’es ardüt.  
Scha’ls Rumantschs nu fan tuots il dovair lur,  
giaraj’a man cun els sco Tamangur.

### Tamangur

Way up beyond S-charl (at a height at which  
no other wood deigns to grow) on an easterly slope,  
depleted age-old Arolla pines still stand,  
torn to tatters by sheer age and the elements.  
Nowhere else is such a horde to be found -  
those sparse remains of the forest “Tamangur”.

There once was a time, there can be no doubt,  
when verdant were today’s bleak slopes and peaks.  
Years went by in their thousands, scorched,  
by lightning, crushed by snow.  
But life fought on and conquered,  
and all its green transcended Tamangur.

Then appeared humans with their greedy destruction,  
not sparing a thought for times still to come;  
avalanches and landslides they caused aplenty.  
The winds howled colder than before  
until cones no longer could ripen on those pines,  
and, since then, it’s been the demise of Tamangur.

Resisting till the bitterest end,  
the pines like valiant soldiers  
one by one on a battlefield fell,  
and are gradually rotting there on the ground.  
If succour doesn’t come soon, it pains to say,  
there’ll be nothing left – not even the name of Tamangur.

The ancient forest that we are slowly obliterating  
is very much like our homely old tongue,  
which once enjoyed vast territories  
and is now narrowly hemmed in.  
If the Romansh people don’t all do their duty,  
their fate will be the fate of Tamangur.

Instead of concluding remarks

Co invlidesans ch'el da seculs nan  
savet noss vegls da redscher e guidar?  
ierta ch'adüna tgnettan adachar,  
varguogna bain, sch'la dessans our da man.  
Tgnain vi dal nos, sco'ls oter vi dal lur,  
e'ns algordain la fin da Tamangur.

Be nö dar loc! – Ningün nu pudrà tour  
a la schlatta rumantscha 'l dret plü ferm,  
chi'd es quel: da mantgnair dadaint seis term,  
voss'ed adüna, seis linguach dal cour –  
Rumantschs, dat pro! – Spendrai tras voss'amur  
nos linguach da la mort da Tamangur.

(Publ. en: «Il vegl chalamêr», 1929, «Ouvras da  
P.L.», chüradas dad Andri Peer, 1, 1966, 77–78.)

How could we forget that for centuries  
it accompanied and counselled our forefathers?  
An inheritance they always esteemed,  
shame on us if we let it slip away.  
Let's stand up for what is ours, as others for theirs,  
and let's never forget the end of Tamangur.

Do not yield ground. No-one will ever manage  
to snatch away the Romansh people's birthright  
to maintain now and forever the language of the heart  
within the boundaries that are its own.  
Hither, ye Romansh! Your love  
can save our language from the death of Tamangur.

(First published in book form in "Il vegl chalamêr",  
1929, Ouvras da Peider Lansel, chüradas dad Andri  
Peer, 1, 1966, 77-88)

"Climb up to S-charl and then keep on going up the mountain. At an altitude, which would otherwise be above the tree line, you'll find the spindly wood of Tamangur, and there is nothing like it anywhere else. Thunder, lightening and avalanches have made the wood suffer, but they have never managed to conquer it altogether. The problem started when people with no thought for the future came along and felled trees (for the smelting works in S-charl – Ed.). As the trees became fewer and fewer, the climate deteriorated, so that the pine cones were no longer able to mature, and the wood lost the ability to regenerate. The few remaining pines put up resistance to the very end like brave warriors, but they too eventually fell and now slowly rot on the ground. If help does not come soon, very soon, even the name Tamangur will vanish." [G. Deplazes, *Die Rätoromanen...*, 1991, pp. 182-183]. "For poet Peider Lansel, the forest of Tamangur, which withstood the storms of the ages until trees were clear-cut by people driven by greed, symbolised the Romansh world. The poem was written at a time when the language was under enormous pressure from the outside and it called on the Romansh people to put up resistance. The poem changes tack as of its fifth verse, and the poet turns directly to the reader with his heart-felt concern: that fate of Tamangur forest is like that of our language, which is continuously losing ground [...] It would be a disgrace if we were to allow the best of our inheritance to go to waste [...]" (Deplazes, *op. cit.*, p. 183).

