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

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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## **Fifth Report submitted by Sweden**

**Pursuant to Article 25, paragraph 2 of the Framework  
Convention for the Protection of National Minorities –  
received on 1 June 2021**

# Sweden's 5th Report to the Council of Europe under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

## Foreword

Last year, 2020, Sweden's minority policy celebrated 20 years. It has been 20 years of both challenges and of progress.

Many reforms have been implemented during this period and, gradually, Sweden has raised its level of ambition in this area. Sweden's efforts to ensure full compliance with its international human rights obligations continues unabated and is an integral part of Sweden's minority policy and its human rights policy. The reforms implemented are producing results, but we are also racing against time when it comes to revitalising our minority languages. Progress has been too slow and we risk losing vital knowledge, especially when it comes to the intergenerational transmission of our minority languages. For this reason, measures that strengthen the languages are priorities in our minority policy.

The ongoing pandemic has hampered consultation as well as work on the revitalisation of the minority languages. An important organising within civil society is also being hampered when people cannot meet and share experiences, culture and languages. However, these difficulties must not be allowed to halt work with our minority policy. The Government has therefore, among other things, launched a national minorities libraries initiative during the year as a measure to strengthen our minority languages.

As elsewhere in Europe, minorities in Sweden also sense increased polarisation of the public discourse as well as higher rates of harassment. It is essential that we continue to combat racism and discrimination, because the risk of being subjected to threats, hatred and violence must not become an obstacle for people who belong to a national minority to openly express their identity, language and culture.

In 2019, the Government enhanced the Act on National Minorities and National Minority Languages. The amendments to the Act were part of an ambition to emphasise and clarify the community's responsibility to ensure the rights of national minorities. The changes brought about by the reform have already produced results at the local and regional levels and laid the foundations for further development of our minority policy.

Sweden takes its international obligations very seriously and the Government welcomes the constructive dialogue with the Council of Europe, that is part of a systematic and continuous follow-up. It also encourages Sweden's national minorities to contribute additional perspectives by submitting their comments and views to the Council of Europe.



Amanda Lind

Minister for Culture and Democracy

## PART I

### Practical arrangements made at national level for following up the results of the fourth monitoring cycle

#### Background information

The five national minorities in Sweden are Jews, Roma, Sami, Sweden Finns, and Tornedalians. The Sami are also recognised as an indigenous people. Many of those belonging to a national minority speak one, sometimes several, of the minority languages Finnish, Yiddish, Meänkieli, Romani Chib<sup>1</sup> and Sami<sup>2</sup>. Speakers of Finnish, Sami and Meänkieli have enhanced rights in special administrative areas, which in 2020 covered 84 municipalities and 15 regions. These rights include individuals having the right to use their minority language in contacts with administrative authorities whose geographical sphere of activity coincides completely or partly with the administrative area of the minority language; and the individual's right to preschool and to receive the whole or a significant part of elderly care in their minority language.

The administrative areas for Meänkieli and Sami are predominantly located in northern Sweden and the majority of the administrative areas for Finnish are located in Mälardalen and adjoining areas. Romani Chib and Yiddish are languages that are not bound to any particular area and are thus not covered by the administrative areas.

#### The development of Sweden's minority policy

In 2016, the Government commissioned a special rapporteur to submit proposals to strengthen minority policy. The commission included reviewing and analysing Sweden's Act on National Minorities and Minority Languages (2009:724) (hereinafter, the Minorities Act) and proposing measures to safeguard observance of the rights of national minorities (ToR 2016/73).

In March 2018, the Government submitted the Bill *En stärkt minoritetspolitik* [A strengthened minority policy] (Govt Bill 2017/18:199) to the Riksdag. The Bill contained the first part of the revised minority policy as well as amendments to strengthen the Minorities Act. These amendments came into force on 1 January 2019. In June 2018, the Government submitted a written communication entitled *Nystart för en stärkt minoritetspolitik* [Fresh start for a strengthened minority policy] (Comm. 2017/18:282) to the Riksdag. This written communication constituted the second part of the revised minority policy and the starting point for continued efforts.

The Minorities Act was strengthened by the Bill "A strengthened minority policy" partly by introducing an obligation on municipalities and regions to adopt objectives and guidelines for their minority policy work, and clarified the administrative authorities' obligation to provide

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<sup>1</sup> Including all variants. Those currently spoken in Sweden include Arli, Kelderash, Lovari, Kalé and Resande (Traveller) Romani.

<sup>2</sup> Including all variants. Those currently spoken in Sweden are primarily North, Lule, Pite, Ume Sami and South Sami.

information as well as stating exactly what consultation actually involves.. The amendments to the Act also meant a strengthening of the right to preschool and other educational activities in minority languages since Sweden's Education Act will now regulate more of these activities and since demand will be made more apparent by asking custodians in administrative areas if they want a place in a preschool in a minority language.

The amendments also strengthened the right to elderly care in minority languages, as the Act now covers more of these activities and includes the older person's need to maintain their cultural identity. The amendments also strengthened rights to elderly care in Yiddish and Romani Chib.

The Government's written communication to the Riksdag on a "Fresh start for a strengthened minority policy" (Comm. 2017/18:282) elaborates on the direction of the minority policy regarding non-legislative aspects. In this written communication, the Government outlines the current situation in the minority policy and assesses that work remains to be done to safeguard observance of the rights of Sweden's national minorities. The Government describes the next steps towards a stronger minority policy, including the significance of an integrated approach to the challenges and opportunities in this area.

The written communication sets out the need for a fresh start to the policy area's chain of control, including the need to investigate and analyse in more detail the regulatory structures for the coordination, development and monitoring of minority policy and that the monitoring system should be improved. The Government also argues that a long-term approach is needed for work with the languages and cultures of Sweden's national minorities, including an action programme for the preservation of the languages and an investigation of how language centres or equivalent functions can be organised.

In the written communication, the Government also presents the view that a long-term strategic approach to the supply of skills is necessary in order to address the lack of trained staff in the public sector, including in the education system. The Government also assesses that knowledge about, and the visibility of, national minorities needs to be enhanced in the community.

**A. Steps taken to publicise the results of the fourth monitoring cycle: publication, dissemination and translation into official languages and minority languages where appropriate**

Sweden's fourth report and the Advisory Committee's report have been published on the Government's website. The reports are translated and available in both Swedish and English versions from the Government Offices of Sweden. In connection with the fourth monitoring cycle, short versions of Sweden's report were also published in translations into Sweden's national minority languages. The two government agencies responsible for follow-up and coordination of minority policy – the Stockholm County Administrative Board and the Sami Parliament – are also responsible for disseminating information via the website [www.minoritets.se](http://www.minoritets.se).

## **B. Follow-up activities organised at national, regional and local level (including activities organised with the Council of Europe)**

In November 2018, the Council of Europe and the Government Offices of Sweden (Ministry of Culture) held a follow-up meeting to discuss the conclusions and assessments that emerged from the monitoring rounds for both the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The purpose of the meeting was to provide a forum for consultation for representatives of the national minorities, the Council of Europe, the Government Offices of Sweden and central government agencies to discuss and share experiences of Sweden's compliance with its international convention obligations concerning national minorities and minority languages. The meeting centred around questions concerning the institutional and legal framework, languages, education and culture, and influence and participation. The intention is to hold a similar follow-up meeting in connection with this monitoring cycle in order to systematically deal with the results of both this process and the corresponding process for the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

### **Regular consultation and follow-up**

The responsible authorities, which are the Stockholm County Administrative Board and the Sami Parliament, remain responsible for following up the minority policy. These authorities publish an annual report on the application of the Minorities Act by municipalities, regions and central government agencies and compliance with the Framework Convention and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Through annual follow-ups and regular thematic follow-ups, they are able to monitor developments in the minority policy.

One of the three key areas of the minority policy is participation and influence. The responsible authorities have stated that the opportunities to exert influence at municipal and regional level are increasing, which is in part attributable to the recent amendments to the Minorities Act. At the national level, the Government Offices of Sweden holds annual consultations that include the responsible minister or state secretary. In addition, special consultations on defined issues are held when the need arises. In 2020, holding consultations has been both more difficult and facilitated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. By moving over to online consultations, there has been a risk that minority representatives who have not mastered, or do not have access to, online meeting tools will be excluded from exerting an influence. At the same time, online meeting forms have enabled more people to participate as a result of fewer obstacles to participation in the form of travel and time consumed.

As part of the strategy for Roma inclusion, regular meetings with the Roma reference group appointed by the Government are held. The Government Offices of Sweden has held consultations within other processes too, such as the inquiry into the Reindeer Husbandry Act.

### **C. Information about the participation of minority organisations and other civil society organisations in the implementation of the Framework Convention and in the preparations for the fifth report**

As part of the preparations for this report, a joint consultation with the national organisations representing the national minorities in Sweden was held. The joint consultation took place on 26 February 2021 and was based on concrete aspects that the minority organisations felt ought to be highlighted in the report. During the consultation, concern was expressed about the low level of knowledge about Sweden's national minorities in the general community, and the racism experienced by several of the minorities. Many of the representatives emphasised the key importance of work with language revitalisation, and also a matter of urgency, and expressed the view that progress in this regard was too slow. During the consultation, it also emerged that challenges remain in terms of the coordination and follow-up of the minority policy. Views and contributions from the consultation have been considered in preparing this report.

### **D. Information on any other measures taken to promote awareness of the Framework Convention**

Sweden has chosen to implement the Framework Convention in its national law through a single piece of legislation covering both the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. It follows from this arrangement that work to promote awareness of the Framework Convention primarily aims to promote awareness of the rights of the national minorities. But this work also aims at broad knowledge-raising activities regarding the national minorities, the minority languages and minorities' culture throughout society. The rights of Sweden's national minorities must be seen in a broad context, and a broad approach is therefore taken when implementing activities to increase knowledge and promote awareness.

#### **Accessible information about the rights of national minorities**

Under Section 3 of the Minorities Act, the administrative authorities shall, when needed, inform the national minorities in a suitable manner about their rights under the Act. This entails an active responsibility to provide information about the rights that national minorities are entitled to enjoy. Knowledge of what rights a person has is of the utmost importance for being able to claim them.

More and more municipalities, regions, government agencies and county administrative boards are providing information about minorities' rights in the minority languages. The most common information channel is websites, but social media, local newspapers and meetings are also used as information channels. In administrative areas, information about rights is commonly provided to parents in preschool and school, and to the elderly in connection with applications for elderly care. Outside administrative areas, information is also usually provided to parents through the school. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the

responsible authorities have also made vital community information available in minority languages.

### **Knowledge-raising activities**

The Sami Parliament and Stockholm County Administrative Board are responsible for measures to spread information and raise knowledge in the municipalities and government agencies in particular. An extensive development project is currently under way to produce a web-based basic course on the rights of national minorities. In addition, a toolbox of practical advice and good examples has been developed to support the work of the municipalities and regions in spreading knowledge and in other aspects of their minority policy commission. The responsible authorities also distribute information material to schools.

The other 20 county councils are also responsible for spreading information and in recent years a number of initiatives have been implemented to increase knowledge about the rights of minorities at the local level.

The Living History Forum is a government agency whose role includes countering antisemitism and antiziganism. The Forum works actively to spread information and holds exhibitions related to the Jewish and Roma minorities.

As stated in Sweden's previous report, the [www.minoritet.se](http://www.minoritet.se) website is an important portal for information about legislation, the Council of Europe's conventions, and Sweden's national minorities. The use of the website has shown rising and consistent growth. Visits to the website in 2015 amounted to 150 000 according to Sweden's previous report. In 2020, more than 420 000 visits were made, demonstrating an increased awareness and an increased demand for information about Sweden's national minorities.

In 2020, the Government appointed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Tornedalians, Kvens and Lantalaiset, which has been commissioned to disseminate information in order to increase knowledge about the minority and their historical experiences.

## **PART II**

### **Issues for Immediate Action**

#### **Recommendation 1: Strengthen the implementation**

**Recommendation from the Council of Europe:** Strengthen the implementation of the Act on National Minorities and Minority Languages at local level; amend the legislation where it provides for too wide a margin of appreciation; and introduce an effective remedy in case of non-compliance with the Act;



In order to strengthen the minority policy, a review of the Act on National Minorities and National Minority Languages (the Minorities Act) was initiated in 2016. The review resulted in a set of amendments tightening the Act and clearer community responsibility at the municipal, regional and national levels. The new Act came into force on 1 January 2019.

At the municipal level, the amendments to the Act mean that each municipality and region has an obligation to adopt objectives and guidelines for their minority policy work. The follow-up shows that about two-thirds of the respondent municipalities and regions are now working on developing, or have already adopted, such objectives and guidelines.<sup>3</sup> The legislative history also states that Sweden's national minorities are to be included in such work, which is in line with the ambition to strengthen the influence of minorities in processes that affect them. In light of this, the consultation provision in the Act has also been clarified and reified.

The right to preschool and elderly care in minority languages in administrative areas has been strengthened by the provision now stipulating that the whole or *a significant part* of the activities shall be provided in minority languages, unlike previously where the provision stipulated only the whole or *parts* of the activity. In addition, an obligation has been introduced to ask custodians if they are interested in preschool education in a minority language when applications for preschool are made to the municipality. In the case of elderly care, information about the option of services and care in a minority language is to be provided when someone applies for assistance within elderly care. The obligation to provide the whole or a significant part of elderly care in minority languages applies to all municipalities in administrative areas but also to other municipalities; and to all minority languages, if the municipality has access to staff who can speak the minority language.

In order to strengthen the monitoring and coordination of the policy, the Government established an inquiry in 2018. The remit of the inquiry included analysing the efficiency and appropriateness of the monitoring system, assessing the need for changes and, if necessary, submitting proposals for changes. The inquiry presented its proposal in spring 2020 and proposed, among other things, increased resources for monitoring and that monitoring should be more strategic. The proposal has undergone a consultation process and is currently being prepared within the Government Offices of Sweden.

It is the responsible authorities – the Stockholm County Administrative Board and the Sami Parliament – that are responsible for coordinating and monitoring the policy. These authorities administer the government grants to municipalities that are part of an administrative area for one or more of the languages. Among other things, they monitor through questionnaires to municipalities, regions and county administrative boards, and submit a report annually to the Government.

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<sup>3</sup> 220 municipalities out of 290 responded to the questionnaire.

