Comments received for
ISO 639-3 Change Request
2009-014

Outcome: Rejected
Effective date: 2010-07-12

Registration Authority decision on Change Request no. 2009-012: to create a new code element "[wts] Wallisertitsch".

The request to create a distinct code element for "Wallisertitsch" is rejected. This request generated discussion on the IETF-languages list (http://www.alvestrand.no/mailman/listinfo/ietf-languages), where the general trend was to view that Wallisertitsch is encompassed within the denotation of [gsw] Swiss German (also called Alemannic and Alsatian in the ISO 639 family of standards). However, no formal comments either in favor or in opposition to the requested new code element were submitted during the review period. Since the end of the review period, the ISO 639-3 registrar has received correspondence from other researchers concerned with improving the clarity of denotation of [gsw] Alemannic / Alsatian / Swiss German, particularly its relation to other language varieties considered to be within the Alemannic family, specifically [wae] Walser and [swg] Swabian. The primary correspondents are both linguists and native speakers of varieties of Swiss German. In that discussion, the consensus was clearly that [gsw] as currently labeled within the ISO 639 family of standards should be reevaluated and considered to encompass also Swabian and Walser. The implicit conclusion within this position is that [gsw] also encompasses the speech varieties of the Wallis Valley of Switzerland, which the proposed new code element was intended to represent. Further, it is anticipated that formal requests will be submitted to merge both Swabian and Walser into [gsw] Alemannic / Alsatian / Swiss German so that the treatment of these speech varieties is consistent throughout the standard. The support for this latter position, for the broader denotation of the code element [gsw], is clearly much greater than support for finer grained distinctions within the ISO 639-3 standard. The finer grained distinctions are more appropriately addressed within ISO 639-6 (http://www.geolang.com/iso639-6/). At such time as the ISO 639-6 registration authority publishes its process for reviewing and adding new code elements, the requester may wish to pursue a code element within that code set.

The ISO 639-3 Registrar further recommends that the requester of the proposed code element for Wallisertitsch make application as described in RFC 5646 (http://datatracker.ietf.org/doc/rfc5646/) to the IETF Languages group proposing a variant subtag for Wallisertitsch in association with the primary language [gsw] Swiss German to meet the needs of the computer based language development work for this language variety.