

1551st meeting, 25 February 2026

10 Legal questions

10.9 European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

b. Evaluation by the Committee of Experts of the implementation of the recommendations for immediate action contained in the Committee of Experts' sixth evaluation report on Finland

Item to be considered by the GR-J at its meeting on 12 February 2026

¹ This document has been classified restricted at the date of issue. In accordance with the Deputies' decision (CM/Del/Dec(2001)765/10.4), it will be declassified after examination by the Committee of Ministers.

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EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

**Evaluation by the Committee of Experts
of the Implementation of the Recommendations for Immediate Action
contained in the Committee of Experts' sixth evaluation report on**

FINLAND

Introduction

1. The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (hereafter referred to as “the Charter”) is a treaty of the Council of Europe putting obligations on its states parties to protect and promote the country’s traditional minority languages in all fields of public life: education, judicial authorities, administrative authorities and public services, media, cultural activities and facilities, economic and social life, and transfrontier exchanges. The Charter entered into force in respect of Finland on 1 March 1998 and applies to the following languages: Swedish (the less widely used national language), Inari Sami, North Sami and Skolt Sami, all under Part II and III; Karelian, Romani, Russian, Tatar and Yiddish, all under Part II.
2. The Committee of Experts monitors the implementation of the Charter. Each state party shall present a periodical report on the implementation of the Charter every five years. On the basis of the periodical report, the Committee of Experts adopts an evaluation report in which it makes “**recommendations for immediate action**” and “further recommendations” on how to improve the protection and promotion of the regional or minority languages in the state concerned. Based on this evaluation report, the Committee of Ministers adopts its recommendations to the state party.
3. Two and a half years after the due date of its periodical report, the state party shall present information on the implementation of every recommendation for immediate action² that the Committee of Experts has made in its evaluation report. The Committee of Experts then adopts an evaluation of the implementation of these recommendations. The “further recommendations” by the Committee of Experts are examined after reception of the next periodical report and the on-the-spot visit to the state party. Five-yearly periodical reports shall contain comprehensive information about the implementation of all Charter undertakings and all recommendations by the Committee of Experts and the Committee of Ministers.
4. Finland submitted the **information on the implementation of the recommendations for immediate action** contained in the Committee of Experts’ sixth evaluation report³ on 15 September 2025. This **evaluation of the implementation of the recommendations for immediate action** is based on the information received from the Finnish authorities, as well as from representatives of the regional or minority language speakers pursuant to Article 16.2 of the Charter.⁴ As far as the compliance of Finland with all its undertakings under the Charter is concerned, the Committee of Experts refers to its sixth evaluation report. The Committee of Experts will examine the implementation of all of the undertakings concerning all of the minority languages in the next evaluation report.
5. This evaluation was adopted by the Committee of Experts on 18 November 2025.

² In accordance with Committee of Ministers Decisions “Strengthening the monitoring mechanism of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages” (CM/Del/Dec(2018)1330/10.4e), para. 1.a.

³ Sixth evaluation report on Finland, MIN-LANG (2024) 3.

⁴ In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Committee of Experts (MIN-LANG(2019)7), Rule 17, paras. 1-6.

Examination of the implementation by Finland of the recommendations for immediate action

I. General issues

6. Inari Sami, North Sami and Skolt Sami are considered separate languages and protected under Part II and Part III of the Charter. Although the Committee of Experts, in its sixth evaluation report on Finland, called on the state authorities to provide separate and detailed information on Inari Sami, North Sami and Skolt Sami when reporting on the implementation of the recommendations for immediate action, this has not yet been done. The information submitted by the authorities continues to aggregate data across the three languages, which makes it difficult to assess whether targeted actions have been undertaken for each of the three Sami languages, according to their distinct circumstances. It also complicates determining the extent to which the recommendations for immediate action have been implemented separately for each Sami language. The Committee of Experts reiterates its recommendations and asks the authorities to provide information on Inari Sami, North Sami and Skolt Sami separately in the next periodical report.⁵

Consultation of representatives of the minority language speakers

7. According to the information submitted to the Committee of Experts, several representatives of speakers state their concern that they have not been consulted by the authorities regarding the implementation of the recommendations for immediate action that the Committee of Experts has made in its sixth evaluation report on Finland, nor when preparing the information on the implementation of these recommendations. The Committee of Experts reiterates that, in conformity with Articles 6 and 7.4 of the Charter, it is necessary to inform the organisations concerned of the recommendations made during the monitoring cycle and to take into consideration the needs and wishes expressed by them in the implementation and related reporting.⁶

8. The Committee of Experts reminds the Finnish authorities to ensure dissemination of the Committee of Experts' evaluation reports and related Committee of Ministers recommendations on their official websites.

⁵ Sixth evaluation report of the Committee of Experts on Finland, MIN-LANG (2024) 3, para. 6.

⁶ See, for example, the Evaluation by the Committee of Experts of the Implementation of the Recommendations for Immediate Action by Slovenia (MIN-LANG(2021)11), para. 8; Evaluation by the Committee of Experts of the Implementation of the Recommendations for Immediate Action by the United Kingdom and Isle of Man (MIN-LANG(2021)3), para. 7; Evaluation by the Committee of Experts of the Implementation of the Recommendations for Immediate Action by Hungary (MIN-LANG(2020)14), para. 6.