## Monitoring of non-compliance in education

Through inspection of education providers and educational establishments, the Swedish School Inspectorate is to work to ensure that all children and pupils have access to an equivalent education and other good quality activities in a safe environment. The School Inspectorate has been commissioned by the Government to take measures to promote issues relating to Sweden's national minorities and minority languages based on the Act on National Minorities and Minority Languages (2009:724) as well as the objectives of the minority policy and its three sub-areas. The Swedish School Inspectorate is to follow up, analyse and report on its efforts. The report on Swedish School Inspectorate's minority policy commission for 2020 (Swedish School Inspectorate, Reg. No. 2021:44) included results from thematic supervision of the right to mother tongue tuition in national minority languages in grades 7–9. The supervision showed that 22 out of 25 education providers fall short in their offerings of mother tongue tuition. The Swedish School Inspectorate also reported the results of its regular supervision of the right to mother tongue tuition and follow-up of its supervision of the Sami Education Board's schools.

## Recommendation 2: Sami influence

**Recommendation from the Council of Europe:** Increase and formalise opportunities for the Sami to participate in a meaningful and effective way in decision-making processes affecting them at municipal, county and national levels and ensure that the Sami can maintain and develop their culture whenever decisions are taken that affect areas inhabited traditionally by them;

The Government is preparing a Government Bill on a formalised consultation procedure for issues affecting the Sami people. In the Bill, the Government will propose enacting a new law on a formalised consultation procedure in matters of particular importance to the Sami people. The purpose of the formalised consultation procedure is to foster the influence of the Sami people over their affairs. The proposal means that the Government and the administrative authorities will be obliged to carry out a formalised consultation procedure with the Sami Parliament before taking decisions on matters that can significantly affect the Sami people.

Regular consultations are to remain as a form of preparation and if possible is to be coordinated with the more formal rounds of consultation in order to ensure coordination and efficiency in the processing.

## Recommendation 3: Teaching in and of minority languages in schools and preschools

**Recommendation from the Council of Europe:** Increase the availability of teaching in and of minority languages, in particular through making the profession of minority language teacher more attractive; develop a comprehensive policy on national minority language education in preschools and the respective training of preschool teachers in close cooperation with minority representatives.

An important part of the recent reform of the minority policy was a higher level of ambition when it comes to preschool in minority languages. The provision stipulating that the whole or parts of the activities should be in minority languages has been changed to the whole or *a significant part* of the activities. The provision that obliges municipalities in the administrative areas to offer children whose custodians request it a place in preschool where the whole or a significant part of the activities are in Finnish, Meänkieli and Sami has also been transferred from the Minorities Act to the *skollagen* [Education Act] (2010:800). In connection with this, an obligation for municipalities in the administrative areas to ask all custodians whether they would like a place in such a preschool was also introduced (see Chapter 8 Section 12 a of the Education Act).

Pupils attending compulsory school and equivalent obligatory school forms, as well as pupils attending upper secondary school, and upper secondary school for pupils with special needs, and who belong to a national minority have, under certain conditions, the right to tuition in their national minority language under the Education Act. Tuition in national minority languages is provided as part of the subject mother tongue. Since 2015, special syllabuses have been developed for Finnish, Yiddish, Meänkieli and Romani Chib. For tuition in Sami, a syllabus already existed. The syllabuses for compulsory school have recently been revised and the Government decided on the amendments in 2020. The revised syllabuses are to be applied from 1 July 2022. For upper secondary schools and upper secondary school for pupils with special needs, teaching in national minority languages is still guided by the subject syllabuses for the subject mother tongue and modern languages. At present, the Swedish National Agency for Education is working on a major revision of the subject syllabuses for upper secondary school, upper secondary school for pupils with special needs, and municipal adult education, as preparatory work for a possible future transition from course grades to subject grades in these types of schools.

In order to increase access to tuition in the national minority languages in compulsory school, compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities, special school, Sami school, upper secondary school, and upper secondary school for pupils with special needs, the Government decided on 22 December 2016 to appoint a special rapporteur to propose measures in the area (ToR 2016/116). On 15 November 2017, the inquiry, which adopted the name *Utredningen om förbättrade möjligheter för elever att utveckla sitt nationella minoritetspråk* [Inquiry into improving opportunities for pupils to develop their national minority language], submitted its report entitled *Nationella minoritetspråk i skolan – förbättrade förutsättningar till undervisning och revitalisering* (SOU 2017:91)[National minority languages in schools – better conditions for tuition and revitalisation]. The report proposes that a new subject – mother tongue – with a guaranteed number of teaching hours, should be introduced into compulsory school and equivalent types of schools (960 hours in compulsory school). To improve the conditions for continuing professional development initiatives in Sami and thereby increase the numbers of qualified teachers who speak Sami, the Swedish National Agency for Education was commissioned in 2018 to start contract education.

A long-term approach to efforts to strengthen the languages and cultures of Sweden's national minorities is needed. There are major differences between the conditions for each of the languages, for example in terms of the number of speakers, which also affect the supply of teachers and the prospects of providing textbooks and other teaching materials. The recruitment base for studies in some of the minority languages at higher education level is thus also limited, which has resulted in some of the study programmes having no applicants some semesters. There are national regulations governing education in national minority languages in the school system which give pupils the right to tuition, but in many cases this is not practicable. There is a lack of teachers who can teach the languages and few pupils who study the languages. The Swedish School Inspectorate's supervision of how education providers for compulsory school grades 7–9 offer and organise tuition in the national minority languages carried out between autumn 2019 and January 2020 showed that many fall short in their offerings of the national minority languages. For example, pupils and custodians received incorrect information about their right to participate in minority language tuition. The Swedish School Inspectorate followed this up and the education providers corrected their information during the time that the supervision was in progress or shortly after it was completed in January 2020.

All in all, regarding schools there is comprehensive legislation on rights, but measures are needed to ensure that good quality tuition in national minority languages can be provided in practice. In its appropriations directions for 2021, the Government commissioned the Swedish National Agency for Education to submit proposals on how national coordination of tuition in national minority languages in the school system could be arranged so as to strengthen tuition in the languages. Based on the five national minority languages and the conditions that apply to the different types of schools, the Swedish National Agency for Education will propose a national organisation that can help to increase access to and improve the quality of tuition in the national minority languages. Support for tuition in the national minority languages, such as access to teaching and learning materials, is to be included in the Swedish National Agency for Education's analysis. In the performance of this commission, the Swedish National Agency for Education is to seek the views of the Swedish Council for Higher Education, the higher education institutions commissioned to offer courses and teacher training in the national minority languages, the Swedish National Council of Adult Education, and from the Institute for Language and Folklore (ISOF) and the Sami Education Board. The Swedish National Agency for Education is to also seek the views of interested parties and of representatives of the national minorities.

In order to increase the supply of teachers in the languages, the above report also proposed that the possibility of including national minority languages as an elective subject in the Degree of Master of Arts in Primary Education should be contemplated.

The Government took the issue of the supply of teachers further and in the memorandum *Ökad kvalitet i lärarutbildningen och fler lärare i skolan (U2021/00301)* [Increased quality in teacher training and more teachers in schools] it proposed that the Degree of Master of Arts in

Primary Education – Pre-School and School Years 1–3, and the Degree of Master of Arts in Primary Education – School Years 4–6, should be able to include the subject mother tongue, including the national minority languages. The Government is of the view that the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Primary Education should therefore be changed so that subject studies in mother tongue, including the national minority languages, can be included in both of these specialisations. Furthermore, the memorandum proposes the introduction of a provision for postgraduate certification to teach in the subject mother tongue, including the national minority languages, to apply to those with a Degree of Master of Arts/Science in Secondary Education as well as to those with a Degree of Master of Arts in Primary Education. Teacher certification under the new provision could be given to those who have completed their degree with additional subject area studies of at least 30 credits, or the equivalent, in language didactics specialising in teaching in the subject mother tongue or the national minority languages.

### **PART III**

#### **Further Measures Taken to Implement the Framework Convention**

##### **ARTICLE 1**

The protection of national minorities and of the rights and freedoms enjoyed by people who belong to these minorities constitutes an integral part of the international protection of human rights and falls as such within the framework of international cooperation.

The objective of its policy regarding national minorities is to provide protection for the national minorities, strengthen their opportunities to exert influence and to support the historical minority languages so as to keep them alive. Minority policy is an integral part of human rights policy and is part of the goal of ensuring full respect for Sweden's international commitments on human rights.

Sweden takes human rights very seriously at both the national and international levels and works to safeguard observance of its international convention obligations. The strategy for its work on human rights at the national level presented in Sweden's fourth report remains in place. As part of this work, in March 2021 the Government decided on a Bill on a human rights institute. The Government's decision was an important step in the establishment of this institute. The new institute will, among other things, monitor, investigate and report on respect for and implementation of human rights in Sweden. The institute will also submit proposals to the Government on measures needed to safeguard human rights. It has been proposed that the Human Rights Institute will be established on 1 January 2022.

In international human rights forums, Sweden consistently underlines the universality of human rights and the responsibility of states to ensure respect for these rights for one and all without discrimination – in its capacity nationally, as well as together with, for example, the European Union, the Nordic countries and within the Nordic-Baltic Eight (NB8).

## The Sami – an indigenous people

Work to strengthen the special rights of Sweden's indigenous people, the Sami, is a priority for the Government. Part of this work is the request from the Sami Parliament to establish the truth commission. The Government sees this is an important and high priority issue that will enable knowledge to be gained about the past and its connections with current conditions for the Sami people. It is important that the wrongs suffered by the Sami people throughout history are brought to light. During 2020 and 2021, the Sami Parliament consulted widely with the Sami people to secure their support and the results of this process were reported to the Government in March 2021.

Draft legislation on a formalised consultation procedure will be presented by the Government with a view to strengthening opportunities for the Sami people to exert influence in processes relevant to them. Dialogue with the Sami Parliament and other Sami organisations is also a prerequisite for, and fundamental to, the work of shaping Sami policy.

In order to strengthen the rights of the Sami people to preserve and develop their language, culture, industries and community life, a Nordic Sami Convention is key. The Sami Parliamentary Council has submitted a request for minor corrections to the final negotiated text, and the matter is now being prepared within the respective Government Offices of the Nordic countries and the Sami Parliament.

## ARTICLE 2

The provisions of this Framework Convention shall be applied in good faith, in a spirit of understanding and tolerance and in conformity with the principles of good neighbourliness, friendly relations and cooperation between States.

There is well-developed and well-functioning Nordic cooperation in the area of Sami policy between Norway, Finland and Sweden, as well as their respective Sami Parliaments at the official level involving meetings between the ministers responsible for Sami issues and the presidents of the Sami Parliaments. Examples of issues that have been pursued and are being pursued at the Nordic level are the establishment of a Nordic Sami language institute, the Sámi Giellagáldu and the Nordic Sami Convention (see also Article 18).

The Sámi Giellagáldu / Sáme Giellagálldo / Saemien Gielegaaltije is the joint Nordic language cooperation body responsible for language cultivation and standardisation for Sami. This body was formed by the Sami Parliaments in Sweden, Norway and Finland and operates under the Sami Parliamentary Council (SPR). The Sami Parliaments have been working for a long time to develop an organisational form for the Sámi Giellagáldu with a joint management and activities where language workers are located in Finland, Norway and Sweden. The work of the Sámi Giellagáldu is based on the special needs and challenges of each language group with regard to standardisation and terminology in order to preserve, strengthen and develop work with the Nordic Sami languages. The Sámi Giellagáldu also provides information through its communications function and gives advice and guidance for



language users on language issues. The joint language cooperation within Sámi Giellagáldu is of great importance for ensuring that the Sami variants do not develop in different directions in the different countries.

For Roma inclusion, there are well-developed networks at European level. The Government Offices of Sweden participates in the European Platform for Roma Inclusion (EPRI), which is a forum for sharing experience and for cooperation on Roma inclusion. The Government Offices of Sweden also participates in the Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (ADI-ROM) for the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) of the Council of Europe.

### ARTICLE 3

3.1 Every person belonging to a national minority shall have the right freely to choose to be treated or not to be treated as such and no disadvantage shall result from this choice or from the exercise of the rights which are connected to that choice.

3.2 Persons belonging to national minorities may exercise the rights and enjoy the freedoms flowing from the principles enshrined in the present Framework Convention individually as well as in community with others.

As Sweden has previously reported, every person who belongs to a national minority has the right to make their own decision to be treated or not to be treated as belonging to a national minority. Under Swedish law, no disadvantages or obligations result from such a decision. Nor are there any provisions in Swedish legislation that prevent persons who belong to a national minority from enjoying the freedoms stated in this Convention, either as individuals or in a group. Membership of one or more of the national minorities is determined on the basis of how individuals identify themselves, and this means that it is the individual who has personal freedom of choice in the matter.

The rights associated with belonging to a minority and a minority language are in many ways interlinked. But there are also certain differences. In order to enjoy the rights linked to a minority language, there is no requirement for individuals to define themselves as belonging to a national minority.

#### Definition of national minorities

The national minorities for which Sweden applies the Framework Convention have remained unchanged since the last report. In 2017, the issue of the national minority status of Finland Swedes was investigated following an announcement by the Riksdag. The issue was investigated by the *Utredningen om en stärkt minoritetspolitik* [Inquiry on strengthening minority policy] and the special rapporteur concluded that Finland Swedes met many of the criteria set in connection with the ratification of the Framework Convention. However, Finland Swedes were assessed as lacking the historical and long-term ties with Sweden required to be recognised as a national minority according to the criteria.

The Government strives for an inclusive approach and to maintain a continuous dialogue on developments in the area of minorities. One example is the recently appointed Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Tornedalians, Kvens and Lantalais, which includes several Meänkieli-speaking groups.

#### ARTICLE 4

4.1 The Parties undertake to guarantee to persons belonging to national minorities the right of equality before the law and of equal protection of the law. In this respect, any discrimination based on belonging to a national minority shall be prohibited.

4.2 The Parties undertake to adopt, where necessary, adequate measures in order to promote, in all areas of economic, social, political and cultural life, full and effective equality between persons belonging to a national minority and those belonging to the majority. In this respect, they shall take due account of the specific conditions of the persons belonging to national minorities.

4.3 The measures adopted in accordance with paragraph 2 shall not be considered to be an act of discrimination.

**Recommendation from the Council of Europe:** Ensure that the legislative and institutional framework adequately protects persons belonging to minorities from discrimination and that combating the discrimination of persons belonging to minorities remains high on the agenda of the Equality Ombudsman.

