

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE
FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE
PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES**

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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**Comments of the Government of Sweden on the Fifth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the
implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by Sweden**
received on 9 February 2024

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Ministry of Culture

Comments from Sweden on the Fifth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

The Ministry of Culture presents its compliments to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe. Sweden has received the Advisory Committee's fifth Opinion on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in Sweden and hereby takes the opportunity to submit comments.

1.1 General Comments

The efforts made by the Advisory Committee to receive, gather, evaluate and draw conclusions from the information about the situation of the national minorities and minority languages in Sweden is of considerable value in the continuous development of Sweden's policy on national minorities.

Observance of the rights of the national minorities in Sweden: Jews, Roma, Sami, Sweden Finns and Tornedalians must be safeguarded. The Swedish Government is committed to ensuring its international commitments.

1.2 Specific comments

Paragraph 17 and 118: From the autumn semester of 2022, the main responsibility for teaching about the culture, history, rights and situation of the indigenous Sami people and the national minorities in Sweden in compulsory school lies in the subject of social studies. In social studies, there is now broader and deeper content about national minorities in both middle primary and secondary school. To enable a unified content, social studies also take over the historical perspective from the history curriculum. In order to make all national minorities visible, they are now mentioned by

name in the compulsory school's core content. The subject contains knowledge about all of Sweden's five national minorities.

In the recent changes of the subject syllabus for the school subject History in upper secondary school decided upon in autumn 2023, the Government has included knowledge about the Swedish national minorities and their situation over time, both regarding exclusion and inclusion in society. This content is to be taught to all pupils in upper secondary school, both in vocational and higher education preparatory programmes.

Paragraph 26 and 205: According to the national legislation there are possibilities to study your mother tongue language within school hours as a replacement for a language choice or within the framework of the school's choice, but also as an extra school subject. In Sweden, municipal and independent organisers are responsible for organising education, and the schedule for each class and pupil is locally decided upon. Remote education and the Government's task to the Swedish National Agency for Education regarding national coordination of teaching in national minority languages which includes coordination and planning in making education in national minority languages can facilitate for education providers.

Paragraph 58: A clarification, realising that users of Romani Chib are a group that might need specific support for their inclusion in society and in contacts with government agencies, the Public Employment Service is now offering services in Romani chib in oral and written contact with the authority, in the same way as for speakers of Finnish, Meänkieli and Sami. The same service is also offered in Yiddish.

Paragraph 189: The Swedish term for the independent schools in Sweden is "fristående skola". In the school year of 2022/23 approx. 16 per cent of the pupils in compulsory school attended an independent school. For the same school year 31 per cent of upper secondary students were attending an independent school.

Paragraph 195: The bill mentioned in the paragraph has been adopted by the Swedish Parliament in November 2023. The changed legislation is valid both for upper secondary school and upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities.

Utökad rätt för elever i gymnasieskolan och anpassade gymnasieskolan att läsa nationella minoritetssprak (Betänkande 2023/24:UbU3 Utbildningsutskottet) | Sveriges riksdag (riksdagen.se)

Paragraph 199: The Government has since the last assignment described in paragraph 199 assigned the Swedish National Agency for Education to coordinate instruction in national minority language education. The task includes coordination and planning in making education in national minority languages accessible for all providers required by law to provide such education. The Swedish National Agency for Education will report their task in February 2024.

Also, in connection with this assignment the Government has tasked the Swedish National Agency for Education to support production of teaching materials in national minority languages and to collaborate with relevant organisations. This work should also support the development of and access to teaching materials.

1.3 Concluding remarks

The Ministry of Culture would like to thank the Advisory Committee for excellent collaboration and look forward to continued dialogue. The Government welcomes an open dialogue with the Council of Europe on the remaining challenges and is looking forward to receiving the Committee of Ministers' recommendations.