II. Recommendations for immediate action

1. Inari Sami – Part II and Part III language

Recommendation for immediate action

a. Take measures to strengthen teacher training at all levels.

Implementation measures taken by the Finnish authorities

9. The authorities state that the University of Oulu continues to hold the national responsibility, as assigned by the Ministry of Education, for Sami languages and culture at the university level in Finland during the new higher education agreement period (2025–2028).⁷ The university, through the Giellagas Institute, provides academic teaching and research in Inari Sami, North Sami and Skolt Sami, which are offered as majors of the Languages and Literature degree programme. In addition, the agreement with the University of Lapland includes research on the Sami and Indigenous Peoples and the development of content on Sami languages in its class teacher training, including special pedagogy.⁸

10. The authorities report about projects supported by the Ministry of Education and Culture to strengthen teacher training. €620 000 were allocated to the University of Oulu for a project (2022–2025) focused on early childhood and special education teacher training that incorporates Sami languages and cultural needs covering Inari Sami, North Sami and Skolt Sami. The ministry also allocated €328 860 to the University of Oulu for an international cooperation project (2024–2027) that establishes a network of all Finnish higher education institutions offering Sami studies to strengthen collaboration and improve the training of Sami-speaking teachers.

11. Representatives of Inari Sami speakers report that the shortage of teachers remains a significant challenge and the existing training measures do not adequately address the needs.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

12. The Committee of Experts notes that Inari Sami, North Sami and Skolt Sami continue to be taught at the University of Oulu and welcomes the agreements in place with both the University of Oulu and the University of Lapland, which include Sami-language objectives that can help create more opportunities for teacher training. While acknowledging the steps taken by the authorities, the Committee of Experts encourages the authorities to continue and if possible, conclude such agreements with additional universities in the future, with a stronger emphasis on teacher training in all Sami languages among their objectives.

13. The Committee of Experts also notes the project-based initiatives aimed at strengthening teacher training and invites the authorities to include in the next periodical report disaggregated data on the outcomes of these projects, in particular how many teachers are trained for each Sami language and for which levels.

14. In addition, since much of the government funding for teacher training continues to be granted on a project basis, the Committee of Experts encourages the authorities to develop a long-term strategy with sustainable funding to ensure the availability of Inari Sami teachers, in co-operation with representatives

⁷ The Ministry of Education and Culture and higher education institutions set objectives, funding, and reporting procedures through four-year agreements. More information available here: Steering, financing and agreements - OKM - Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland.

⁸ Information Document on the implementation of the Recommendations for Immediate Action based on the 6th monitoring cycle Submitted by Finland on 15 September 2025, MIN-LANG (2025) IRIA 5, paras. 10-11.

of speakers. Furthermore, the authorities could also consider supporting measures, such as incentives for students (including bursaries, guaranteed employment or salary bonuses), to encourage participation in teacher training in Inari Sami. For these reasons, the Committee of Experts considers the recommendation not yet implemented.

Recommendation for immediate action

b. Make the funding for the promotion of Inari Sami sustainable.

Implementation measures taken by the Finnish authorities

15. The authorities report that the Ministry of Justice allocated €120 000 in 2025 as discretionary government grants for the implementation of the Sami Language Act. These grants are regularly included in the state budget and are intended to support municipalities, parishes, herding co-operatives and private entities in covering additional costs incurred by implementing the Sami Language Act.⁹

16. The authorities also inform about additional funding provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture to support various educational initiatives. This includes government grants of €240 000 allocated to municipalities in the Sami Homeland to provide early childhood education in Inari Sami, North Sami and Skolt Sami, as well as project grants to the University of Oulu (see para. 10). The authorities acknowledge that, so far, additional funding for Sami language instruction has been provided through state grants decided on an annual basis and inform that, starting in autumn 2025, a general grant will be available to support “mother tongue instruction” for students whose first language is a foreign language, Sami or Romani.¹⁰

17. Representatives of speakers inform that funding remains unstable and insufficient, threatening the continuity of specific programs such as language nests, language teaching, presence in media (including print and online) and cultural initiatives in Inari Sami, North Sami and Skolt Sami. Moreover, the discretionary grant provided by the Ministry of Justice, which has been a significant funding channel, especially for municipalities in the Sami Homeland and the Lapland Wellbeing Services County¹¹ to finance Sami language studies for their personnel, has been cut by more than 50%, and the current amount of €120 000 is insufficient to cover such training costs. Representatives of speakers regret that the support provided for adult education in Inari Sami, North Sami and Skolt Sami was discontinued, which further reduced opportunities to recruit more Sami-speaking professionals across different fields. These cuts have an especially negative impact on the highly endangered Inari Sami and Skolt Sami.

18. Insufficient funding is reported to also have a negative impact on the availability of healthcare and social services in Inari, North and Skolt Sami (see paras. 29-30). Cuts in the funding of the Sami Parliament in 2025 also affected *Sámi Giellagáldu*,¹² causing uncertainty and hampering its activities. According to representatives of speakers, permanently secured and sufficient funding is needed to secure the activities of *Sámi Giellagáldu*.

⁹ See Section 31 of the Sami Language Act (1086/2003).