**Recommendation from the Council of Europe:** Continue to invest in the implementation of the Long-term strategy for Roma inclusion 2012–2032 based on clearly defined target indicators and regularly reviewed implementation plans and gradually move from short-term projects to long-term institutionalised support for initiatives that have proven to be effective; and look for possibilities to set up a national centre for Roma issues based on the findings of the Commission against Antiziganism.

**Recommendation from the Council of Europe:** Develop and apply, in cooperation with minority representatives, adequate methods to collect disaggregated, anonymous data on the situation of persons belonging to national minorities, while respecting international data protection obligations and the principle of voluntary and free self-identification.

The Government is continuing its efforts to ensure that Sweden's Discrimination Act is as comprehensive as possible. Among other things, the ongoing inquiry into certain issues in the Discrimination Act has been commissioned to assess how protection against discrimination in certain public activities can be changed in order to ensure that the protection against discrimination is as comprehensive as possible. The inquiry is to also assess whether measures are needed to strengthen protection against discrimination where there is no private injured party (ToR 2020:102). The inquiry will submit its proposals on 1 October 2021.



## Health of Sweden's national minorities

The right to health is protected in Sweden's minority policy. With some exceptions, the health of Sweden's minorities is good but varies depending on the minority studied.

In the Swedish health care system, responsibility for health care is shared between central government, the region and the municipality. Health care is regulated in the *Hälso- och sjukvårdslag* [Health and Medical Services Act], but there is specific legislation in a number of areas that governs these activities. The central government level is responsible for overall health care policy, supervision, evidence-based policy, and certain financial contributions to municipalities and regions. The regions are responsible for organising health care so that all citizens have access to good care. The municipality may offer home-based health care (health care provided in the private residence of the patient) after having concluded an agreement to take over the region's obligation to provide such care. In all of Sweden's regions except one, the obligation to provide home-based health care has been transferred to the municipalities. Home-based health care arranged by the municipality does not include doctors, who remain the responsibility of the region.

In addition to these activities in regions and municipalities, a number of government agencies, primarily the National Board of Health and Welfare and the Public Health Agency of Sweden, have important tasks in health care and public health among the national minorities and indigenous people. The Public Health Agency of Sweden's work with the minority policy is largely linked to the Agency's broad sphere of activities. For many years, the remit of the Public Health Agency of Sweden has also included developing long-term dialogue with the national minorities. In recent years, the Agency has also been commissioned to take measures to implement the Minorities Act within its remit based on the minority policy goal and its three sub-areas, and to develop long-term arrangements for continuous follow-up of the situation of national minorities within its remit. Over the years, the Public Health Agency of Sweden has produced reports on the health status of the national minorities. A multi-annual plan for the Agency's monitoring of the health situation of the national minorities has been prepared in consultation with each of the national minority groups. In June 2019, the report entitled *Hur mår personer med finländskt ursprung?* [The health situation of people of Finnish origin] was presented. In 2020 the Agency, together with the National Board of Health and Welfare and the National Association of Tornedalians (STR-T), prepared a questionnaire and a question template for interviews aimed at monitoring the health of the Tornedalians using various methods. The Agency's Internet pages on national minorities have been regularly updated with information in all the minority languages with multiple variants, and up-to-date information about the national minorities where relevant to the Agency's activities is published on the Agency's intranet. The COVID-19 pandemic has meant that the Agency has responded to many questions from minority groups and also provided information on the Internet in the minority languages concerning the recommendations regarding COVID-19.

The minority policy has a bearing on the majority of the activities of the National Board of Health and Welfare. Its statistics gathering is exempt because the Agency does not collect individual data on ethnicity and language. The minority policy is reflected in the Agency's activities such as in the preparation of manuals, knowledge support and educational materials, primarily intended for social services. This applies in particular to elderly care, which is covered by a number of provisions, but also to other social services such as social care for children and young people. In recent years, the National Board of Health and Welfare and the Public Health Agency of Sweden have also been commissioned to jointly develop their cooperation based on the goal and sub-areas of the minority policy. The National Board of Health and Welfare will also strengthen its cooperation with the Public Health Agency of Sweden in order to gain access to their experience in monitoring the health situation of the national minorities. The aim is to investigate whether some of the methods discussed and used by the Public Health Agency of Sweden are applicable to monitoring the situation for national minority groups in elderly care in particular, but also other social services and health care. The National Board of Health and Welfare has also been commissioned to provide information about the Minorities Act within its areas of responsibility and to survey the potential needs for initiatives to boost awareness of the importance of the Minorities Act within social services (in particular in elderly care) and health care.

The National Board of Health and Welfare and the Public Health Agency of Sweden also have important roles in mental health and suicide prevention efforts. The focus for mental health and suicide prevention efforts is apparent in the Government's strategy *Fem fokusområden fem år framåt från 2016* [Five focus areas five years beyond 2016]. Five areas that are the most urgent to develop were identified in this strategy: prevention and promotion, early and accessible interventions, individuals' participation and rights, vulnerable groups, and lastly management, governance and organisation. Sweden's national minorities and indigenous people are covered by all these target areas but in particular target area 4, vulnerable groups. In 2021, approximately SEK 1.7 billion will be allocated to efforts to promote mental health and prevent mental ill-health and suicide through an agreement between central government and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR). One of the agreement's aims is to implement the national strategy in this area. The Government has also increased funding for civil society organisations to promote mental health and to prevent mental ill-health and suicide. For 2021, approximately SEK 65 million will be allocated to these organisations' work with mental health and suicide prevention, among these organisations working to promote health and prevent ill-health among Sweden's national minorities and indigenous people. On 17 June 2020, the Government commissioned the Public Health Agency of Sweden to establish a mental health and suicide prevention function at the Agency. This function's role is to communicate knowledge about mental health and suicide to the public and to particularly vulnerable groups. The function started operating on 1 January 2021. On 30 July 2020, the Government commissioned the Public Health Agency of Sweden and the National Board of Health and Welfare, along with twenty-five other government agencies including the Sami Parliament, to submit input for a new

strategy in the area of mental health and suicide prevention. This commission requires regular consultation with representatives from Sweden's national minorities and indigenous people.

In addition to the overall strategy for the minority policy, which constitutes a general direction for the policy area, there is the Government's strategy for Roma inclusion (Comm. 2011/12:56) where health and social care and security are identified as a special target area. In recent years, a number of initiatives have been taken to improve the health situation of the Roma. Among other things, the Government has commissioned the Stockholm County Administrative Board to implement initiatives to train Roma health motivators (2016–2018), and has instructed the National Board of Health and Welfare to implement training initiatives targeting social services with a particular focus on the Roma (2016–2020).

In the period 2017–2020, the Government has granted funding through the Sami Health Network to increase Sami cultural skills in health care and develop ways of working to meet the needs of Sami patients.

#### Work on the strategy for Roma inclusion has continued

The goal of the strategy for Roma inclusion is that a Roma person born in 2012 will, by 2032, enjoy the same opportunities as a non-Roma person. Work based on the strategy aims to ensure that the Roma have their human rights respected.

Several government agencies were commissioned within the framework of the Government's strategy for Roma inclusion in 2016–2019. The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society was commissioned to distribute funding pursuant to *förordning (2016:840) om statsbidrag för hälsofrämjande insatser riktade till romer (2016–2019)* [Ordinance on government grants for health promotion measures targeting the Roma 2016–2019]. The National Agency for Education and the National Board of Health and Welfare were also commissioned to develop a training programme for mediators with Roma language and cultural skills to serve as a bridge between private individuals and public activities. These mediators are active in preschools, schools, and social services or work with issues related to these activities (2016–2019). The Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning was commissioned to implement an initiative to combat discrimination against Roma in the housing market in 2016–2019. This commission included the creation of a network of Roma representatives, property owners and landlords, and the development with the network of guidelines for property owners and landlords. The Stockholm County Administrative Board was commissioned to coordinate, monitor and implement initiatives within the framework of the Long-term strategy for Roma inclusion in 2012–2032 with its coordinating role.

In 2016, *Arbetsförmedlingen* [the Swedish Public Employment Service] was commissioned to further develop its work on Roma inclusion within its activities in 2016–2019. Since then, the Government has commissioned the Employment Service to continue to develop its work on Roma inclusion in its activities for the period 2020–2023. During the period 2016–2019, the Employment Service worked to produce baseline studies, raise the level of knowledge within

the Employment Service, implement knowledge-boosting efforts in relation to employers, and develop an action plan for long-term, strategic work with the target group. The Employment Service's aim is to integrate its work with Roma inclusion into the day-to-day management of its activities. The staff redeployment that the Employment Service went through in 2019 had a negative impact on its work with Roma inclusion. Because users of Romani Chib are a group that may need special support for their inclusion in the society and in contacts with government agencies, the Swedish Public Employment Service is investigating the possibility of offering the same service in oral and written contacts in Romani Chib as exists for Finnish, Meänkieli and Sami. Expanding the possibility of the Roma minority being able to use their minority language in their dealings with the Employment Service can help to promote greater trust in the Service, while also making the target group visible internally within the Employment Service.

An inquiry was conducted which aimed to investigate how a national centre for Roma issues could be established based on the proposals made by the Commission against anti-Gypsyism (SOU 2016:44). The inquiry proposed the establishment of a government agency for Roma issues in June 2019, (Ministerial communication 2019:15, *Långsiktighet och stadga i arbetet framåt – en myndighet för romska frågor* [Long-term approaches and stability in the work moving forward – a government agency for Roma issues]). The proposal was circulated for comment in the autumn of 2019, and in this process all submissions received from Roma civil society organisations rejected the proposal. This view has also emerged in consultations with Roma representatives. The opinions of the Roma minority weigh heavily and the Government, in consultation with representatives of the Roma minority, has discussed how to deal with the inquiry's proposal to establish a government agency for Roma issues.

#### **Gathering data and statistics on the life situations of national minorities is fraught with difficulties.**

The Government deems that monitoring the minority policy is important in order to know that the initiatives implemented are effective and are leading developments in the right direction. An important part of this monitoring is qualitative data, which can give a clear picture of the life situation of national minorities. As previously reported, Sweden has a restrictive approach to collecting data on ethnic grounds. However, like the Committee, the Government sees a need for better qualitative data and in 2016 commissioned a special rapporteur to evaluate the need for measures to improve qualitative data on Sweden's national minorities on the basis of each minority's circumstances and needs. The inquiry concluded that Sweden's restrictive approach could not be reconciled with representative and exhaustive quantitative studies in the traditional sense, but that other possibilities could be considered. The inquiry proposed three types of data collection that could provide a more qualitative basis for decisions. These are implementation data (progress in the implementation of the minority policy at the national, regional and local levels), equality data (comparing the results of qualitative surveys with the results for the majority population), and data on minority languages (the inquiry concluded that it ought to be possible to develop indirect indicators). The Government is currently reviewing the governance and monitoring

of the minority policy in light of the proposals submitted by the inquiry commissioned to submit proposals for governance in this policy area. The proposals were submitted in spring 2020.

The Stockholm County Administrative Board has been commissioned to review the monitoring of the strategy for Roma inclusion. This work includes developing a monitoring system based on previous experience using baseline studies.

## ARTICLE 5

5.1 The Parties undertake to promote the conditions necessary for persons belonging to national minorities to maintain and develop their culture, and to preserve the essential elements of their identity, namely their religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage.

5.2 Without prejudice to measures taken in pursuance of their general integration policy, the Parties shall refrain from policies or practices aimed at assimilation of persons belonging to national minorities against their will and shall protect these persons from any action aimed at such assimilation.

**Recommendation from the Council of Europe:** The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to set up, in close cooperation with the Sami, a truth and reconciliation process which thoroughly addresses past human rights violations against the Sami and raises awareness of them in Swedish society.

### Sami influence and participation

It is clear from the Instrument of Government (*regeringsformen*) that the Sami are a people and that the Sami people's conditions for maintaining and developing their own cultural and social life are to be promoted. In recent years, the Government has continued its ongoing efforts to strengthen the status of the Sami as an indigenous people and national minority. A central part of this work is strengthening Sami influence and participation.

As previously reported, part of the remit of the Sami Parliament is to participate in spatial planning and to monitor that Sami needs, including the interests of the reindeer industry in matters concerning land and water use, are taken into account. The Sami Parliament also participates in reference and working groups, forums and consultations with central and regional government agencies.

In addition, proposals for amendments to the Minerals Act regarding consultation have also been presented and implemented. Under the new provisions in force since 1 January 2018, in cases concerning the granting of mining concessions under the Minerals Act, a specific environmental assessment must be carried out, information must be provided, and the process must be coordinated with the Sami people. This means that the operator must consult with the private individuals who are likely to be particularly affected by the activity, which includes the affected Sami villages, concerning the location and anticipated



environmental impacts, etc., of the mining operation. It can therefore be concluded that there is now a formal legal requirement for consultation when applications for these concessions are tested.

An inquiry to review the reindeer husbandry legislation, which is from 1971, has recently been appointed. The preparation of the directives has been carried out in close dialogue with both the Sami Parliament and civil society representatives of the Sami people.

The Sami people's opportunities to enjoy their economic, social and cultural rights and influence them are important to the Government. This is why the Government, together with Australia and Canada among other countries, has contributed both knowledge and financial resources to an OECD study aimed at improving opportunities for economic development within indigenous communities. The study, which was developed in close cooperation with representatives of the Sami community, was presented in spring 2019. The study looked at how existing tools, initiatives and rules in rural development and regional growth were working for the Sami community and their economic activity. The study also presents policy recommendations for strengthening the link between indigenous peoples on the one hand and regional and rural development policy on the other hand.

The Swedish population's knowledge about and attitudes towards the preservation of the languages and cultures In 2020, the Institute for Language and Folklore (ISOF), with the aid of Kantar-Sifo and in collaboration with the Stockholm County Administrative Board of and the Sami Parliament, surveyed what the general public knows about Sweden's national minorities. The survey measured the Swedish population's knowledge about and attitudes towards the preservation of the languages and cultures of Sweden's national minorities. The results, which were published in February 2021, show that knowledge about the national minorities and minority languages has improved since the previous survey in 2015, but only marginally compared with the results in 2010. In the 2020 survey, 77 per cent could name at least one of Sweden's five national minorities and 74 per cent could name at least one of the national minority languages. On the other hand, awareness among younger people (15–29 years old) had improved markedly. A very high proportion – around 90 per cent – of young people in this age range stated that they think it is 'quite important' or 'very important' to preserve the languages and cultures of Sweden's minorities. The corresponding figure for the entire population was 83 per cent, which indicates that the majority of the Swedish population is in favour of an active policy to preserve these languages.

