

## IUSTITIA AND § 19

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Under pressure from the German Bohemians, the so-called *Sprachenzwangsverbot* for public schools was added to the constitution of 1867, along with the right to maintenance of nationality and the equality of all customary languages in school, office and public life. In legal practice, however, no Empire-wide consistent standard as concerned the language question developed. While the Administrative Court (*Verwaltungsgericht*) authorized only one language, the Imperial Court (*Reichsgericht*) declared both Czech and German to be customary languages throughout the Crownland of Bohemia. The author's interpretation is that precisely this legal situation prohibits any fundamental critique of the old Austrian language practice. In view of its basic dilemma – here, the protection of minorities against assimilationist tendencies, there, the lack of bilinguality – all historical value judgements can, in the end, only be ambivalent.