¹⁰ See Information document, MIN-LANG (2025) IRIA 5, para. 9.

¹¹The responsibility for organising healthcare, social welfare and rescue services was transferred from municipalities and joint municipal authorities to wellbeing services counties (Finnish *hyvinvointialue*, Swedish *välfrädsområde*) on 1 January 2023. See more: <https://stm.fi/en/wellbeing-services-counties>; See also footnote 19.

¹² *Sámi Giellagáldu* (*Sámi Language Council*) is a professional and resource centre for Sami languages established by the Sami Parliaments of Finland, Sweden and Norway.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

19. The Committee of Experts notes that most state funding continues to be allocated through annual discretionary government grants or project-based funding and that, overall, the lack of sustainable funding is a recurrent impediment to the promotion of Inari Sami across various fields, including in health and social services (see also para. 33).

20. The Committee of Experts reiterates its recommendation that funding should be made available for longer periods as the insecurity connected with the system hampers the continuity of the services provided.¹³ It reminds the authorities of the Committee of Ministers' recent resolution in which it calls on the authorities to increase support for the teaching of Sami languages across the country, in particular by ensuring permanent and sufficient funding for language nests for all three Sami languages.¹⁴ The Committee of Experts also invites the authorities to institutionalise initiatives and services, such as language nests and teacher training models that proved to be effective, and secure sufficient funding. The Committee of Experts concludes that this recommendation is not yet implemented.

Recommendation for immediate action

c. Take measures to increase awareness and tolerance vis-à-vis Inari Sami, both in education and in the media.

Implementation measures taken by the Finnish authorities

21. The authorities report that, under the Language Policy Programme,¹⁵ the Ministry of Justice commissioned the development of audio-visual materials aimed at increasing awareness of the minority languages spoken in Finland, to be used as supplementary teaching resources for secondary school pupils (age 16 or older). Under the Strategy for National Languages of Finland,¹⁶ the Ministry of Justice financed audio-visual materials to promote awareness among public authorities of their legal obligations regarding the Inari, North and Skolt Sami languages. These materials are scheduled for publication in 2025 and, at the time the information was received, these materials had not yet been published.

22. In 2025, the Ministry of Education and Culture launched a development programme to promote equity and equality across the education system, providing professionals working in education with tools to combat bullying, harassment and discrimination, also covering minority languages.

23. In statements submitted to the Committee of Experts, representatives of speakers report limited and inadequate representation of the Inari Sami, North Sami and Skolt Sami in learning materials and emphasise the need for updated, accurate and inclusive learning materials developed in co-operation with speakers. These should reflect the diversity of Sami languages and cultures and eliminate stereotypes. In media, the existing news television programmes covering current Sami issues are broadcast by the national television only late in the evening, reducing the viewers among Sami and the majority population. According to representatives of speakers, earlier broadcasts could improve visibility, promote accurate knowledge and strengthen understanding of Sami people, culture and languages.

¹³ Evaluation on the recommendations for immediate action from the fifth evaluation report on Finland, MINLANG (2020)12, para. 13.

¹⁴ CM/ResCMN (2025)6 on the implementation of the FCNM by Finland, 9 July 2025, priority recommendation No.9. See also Sixth Opinion on Finland of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, ACFC/OP/VI(2024)1, para.184.

¹⁵ Language policy programme (2022).

¹⁶ Strategy for the National Languages of Finland.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

24. The Committee of Experts takes note of the audio-visual materials as well as the other initiatives mentioned by the authorities. The Committee regrets that no concrete examples of how Inari Sami is portrayed in the mainstream curriculum of compulsory education and in the media addressing the majority population were provided by the authorities. The Committee of Experts reiterates that promotion of awareness and tolerance vis-à-vis minority languages through education requires a comprehensive approach involving the design of curricula, teacher training and teaching materials.¹⁷ Media should be encouraged, without prejudice to their independence, to pay more attention to minority languages as integral parts of Finland's history and culture. In addition, awareness of the minority languages should be raised as a component and as an expected result of mainstream journalistic training.¹⁸

25. As already indicated by the Committee of Experts,¹⁹ the extent to which a minority language is protected or promoted is, in many respects, a reflection of the majority language speakers' approach and perception; awareness-raising within the majority is therefore of the utmost importance. The purpose is not only to promote knowledge of the existence of minority languages in a country, but also to inspire the majority population to value the fact that minority languages form an integral part of the linguistic and cultural heritage of the state. The Committee of Experts invites the authorities to strengthen their efforts to promote awareness of Inari Sami among general population in education, to update teaching materials in co-operation with speakers and to improve media coverage, noting that this recommendation has not yet been implemented.

Recommendation for immediate action

d. Ensure an effective implementation of the legislation pertaining to Inari Sami in social and health care services.

Implementation measures taken by the Finnish authorities

26. According to the authorities, the Lapland Wellbeing Services County,²⁰ which has a special national mission to develop health and social services in Inari Sami, North Sami and Skolt Sami, has undertaken several measures since the beginning of its operations in 2023 to improve the availability and quality of services in all three Sami languages. These measures include identifying Sami-speaking personnel and increasing their presence in customer service, providing training on the linguistic rights of Sami speakers, introducing its own translation and interpretation services and developing digital and cross-border services. Furthermore, the wellbeing services county has established Finland's first Sami-language care home in Karigasniemi and developed new services across county boundaries, including the Sami psychological support unit Uvja.