#### **Sami language centre has been evaluated and the question of new language centres investigated**

Since 2009, two Sami language centres have been commissioned to develop and stimulate the use of the Sami language and its variants using an innovative and forward-looking approach. The importance of the language centres' method for promoting the revitalisation of the language was evaluated within the remit of a government commission of inquiry (SOU 2017:60). The inquiry concluded that the language centres play a necessary and valuable role in the revitalisation of the Sami language and that language centres for other minority

languages ought to be considered. In 2018, the Government commissioned the Institute for Language and Folklore to investigate what form language centres for Finnish and Meänkieli could take, and to investigate the possibilities for similar centres for Yiddish and Romani Chib. In addition, the Sami Parliament was commissioned to investigate the ways in which the activities of the Sami language centres could be developed to support and promote more Sami language variants.

The Institute for Language and Folklore and the Sami Parliament have proposed the establishment of six additional language centres: two for Sami (North and Lule Sami), one for Meänkieli, one for Yiddish, one for Romani Chib and one for Finnish. It is proposed that the centres would be established within the purview of both of these government agencies and located at strategic points around the country. The government agencies' proposals were circulated for comment and the referral bodies were all in favour of establishing more language centres. The proposals are now being prepared within the Government Offices of Sweden.

#### **Proposals submitted for an action programme for the preservation of Sweden's national minority languages**

The Government assesses that there is a need for long-term protection of Sweden's minority languages. In 2019, the Institute for Language and Folklore and the Sami Parliament were commissioned to submit proposals for the development of an action programme for the preservation of Sweden's national minority languages. The purpose of an action programme is to support the possibility of national minority languages being revitalised and surviving as living languages in Sweden. In their 2020 report, these government agencies proposed a long list of measures aimed at strengthening and preserving Sweden's national minority languages. The measures concern many sectors of society and have a major focus on the education system. The proposals were circulated for comment during the spring of 2021 and are now being prepared in the Government Offices of Sweden.

#### **A Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Tornedalians, Kvens and Lantalaïset has been appointed and preliminary studies are under way for a future Sami Truth Commission**

Tornedalians, Kvens and Lantalaïset were living in the Torne Valley in northern Sweden long before the current Swedish state was formed. Under the assimilation policy of the 19th and 20th centuries, these minorities and their languages and cultures were repressed in various ways. On 19 March 2020, the Government appointed a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate the historical violations of human rights and abuses suffered by the Tornedalians, Kvens and Lantalaïset. The Commission will work until 16 May 2022 and has been commissioned to boost knowledge in Swedish society about this national minority and its historical experiences.

Work is under way to establish a Sami Truth Commission. On 9 June 2020, the Sami Parliament received funding for a process to secure support for the Commission from the Sami people. This process aims to raise the Sami's own voices and include their perspectives

in the preparations for a Sami Truth Commission. The Sami Parliament has presented a report of the preparations in March 2021.

### Priority given to initiatives supporting the cultures of national minorities

The cultures of national minorities and investments in national minority languages are a central part of Sweden's minority policy. As part of this, in 2021 the Swedish Arts Council was commissioned to report on the ongoing investments needed to achieve the objectives of the minority policy and the strategy for Roma inclusion.

Government funding for regional culture is distributed through the cultural cooperation model, whereby the regions have the responsibility and the freedom to distribute government grants to regional and local cultural activities. The elected regional councils decide how the funds are distributed in accordance with the applicable ordinance on distributing government grants. The Swedish Arts Council monitors how the funding is utilised and has dialogues with the regions on various matters, including issues related to the cultures of the national minorities. In 2019, a network was created for the regions and their work with the cultural expressions of Sweden's national minorities. The network arose from a need to share expertise and experiences and is coordinated by the Swedish Arts Council. A number of national minority organisations that had been awarded grants by the Swedish Arts Council participated in the 2020 network meeting and presented their activities to the regions. A follow-up report on broadened participation within the cultural cooperation model submitted by the Swedish Arts Council to the Government in 2021 claims among other things that Sweden's national minorities are a target group that ought to be given special attention.

Government funding for the cultural activities of national minorities has increased by SEK 10 million since 2018. The aid is aimed at strengthening, developing, highlighting or otherwise promoting the cultures of Sweden's national minorities and enabling them to communicate their own history, languages and identities themselves. The funding is distributed by the Swedish Arts Council.

In 2020, the Sami Parliament was also allocated SEK 4 million to be used specifically as crisis grants for Sami culture suffering the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. An additional SEK 10 million has also been allocated to the Sami Parliament in 2021.

In the years 2016–2018, the Swedish Film Institute was commissioned by the Government to promote access to films for children and young people in the national minority languages (in total about SEK 2 million per year). This commission was made permanent from 2019. The Swedish Film Institute has developed a strategy for its activities in promoting films for children and young people in the national minority languages which runs until 2025.

*Stiftelsen Finlands kulturinstitut i Sverige* [Finnish Cultural Institution Foundation in Sweden] has received a three-year government grant totalling SEK 1.5 million in 2018–2020 to promote Finnish culture in Sweden. This initiative has included showing Finnish films around the



country. In addition, a number of writers' tours, music events and special guest performances at theatres have been arranged. The Government has also granted funding of SEK 500 000 to this Foundation for 2021.

### Literature, libraries and reading promotion programmes contributing to the revitalisation of the minority languages

Between 2017 and 2019, the Swedish Arts Council was commissioned to promote the publication and dissemination of literature in the national minority languages. As part of this commission, the Council has produced a catalogue of literature in the national minority languages and provided support to the Biskops-Arnö folk high school, which holds writing courses in the national minority languages. The Swedish Arts Council's final report on the commission claims that all national minorities want more literature from an insider perspective written by authors from among the national minorities. In order for this literature to reach readers, there is also a common need for more people who can translate from and to the national minority languages. In the years 2018–2020, the Government also implemented a special initiative to strengthen libraries throughout the country. Within this initiative, for example the library in Arvidsjaur received government grants to strengthen Sami literature and to increase knowledge about the Sami people and Sami culture among the residents of the municipality in 2018–2020. The entire initiative is being evaluated by the University College of Borås, with the evaluation scheduled to be complete in autumn 2021.

Commissioned by the Government (2015–2019), the National Library of Sweden produced a proposal for a national library strategy. The proposal was submitted in 2019 and is being prepared in the Government Offices of Sweden. The needs and perspectives of the national minorities have been highlighted in these proposals. One of the proposals that has already been decided concerned strengthening the national minorities libraries. In December 2020, the Government decided to commission the National Library of Sweden to implement an initiative to make the national minority libraries into resource libraries for each language group and for Sweden's municipalities. The commission includes ensuring that these libraries provide support to Sweden's municipalities and promote the provisioning of media in the national minority languages. In particular, attention is to be paid to access to literature for children and young people. Today there is no library for Romani Chib equivalent to the libraries for the other national minority languages. Therefore, the National Library of Sweden will review in particular and submit proposals for how to promote library activities for Romani Chib. This commission is being carried out in collaboration with the Sami Parliament and the national minorities concerned after obtaining input from the Swedish Arts Council, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, and other relevant actors.

During spring 2021, the Government presented a written communication to the Riksdag on work to promote reading in Sweden. The written communication is based on assessments in the Reading Delegation's report *Barns och ungas läsning – ett ansvar för hela samhället* [Children's and young people's reading – a societal responsibility] (SOU 2018:57). Children who speak minority languages are addressed in a separate section. The written communication states that

children and young people should continue to have the opportunity to develop their national minority language, their mother tongue and sign language, in parallel with the Swedish language. Children should also be given good access to literature in the national minority languages and languages other than Swedish. A number of national minority organisations were afforded the opportunity to respond to the draft report (SOU 2018:57) when circulated for comment.

### **Inclusion of minority traditions in intangible cultural heritage**

In 2011, Sweden ratified the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. For its national implementation of the Convention, Sweden has developed a national organisation focusing on cooperation and the participation of civil society in this work. This work is coordinated by the Institute for Language and Folklore and is structured around four expert nodes responsible for different domains of Sweden's intangible cultural heritage. These expert nodes have been linked to networks of actors consisting of practitioners and non-profit organisations, including those from among the national minorities, as well as educational, research and cultural heritage institutions.

In recent years, Sweden's national inventory of intangible cultural heritage ([www.levandetraditioner.se](http://www.levandetraditioner.se)), hosted by the Institute for Language and Folklore, has continued to expand in dialogue with non-profit organisations throughout the country. The Institute for Language and Folklore is working actively towards Sweden's national minorities participating more in the work of listing living traditions, and has developed specific methods for this, and this work has resulted in the addition of some Roma and Jewish traditions to the list in recent years.

The Sami Parliament has an important role to play in safeguarding Sami intangible cultural heritage. Consequently, the Sami Parliament's appropriation directions for 2021 include a requirement to report back to the Government on how it has contributed to the ongoing implementation of the Convention in Sweden during the year. The same reporting requirements have been issued to the four expert node government agencies/institutions.

### **Promotion of Roma culture**

In 2016, the Swedish Arts Council was commissioned by the Government to report on how the Council is working to highlight, preserve and develop Roma culture based on the Government's strategy for Roma inclusion in 2012–2032. In its annual report, the Council stressed that it is difficult for Roma actors to find regional and municipal co-financing when applying for government grants. In 2020, the Swedish Arts Council particularly emphasised this issue in its work with regional cultural plans and in its dialogues with the regions.

As part of its commission regarding Roma culture, the Swedish Arts Council has also held consultations and dialogue meetings, and allocated special grants to Roma actors. In its final report in 2019, the Council emphasised that there is great ignorance among Sweden's cultural institutions about Roma culture and that these institutions lack networks through which to

come into contact with Roma associations. Furthermore, the report pointed out that the application process for allocating grants is not adapted to the needs of Roma actors and that applicants find it difficult to meet the requirements for co-financing from municipalities and regions. The Council's conclusions included identifying a need for ongoing and long-term initiatives. Furthermore, the report stressed that the issue will be included in the Council's work for broader participation, where a new position of activities developer will continue this work based on Agenda 2030 among other things.

The Swedish Arts Council appoints a national reading ambassador within its area of responsibility. In 2019–2021, the fifth such reading ambassador was appointed, Bagir Kwiek. His main focus is the Roma minority. Through the work of the reading ambassador, 17 public libraries around the country have been appointed as Roma reading embassies.

## ARTICLE 6

6.1 The Parties shall encourage a spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue and take effective measures to promote mutual respect and understanding and co-operation among all persons living on their territory, irrespective of those persons' ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, in particular in the fields of education, culture and the media.

6.2 The Parties undertake to take appropriate measures to protect persons who may be subject to threats or acts of discrimination, hostility or violence as a result of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity.

**Recommendation from the Council of Europe:** Implement thoroughly and provide adequate resources for the National plan to combat racism, similar forms of hostility and hate crime and continue to step up the combat against all forms of intolerance, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and hate speech, in particular in social media and on the internet.

The implementation of the National plan to combat racism, similar forms of hostility and hate crime continues. The Living History Forum has continued its commission to coordinate and monitor work with the National plan. According to the Living History Forum, the National plan has given legitimacy, coherence and direction to the work of the government agencies involved and helped to get the issue of racism onto the national agenda.

The National plan, which constitutes a comprehensive approach to working to combat all forms of racism and hate crime, including antisemitism, antiziganism and racism against the Sami, has been strengthened. As of 2020, an additional SEK 10 million has been added to the National plan, enabling a continued high level of ambition in a more long-term effort.

The Living History Forum is implementing a major educational initiative on different forms of racism which currently targets school staff and other public sector employees, among others. During the spring of 2020, the Living History Forum's commission was strengthened,

which means that it can now develop its efforts to train public sector employees, focusing on assuring quality in how public sector organisations relate to the public in their efforts to combat racism.

Exposure to racism and similar forms of hostility risks affecting both individuals and society as a whole, for example through the impact on the individual's mental health, the prevalence of discrimination, trust in the authorities and, ultimately, trust in democracy. There is currently no comprehensive picture of the knowledge that exists in this area. The Living History Forum has therefore been commissioned to survey knowledge about people's experiences of racism in contact with Swedish government agencies and other public activities.

In January 2020, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was incorporated into Swedish law. Under the National plan, the Ombudsman for Children in Sweden has been commissioned to developing and compile knowledge about the exposure of children and young people to racism based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The purpose of this commission is to obtain a comprehensive picture of how racism directed at children and young people is expressed and in what contexts, how the living conditions of children and young people are affected by racism, and how the exposure of children and young people to racism can be combated and prevented.

Based on the government commission No Hate Speech Movement (2017–2020), the Swedish Media Council boosted knowledge of racism and similar forms of hostility on the Internet among children and young people. For example, the Council developed new material targeting primarily teachers in compulsory and secondary schools in order to increase awareness of how images and symbols can entrench racist ideas.

### **Work against antisemitism and for Jewish safety**

Xenophobic acts against faith communities are a widespread problem in Sweden today. There is a gap between the number of reported hate crimes with antisemitic, islamophobic and christophobic features and private individuals' experience of these crimes. The number of unreported cases appears to be very large.

Since 2015, there has been a government grant aimed at improving security for faith communities entitled to government grants, including the Jewish Central Council in Sweden. In 2018, the Government chose to broaden this target group so that all civil society actors could apply for grants based on the *förordningen (2018:1533) om statsbidrag för säkerhetsbäjäande åtgärder till organisationer inom det civila samhället* [Ordinance on government grants to civil society organisations for security measures]. The Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency is responsible for decisions on funding under this ordinance. For the budget year 2021, the Government has allocated SEK 22 million to this purpose.

## Work to combat hate crimes continues

The judicial system attaches great importance to efforts to combat and counter hate crimes.

The Swedish Police Authority has raised its level of ambition regarding hate crimes and other crimes that threaten fundamental freedoms and rights. The Authority has a national contact point for these issues and democracy and hate crime groups in three metropolitan areas: Stockholm, West and South. In the other policeregions there are also designated investigators. In addition to investigating suspected crimes, these resources are dedicated to work with victim support, internal training, collaboration and other security and trust-building measures.

The Swedish Police Authority has further developed digital support and teaching and learning materials on human rights, democracy and hate crimes for secondary schools and developed educational material containing basic information about democracy, the police and the laws and regulations in Sweden governing Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) classes. In particular, the Swedish Police Authority has a special mandate to continue to develop and improve efforts to combat hate crimes and other crimes that threaten democracy. The Swedish Police Authority works with other government agencies and organisations such as the Living History Forum, Swedish Crime Victim Authority, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, the Stockholm County Administrative Board, the Swedish Agency for Support to Faith Communities and the Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Rights (RFSL) in its efforts to combat hate crime. At regional and local level, there is collaboration between the Swedish Police Authority and groups exposed to hate crime.

