

# ISO 639-3 Registration Authority

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

This form is to be used in conjunction with a “Request for Change to ISO 639-3 Language Code” form

Date: 2017-8-16

Name of Primary Requester: Michael Everson

E-mail address: everson at evertime dot com

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

Susanna Mkrtchyan (President, Wikimedia Armenia, susanna.mkrtyan at gmail dot com)

Razmik Panossian (Director, Armenian Communities Department, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, rpanossian at gulbenkian dot pt)

Anaid Donabedian (Chair of Armenian Studies Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, Paris, adonabedian at inalco dot fr)

Artur Khalatyan (Executive Director, Wikimedia Armenia, arthurkhalatyan at gmail dot com)

Azniv Stepanian (Western Armenian Project Coordinator, Wikimedia Armenia, khoraz at hotmail dot com)

Associated Change request number : 2017-023

(completed by Registration Authority)

Tentative assignment of new identifier : hyw

(completed by Registration Authority)

PLEASE NOTE: This completed form will become part of the public record of this change request and the history of the ISO 639-3 code set. 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:  
Western Armenian
- b) Autonym (self-name) for this language:  
արեւմտահայերէն, arevmdahayerên
- c) Common alternate names and spellings of language, and any established abbreviations:
- d) Reason for preferred name:  
It is the name given by everybody to the Western Armenian language
- e) Name and approximate population of ethnic group or community who use this language (complete individual language currently in use):  
880,000
- f) Preferred three letter identifier, if available: hyw

Your suggestion will be taken into account, but the Registration Authority will determine the identifier to be proposed. The identifier is 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
- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Living language   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Nearly extinct/secondary use only (includes languages in revival) |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Recently extinct language   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Historical language   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Ancient language  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Artificially constructed language                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Macrolanguage   |

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

For individual languages, also complete:

- b) Countries where used:  
The Armenian diaspora, especially North and South America, Europe, Australia, and all of the Middle East excepting Iran.
- c) Region within each country: towns, districts, states or provinces where used. Include GPS coordinates of the approximate center of the language, if possible:  
The major cities, having schools and concentrated numbers of speakers (in alphabetical order) are: Aleppo, Athens, Baghdad, Beirut, Boston, Buenos Aires, Cairo, Damascus, Istanbul, Jerusalem, Los Angeles, Lyons, Marseille, Montréal, New York, Paris, San Francisco, Sofia, Sydney, Toronto. Note that there are some new communities emerging due to the wars in Iraq and Syria, most notably in Sweden, Belgium and elsewhere in Europe. Western Armenian in diaspora is a polycentric language.
- 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:  
Indo-European
- c) Closest language linguistically. For a Macrolanguage, list the individual languages (adopted and/or proposed) to be included in its group. For signed language, note influence from other signed or spoken languages:  
Eastern Armenian.

#### 4. LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND USE

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

There are at least two dozen daily and weekly newspapers, several literary magazines (in print and on line), plus scores of newsletters. There are radio and TV programmes in Western Armenian in the Middle East, United States, and Canada. There are online news services. A very rich literary tradition since mid-19th century exists with major deposits of books and newspapers in libraries around the world. Notable among them: the Mekhitarist congregation library in Venice, the Armenian Patriarchates in Jerusalem and Istanbul, as well as major university collections at Harvard, UCLA, University of Michigan (Ann Arbor and Dearborn), and INALCO and the Nubarian Library in Paris. There are several Armenian studies chairs at universities in the West that teach the language. In Armenia, some universities teach Western Armenian courses. There are also several summer schools that teach Western Armenian (in London, Istanbul, Venice). There is contemporary literature being produced in Western Armenian.

- 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?:

There are over 80 Armenian day schools (primary and/or secondary) in the diaspora teaching western Armenian, with their textbooks, teachers, schools boards, etc. Most are in Lebanon, Syria, and Istanbul. There are at least 15 in the United States, 7 in Latin America, 5 or 6 in Canada, a similar number in France. There are a great many Saturday/Sunday schools.

Western Armenian language is recognized by France as one of the languages of France. It has no official status there, as France did not ratify the European Charter for minority languages, but Armenian may be chosen in a range of official exams. Cyprus, having ratified the European Charter, recognizes Western Armenian as one of its minority languages and Armenian schools are supported by the government, which assigns them the status of public schools.

The Armenian constitution does not distinguish between Eastern and Western Armenian, but the Ministry of the Diaspora recognizes and declares the need to protect Western Armenian. The Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia (head of the church in diaspora), based in Lebanon, has declared its support for the preservation of the language. The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation has made its revitalization a core priority in its funding through the Armenian Communities Department.

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

Armenian identity in diaspora is not unequivocally connected to the knowledge of the language, since in fact a minority of the population having Western Armenian as an heritage language still speak the language. Nevertheless the knowledge of the language is central to the "ideal" of Armenianness. A study made in France in 2014 (A. Donabedian, A. Al-Bataineh. "L'arménien occidental en France, dynamiques actuelles, rapport remis à la DGLFLF, octobre 2014. <https://sites.google.com/site/enquetearmoccidental/>) the willingness to maintain the language is very strong even among people who do not really master the language. Together with the fact that the critical mass of speakers among the diaspora is quite high compare to other endangered languages, recognition and support

for the language is a factor of its maintenance, as shown in international conferences and workshops in 2015 (Paris) and 2016 (Oxford). Domains of use are very variable depending on the country, the generation, and the segment of the community considered. Major parameters here are territorialization within neighbourhoods, and children attending or not attending Armenian schools. In Lebanon and Syria almost all domains of use are represented in Western Armenian. In California and at some extent in Quebec, all domains are represented except in the administrative and socio-economic domains, apart from some ethnically homogeneous societies. In Europe and in Turkey usually the domain is restricted to domestic use, and sometimes to some community activities (sport, scouts, associations, etc.) and media (radio, press).

## 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:  
Susanna Mkrtchyan, Razmik Panossian, Anaid Donabedian, Artur Khalatyan, and Azniv Stepanian have all contributed to this proposal on the basis of their first-hand knowledge as community leaders.
  
- b) Knowledge through personal communication. Describe:
  
- c) Knowledge from published sources. Include known dictionaries, grammars, etc. (please give complete bibliographical references):  
See the contribution by Anaïd Donabedian for a list of newspapers, radio programmes, and other publications. See also the PDF authored by Michael Everson et al. which gives paradigms showing the extensive differences between the two languages.

### **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/iso639-3/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://linguistlist.org/forms/langs/GetListOfAncientLgs.html>

LinguistList. Constructed Languages. <http://linguistlist.org/forms/langs/GetListOfConstructedLgs.html>