27. The authorities mention the challenge highlighted by the Lapland Wellbeing Services County, noting that the funding it receives does not fully match the scale of its national responsibilities. This is partly due to shortcomings in the statistics of the Digital and Population Data Services Agency, which still allows only one "mother tongue" to be registered. The authorities also acknowledge that challenges

¹⁷ Evaluation on the recommendations for immediate action from the fifth evaluation report on Finland, MINLANG (2020)12, para. 15.

¹⁸ Evaluation on the recommendations for immediate action from the fifth evaluation report on Slovenia, MIN-LANG (2021)11, para. 27.

¹⁹ See, for example, Fourth evaluation report of the Committee of Experts on Slovenia, ECRML(2014)5, para. 83; Fourth evaluation report of the Committee of Experts on Slovakia, ECRML (2016)2, para. 69.

²⁰ The Act on Organising Healthcare and Social Welfare Services (612/2021) and the Act on Wellbeing Services Counties (611/2021) introduced reforms in health and social services, assigning new wellbeing services counties the responsibility to provide these services. As of 2023, the Lapland Wellbeing Services County has taken over the duty of offering social welfare and healthcare services for the Sami Homeland municipalities. See more: Sixth evaluation report of the Committee of Experts on Finland, MIN-LANG (2024) 3, paras. 85-90; See also footnote 10.

continue to arise in the development of services in Sami languages, notably in the availability of personnel speaking Inari Sami and Skolt Sami.²¹

28. The authorities further report that, to address the shortage of Sami-speaking personnel in social and health care, the Ministry of Education and Culture has financed two projects led by the University of Oulu and the Lapland University of Applied Sciences (2023-2025/2026) with a total of nearly two million euros. These projects aim to improve the availability of professionals speaking Inari Sami, North Sami and Skolt Sami and strengthen the skills and cultural knowledge needed in health and social services.

29. In statements submitted to the Committee of Experts, representatives of speakers inform that services in Inari Sami, North Sami and Skolt Sami remain inconsistent and insufficient, and note that funding significantly affects their availability. For instance, cuts to discretionary grants for implementing the Sami Language Act and the discontinuation of adult education have negatively impacted the availability of Sami-speaking staff (see para. 17). In addition, the earmarked state subsidy from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, disbursed by the Sami Parliament to the Lapland Wellbeing Services County is insufficient and should be increased to strengthen service provision in all three Sami languages, across Sami Homeland and for all age groups.

30. Representatives of speakers also report that the unit providing psychological support for the Sami has secure funding only for the duration of the Sami Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which ends in 2025, leaving its future beyond 2026 uncertain. The unit is considered a major step forward, as no comparable service in Finland has previously operated in Inari Sami, North Sami and Skolt Sami while respecting cultural background. Representatives of speakers recommend establishing it by law as a permanent state service.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

31. The Committee of Experts welcomes the measures taken by the authorities to increase the availability of social and health services in Inari Sami, North Sami and Skolt Sami and looks forward to receiving more information on the results of the two projects, including concrete data on the increased number of Sami-speaking personnel in social and health facilities for each of the Sami languages. Disaggregated data are particularly important, as health and social services in Inari and Skolt Sami face significant availability challenges. The Committee of Experts regrets that the Population Information System does not allow to declare several first languages, making it difficult for the Lapland Wellbeing Services County to accurately assess the number of Inari Sami, North Sami and Skolt Sami speakers and plan services effectively.

32. The Committee of Experts reiterates its recommendation and encourages the authorities to strengthen their measures to train and recruit Sami-speaking personnel and address any structural shortcomings hampering the use of Inari Sami in health and social services, including gaps in statistics, in co-operation with speakers.

33. The Committee of Experts encourages the Finnish authorities to ensure sustainable funding for the Lapland Wellbeing Services County (see also paras.19-20), enabling it to carry out its national mission with respect to Inari Sami and maintain its services and units, especially those that are particularly important for speakers, such as the unit providing psychological support. Despite the progress made, this recommendation has not yet been implemented.

²¹ Information document, MIN-LANG (2025) IRIA 5, paras. 15 and 18.

2. Karelian – Part II language

Recommendation for immediate action

- a. **Consult the speakers in order to provide teaching of Karelian at all relevant levels of education.**

Implementation measures taken by the Finnish authorities

34. The authorities report that a Karelian language revitalisation programme was published in May 2025, which includes measures in the field of education, such as: piloting language nests and school teaching (both in classrooms and via distance learning), intensive language classes for adults, developing a teacher training path and producing learning materials.²² The programme was prepared by an expert group on the Karelian language appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture, together with the University of Eastern Finland's Karelian language revitalisation project implemented from 15 December 2022 to 31 December 2024. The University of Eastern Finland continues to carry out research, teaching, and revitalisation of the language in the new agreement for 2025-2028.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

35. The Committee of Experts welcomes the new Karelian language revitalisation programme, which includes measures aiming to strengthen the teaching of Karelian and the agreement concluded with the University of Eastern Finland to contribute to its implementation. The Committee of Experts encourages the authorities to ensure sustainable funding to enable the programme to be implemented effectively, in co-operation with representatives of speakers. It further invites the authorities to provide information on the implementation of the measures proposed in the programme in the field of education in their next periodical report.