The work of the Swedish Prosecution Authority in relation to hate crime can be summarised as follows. In all local public prosecution offices, there are one or more prosecutors specifically designated for combating hate crimes (hate crime prosecutors). Every year, the hate crime prosecutors are invited to a hate crime conference organised by the Prosecution Development Centre in Malmö in collaboration with the head of the South-East Public Prosecution Area. The aim of the hate crime conference is to boost the skills of the hate crime prosecutors and to support uniformity in the prosecutors' application of the law. The conference includes discussions about investigation and prosecution of hate crimes, information about developments in the law and case law, and lectures from external lecturers.

During their compulsory basic training, even those prosecutors who are not specifically designated as hate crime prosecutors get four 45-minute classes on hate crime. The purpose of these classes during their basic training is to increase the course participants' knowledge about hate crime and to provide a better understanding of the special measures that are to be taken in investigations of crimes involving hate crime motives.

In addition to conferences and lectures, the Prosecution Development Centre has published two policy documents for guidance (one on hate crime and one on agitation against an ethnic or national group on social media) and four documents describing varieties of

methodological support. All of these documents except the policy document on hate crime have been drawn up since 2016. The documents are available to hate crime prosecutors on the subject page for hate crime on the Swedish Prosecution Authority's intranet.

Along with the heads of the Prosecution Areas, the Prosecution Development Centre is responsible for monitoring hate crime issues and is also responsible for the policy documents and the conferences held. There is also a specially appointed prosecutor who is a national specialist in the area of hate crime. During spring 2020, the national specialist conducted an online lecture for hate crime prosecutors and other interested parties on crimes with hate crime motives.

### **The trend in reported hate crimes**

Every two years, the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (BRÅ) publishes statistics on identified reports of hate crime. The statistics on reported hate crimes can provide an indication of how hate crime is being addressed in police reports and information about the reported incidents. However, the statistics say very little about the prevalence of hate crime in the ancommunity because many incidents of crime are not reported.

In 2018, BRÅ identified 278 reports of crimes with antisemitic motives. That was 53 per cent more than in 2016, but at the same level as in 2014 and 2015. In 2018, 109 cases of anti-Roma crime were identified. That was 31 per cent less than 2016, and the lowest number of reported crimes to date. It is not possible to determine whether the changes in the number of reports is due to changes in the number of victims, a greater willingness to report these crimes or the attention given to hate crime in the reports. However, BRÅ noted that the increase in the total number of crimes with identified hate crime motives in 2018 mainly consisted of an increase in police reports relating to agitation against an ethnic or national group, and that a large portion of these reports were the result of various actors' efforts to draw attention to online hate crime. The antisemitic hate crime motive is one of the motives where this has had the greatest impact.

The statistics also contain data on solved crimes against persons, i.e. crimes where legal proceedings have been taken against at least one person in the form of a decision to indict, a summary imposition of a fine, or a waiver of prosecution. The proportion of reported hate crimes is generally low. The low rate of solved crimes against persons is not unique to hate crimes. In general, this rate is also low among the most frequently occurring types of crimes against persons, such as molestation, defamation and inflicting damage. Generally speaking, hate crimes are also difficult to investigate and require special expertise. A major challenge for investigators and prosecutors is being able to identify the motive and prove it.

In May 2019, BRÅ published an in-depth study on antisemitic hate crime. In the context of the study, BRÅ has examined police reports, preliminary investigations and judgements. BRÅ has also conducted interviews with individuals who have been victims of antisemitism, representatives of Jewish congregations and associations, and individuals from municipal activities, civil society and the police. The study showed that antisemitism can occur in all



kinds of places and across broad sections of the population. However, the perpetrators are more often men, and more often relatively young – even though these crimes are committed by men and women from all age groups. The perpetrators come from different types of milieus, and far from all of them belong to an organised group. According to the individuals interviewed by BRÅ, there are two types of milieus with particular concentrations of antisemitism: radical nationalist and violence promoting Jihadist milieus.

An all-party committee, appointed by the Swedish Government, has proposed that racist organisations should be prohibited through new criminal legislation. The committee proposed two new offences in the Swedish Criminal Code, organised racism and support for organised racism. The proposal has been sent for consultation.

### **ARTICLE 7**

The Parties shall ensure respect for the right of every person belonging to a national minority to freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of association, freedom of expression, and freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Developments in Sweden do not necessitate any further reporting under this Article. A report is given under Article 5 of measures concerning consultation and support for organisations representing the national minorities.

### **ARTICLE 8**

The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to manifest his or her religion or belief and to establish religious institutions, organisations and associations.

Sweden's Instrument of Government establishes that "In relation to the community, everyone shall be guaranteed the freedom to practise their religion alone or in the company of others." Freedom of worship is a freedom that is absolute, and which may not be restricted by any other act of law. This means that there are no restrictions on the national minorities in terms of practising their religion or faith.

Developments in Sweden do not necessitate any further reporting under this Article. For more information, see previous reports.

### **ARTICLE 9**

9.1 The Parties undertake to recognise that the right to freedom of expression of every person belonging to a national minority includes freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas in the minority language, without interference by public authorities and regardless of frontiers. The Parties shall ensure, within the framework of their legal systems, that persons belonging to a national minority are not discriminated against in their access to the media.

9.2 Paragraph 1 shall not prevent Parties from requiring the licensing, without discrimination and based on objective criteria, of sound radio and television broadcasting, or cinema enterprises.

9.3 The Parties shall not hinder the creation and the use of printed media by persons belonging to national minorities. In the legal framework of sound radio and television broadcasting, they shall ensure, as far as possible, and taking into account the provisions of paragraph 1, that persons belonging to national minorities are granted the possibility of creating and using their own media.

9.4 In the framework of their legal systems, the Parties shall adopt adequate measures in order to facilitate access to the media for persons belonging to national minorities and in order to promote tolerance and permit cultural pluralism.

**Recommendation from the Council of Europe:** Continue investment in the promotion of national minority languages through digital media, while taking into account the continuing need for traditional media; involve minority representatives in the development of guidelines for the next broadcasting licensing period.

Media have an important role in strengthening the identity of the national minorities and in revitalising the minority languages. Sweden also has far-reaching freedom of the press and freedom of expression and therefore takes a very restrictive view of all forms of control of the media. That said, an account is given below of the promotion measures taken by the State in this area.

### Radio and TV broadcasts in minority languages

Public service broadcasters operate in the interest of the general public and they have a special responsibility to take into account the needs of Sweden's national minorities.

Prior to the 2020–2025 licence period, an all-party commission of inquiry appointed by the Government on 17 June 2017 was commissioned to propose an appropriate regulation of Sweden's public service broadcasters. Based on Sweden's international obligations in this area and the Government's strategy for the national minorities (Govt Bill 2008/09:158), this commission included proposing how responsibility for programming in minority languages could be formulated in order to contribute to strengthened quality and visibility. As part of this work, the commission of inquiry had special consultations with representatives of the national minorities concerning how public service broadcasters' responsibility for minority language programming should be formulated, which the commission of enquiry included in its report *Ett oberoende public service för alla – nya möjligheter och ökat ansvar* [Independent public service broadcasting for all – new opportunities and increased responsibilities] SOU 2018:50 p. 169. The report was distributed for consultation to the representatives of the minorities prior to the preparation of the Government Bill *Ett modernt public service nära publiken – villkor*



2020–2025 [Modern public service broadcasting close to the audience – conditions 2020–2025], Govt Bill 2018/19:136.

In December 2019, in accordance with the direction confirmed by the Riksdag, the Government decided on new broadcasting licences for the three public service broadcasters Sveriges Radio AB (SR) [Swedish Radio], Sveriges Television AB (SVT) [Swedish Television] and Sveriges Utbildningsradio AB (UR) [Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company]. The new broadcasting licences are valid for the period 2020–2025, and it is in these licences that their public service broadcasting remits are primarily regulated.

Programming in the national minority languages is an important part of the public service broadcasters' remits. Their activities offer opportunities for people who belong to a language minority to strengthen their linguistic and cultural roots and thereby confirm their identities through artistic experiences, news and information on both radio and television. It is also a way of increasing the visibility of these languages and hence of the minorities who speak them.

During the previous 2014–2019 licence period, the overall program offerings in the national minority languages increased from a total of 10 391 hours in 2013 to 11 276 hours in 2019. An increase can also be noted for each language.

Developments in the media landscape in recent years have meant that more and more people are accessing radio and television programming on various Internet-based platforms. Terrestrial radio and television broadcasting are still of great importance to many, but it is Internet-based platforms that are growing. In light of these developments, the conditions in the new broadcasting licences have been partly changed. Instead of a unilateral focus on the total volume of programming, the focus is now more on the quality of the programming, and on availability of new programming – original broadcasts or original publications.

The broadcasters' original broadcasts and original publications of programs in each of the national minority languages will be increased during the 2020–2025 licence period compared with the levels in 2019. This requirement means that the focus is on new programming rather than total programming. Original broadcasts or original publications may consist of new productions, new purchases of programs or adaptations of programs in a new language. Unlike in the past, the requirement to increase programming does not apply per year but rather to the license period as a whole in relation to the 2019 level.

However, the requirement to increase programming only applying to new programming does not mean that total programming in the minority languages can be reduced. The annual total programming in each language for the 2020–2025 licence period is to be at least the same level as in 2019.

The condition to increase annual programming in the minority languages in the broadcasting licences for the 2014–2019 period did not cover Yiddish. The public service broadcasters'

programming in Yiddish is also very small. Under the new licences, Yiddish has the same status as other national minority languages, unlike in the past. In view of the fact that during the previous licence period there was no requirement to increase programming in Yiddish, all programming in Yiddish is covered by the requirement to increase programming in the coming licence period. Total programming in Yiddish must thus increase during the licence period in relation to the level reached by the end of 2019.

The Government is of the view that one of the most important factors for assessing quality in the programming is that it is perceived as relevant and important to the target groups concerned. Therefore, in the new licences, requirements on dialogue with the groups concerned have been enhanced. Unlike in previous broadcasting licences, the current licenses require that a regular dialogue is maintained, which means it ought to occur at least once each year.

It is important that minority language programming is available on many different platforms in order to reach as many users as possible. The broadcasters are to strive to strike a balance between terrestrial programming and programming on the broadcasters' own Internet-based platforms. An analysis of how minority language programming can best reach its audience ought to be an important element in the broadcasters' dialogue with the groups concerned.

The broadcasters produce annual reports on the scope of their radio and TV programming, including programming in the minority languages, in so-called public service reports. In March 2021, the broadcasters submitted their first reports under their new broadcasting licences. These reports concern 2020. In aggregate, the broadcasters' programming in the national minority languages increased from 11 276 hours in 2019 to 11 387 hours in 2020. In addition, all three broadcasters also offer programming in the national minority languages online via their Play services.

The total broadcasting time on SVT in 2020 was 21 946 hours, of which 774 hours were broadcast in one of the minority languages of Sami, Finnish, Meänkieli, Romani Chib and Yiddish. Of these, 467 hours were broadcast in Finnish, 161 hours in Sami, 61 hours in Meänkieli, 80 hours in Romani Chib and 5 hours in Yiddish.

Some of the programs broadcast by SVT in minority languages are *Finska ögonblick* [Finnish moments], a program based on the target group's own memories that have been significant, made an impression and shaped both society and their identity. *Det vackraste samiska hantverket* [The most beautiful Sami handicraft] depicted the creation of traditional handicrafts today. The series *Nördar på standby* [Nerds on standby] gave the audience an insight into the Sami target group by following a Sami family's quest for a common interest. Children's programs in Meänkieli alternate between Meänkieli and Swedish and focus on language learning, for example in the program *Knopp och Kropp* [Head to Toe]. In the program *Proffs på en dag* [Pro in a day] young people were asked if they could prepare a meal in the traditions of the Torne Valley using only their smartphones to help them as delicious as meals prepared by veterans with lifelong inherited experience. The program *Tasha 17K* in Romani Chib was about a

young Roma hip-hop girl fighting for a career as a budding artist, but also her own path between two cultures. In *Woodski's värld* [Woodski's world], Tomas Woodski learned Yiddish and, using his new language, he took viewers to various places around the world, all of which share Yiddish as a language.

SR's total broadcasting time in its terrestrial network in 2020 was 122 426 hours, of which 10 505 hours were broadcast in one of the minority languages of Sami, Finnish, Meänkieli, Romani Chib and Yiddish. Of these, 1 432 hours were broadcast in Sami, 7 495 hours in Finnish, 1 123 hours in Meänkieli, 446 hours in Romani Chib and 9 in Yiddish. SR Sameradion broadcasts programmes in Sami in all programme categories and for all age groups. This department investigates and covers the Sami community and follows developments in other indigenous communities in the world. Sveriges Radio Finska also has a broad range of programming for Sweden Finn listeners. In 2020, Sisoradio changed its name to Sveriges Radio Finska [Swedish Radio Finnish] as part of the development of its programming for a target group consisting of first, second and third generation Finns in Sweden. Meänraatio is Sveriges Radio's department for Meänkieli and produces programs for adults and children as well as young people. Radio Romano produces and broadcasts programs in Romani Chib on the channels P2 and P6 Stockholm as well as on Sveriges Radio's digital platforms. The programming targets adults, children and young people. *Jiddisch far alle* [Yiddish for all] is broadcast regularly on P1 and consists of short programs in Yiddish and Swedish about how the language is developing in Sweden and the world today. The bilingual initiative *Randiga sagor* [Stripey Tales] for the youngest target group included readings in Yiddish mixed with Swedish.

UR's total broadcasting time on radio and TV in 2020 was 4 085 hours, of which 108 hours were broadcast in one of the minority languages of Sami, Finnish, Meänkieli, Romani Chib and Yiddish. Of these, 21 hours were broadcast in Sami, 43 hours in Finnish, 19 hours in Meänkieli, 20 hours in Romani Chib and 5 in Yiddish.

On 18 March 2021, the Government appointed a commission of inquiry to propose how conditions on public service content on the Internet might be set. The inquiry is also to assess which of the current content conditions that apply to public service broadcasting, such as conditions regarding programs in minority languages, are appropriate to apply for their activities online. The implementation of such proposals depends on the previously proposed amendments to Sweden's Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression (YGL) being implemented.

