
North Frisian and politics

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The development and present situation of the North Frisian community and its language(s) is inextricably linked with politics at a regional, national and European level.

In this paper, I shall attempt to give a survey of the development of politics with reference to North Frisian and the North Frisians since the Second World War. Such an overview will, however, need to differentiate various aspects such as:

- (a) the concepts of language policy, language planning and language politics,
- (b) different types of politics such as symbolic and instrumental politics,
- (c) the internal politics of the community itself as opposed to the external politics of the state towards the community, and
- (d) the influence of politics on language planning.

Bearing such considerations in mind, I shall give a brief overview of the development of minority (language) politics in North Frisia, illustrating the theoretical concepts with concrete examples. A good example of positive symbolic politics are the bilingual signs, which have recently been introduced on public buildings in North Frisia; whereas a possible example of negative instrumental politics are the changes in the education system resulting in the number of school children receiving Frisian lessons in school going into steep decline.