3. North Sami²³ – Part II and Part III language

Recommendation for immediate action

- a. **Make the funding for the promotion of North Sami sustainable.**

Implementation measures taken by the Finnish authorities

36. According to the information provided by the authorities, the information presented in detail for Inari Sami applies to North Sami accordingly. For further information on implementation measures, please see paras. 15-18.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

37. With regard to the implementation of the recommendation, the Committee of Experts refers to its conclusions regarding Inari Sami (see paras. 19-20), which apply to North Sami accordingly.

Recommendation for immediate action

- b. **Take measures to increase awareness and tolerance vis-à-vis North Sami, both in education and in the media.**

²² Karelian language revitalisation programme.

²³ Please note that cross-references are made wherever recommendations for the three Sami languages were identical and no disaggregated information on their implementation is available.

Implementation measures taken by the Finnish authorities

38. The authorities report that the audio-visual materials addressed to secondary school pupils (age 16 or older) and those addressed to public authorities on their linguistic obligations include North Sami. For further information on implementation measures, please see paras. 21-23.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

39. With regard to the implementation of the recommendation, the Committee of Experts refers to its conclusions regarding Inari Sami (see paras. 24-25), which apply to North Sami accordingly.

Recommendation for immediate action

c. Ensure an effective implementation of the legislation pertaining to North Sami in social and health care services.

Implementation measures taken by the Finnish authorities

40. The Lapland Wellbeing Services County has a special mission to develop health and social services in North Sami. The authorities acknowledge persistent challenges in the development of services in Sami languages, including North Sami. For further information on implementation measures, please see paras. 26-30.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

41. With regard to the implementation of the recommendation, the Committee of Experts refers to its conclusion regarding Inari Sami (see paras. 31-33), which applies to North Sami accordingly.

4. Romani – Part II language

Recommendation for immediate action

a. Take resolute measures to ensure the full implementation of the revitalisation programme for the Romani language.

Implementation measures taken by the Finnish authorities

42. The authorities refer to the Programme for the Revival of the Finnish Romani²⁴ published by the Finnish National Agency for Education in 2022. This is being carried out by the Roma and other stakeholders, with support from the Finnish Cultural Foundation, which will contribute one million euros during 2023-2030 to the promotion of Romani language, art, and culture. The third National Roma Policy²⁵ for 2023-2030 contains actions from the Programme for the Revival of the Finnish Romani. The authorities acknowledge, however, that implementation of the revitalisation programme has progressed slowly because no funds have been allocated in the national budget for this purpose.²⁶

43. The authorities also report that in 2025 the Ministry of Justice will commission a report on long-term revitalisation efforts in co-operation with the Institute for the Languages of Finland (Kotus) and under the co-ordination of the Forum for Minority Languages. The report will examine what kind of structure

²⁴ Programme for the Revival of the Finnish Romani Language, pages 82-86.

²⁵ Finland's National Roma Policy (ROMPO) 2023–2030, pages 72-76.

²⁶ Information document, MIN-LANG (2025) IRIA 5, para. 25.

should be created to ensure sustained work on language revitalisation. This initiative is part of the Language Policy Programme.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

44. The Committee of Experts welcomes the inclusion of concrete measures to revitalise the Romani language in the Programme for the Revival of Finnish Romani and the third National Roma Policy. However, it regrets that no state budget has been allocated for their implementation and urges the authorities to ensure sustainable funding. The Committee looks forward to receiving further information on the implementation of these measures in the next periodical report and, at this stage, considers the recommendation not implemented.

Recommendation for immediate action

b. Develop, in co-operation with the speakers, an adequate and sustainable model of teaching in and/or of Romani.

Implementation measures taken by the Finnish authorities

45. The Programme for the Revival of Finnish Romani and the third National Roma Policy (2023-2030) include measures related to the Romani teaching, including a pilot project on remote Romani language teaching, as well as development of textbooks, digital resources, games and audiovisual content. The authorities inform that learning materials for the Romani language are also published by the Finnish National Agency for Education as low-distribution publications, which can be used at grades 1-9 (age 7-16).

46. The authorities further report that as of spring 2025, an ongoing mapping is being carried out to assess the situation of Romani education and the availability of teachers of Romani in Finnish schools. This work, conducted by the National Agency for Education with funding from the Ministry of Education and Culture, examines the prerequisites for strengthening Romani language teaching in basic education. National grants are also available for education providers to offer complementary education in Romani. However, the authorities inform that the number of pupils receiving such instruction has declined over the past decade, with fewer than 30 children currently enrolled per term. The results of the ongoing mapping will also be used to analyse this trend.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

47. As mentioned above (para. 44), the Committee of Experts notes the inclusion of concrete measures to revitalise the Romani language in the Programme for the Revival of Finnish Romani and the third National Roma Policy which also concern Romani language teaching. It further notes that the development of remote teaching models was part of the previous plan,²⁷ and welcomes that these models are now being implemented through a national pilot project under separate funding. While encouraging the authorities to include information on its results in the next periodical report, the Committee of Experts stresses that pilot projects should eventually give way to more sustainable solutions.