### Minority language newspapers

As stated in Sweden's previous report, press subsidies can be given to daily newspapers aimed at linguistic minorities. The alleviation of the criteria for press subsidies that apply to newspapers in Finnish, Sami and Meänkieli, as described in Sweden's previous report, remains unchanged. There are newspapers in Finnish that receive press subsidies. There is

also one newspaper partly written in Finnish and Meänkieli that receives limited operating subsidies.

In November 2016, the commission of inquiry *En mediepolitik för framtiden (Medieutredningen)* [Media policy for the future – the media inquiry] presented its final report: *En gränsöverskridande mediepolitik – För upplysning, engagemang och ansvar (SOU 2016:80)* [A cross-border media policy – For information, engagement and responsibility]. The report described the media situation for the Sami people and Sweden’s national minorities among other things. The media inquiry also submitted a proposal for a new media subsidy, which includes relaxations of the requirements for media that target national minorities. The proposal for a new media subsidy was circulated for consultation to the relevant actors, including organisations that represent Sweden’s national minorities.

In a Government Bill *Journalistik i hela landet* [Journalism throughout the country] (Govt Bill 2017/18:154), the Government proposed combining an extension of the existing press subsidy to newspapers and a new technology-neutral media subsidy that could be provided to news media regardless of the content form or the manner in which it is distributed. This means that the technology-neutral media subsidy can be given to news media with text, image, sound or moving image content, and subsidies can be given to newspapers, web-based media, radio or television for example. The Riksdag voted to support the Government Bill. The media subsidy came into force on 1 February 2019.

The media subsidy today consists of three different forms of support: innovation and development grants, grants for local journalism in areas with poor coverage, and editorial aid (introduced in 2020). In order to make it easier for media targeting the national minorities to fulfil the requirements for the new media subsidy, there is some alleviation of the criteria. Among other things, this means that media that targets national minorities need to have at least 750 regular users (rather than 1 500 regular users) and be published or broadcast at least 10 times per year (instead of 45 times per year). A newspaper in Finnish and a newspaper that writes partly in Finnish and Meänkieli have received media subsidies. The innovation and development grant replaces the development grant for printed public newspapers introduced in 2016 and, as before, it can cover a larger share of the costs (75 per cent instead of 40 per cent) if it is of particular importance to national minorities.

In 2020, special crisis grants have targeted the media sector in response to the spread of the COVID-19 disease. This includes aid for the publication of printed newspapers and special funds for newsroom grants with temporary rules during 2020. These efforts aim to ensure the public’s access to information and to mitigate the negative financial consequences for the news media resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. For these emergency aid measures too, there is the same easing of the criteria for media targeting national minorities that receive the media subsidy. The same newspapers in national minority languages that have received press subsidies and media subsidies have thus also benefited from both these subsidies.

The Swedish Arts Council distributes grants for the production of cultural periodicals in the national minority languages or which target the national minorities. As part of the Council's remit for 2017–2019 to promote the publication and dissemination of literature in Sweden's national minority languages, it was revealed that public libraries had no information about channels for purchasing literature in Sweden's national minority languages. The Swedish Arts Council has therefore developed a catalogue with a selection of non-fiction and fiction. Work is under way to further develop this catalogue,

## ARTICLE 10

10.1 The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to use freely and without interference his or her minority language, in private and in public, orally and in writing.

10.2 In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if those persons so request and where such a request corresponds to a real need, the Parties shall endeavour to ensure, as far as possible, the conditions which would make it possible to use the minority language in relations between those persons and the administrative authorities.

10.3 The Parties undertake to guarantee the right of every person belonging to a national minority to be informed promptly, in a language which he or she understands, of the reasons for his or her arrest, and of the nature and cause of any accusation against him or her, and to defend himself or herself in this language, if necessary with the free assistance of an interpreter.

**Recommendation from the Council of Europe:** Take resolute measures to allow elderly persons belonging to national minorities to receive care in their minority language.

The strengthened Minorities Act has meant a tightening of the community's obligations to provide information on the rights of national minorities both within and outside the administrative areas. The right to communicate in a minority language with an administrative authority whose geographical area of activities coincides wholly or partly with the administrative area of the minority language remains in place. In addition, the unconditional right to communicate in writing with certain authorities has been extended to also apply to Meänkieli and the Employment Service in cases where the individual is a party or a representative of a party.

Regarding the right to use minority languages in the judicial system, see previous reports.

### The language cultivation work of the Institute for Language and Folklore

The Institute for Language and Folklore (ISOF) works continuously to strengthen Finnish technical language in Sweden so that it can be used in all areas of public life. An important aspect is that the Finnish terminology follows developments in Swedish society so that

government agencies can answer current questions from citizens in Finnish and so that staff in childcare and elderly care can use up-to-date technical terminology. This largely applies to the other languages as well. ISOF offers advice in other languages and is working to develop public institutions glossaries in these languages as well. So far, however, only glossaries of this kind in Finnish and Romani Chib have been published. ISOF is working with language cultivation in Yiddish and Meänkieli in a slightly different way. The Institute's language experts holds courses for Finnish speakers in different occupations working in health care and schools, as well as for interpreter students at Stockholm University. ISOF also provides recommendations and support on terminological matters to the public and other government agencies.

ISOF develops and publishes bilingual glossaries in various prioritised areas of society. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a number of new words and terminology being used in public institutions. ISOF has created coronavirus bilingual glossaries in Swedish-Finnish, -Yiddish, and -Romani Chib. In recent years, a bilingual Swedish-Finnish glossary of social care terms, a library glossary and a social services glossary have been published. A church bilingual glossary will soon be finalised. In recent years, various bilingual glossaries have been produced in Roma dialects, such as glossaries of school terms, social services terms, and social care terms. In Yiddish, a Yiddish-Swedish-Yiddish glossary was published in 2020. Work with courses and the glossaries is making it easier for government agency staff to use the national minority languages within the public sector.

### **Elderly care in minority languages**

In order to strengthen the legislation governing the rights of national minorities, the Riksdag has decided to improve the Government Bill *En stärkt minoritetspolitik* [A strong minority policy] (Govt Bill 2017/18:199) The strengthened Act on National Minorities and Minority Languages (2009:724) entered into force on 1 January 2019, and means among other things that the right to elderly care in Finnish, Meänkieli and Sami applies to the whole or a significant part of the activities. In the past, the right to elderly care applied to the whole or *parts of* the activities, which was potentially a limiting factor on people wanting to get this kind of care. The amendments also strengthened rights in relation to elderly care in Yiddish and Romani Chib. The amendments also mean that the right to elderly care must take account of the older person's need to maintain their cultural identity.

In 2020, the National Board of Health and Welfare was commissioned to implement the Minorities Act within its operations and to develop long-term arrangements for continuously monitoring the situation of the national minorities within the Board's remit. Among other things, the National Board of Health and Welfare has drawn attention to the rights of the national minorities in its manuals, checklists and other documents that support its activities internally as well as externally. The Board has also translated information targeting health care staff, for example in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic, into Finnish, Meänkieli and Sami. The national minorities have had opportunities to influence this commission, for example in the development of input for a national carers strategy.



During 2020, the National Board of Health and Welfare conducted eight consultations with the minorities and interviewed the regions in the administrative areas. In consultation with the minorities, the Board has concluded that those who bear the responsibility within municipal elderly care should be monitored. This monitoring will cover language, cultural skills and treatment, and representatives of the minorities will be involved in the whole process from formulating the questions to the analysis of the results and proposals for action where applicable.

In the context of Roma inclusion, the National Board of Health and Welfare has produced a report within one of the areas identified in the strategy: social care and security. The report is based on an interview study with Roma people in five of the ten municipalities that have received government grants, and a questionnaire addressed to social services in all ten municipalities. The areas of activities covered by the report include elderly care. This work has drawn attention to the need for elderly care for the Roma, and the assessment is that elderly care for the Roma will most likely increase because many younger Roma are in the workforce today. The strengthened provisions on elderly care in the Minorities Act are also expected to contribute to an increasing number of Roma requesting elderly care in the future.

## ARTICLE 11

11.1 The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to use his or her surname (patronym) and first names in the minority language and the right to official recognition of them, according to modalities provided for in their legal system.

11.2 In areas traditionally inhabited by substantial numbers of persons belonging to a national minority, the Parties shall endeavour, in the framework of their legal system, including, where appropriate, agreements with other States, and taking into account their specific conditions, to display traditional local names, street names and other topographical indications intended for the public also in the minority language when there is a sufficient demand for such pointers.

11.3 The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to erect in his or her minority language signs, notices and other information of a private nature that can be seen by the public.

### ISOF's work with place names and personal names:

ISOF works extensively with the cultivation of place names in the Sami and Meänkieli language area. In addition, through its research and development efforts, the Institute is helping to acquire and disseminate knowledge about individual place names and orthographies. The Institute is also helping to highlight place names in minority languages in Sweden through its extensive advisory and referral body work for central government agencies, municipalities and organisations, as well as for researchers and private individuals.

The Institute's work with personal names and place names has a strong citizen focus, since being able to choose their own personal names and to make visible place names with clear connections to identity and to intangible cultural heritage has a direct impact on private individuals. Through its work with the cultivation of personal names and its research, ISOF is helping to strengthen the possibility of adopting personal names originating from our national minority languages, but also personal names originating from other name cultures that have become part of Swedish society as result of immigration.

### **There are no barriers to adopting family or surnames in minority languages**

Personal names are an important and natural part of society. A name is something that gives an individual an identity and an opportunity to show that they belong to a family and kin. As stated in previous reports, there are no rules in Swedish law that prevent individuals from using or adopting family names or surnames in the minority languages.

On 1 July 2017, a new *lag om personnamn* [Personal Names Act] entered into force. The new Act aimed to strengthen the individual's options to choose their own name, to make the legislation more accessible to the individual and to simplify the processing of name cases. Among other things, the new Act means that all surnames are to be acquired through application and that automatic acquisition of a surname through birth and adoption is abolished. There should also be many potential surnames to acquire; for example, the most common surnames in Sweden are free for anyone to adopt. It is also possible to adopt a double-barrelled surname. The new law makes it easier for an individual to change their name and it is possible to change name more than once. It is the Swedish Tax Agency that makes determinations on names.

ISOF acts as a government advisory body to the Swedish Tax Agency in matters that have linguistic and name studies perspectives. However, work still remains to be done to integrate a minority and revitalisation perspective into the examination of applications for a change of personal name. It is of great importance that people with a minority background should be given the opportunity to reclaim their names in order to strengthen their minority identity. ISOF is working to strengthen and integrate the minority perspective into the way in which names are given in Sweden.

### **Work with place names and road signs in minority languages continues**

The work of *Lantmäteriet*, the Swedish Mapping, Cadastral and Land Registration Authority, to create new map databases in the scale range 1:10 000 and 1:50 000 enables a concentration of place names in minority languages in the multilingual areas. Requests for place names in the different minority languages on maps are regularly received by Lantmäteriet's place name function. These requests can come from private individuals who have surveyed their local geographical area, and representatives of Sami villages and other associations such as the National Association of Swedish Tornedalians – Tornionlaaksolaiset (STR-T). Names can also be channelled to Lantmäteriet via the Sami Parliament. Currently, about 200 names



within the Meänkieli area are being examined at the Institute of Languages and Popular Memories.

During the period covered by this report, Lantmäteriet has also completed a recoding project. Place names coded with the wrong language code have been recoded to the correct language code. This work was completed in 2019, and covered all names listed in a scale of 1:10 000 within the minority language areas. In January 2021, there were 34 974 names coded as either Finnish, Meänkieli, North Sami, Lule Sami, Ume Sami or South Sami.

In June 2017, Lantmäteriet took part in a training day in Luleå, which highlighted various aspects of minority languages. The course targeted primarily municipalities within the county of Norrbotten, and besides these municipalities, STR-T and the Swedish Transport Administration also participated. The Lantmäteriet reported on its work on place names in the minority language.

In spring 2019, Lantmäteriet participated in the symposium NORNA 49, Minority Names in Oral and Written Contexts in a Multi-Cultural World, in Guovdageaidnu (Kautokeino) and presented the work of Lantmäteriet and the work of its predecessors *Topografiska Corpsen* [Corps of topographical engineers] and *Rikets allmänna kartverk* [National mapping office] with place names for 200 years. The presentation had a particular focus on minority names. The presentation will be published in the forthcoming conference report.

During the period covered by this report, Lantmäteriet has continued its collaboration with the Swedish Transport Administration on matters related to road signs within the minority language areas. Lantmäteriet functions as a referral body for questions related to road signs where the Swedish Transport Administration is the responsible authority. As part of a larger inventory of place signs in the counties of Norrbotten and Västerbotten, Lantmäteriet has answered questions and made recommendations concerning names in minority languages in cases concerning road signs. ISOF is an advisory body to Lantmäteriet in these matters.

On behalf of PostNord, Lantmäteriet has produced a list showing the Sami or Meänkieli names of each post name in the minority language area. The list is available via PostNord's website.

The Place-Name Advisory Board is an advisory body within Lantmäteriet. In addition to Lantmäteriet, the Board includes representatives of the Institute for Language and Folklore, the National Heritage Board, the Sami Parliament, *Sveriges hembygdsförbund* [Confederation of local history associations], the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, the Swedish Transport Administration, and the higher education institutions. The Board's task is to facilitate good place names practice being applied throughout Sweden. The Board also has an important role as a discussion forum in which representatives of the government agencies establish contacts. During the period covered by this report, a number of topics related to the territorial minority languages have been discussed, such as orthographies for the Sami

variants, road sign issues and the referral process in place name cases between the Sami Parliament and Lantmäteriet.

## ARTICLE 12

12.1 The Parties shall, where appropriate, take measures in the fields of education and research to foster knowledge of the culture, history, language and religion of their national minorities and of the majority.

12.2 In this context the Parties shall *inter alia* provide adequate opportunities for teacher training and access to textbooks and facilitate contacts among students and teachers of different population groups.

12.3 The Parties undertake to promote equal opportunities for access to education at all levels for persons belonging to national minorities.

**Recommendation from the Council of Europe:** Ensure that textbooks and other teaching and learning materials, as well as the university curricula for future teachers, contain relevant and up-to-date information about national minorities in order to meet the requirements of the national curriculum in this respect.

