

TARIEL PUTKARADZE'S CONTRIBUTION
TO THE PLANNING OF GEORGIAN LANGUAGE
POLICY CONCERNING
THE CHARTER OF EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

Merab Gvazava
Literary critic
Georgia, Kutaisi

From the multifaceted work of Tariel Putkaradze, I would like to single out his great merit in the development of the most important state concept of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

The text of the Charter was published by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg in 1992. In April 1999, Georgia became a member of the Council of Europe. Our country has committed to ratify the Charter within a year. As a result of a deep and careful analysis of the document, Tariel Putkaradze concluded that a sober and reckless decision at the state level (which was not ruled out) would inevitably have catastrophic consequences for the country. He considered it his primary duty to stand where the country needed him most. The situation was complicated by the heterogeneous attitude of Georgian linguists towards the problem. It will be of little mention that Tariel, as they say, passed the text of the charter under a microscope; Suffice it to recall the scandalous case when he found factual inaccuracies in the main text of the Charter and immediately notified the Secretariat of the Council of Europe. The answer was: Yes, Mr. Tariel, to our surprise you are right. Thank you very much for helping us to find and correct the mistake. The Council of Europe Secretariat immediately offered Tariel Putkaradze to be their representative in the Caucasus as an expert, to which Tariel refused.

I attended a conference at the Rondell Center, initiated by the Council of Europe and dedicated to the specific requirements of the European Charter about Georgia. The conference was chaired by the Council of Europe linguists. Their demand was for the government to speed up the ratification process in a way that is damaging to our statehood. I saw with my own eyes the bewildered European experts, who could not oppose anything, the arguments of Tariel Putkaradze and Rezo Sherozia.

Tariel Putkaradze used any tribune, including the parliament, appeared on various TV channels, gave public lectures, read reports at scientific conferences, wrote and published letters and books, with great tact and deep competence explained to opponents (who never had a problem). Why did he attach such special importance to the European Charter?!

Tariel generally believed that this was a highly necessary, important, and

comprehensive document with the only necessary reservation: it had to be properly understood and used for its intended purpose.

On the other hand, in case of negligence, it could have acted as the most powerful detonator and caused the state to dismantle it. It is given these risks and dangers that large and powerful states are still refraining from ratifying it: France, Italy, Turkey, Poland, and others.

Tariel Putkaradze, as a true patriot and patriot, could not wait patiently for the development of events. He took upon himself a problem that did not essentially concern him and was only the competence of the state. To exclude any coincidence, realizing the government's superficial attitude towards the existential problem, he developed and fixed in public the perfect concept of the European Charter, which excluded risks.

No matter which government decides to ratify the European Charter, it will not be able to avoid the result of Tariel Putkaradze's tireless work and struggle, which avoids the deadly threat to his homeland. In return for this heroism, Tariel Putkaradze received a torrent of slander and insults, which continues to this day.