48. The Committee of Experts welcomes the ongoing mapping study and encourages the authorities to address the identified shortcomings with adequate and sustainable funding. The Committee of Experts considers that further steps are needed to ensure sustainable teaching in Romani and reiterates its

²⁷ See Finland's National Roma Policy (ROMPO) 2018-2022, page 50.

recommendation²⁸ that measures should not be implemented in isolation but form part of a comprehensive and sustainable model for teaching in and of Romani. Such a model requires the establishment of curricula, teacher training and pilot schools, as well as awareness-raising efforts among parents. It is unclear to the Committee of Experts what the complementary education in Romani is, and the Committee asks the authorities to provide information in the next monitoring round. For these reasons, the Committee of Experts considers this recommendation not yet implemented.

Recommendation for immediate action

c. Take measures to strengthen teacher training for Romani.
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Implementation measures taken by the Finnish authorities

49. Regarding the teacher training in Romani, the authorities state that it falls under the autonomy of the University of Helsinki.

50. Measures on teacher training are also included in the Programme for the Revival of the Finnish Romani, which states that the study path for Romani language students to qualify as Romani language teachers will be clarified by the University of Helsinki. Efforts are also being made to increase the number of Romani language students, including the integration of digital and remote pedagogy studies into their degree programmes. In addition, a pilot project will be developed to make it possible to study the Romani language within the Bachelor of Social Services degree at the Diaconia University of Applied Sciences in Helsinki, with further qualifications available in education and instruction through the Subject Teacher Education Programme (STEP) programme.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

51. The Committee of Experts notes the measures foreseen by the authorities to strengthen teacher training for Romani. It recalls, however, that the authorities remain responsible for fulfilling the obligation to ensure teacher training despite the autonomy of the university, for instance, by providing earmarked funding. The Committee of Experts concludes that this recommendation is not yet implemented and encourages the authorities to continue investing in attracting students to existing study programmes and collaborate with representatives of Romani speakers to develop a long-term strategy to address the persisting shortage of teachers.²⁹ It further encourages the introduction of measures, such as student incentives (e.g. additional bursaries, guaranteed employment, or salary bonuses) and intensive courses to strengthen teaching capacity in Romani.

Recommendation for immediate action

d. Take measures to increase awareness and tolerance vis-à-vis Romani, both in the general curriculum at all stages of education and in the media.

Implementation measures taken by the Finnish authorities

52. The authorities report that the audio-visual materials addressed to secondary school pupils (age 16 or older) include Romani. For further information on implementation measures, please see paras. 21-22.

²⁸ Evaluation on the recommendations for immediate action from the fifth evaluation report on Finland, MINLANG (2020)12, para. 40.

²⁹ Sixth evaluation report of the Committee of Experts on Finland, MIN-LANG (2024) 3, para. 101.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

53. With regard to the implementation of the recommendation, the Committee of Experts refers to its conclusion regarding Inari Sami (see paras. 24-25), which applies to Romani accordingly.

5. Russian – Part II language

Recommendation for immediate action

- a. Take measures to increase awareness and tolerance among the majority population vis-à-vis Russian as a minority language of Finland.**

Implementation measures taken by the Finnish authorities

54. The authorities inform that the Ministry of Justice has funded a project, which promotes positive relations between population groups. As part of this initiative, a series of Russian-language events was organized to address issues affecting Russian-speaking residents in Finland. The outcomes of these events were presented to local authorities and discussed with a wider audience.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

55. With regard to the implementation of the recommendation, the Committee of Experts refers to its conclusions regarding Inari Sami (see paras. 24-25), which apply to Russian accordingly.

6. Skolt Sami³⁰ – Part II and Part III language

Recommendation for immediate action

- a. Take measures to strengthen teacher training at all levels.**

Implementation measures taken by the Finnish authorities

56. The measures and projects reported by the authorities concerning teacher training include Skolt Sami, which can be also studied at the University of Oulu. For further information on implementation measures, please see paras. 910.

57. Representatives of speakers emphasise that the situation of Skolt Sami is critical, the shortage of teachers is severe, and there are only a few trained subject teachers of Skolt Sami. They further state that there have been no targeted measures to ensure teacher training, despite a 2021 report by a Ministry of Education and Culture working group identifying the development of Skolt Sami teaching as the most urgent priority.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

58. The Committee of Experts recalls that Skolt Sami remains a severely endangered language, which needs a similar revitalisation process as the one successfully conducted for Inari Sami in order to survive.³¹ The Committee of Experts regrets that the lack of qualified teachers continues to hinder the expansion of Skolt Sami education and of the language revitalisation efforts. Urgent measures are needed to address the severe shortage of teachers in Skolt Sami. In addition, the authorities should develop a long-term strategy with sustainable funding to ensure the availability of Skolt Sami teachers, in

³⁰ Please note that cross-references are made wherever recommendations for the three Sami languages were identical and no disaggregated information on their implementation is available.

³¹ Sixth evaluation report of the Committee of Experts on Finland, MIN-LANG (2024) 3, para. 101.

co-operation with speakers. Supporting measures, such as incentives for students (including bursaries, guaranteed employment, or salary bonuses), to encourage participation in teacher training in Skolt Sami, could also be considered. For further conclusions by the Committee of Experts, please see paras. 12-14.