### An inquiry has been appointed to improve the quality of teaching and learning materials

Access to suitable, high-quality teaching and learning materials is important for both teachers and students. In the Swedish school system, however, teaching and learning materials are not controlled by central government. Teaching and learning materials are mainly produced by a number of private companies. This means that central government has limited influence over what teaching and learning materials are published and used in teaching, even if national curricula and course and subject syllabuses often guide the content of teaching and learning materials and the companies that publish them often actively ensure that essential parts of the course and subject syllabuses are covered in them. The key actors, i.e. central government, the teaching and learning materials publishers, the researchers and the profession, may need to work together to create the conditions for making high-quality teaching and learning materials available. This might include for example how to assure the quality of teaching and learning materials based on the intended learning outcomes for the course and how to guarantee access to teaching and learning materials in the national minority languages and for mother tongue tuition. On 29 November 2019, the Government appointed an inquiry on strengthening school libraries and teaching and learning materials (ToR 2019:91). The inquiry will present its final report on 15 August 2021. The inquiry was commissioned to propose how to facilitate choosing suitable and accessible, high-quality teaching and learning materials.

### Teaching in and about national minorities and national minority languages

As regards support for teaching in and about national minority languages and national minorities, the Swedish National Agency for Education has had a commission for teaching and learning materials since 2013, and since then the Agency has provided these materials in

all national minority languages. The Agency has also produced supporting material for teaching about Sweden's national minorities in various subjects via its website. This material is freely available. As part of the Agency's mission to coordinate teaching in minority languages at the national level and as reported in May 2021, the Swedish National Agency for Education has addressed the question of access to teaching and learning materials. The Institute for Language and Folklore also supplies teaching and learning materials about minority languages and about the minorities via its website. In its appropriations directions for 2021, the Sami Education Board was required to increase the resources spent on developing teaching and learning materials in Sami.

The syllabuses for comprehensive school have been recently revised. As a result of this revision, teaching about the national minorities is now concentrated to and has been strengthened in primarily the subject of civics. The purpose of this change is to allow more time to be spent on the area. All in all, the Swedish National Agency for Education assesses that the changes decided by the Government and which will come into effect on 1 July 2022 entail a broadening and strengthening of the area compared with the current course syllabuses.

In 2020, together with the Swedish National Agency for Education, ISOF held a conference for mother tongue teachers of Romani Chib. The purpose of the conference was to enable mother tongue teachers to meet and share knowledge and experience. The conference was held again in 2021, and this time mother tongue teachers of Yiddish and Meänkieli also participated.

#### **Educational initiatives for the national minorities**

The Swedish National Agency for Education has been commissioned to implement efforts to raise awareness in schools about the Roma as a national minority (Ku2016/01673/DISK). This commission includes investigating what form of support already exists in the municipalities that have ongoing work for Roma inclusion in order to then offer a grant for this purpose. The commission includes disseminating information and knowledge through existing channels, carrying out a targeted initiative in a number of municipalities, and offering a support package to increase knowledge about national minorities in schools with a focus on the Roma. In cooperation with Roma representatives, the Agency has also produced a digital teaching material supplement containing facts and inspirational material about Roma culture, language, religion and history and a dozen teaching tools in Romani Chib that can be used in mother tongue tuition.

The Swedish National Agency for Education and the National Board of Health and Welfare submitted a report to the Government on mediator training for people with Roma language and culture skills that was carried out during the period 2016–2019 (Ku2016/00995/DISK). After these three years, these government agencies assessed that mediator training at Södertörn University College and mediator activities in the municipalities are important initiatives in the work for Roma inclusion, even if the number of participants has been

limited. The Swedish National Agency for Education submitted a report on this commission on 1 March 2021.

Concerning programme and course syllabuses for higher education, the Swedish higher education system is designed so that the Riksdag and the Government have the overarching responsibility for higher education and research, but the higher education institutions are largely autonomous. Within the scope of current regulations, this means that it is the higher education institutions themselves that decide on the allocation of funding internally, the courses and study programmes offered, and the content and design of courses and study programmes. There is thus no provision in any regulation that programme or course syllabuses for teacher education programmes are to contain information on national minorities.

### Information provided to individuals on courses and study programmes in national minority languages

For a few years now, via its appropriations directions the Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR), has been commissioned to monitor, analyse and report on its internal and external targeted efforts in relation to the goal of the minority policy. However, in the Government's written communication to the Riksdag, "Fresh start for a strengthened minority policy" (Comm. 2017/18:282), it emerged that UHR saw an opportunity to strengthen its commission in terms of providing inspiration and information in order to get more people to begin courses and study programmes. In this written communication, the Government states that it agrees with that assessment and is of the view that there is a need to further develop the information provided to individuals who are considering a range of education alternatives.

As a result, the Government decided to add to the UHR's 2020 appropriations directions requiring UHR to also report information that government agencies had provided to private persons about courses and study programmes concerning national minorities or minority languages. The same commission has been given for 2021 and the commission in its entirety now reads that the (UHR) "is to monitor, analyse and report on its internal and external targeted initiatives, such as information to individuals about courses and study programmes, based on the goal of the minority policy. A report on this commission is to be presented to the Stockholm County Administrative Board and the Sami Parliament by 15 November 2021 at the latest."

As part of this commission, UHR has so far held a conference on national minorities and higher education for example, and published news articles related to national minorities and/or minority languages on [www.uhr.se](http://www.uhr.se). UHR has also published five short films in the national minority languages of Lule Sami, South Sami, North Sami, Meänkieli and Finnish. These short films, called *Hjärtespråksfilmer* [Languages close to the heart], are intended to spread knowledge about the national minorities and to inspire students to undertake higher education studies in these languages. They were produced and published based on the wishes

of representatives of the national minorities. The films are subtitled in Swedish and the national minority language and can be viewed on UHR's YouTube channel as well as via UHR's websites [www.uhr.se](http://www.uhr.se) and [www.studera.nu](http://www.studera.nu). Between 1 January and 30 September 2020, the films have been viewed almost 16 000 times in total on YouTube. UHR is also part of the regular educational authorities' consultations with national minority organisations.

### The educational situation for Roma children

In 2019, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) carried out a study on the situation of Roma in Sweden and other countries. The report<sup>4</sup> is based on a survey among a representative sample for the minority group. The report shows that 90 per cent of Roma and Traveller children aged between 4 and 6 participate in preschool education and 99 per cent begin school. The main reason these pupils drop out of school before the age of 15, according to the report, is bullying. One in two parents of Roma children in Sweden in the survey reported that their children had been bullied, which is the highest figure for this indicator in the report.

The City of Stockholm decided to close down the Roma Culture Class at the primary school Hammarbyskolan after it was inspected on 25 August 2016. The Swedish School Inspectorate's inspection showed substantial shortcomings in the teaching and the City of Stockholm, which was the education provider for the school, shared these assessments of the shortcomings exhibited by the school and decided to close down the school in 2018.

### ARTICLE 13

13.1 Within the framework of their education systems, the Parties shall recognise that persons belonging to a national minority have the right to set up and to manage their own private educational and training establishments.

13.2 The exercise of this right shall not entail any financial obligation for the Parties.

Both private natural persons and legal persons can apply for approval as the education provider of an independent preschool, school or out-of-school centre in Sweden. The Swedish School Inspectorate makes decisions to approve private actors as education providers of independent schools, while municipalities decide in cases concerning independent preschools. To be approved as an education provider, the private actor must have acquired knowledge through experience or in another way of the regulations applicable to the establishment, have the financial capacity to comply with the regulations applicable to the establishment, and otherwise be capable of complying with the regulations that apply to education. In addition, the private actor must be assessed as fit and proper. This assessment is to take into account the private actor's willingness and capacity to fulfil their obligations to the community, that the private actor is otherwise law-abiding, and other relevant circumstances. In order to obtain approval, the education provided must not have significant

<sup>4</sup> Roma and Travellers in six countries, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2020

long-term negative consequences for the pupils, or for the part of the school system organised by the community in the municipality where the educational or training establishment is to be operated. If these requirements are met, approval must be given. The requirements apply to all applicants seeking approval, irrespective of the legal structure of the establishment.

All private natural persons or legal persons who are approved as education providers for educational or training establishments under the Education Act are entitled to municipal grants to finance their establishment, regardless of the specialisation of the establishment. The starting point for the grants provisions is that as far as possible the conditions for public and private education providers are to be equal. Grants are given for each pupil in the form of a basic amount and, in some cases, a supplementary amount. The basic amount is determined on the same basis as the municipality applies when allocating resources to its own schools. The private education providers decide themselves how they will utilise these resources. However, education providers, whether municipal or private, must allocate sufficient resources for the educational or training establishment to be able to comply with the statutory requirements on schools.

There are six Sweden Finn independent schools in Sweden with a permit from the Swedish School Inspectorate to provide bilingual tuition. More information on bilingual tuition can be found below in the presentation of measures under Article 14.

## ARTICLE 14

14.1 The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to learn his or her minority language.

14.2 In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if there is sufficient demand, the Parties shall endeavour to ensure, as far as possible and within the framework of their education systems, that persons belonging to those minorities have adequate opportunities for being taught the minority language or for receiving instruction in this language.

14.3 Paragraph 2 of this article shall be implemented without prejudice to the learning of the official language or the teaching in this language.

**Recommendation from the Council of Europe:** Support digital means of teaching in and of minority languages, in particular in the lesser-used minority languages and variants thereof.

### The right to mother tongue tuition

Since 1 January 2019, children in preschool have the right to develop their mother tongue, which under Chapter 8 Section 10 of the Education Act may be a national minority language. According to Chapter 8 Section 12 a of the Education Act, a municipality of residence which



is part of an administrative area must offer children whose parents request it a place in a preschool where the whole or a significant part of the education is provided in Finnish, Meänkieli or Sami. In 2020, the Swedish National Agency for Education had the preschool curriculum, LpFö18, translated into the Finnish, Meänkieli and North, South and Lule Sami languages.

Students who belong to one of the national minorities have the right to mother tongue tuition even if the language is not the student's language of daily social interaction in the home, in compulsory school and equivalent types of schools as well as secondary school and upper secondary school for pupils with special needs. The education provider is obliged to arrange mother tongue tuition in the national minority languages even if only one pupil attending the education provider's school applies for tuition in the language. However, the requirement that a suitable teacher must be available also applies to the national minority languages. The limitation whereby a pupil can only receive mother tongue tuition for a maximum of seven school years if the pupil is receiving the tuition outside the guaranteed classroom hours is not applicable to tuition in the national minority languages. A Roma pupil who is from abroad may also be given mother tongue tuition in two languages if there are special reasons.

It is also possible to study minority languages in the language choices offered within compulsory schools in order to ensure that teaching in minority languages takes place within the timetable for the compulsory school.

Since 2015 there have been syllabuses for compulsory school, compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities, special school and Sami school in the subject mother tongue for the national minority languages Finnish, Romani Chib, Meänkieli and Yiddish – as both first and second languages.

Upper secondary school pupils who belong to one of the national minorities are entitled to tuition in their mother tongue even if the language is not the language of the pupils' daily social interactions in the home. However, the pupil needs to have a good knowledge of the language. Pupils can also study their national minority language – Finnish, Sami, Yiddish, Meänkieli or Romani Chib – as a language choice at upper secondary school or upper secondary school for individuals with learning disabilities. Studies can start at a level based on the pupil's existing skills. Students in upper secondary school can study national minority languages in the context of the subject mother tongue and the subject modern languages. Room for this has been made within the structure of a number of national programmes, and there is room for all pupils to do this, in university entrance programmes as well as in vocational programmes, as individual choices or as extension programmes.

The table below shows the number of pupils in compulsory school participating in mother tongue tuition for minority languages in the school year 2019/20 in Sweden. The table shows that a number of pupils are not participating in this tuition even though they could choose to.

Number of pupils	Entitled	Participating
Sami	746	443
Finnish	9 188	4 833
Meänkieli	394	169
Romani Chib	2 547	740
Yiddish	12	6

The table below shows that for upper secondary schools the number of pupils who have grades in at least one course in a national minority language has varied somewhat but has been at a very low level over time.

The table below shows the number of pupils who have completed their studies in upper secondary school with a grade in at least one course in a national minority language in their secondary school diploma or certificate. The table cannot therefore be compared with the table above since it does not show pupils who participated in the tuition in a particular school year. When there is no number given (..), there were fewer than five pupils in that school year.

	2014	2016	2018	2019	2020
Finnish	192	135	122	131	142
Yiddish	0	0	0	..	..
Meänkieli	8	0	0	5	7
Romani Chib	8	12	12	21	25
Sami	18	16	22	27	23

### Remote teaching

To further facilitate pupils studying their national minority languages, the option of remote teaching has been opened up. Remote teaching means interactive teaching using information and communication technologies (ICT), where pupils and teachers are separated in space but not in time. The option of remote teaching in mother tongue and modern languages classes was introduced into the Education Act as of 1 July 2015 and as of 1 January 2021<sup>5</sup> this option has been extended to remote teaching and distance education in all subjects except the practical and artistic subjects by a new chapter in the Education Act. It also became possible to outsource remote teaching, which occurs in some of the minority languages, in particular

<sup>5</sup> Due to the pandemic, the Government decided on 13 March 2020 on a new ordinance on education in the school system. The ordinance applies to preschool class, compulsory school, compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities, special school, Sami School, upper secondary school and upper secondary school for pupils with special needs and other educational activities where a certain infection is spreading. The aim of the ordinance is to give education providers better opportunities to provide pupils with the education they are entitled to, even if a school has to be kept closed, for example because of high absenteeism among staff or if the education provider, in consultation with an infectious disease control physician, has decided to close the school in order to control the spread of certain infections. The ordinance allows schools to derogate from the provisions governing how the education is to be structured, its scope and how it is to be taught. For example, the new ordinance makes it possible to provide remote teaching or distance education as needed.

the Sami language. The opportunities for the education provider to provide remote teaching in these subjects, even if the school or education provider does not have a registered or qualified teacher or where the number of pupils is insufficient, have thus been improved. Remote teaching may be provided in the subjects mother tongue (national minority languages), Sami in Sami School, modern languages, sign language and to give pupils study guidance in their mother tongue and for integrated Sami tuition in compulsory school. Remote teaching may also be used for study guidance in minority languages.

In 2018, the Government commissioned the Swedish National Agency for Education to organise teacher training in Sami for teachers who are registered but do not have qualifications in Sami as well as for persons who speak and write Sami but who do not have teacher education. The next course starts in the autumn semester of 2021.

