

# ISO 639-3 Registration Authority

## Request for New Language Code Element in ISO 639-3

Date: 2006-5-10

Name of Primary Requester: Albert Bickford; Thierry Haesenne

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Names, affiliations and email addresses of additional supporters of this request:

Associated Change request number : 2006-001

(completed by Registration Authority)

Tentative assignment of new identifier : sfb

(completed by Registration Authority)

Do not be concerned about your responses causing the form text spacing or pagination to change. Use Shift-Enter to insert a new line in a form field (where allowed)

### 1. NAMES and IDENTIFICATION

- a) Preferred name of language for code element denotation:  
Langue des signes de Belgique Francophone
- b) Autonym (self-name) for this language:  
(signed autonym is not easily represented due to difficulties in transcribing signed languages)
- c) Alternate names and spellings of language, and any established abbreviations:  
LSFB, Langue des Signes Belge Francophone, French Belgian Sign Language
- d) Reason for preferred name:  
Haesenne comments: "Regarding the situation in French-speaking Belgium (Wallonia and the major parts of Brussels), in the early 1980s, the term "Langue Française Signée" (Signed French Language) was used, then it changed into "Langue des Signes Belge" (Belgian Sign Language) or "Langue des Signes Française de Belgique" (French Sign Language of Belgium). However, Deaf people have become quite unsatisfied with these terms and thus, another term was advocated. Since then, Langue des Signes Belge Francophone or Langue des Signes de Belgique Francophone has been used during formal meetings although most deaf people still refer their language as "sign language". There was never a compromise on which term to use. Therefore, sign language researchers hired to write a report on the feasibility of an official recognition of the sign language used in French-speaking Belgium chose the term "Langue des Signes de Belgique Francophone" and an abbreviation which reflected the close relationship between this sign language and French Sign Language : LSFB."

See also the FAQ of the Fédération Francophone des Sourds de Belgique, the Deaf association in Walloon, at <http://www.ffsb.be/doc/LS/ls2.htm>, and the official parliamentary declaration, available at [http://www.ffsb.be/doc/LS/decret\\_officiel.pdf](http://www.ffsb.be/doc/LS/decret_officiel.pdf)

- e) Name of ethnic group or description of people who use this language and approximate population of users, if in use today:  
Deaf community of Francophone Belgium
- f) Preferred three letter identifier, if available: sfb

Your suggestion will be taken into account, but the Registration Authority will determine the identifier to be proposed. Language identifiers are not intended to be an abbreviation for a name of the language, but to serve as a device to identify a given language uniquely. With thousands of languages, many sets of which have similar names, it is not possible to provide identifiers that resemble a language name in every case.

## 2. TEMPORAL DESCRIPTION and LOCATION

- a) Is this a  Living language  
 Nearly extinct/secondary use only (includes languages in revival)  
 Recently extinct language  
 Historical language  
 Ancient language  
 Artificially constructed language

(Select one. See explanations of these types at <http://www.sil.org/iso639%2D3/types.asp>)

- b) Countries where used:  
Belgium
- c) Region within each country: towns, districts, states or provinces where used:  
Belgique Francophone (Wallonia and major parts of Brussels)
- d) For an ancient or historical language, give approximate time frame; for a recently extinct language, give the approximate date of the last known user's death

## 3. MODALITY AND LINGUISTIC AFFILIATION

- a) This language is:  Signed  Spoken  Attested only in writings
- b) Language family, if classified; origin, if artificially constructed:  
Deaf sign language (a pseudo-family that is commonly used for signed languages instead of an actual genetic affiliation, since there is insufficient research to establish clear language families for signed languages).
- c) Closest language linguistically. For signed language, note influence from other signed or spoken languages:  
Vlaamse Gebarentaal (VGT) = Flemish Sign Language, see separate new code request for it. LSFB is influenced by spoken French, particularly in mouthings, and this is one of the most important factors that distinguishes it from VGT. There is also a close relationship to Langue des Signes Francaise (French Sign Language).

## 4. LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND USE

- a) What written literature, inscriptions or recordings exist in this language? Are there newspapers, radio or television broadcasts, etc.?:

Since 1981, there is a daily news broadcasted on RTBF1 (the main French-speaking channel in Belgium), which is translated into LSFB almost every day on RTBF2 at 7:30pm. Since the late 1990s, there is also a news programme for children (Niouzz) which is broadcasted every day around 6pm and translated into LSFB on the next day at 11am. Currently the FFSB (Francophone Federation of the Deaf of Belgium) is lobbying for better viewing. Also several associations and research centres have filmed deaf people signing. Currently, only one research centre in French Speaking Belgium (PROFILS) is analysing the videotapes of LSFB, while collecting data from deaf people all over the country.

- b) Is this language officially recognized by any level of government? Is it used in any levels of formal education as a language of instruction (for other subjects)? Is it taught in schools?:

Officially recognized by the federal parliament; see [http://www.ffsb.be/doc/LS/decret\\_officiel.pdf](http://www.ffsb.be/doc/LS/decret_officiel.pdf).

It had never been taught as a proper language in Deaf schools before its official recognition. Since then, it has started being taught in some Deaf schools as a pilot project. However, it has been taught in vocational schools since 1992 (twelve levels), and also in several private associations or schools since the 1980s.

- c) Comment on factors of ethnolinguistic identity and informal domains of use:

As discussed in the proposal to split Belgian Sign Language (bvs) into LSBF and VGT, there is a clear ethnolinguistic distinction between the signed languages in Wallonia and Flanders. The two languages are fairly close linguistically, with one of the biggest differences being in the mouthings. Some people, under some circumstances, can understand the other language moderately well, but other people have considerable difficulty (especially in situations, such as television, where there is no adjustment to the language of the addressee).

## 5. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

You do not need to repeat sources previously identified in the form, “Request for Change to ISO 639-3 Language Code”

- a) First-hand knowledge. Describe:  
Research and involvement in the community by Thierry Haesenne
  
- b) Knowledge through personal communication. Describe:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- c) Knowledge from published sources. Include known dictionaries, grammars, etc. (please give complete bibliographical references):  
(cited above where relevant)

### **Please return this form to:**

ISO 639-3 Registrar  
SIL International, Office of Language Information Systems  
7500 West Camp Wisdom Road  
Dallas, Texas 75236 USA  
ISO 639-3/RA web site: <http://www.sil.org/iso639%2D3/default.asp>  
Email: [iso639-3@sil.org](mailto:iso639-3@sil.org)  
An email attachment of this completed form is preferred.

### **Further information:**

If your request for a new language code element is supported by the Registration Authority as a formal proposal, you may be contacted separately by researchers working with the Ethnologue or with LinguistList asking you to provide additional information.

### **Sources of documentation for ISO 639-3 identifiers:**

Gordon, Raymond G., Jr. (ed.), 2005. Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Fifteenth edition. Dallas, Tex.: SIL International. Online version: <http://www.ethnologue.com/> .

LinguistList. Ancient and Extinct Languages. <http://cf.linguistlist.org/cfdocs/new-website/LL-WorkingDirs/forms/langs/GetListOfAncientLgs.html>

LinguistList. Constructed Languages. <http://cf.linguistlist.org/cfdocs/new-website/LL-WorkingDirs/forms/langs/GetListOfConstructedLgs.html>