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

**COMMENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SWEDEN
ON THE OPINION OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE
PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES IN SWEDEN**

Sweden welcomes the report of the Committee on the framework Convention since it supports Sweden's efforts to promote the national minorities. Many of the issues raised by the Committee are consistent with the work carried out in Sweden. We would only like to make the following clarifications and observations regarding a few paragraphs.

21, 22 and 73. A new civil law prohibiting *inter alia* ethnic discrimination in a number of areas of society, including goods/services and housing, entered into force on 1 July 2003.

46. As regards the print media the Advisory Committee refers to the Statute of Annual Press Subsidies and especially Article 11 in Chapter 2. Sweden wishes to make a clarification in this regard.

Indeed the statute stipulates that the contents of the publication receiving subsidies should be mainly in Swedish. But it also stipulates that newspapers, which are not written mainly in Swedish, will be considered as equal if they fulfil the general requirements as well as the three requirements mentioned in the report. The purpose of these requirements is to make sure that the newspaper has a Swedish connection. Newspapers in Swedish also have to fulfil the third requirement of at least 90 % circulation in Sweden. According to the statute the publication should be distributed mainly in Sweden and the Swedish Press Subsidies Council has in its own regulation decided that this should be interpreted as a circulation of at least 90 % in Sweden

Hence the requirements are not to be seen as exceptional as was stated by mistake in Sweden's additional information of 15 November 2002.

51 and 85. The Advisory Committee expresses the opinion that the Swedish authorities should, aside from the use of Sami and Finnish together with Swedish, also use Meänkieli place names on maps, signposts and so on in areas where the language is spoken. This is however already being done. The National Heritage Act (1988:950) states, as the Committee has noted, that Swedish, Sami and Finnish place names should be used together as far as possible. According to the Government Bill 1998/1999:114, which preceded the law, Finnish was indicated to comprise also Meänkieli.

This summer the National Land Survey of Sweden is working with the national mapping in some of the northern areas of Sweden, *inter alia* Tornedalen. This work also implies to complete the geographical information with topographical indications in Meänkieli. When this work is done, the Swedish National Road Administration can use the information in their road signs.

59 and 92. The new Authority for school improvement has been commissioned on 2 June 2003 to improve the conditions for education in segregated areas. The authority shall for example find and spread good examples of innovative pedagogic methods and solutions regarding matters of the organization of mother tongue instruction. International experiences shall be observed as well as results from research. A first report shall be delivered in November 2003 and a final report in December 2005.

The web-site "Theme Mother tongue" is an initiative by the National agency for education in order to inform pupils and parents about mother tongue education.

60 and 93. According to a recent Government decision a four year pilot project with bilingual education in grades 7-9 will start as from 1 August 2003. This means that bilingual education can be provided during the whole nine-year compulsory schooling.

The aim is to reduce the differences in school results depending on the social and ethnic background of the pupils. The Authority for school improvement shall support the pilot project and follow the evaluations of the project done by the municipalities.

86. Textbooks are produced in a free market and there is no state control nor responsibility. However in the curriculum the head teacher is responsible for ensuring that teaching materials of a good quality are available