The poem has lost none of its symbolic force even right up to the present. It is repeatedly quoted by those who want to wake the Romansh people up to the value of their culture that is under threat. The definitive responsibility lies with the Romansh people themselves: if they fail to do their duty and to look after their language, then they will suffer the same fate as Tamangur forest. "Be nö dar loc!... – Spendrai tras voss'amur nos linguach da la mort da Tamangur" – Do not give in or soften, whatever the price. No-one can deny us the right of an existence, and love will save Our Tongue from dying out. Another poem with a similar symbolic impact and effectiveness to Lansel's "Tamangur" but this time from amidst the Romansh communities along the River Rhine, was published by the Sursilvan poet,

Giachen Hasper Muoth (1844-1906). Muoth's poem, like Linsel's, is an urgent appeal to the Romansh people to defend and cherish their linguistic and cultural heritage (cf. G. Deplazes: "Die Rätoromanen", 1991, pp. 123-126).

In the 1990s, Pascal Gamboni, the lead singer of the Sursilvan rock group, "Passiunai", wrote a song with the title "Unics" ("unique people"). In a moderately ironical tone, it shows what it means to be a young Romansh person.

### unics

astg'ju di da té danunder tg'ju sun  
da quei liug tg'ju sun ê nu'ca tg'ju stun  
nu'ch'ins so aun beiber o d'il flum  
nu'ch'ins so tut sur da tschel ê tschella

nies lungatg son mo paucs  
nies lungatg réisdan mo paucs  
nies lungatg son mo paucs  
nies lungatg réisdan mo paucs  
nus essan unics, unics, unics  
nus essan unics, unics, unics

antorn antorn sei tut mo cuélms  
forza îls plé bials sên quei bi mund  
fatg termagls va'ju s'îl prau  
ê las vaccas va'ju pertgirau  
ref.: nies lungatg son mo paucs...  
nus essan unics...

la stad mein nus a viagè  
ê gl'atun sittein nus sên las tscharvas  
gl'unviern seruschnein nus giu d'îl cuélm  
permavera encurin nus da marida  
ref.: nies lungatg son mo paucs...  
nus essan unics...

(Pascal Gamboni, «Passiunai»)

### unique people

can I tell you where I come from  
can I tell you the name of that place and where I live  
where we can still drink the river's waters  
where everyone knows everything about everyone else

only a few know our language  
only a few speak our language  
only a few know our language  
only a few speak our language  
we are unique, unique, unique  
we are unique, unique, unique

all around us nothing but mountains,  
perhaps the most beautiful on this beautiful Earth,  
I used to play in the meadows  
and I used to look after the cows  
ref.: only a few know our language...  
we are unique, unique, unique...

in summer we go on our travels  
and in autumn we go shooting game  
in winter we slither down from the peaks  
in spring we see if we can manage to marry  
ref.: only a few know our language...  
we are unique, unique, unique...

(Pascal Gamboni, "Passiunai")

## Internet addresses:

The following addresses have all been verified at the time of going to press. Obviously, changes are liable to occur afterwards. Some of the sites do not (yet) provide information in English.