**The Swedish National Agency for Education has a designated national responsibility for coordinating questions related to the national minorities and national minority languages**

Since 2019, the Swedish National Education Agency has had a combined responsibility (sectoral responsibility) for questions related to the national minorities and national minority languages within its remit, which involves bringing together, supporting and advocating for the parties concerned. In its appropriations directions for 2021, the Government commissioned the Swedish National Agency for Education to submit proposals on how national coordination of tuition in national minority languages in the school system could be organised in order to strengthen tuition in these languages. Based on the conditions for the five national minority languages and the different types of schools, the Swedish National Agency for Education is to propose how to achieve and organise improved access to and the quality of teaching in national minority languages in schools. Support for tuition in national minority languages, such as access to teaching and learning materials, is to be included in the Swedish National Agency for Education's analysis. In the performance of this commission, the Swedish National Agency for Education is to seek the views of the Swedish Council for Higher Education, the higher education institutions commissioned to run courses and teacher training in the national minority languages, the Sami Education Board, the Swedish National Council of Adult Education, and the Institute for Language and Folklore. The Swedish National Agency for Education is to also seek the views of interested parties and of representatives of the national minorities. The Swedish National Agency for Education reported on the commission on 15 May 2021.

### **Bilingual tuition**

Chapter 9, Section 12 of the Education Ordinance states that for pupils who have a language other than Swedish as their daily means of interaction with their parents, parts of the teaching in years 1–6 may be organised in this language. For Finnish this also applies in years 7–9. The Government sees bilingual tuition as an important part of language revitalisation and the Government has therefore decided to extend the pilot activities on bilingual tuition in compulsory school until 30 June 2021.

## Supply of teachers

One major obstacle for education providers in organising teaching in national minority languages, whether in regular classrooms or remotely, is the great shortage of teachers in the minority languages and the shortage of teachers in Sweden more generally. Teachers who are qualified to teach in national minority languages do not generally work full-time. See the table below, which highlights the availability of teachers in minority languages and their percentage of full-time service in compulsory and secondary schools in the school year 2019/20. For Romani Chib, there are so few teachers and so many students that it will be difficult to meet the demand.

Language	Number of trained teachers	Percentage of full-time	Full-time
Sami	62	61	38
Finnish	228	62	142
Meänkieli	12	42	5
Romani Chib	39	42	16
Yiddish	3	11	0

The Government has taken the matter of increasing the number of teachers qualified in minority languages further. The memorandum was referenced under Recommendation 3 above. The memorandum *Ökad kvalitet i lärarutbildningen och fler lärare i skolan (U2021/00301)* [Increased quality in teacher training and more teachers in schools] proposes that the Degree of Master of Arts in Primary Education – Pre-School and School Years 1–3 and the Degree of Master of Arts in Primary Education – School Years 4–6 should be able to include mother tongue, that is, national minority languages. The Government is of the view that the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Primary Education should therefore be changed so that subject studies in mother tongue, including national minority languages, can be included in both these specialisations. Furthermore, the memorandum proposes the introduction of a provision for postgraduate certification to teach in the subject mother tongue, including national minority languages, to apply to those with a Degree of Master of Arts/Science in Secondary Education and to those with a Degree of Master of Arts in Primary Education. Under the new provision, it should be possible to give teacher certification to those who have supplemented their degree with further subject studies amount to at least 30 credits, or equivalent, in language didactics specialising in teaching the subject mother tongue or the national minority languages. The memorandum has been circulated for comment and is now being prepared in the Government Offices of Sweden.

The previous commission to certain higher education institutions to build up and develop subject teacher education in different minority languages has been revised from 2021 onwards. The previous wording “continue the expansion of subject teacher education in [minority language in question]” has been changed to “to work with development and scholarly education, which is to include teacher education programmes. This work is to promote teaching in preschool, compulsory school, secondary school and higher education in

[minority language in question].” New for 2021 is also that Yiddish is covered by the commission to work with the development of teacher education programmes. The commissions to the higher education institutions are specified in the annual appropriations directions to each higher education institution.

The reason for the change in the commission was that both the Government and the higher education institutions commissioned to provide teacher education and minority languages considered that the commission description was too narrow. The higher education institutions have been working for many years to try to create teacher education programmes in these subjects, which, in most cases, have functioned as intended. However, a broader formulation of this commission will allow the higher education institutions to adapt their efforts to the different challenges of each of the national minority languages. The new formulation also opens the way for solutions which, in the long term, can increase the supply of teachers in the national minority languages, in both the higher education institutions themselves and in Sweden’s schools. Under the new commission, the higher education institutions can carry out development work, offer language courses at beginner level as well as in the form of continuing professional development for existing mother tongue teachers, develop scholarly course literature, support students unfamiliar with higher education studies, develop Nordic cooperation, invest in research and build up academic environments, etc. Giving the commission a broader academic application can increase access to staff with doctoral level education, which in turn can lead to more teaching staff who can teach in the minority languages at higher education level. Among other things, the new commission description is based on the views of the affected higher education institutions, their proposals and their experiences of working with this commission over a number of years. The new commission was also preceded by a written consultation process with the minority group organisations. Umeå University is responsible for Sami and Meänkieli, Stockholm University for Finnish, Södertörn University College for Romani Chib, and Lund University is responsible for Yiddish. In addition to these commissions focusing on teacher education, Uppsala University is commissioned each year to offer education in Finnish. Uppsala University offers courses in Finnish at first cycle level, but Finnish can also be studied at second cycle level and at third cycle level within the broader main subject area of Finno-Ugric languages. Umeå University also offers courses in Finnish. In addition to Umeå University, Sami can also be studied at Uppsala University.

In February 2020, the Government decided to extend the *Läraryftet* (an initiative targeting qualified teachers who want to increase the number of subjects in which they are qualified to teach and offering a slower pace of study) to 2025 and to expand it to cover more teachers, education stages and subjects. During 2021, courses in Finnish for mother tongue teachers (60 credits), corresponding to one year of full-time study are being offered at Stockholm University.

### Activities with Roma mediators in preschool and school have been successful

As part of the Government's strategy for Roma inclusion (Comm. 2011/12:56) for the period 2012–2032, the National Agency for Education was commissioned to produce a training programme for mediators with Roma language and cultural skills to serve as a link between individuals and public activities. The training programme, which started in December 2016, has been extended until 2020 (Ku2016/00995/DISK). The mediators work in preschools and schools in the municipalities that have participated in the strategy's pilot scheme for Roma inclusion. This activity has contributed to more and more Roma children attending preschool, more and more Roma pupils completing compulsory school, and upper secondary school becoming more and more important for Roma pupils. The Swedish National Agency for Education reported on the commission on 1 March 2021.

### The Sami Education Board has been strengthened

With the aim of strengthening Sami tuition, for a number of years the Government has been increasing the administrative appropriation to the Sami Education Board, reaching SEK 58 million for 2021. For example, in the budget bill for 2021, an increase was decided, intended to boost the Sami Education Board's work with integrated teaching and to expand the production of teaching and learning materials in Sami.

According to its instructions, the Swedish National Agency for Education has had an overall responsibility for questions relating to the national minorities and national minority languages within its remit, which involves bringing together, supporting and advocating for the parties involved. In order to increase the supply of qualified teachers in Sami, since autumn 2018 (U2017/05022/S in part, U2018/00760/S), the Swedish National Agency for Education has been offering a study programme consisting of four 7.5 credit courses for teachers in Sami that will continue to run until further notice. The number of participants is approximately 20 per instance of the programme. The total number of participants is equivalent to approximately two-thirds of the total number of mother tongue teachers in Sami. The next study programme starts in the autumn semester of 2021 and targets practising teachers, employed by an education provider and who teach one of the following subjects: Sami in Sami School, Sami as mother tongue, or Sami as a modern language. The study programme does not require any prior knowledge except that the participants must meet the requirements above.

## ARTICLE 15

The Parties shall create the conditions necessary for the effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in cultural, social and economic life and in public affairs, in particular those affecting them.



The community consultation obligation has been clarified and support material has been developed.

The participation and influence of national minorities is one of the cornerstones of Sweden's minority policy. According to the Minorities Act, Sweden's minorities are to be given the opportunity to influence matters affecting them. Furthermore, the administrative authorities are obliged to consult as far as possible with the minorities on such matters. This obligation applies equally to all minorities in all municipalities. Today, Sweden's minorities are consulted at all levels in the society, but the scope of this consultation and methods used vary widely. At municipal level, minorities in the municipalities in the administrative area for one or more of the languages Finnish, Meänkieli and Sami are the most widely consulted. The interpretation of what consultation means and how it should be carried out differs and the conditions for consultation also differ in different municipalities or within different administrative authorities. In light of this, a new provision has been introduced into the Minorities Act which clarifies that consultation means a structured dialogue with the minorities with the aim of being able to take their views and needs into account in decision-making. In addition, a new provision has been introduced which regulates the obligation of the administrative authorities to consult with children and young people in particular, on matters affecting them. The provision also provides that the arrangements for consultation with children and young people should be adapted to their circumstances.

The Stockholm County Administrative Board and Sami Parliament have developed a toolbox of materials, good examples and tips for consultation with minorities and also with children and young people. The toolbox consists of links, documents and films and is intended to serve as support for municipalities and regions in the implementation of Sweden's minority policy. The material is available for download from the website [www.minorit.se](http://www.minorit.se).

The strengthening of this obligation in the Act has led to a greater demand for consultation with the organisations representing Sweden's national minorities. National organisations representing the national minorities can receive funding for their activities from the Stockholm County Administrative Board. In 2020, this funding amounted to SEK 6.5 million and was distributed among 18 national organisations representing Jews, Roma, Sweden Finns and Tornedalians. In 2018, the Government announced that a similar government grant was to be introduced for national organisations representing the Sami people as well. Many of the national minority young people's organisations received grants for organising from the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society. For 2020, additional funding has been paid out to these young people's organisations because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **The Government is working on a Sami consultation procedure**

The Government intends to present a proposal to enact a new law on a formalised consultation procedure in matters of particular importance to the Sami people (consultation procedure). The consultation procedure will enhance the right of Sami representatives to participate in decision-making processes and is a step in strengthening the Sami people's opportunities for influence and participation on matters affecting the conditions for Sami

people. The purpose of consultations is to foster the influence of the Sami people over their affairs.

The proposal imposes an obligation on the Government and central administrative authorities to consult Sami representatives on matters which may have particular relevance to the Sami people. The consultation is to be carried out before the decision is taken on a matter and as far as possible is to be coordinated with consultation procedures and other similar procedures that are to be carried out in relation to a matter. The Sami Parliament is the body to be consulted as the representative of the Sami people.

#### **ARTICLE 16**

The Parties shall refrain from measures which alter the proportions of the population in areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities and are aimed at restricting the rights and freedoms flowing from the principles enshrined in the present framework Convention.

Developments in Sweden do not necessitate any further reporting under this Article. For more information, see previous reports.

#### **ARTICLE 17**

17.1 The Parties undertake not to interfere with the right of persons belonging to national minorities to establish and maintain free and peaceful contacts across frontiers with persons lawfully staying in other States, in particular those with whom they share an ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, or a common cultural heritage.

17.2 The Parties undertake not to interfere with the right of persons belonging to national minorities to participate in the activities of non-governmental organisations, both at the national and international levels.

Developments in Sweden do not necessitate any further reporting under this Article. For more information, see previous reports.

See Articles 2 and 18 for information on Sweden's cross-border work in the area of minority policy.

#### **ARTICLE 18**

18.1 The Parties shall endeavour to conclude, where necessary, bilateral and multilateral agreements with other States, in particular neighbouring States, in order to ensure the protection of persons belonging to the national minorities concerned.

18.2 Where relevant, the Parties shall take measures to encourage transfrontier cooperation.

## Nordic Sami Convention

Ministers and the presidents of the Sami Parliaments from Sweden, Norway and Finland recently stated a goal that an agreed text should be ready for signature by the end of spring 2021, so that each country can then proceed with its accession and ratification processes. The Sami Parliament and the parties which are particularly involved are thus currently working intensively to complete this text.

The purpose of this Convention is to affirm and strengthen the rights of the Sami people. It is the first regional agreement with an indigenous people of its kind. The Convention means enhanced opportunities for a more coordinated approach to Nordic Sami policy. The Convention provides good opportunities for follow-up through dialogue, but also through reports and the sharing of experience and information on best practice. It will be significant for a more uniform Nordic Sami policy. Tools for improved dialogue between central government, government agencies and the Sami people will follow from the Convention.

The Convention establishes a number of important principles for the Sami people: the right to self-determination; the Sami Parliament's right to self-governance; central government's consultation obligation; strengthened protection of Sami cultural heritage; transfrontier cooperation; that the governments of the three countries are to consider the combined effect on the Sami people's culture, language and social life of various encroachments on natural resources; the protection of industries including hunting, fishing, natural sources of livelihood, and *Duodji* (Sami handicrafts).

## The Nordic Government Officials Body for Sami Affairs

The Nordic Government Officials Body for Sami Affairs (NÄS) was founded in 2001 and consists of officials from the three Nordic countries' government offices and the Sami Parliament.

Its articles of association state that NÄS meets as required but at least once per year. In recent years, when negotiations on a Nordic Sami Convention have been under way, the importance of NÄS cooperation has diminished somewhat, since most issues have been dealt with in the negotiations on the Convention.

Sami issues that apply to the development of the language, Sami culture, industries and the community life of the Sami people are treated in NÄS.

## ILO 169

The Government will, in accordance with what Sweden has communicated to the UN Human Rights Council, work towards a ratification of ILO Convention no 169. But ultimately, a ratification of ILO Convention no 169 is a matter for the Riksdag to decide on.

### Nordic cooperation in the area of languages

The Nordic Council of Ministers has initiated an effort to promote and support the national minority languages and other smaller languages in the Nordic countries through the initiative *Små språk i Norden* [Small languages in the Nordic countries]. The Institute for Language and Folklore has been commissioned by the Government to host the initiative. The initiative is ongoing until 2022 and the aim is to develop Nordic efforts to support the minority languages, and to spark interest and increase knowledge about how education and culture can strengthen the smaller languages in the Nordic countries. Work is also ongoing to develop ways to follow up the Nordic Language Declaration, which includes goals for Nordic Language Cooperation's promotion of national minority languages.

The Sami Parliamentary Council (SPR), which is a cooperation body for the three Nordic Sami Parliaments, has initiated the Nordic Sami language cooperation body Sámi Giellagáldu. Sámi Giellagáldu, together with the Nordic Sami Parliaments, is responsible for developing Sami and offering language assistance to the public. There are language sections for the different languages that are responsible for the standardisation of the written language and new terminology in each of the languages.