Recommendation for immediate action

b. Make the funding for the promotion of Skolt Sami sustainable.

Implementation measures taken by the Finnish authorities

59. According to the information provided by the authorities, the information presented in detail for Inari Sami applies to Skolt Sami accordingly. For further information on implementation measures, please see paras. 15-18.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

60. With regard to the implementation of the recommendation, the Committee of Experts refers to its conclusions regarding Inari Sami (see paras. 19-20), which apply to Skolt Sami accordingly.

Recommendation for immediate action

c. Take measures to increase awareness and tolerance vis-à-vis Skolt Sami, both in education and in the media.

Implementation measures taken by the Finnish authorities

61. The authorities report that the audio-visual materials addressed to secondary school pupils (age 16 or older) and those addressed to public authorities on their linguistic obligations include Skolt Sami. For further information and the evaluation by the Committee of Experts, please see paras. 21-23.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

62. With regard to the implementation of the recommendation, the Committee of Experts refers to its conclusions regarding Inari Sami (see paras. 24-25), which apply to Skolt Sami accordingly.

Recommendation for immediate action

d. Ensure an effective implementation of the legislation pertaining to Skolt Sami in social and health care services.
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Implementation measures taken by the Finnish authorities

63. The Lapland Wellbeing Services County has a special mission to develop health and social services in Skolt Sami. Authorities acknowledge ongoing challenges in the development of services in Sami languages and that the shortage of professionals is especially pressing in Skolt Sami. For further information on implementation measures, please see paras. 26-30.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

64. With regard to the implementation of the recommendation, the Committee of Experts refers to its conclusions regarding Inari Sami (see paras. 31-33), which apply to Skolt Sami accordingly.

7. Swedish – Part II and Part III language

Recommendation for immediate action

a. Ensure the use of Swedish within regional and local authorities.

Implementation measures taken by the Finnish authorities

65. The authorities report that, as part of the Strategy for the National Languages of Finland, the Ministry of Justice is preparing audio-visual materials for public authorities aiming to promote the implementation of the obligations of the authorities as regards minority languages use (see also para. 21 above). The material, which will also cover Swedish, is scheduled for publication in 2025. At the time the information was received, these materials had not yet been published.

66. In statements submitted to the Committee of Experts, representatives of speakers refer to the 2024 Language Barometer,³² which show that Swedish speakers often face issues with digital and public services. Shortcomings in digital services include inadequate Swedish translations, missing links to information in Swedish and chatboxes that are usually only in Finnish. According to speakers, there are not enough Swedish-speaking staff, which limits access to services in Swedish. Moreover, services and service paths are first created in Finnish and only later in Swedish. Representatives of speakers suggest that services should be available in both national languages from the outset and recommend recruiting more Swedish-speaking staff, better planning of work shifts to increase their availability, and training courses such as the intensive two-day Swedish course for Finnish-speaking employment service staff in Helsinki starting in November 2025.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

67. The Committee of Experts notes this initiative which aims at raising awareness of public authorities on their obligations under language laws. It regrets, however, that no concrete new practical measures have been reported to improve the access of Swedish speakers to digital services offered in administration and to increase the use of Swedish, which continues to correlate with the proportion of Swedish speakers within municipalities, being therefore less available in areas with a low share of Swedish-speaking population.³³ The Committee of Experts concludes that this recommendation is not yet implemented and reiterates its recommendation to ensure that Swedish speakers can use their language within regional and local authorities, and that services, including digital ones, offered by these authorities are also available in Swedish. It further encourages the authorities to strengthen their efforts concerning the recruitment and training of officials and public service employees speaking Swedish.

Recommendation for immediate action

b. Ensure the effective use of Swedish in social and health care facilities.

Implementation measures taken by the Finnish authorities

68. The authorities report that the Western Uusimaa Wellbeing Services County is responsible for the development of Swedish-language healthcare and social welfare services for the entire country and coordinates the network of bilingual wellbeing services counties, pursuant to the healthcare reform which

³² Language Barometer 2024.

³³ Sixth evaluation report of the Committee of Experts on Finland, MIN-LANG (2024) 3, para. 64.

entered into force in 2023. The implementation of services provided in Swedish and the effectiveness of the co-operation agreements³⁴ between bilingual wellbeing counties is monitored by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

69. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is preparing a report on the availability of services in Swedish in the wellbeing services counties to be completed by 2026. While welcoming the report, representatives of Swedish speakers underline that the systematic collection of data on healthcare and social welfare services in Swedish is currently inadequate and suggest using this report to also improve the data collection system.

70. The authorities further inform that discretionary government grants have been allocated for competence clusters in Porvoo/Borgå and Raseborg/Raasepori to support linguistic rights and that translations of the national Current Care Guidelines, including some 30 previously untranslated Guidelines into Swedish, has been financed through a dedicated appropriation in the national budget.

71. In addition, as part of the Strategy for the National Languages of Finland, the Ministry of Justice has also been organizing a series of six dialogues in bilingual wellbeing services counties since 2024 until 2026 with the aim of raising awareness about the significance of language for the quality of services. Participants include clients and authorities from the wellbeing services counties and once all six dialogues are complete, the Ministry of Justice will compile a final report summarizing all the results.