<a href="http://www.admin.ch">www.admin.ch</a>	Central portal for the whole Swiss federal administration
<a href="http://www.afk.gr.ch">www.afk.gr.ch</a>	Graubünden cantonal office of culture
<a href="http://www.ch.ch">www.ch.ch</a>	Administration and public service
<a href="http://www.drg.ch">www.drg.ch</a>	Dicziunari Rumantsch Grischun
<a href="http://www.ethnologue.com">www.ethnologue.com</a>	Languages of the world
<a href="http://www.e-lir.ch">www.e-lir.ch</a>	Lexicon istoric retic (two-volume edition of the "Historical Dictionary of Switzerland", with particular coverage of the Rhaetian/Graubünden territory)
<a href="http://www.forum-helveticum.ch">www.forum-helveticum.ch</a>	Forum Helveticum
<a href="http://www.frr.ch">www.frr.ch</a>	Fundaziun Retoromana
<a href="http://www.giuru.ch">www.giuru.ch</a>	Giuventetgna Rumantscha (Romansh young people's organisation)
<a href="http://www.gr.ch">www.gr.ch</a>	Canton Graubünden
<a href="http://www.graubuenden.ch">www.graubuenden.ch</a>	Graubünden Ferien (cantonal tourist office)
<a href="http://www.imkchur.ch">www.imkchur.ch</a>	Institute for Media and Communication in Chur
<a href="http://www.kbchur.gr.ch">www.kbchur.gr.ch</a>	Graubünden cantonal library
<a href="http://www.kulturforschung.ch">www.kulturforschung.ch</a>	Verein für Kulturforschung Graubünden (cultural research)
<a href="http://www.kultur-schweiz.admin.ch">www.kultur-schweiz.admin.ch</a>	The federal office responsible for culture, language policy, etc.; report of Switzerland's implementation of the Language Charter
<a href="http://www.laquotidiana.ch">www.laquotidiana.ch</a>	La Quotidiana (Romansh daily newspaper)
<a href="http://www.liarumantscha.ch">www.liarumantscha.ch</a>	<b>Lia Rumantscha</b>
<a href="http://www.movie-encarden.ch">www.movie-encarden.ch</a>	Movie Encarden - film en moviment
<a href="http://www.myledari.ch">www.myledari.ch</a>	(young people's film club, created 1998 with the support of Pro Helvetia)
<a href="http://www.pgi.ch">www.pgi.ch</a>	Online Romansh-English/English-Romansh dictionary
<a href="http://www.pfh-gr.ch">www.pfh-gr.ch</a>	(all five idioms and Rumantsch Grischun)
<a href="http://www.punts.ch">www.punts.ch</a>	Pro Grigioni Italiano
<a href="http://www.punts-info.ch">www.punts-info.ch</a>	Graubünden PHS/HEP ("university of applied educational sciences")
<a href="http://www.prohelvetia.ch">www.prohelvetia.ch</a>	Punts (young people's magazine)
<a href="http://www.proraetia.ch">www.proraetia.ch</a>	Information about the young people's magazine "Punts"
<a href="http://www.quartalingua.ch">www.quartalingua.ch</a>	Pro Helvetia
<a href="http://www.roma.unibe.ch">www.roma.unibe.ch</a>	Pro Raetia
<a href="http://www.rumantsch.ch">www.rumantsch.ch</a>	Quarta Lingua
<a href="http://www.rumantsch.ch/didacta/cgl">www.rumantsch.ch/didacta/cgl</a>	Institute of Romance languages, University of Berne
<a href="http://www.rtr.ch">www.rtr.ch</a>	The central Romansh portal with links to various associations, schools, media, etc. that support Romansh as well as to websites in Romansh or with information about Romansh
<a href="http://www.sagw.ch">www.sagw.ch</a>	The CGL's online didactic centre
<a href="http://www.sal.ch">www.sal.ch</a>	Romansh radio and television
<a href="http://www.snl.admin.ch">www.snl.admin.ch</a>	SAGW/SAHS (Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences)
<a href="http://www.sling-online.ch">www.sling-online.ch</a>	School of Applied Linguistics, Zurich and Chur
<a href="http://www.tlfq.ulaval.ca/axl">www.tlfq.ulaval.ca/axl</a>	Swiss National Library, Berne
<a href="http://www.udg.ch">www.udg.ch</a>	Graubünden regional language service
<a href="http://www.unige.ch/lettres/roman">www.unige.ch/lettres/roman</a>	Les grandes familles linguistiques du monde, Québec
<a href="http://www.unifr.ch">www.unifr.ch</a>	Unìon dals Grischs
<a href="http://www.unizh.ch/rose">www.unizh.ch/rose</a>	University of Geneva
<a href="http://www.usrum.ch">www.usrum.ch</a>	University of Fribourg, Switzerland
<a href="http://www.walserverein-gr.ch">www.walserverein-gr.ch</a>	Department of Romance Languages, University of Zurich
	Union for Romansh Literature (formerly: writers' union)
	Association of Walsers

### Special website for the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages:

[www.coe.int/minlang](http://www.coe.int/minlang)



This booklet has been produced with the financial support of

- Graubünden Cantonal Bank
- Graubünden's cultural promotion programme
- Pro Helvetia
- Pro Patria
- Radio e Televisiun Rumantscha
- Société de la Loterie de la Suisse romande
- Südostschweiz Print AG
- UBS Cultural Foundation

The Lia Rumantscha would like to express its thanks to all those institutions and organisations that have provided financial support as well as to everyone who has assisted with distribution and sales.