72. Representatives of speakers regret that although the legislation requires equivalent services in both Finnish and Swedish in bilingual wellbeing counties, in practice such services are limited due to challenges that stem from a combination of shortcomings in the availability of Swedish-speaking personnel, inadequate planning and organisation of services in Swedish, budget cuts and cost-saving measures. They stress that the co-operation agreement between bilingual wellbeing counties is intended by legislation to cover only specific cases and should not be considered as a measure to remedy the overall shortcomings in access to services in Swedish. The co-operation agreement alone cannot address the existing structural problems, and further measures and guidance from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health are needed.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

73. The Committee of Experts acknowledges the translation of the Current Care Guidelines, as already reported by the authorities in 2020,³⁵ and encourages continued efforts to ensure their availability in Swedish.

74. The Committee of Experts regrets that challenges in the use of Swedish in social and healthcare services remain unresolved and considers that the recommendation is not yet implemented. It nevertheless welcomes that the authorities recognize the importance of these services, organise dialogues involving speakers and are preparing a report on the availability of services in bilingual wellbeing service counties. The Committee of Experts looks forward to the results of the report, which is expected to provide reliable data on the challenges of ensuring services in Swedish and the impact of the 2023 health reform. Meanwhile, it encourages the authorities to already take concrete steps to address

³⁴ Section 39 of the Act on Organising Healthcare and Social Welfare Services (612/2021): "Bilingual welfare areas must enter into a cooperation agreement to secure the realization of Swedish-speaking linguistic rights in social and healthcare. The co-operation agreement between bilingual welfare areas must agree on the division of labour and cooperation between bilingual welfare areas in the implementation of Swedish-language social and health care services where this is necessary to ensure the implementation of linguistic rights due to the complexity, rarity or high costs involved."

³⁵ Evaluation on the recommendations for immediate action from the fifth evaluation report on Finland, MINLANG (2020)12, paras. 65; 68-69.

existing shortcomings and ensure the effective implementation of current legislation while maintaining regular dialogue with Swedish representatives about these issues.

Recommendation for immediate action

c. Strengthen efforts to increase tolerance vis-à-vis Swedish in the general public.

Implementation measures taken by the Finnish authorities

75. The authorities report that the audio-visual materials addressed to secondary school pupils (age 16 or older) and those addressed to public authorities on their linguistic obligations include Swedish. For further information on implementation measures, please see paras. 21-22.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

76. With regard to the implementation of the recommendation, the Committee of Experts refers to its conclusions regarding Inari Sami (see paras. 24-25), which apply to Swedish accordingly.

9. Yiddish– Part II language

Recommendation for immediate action

a. Take resolute action to promote Yiddish.

Implementation measures taken by the Finnish authorities

77. The authorities refer to the Language Policy Programme, which aims to protect, revive, support, and strengthen all minority languages of Finland, including Yiddish.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

78. The Committee of Experts notes that Yiddish is mentioned in the Language Policy Programme but regrets that no concrete measures concerning Yiddish are reported by the authorities. Yiddish is in a very fragile situation in Finland; the Committee of Experts therefore asks the authorities to take resolute action to protect Yiddish. It concludes that this recommendation is not implemented.

Recommendation for immediate action

b. Facilitate the teaching of Yiddish.

Implementation measures taken by the Finnish authorities

79. The information provided by the authorities refers to Hebrew and does not give any indication that measures have been taken as regards the teaching of Yiddish.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

80. The Committee of Experts regrets that no measures have been taken to address this recommendation. Given the fragile situation of Yiddish and that it risks disappearing in Finland, the Committee of Experts reiterates its recommendation and urges the authorities to take action to identify measures to facilitate the teaching of Yiddish.

Recommendation for immediate action

c. Raise awareness of Yiddish as a minority language of Finland.

Implementation measures taken by the Finnish authorities

81. The information provided by the authorities does not give any indication that measures have been taken as regards raising awareness of Yiddish as a minority language of Finland.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

82. With regard to the implementation of the recommendation, the Committee of Experts refers to its conclusions regarding Inari Sami (see paras. 24-25), which apply to Yiddish accordingly.

Communication to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe

The Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, while acknowledging the efforts of the authorities of Finland to comply with their undertakings under the Charter, has in its sixth evaluation report (MIN-LANG (2024) 3) made “recommendations for immediate action” and “further recommendations” on how to improve the protection and promotion of the regional or minority languages in Finland.

In accordance with the Committee of Ministers Decisions of 28 November 2018 (CM/Del/Dec(2018)1330/10.4e), Finland had to present information on the implementation of the recommendations for immediate action, which contain the priority measures that should be taken by the state party. Finland presented this information on 15 September 2025. In the present evaluation, the Committee of Experts has examined the implementation of these recommendations.

In accordance with its Rules of Procedure, the Committee of Experts invites the Committee of Ministers to:

1. take note of the evaluation made by the Committee of Experts of the implementation of the recommendations for immediate action by Finland and invite the authorities of Finland to disseminate it to the competent national authorities and relevant stakeholders;
2. reiterate its Recommendation CM/RecChL(2024)4 and invite the authorities of Finland to present their next periodical report by 1 March 2028 in the required format.