

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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MIN-LANG(2024)6

EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

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

SWEDEN

Introduction

1. The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (hereafter referred to as “the Charter”) is a treaty of the Council of Europe putting obligations on its states parties to protect and promote the country’s traditional minority languages in all fields of public life: education, judicial authorities, administrative authorities and public services, media, cultural activities and facilities, economic and social life, and transfrontier exchanges. The Charter was ratified by Sweden on 9 February 2000, entered into force on 1 June 2000, and applies to the following languages: Finnish, Meänkieli and Sami under Part II and Part III of the Charter, and Romani and Yiddish under Part II of the Charter.

2. The Committee of Experts monitors the implementation of the Charter. Each state party shall present a periodical report on the implementation of the Charter every five years. On the basis of the periodical report, the Committee of Experts adopts an evaluation report in which it makes “**recommendations for immediate action**” and “further recommendations” on how to improve the protection and promotion of the regional or minority languages in the state concerned. Based on this evaluation report, the Committee of Ministers adopts its recommendations to the state party.

3. Two and a half years after the due date of its periodical report, the state party shall present information on the implementation of every recommendation for immediate action¹ that the Committee of Experts has made in its evaluation report. The Committee of Experts then adopts an evaluation of the implementation of these recommendations. The “further recommendations” by the Committee of Experts are examined after reception of the next periodical report and the on-the-spot visit to the state party. Five-yearly periodical reports shall contain comprehensive information about the implementation of all Charter undertakings and all recommendations by the Committee of Experts and the Committee of Ministers.

4. Sweden submitted the **information on the implementation of the recommendations for immediate action** contained in the Committee of Experts’ eighth evaluation report² on 4 December 2023. This **evaluation of the implementation of the recommendations for immediate action** is based on the information received from the Swedish authorities, as well as from representatives of the minority language speakers pursuant to Article 16.2 of the Charter.³ As far as the compliance of Sweden with all its undertakings under the Charter is concerned, the Committee of Experts refers to its eighth evaluation report. The Committee of Experts will examine the implementation of all of the undertakings concerning all of the minority languages in the next evaluation report.

5. This evaluation was adopted by the Committee of Experts on 7 March 2024.

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

² Eighth evaluation report of the Committee of Experts on Sweden, [MIN-LANG \(2022\) 16](#).

³ In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Committee of Experts ([MIN-LANG\(2019\)7](#)), Rule 17, paras. 1-6.

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

I. General issues

Reporting

6. The authorities have informed the Committee of Experts that they have not consulted the representatives of the minority language users when preparing the information on the implementation of the recommendations for immediate action. The Committee of Experts regrets this and reiterates that, in conformity with Articles 6 and 7.4 of the Charter, it is necessary to inform the organisations concerned of the recommendations made during the monitoring and to take into consideration the needs and wishes expressed by them in the implementation and related reporting.⁴ The Committee of Experts also finds the level of detail in the reporting on Meänkieli, Sami and Yiddish inadequate, since not all of the more detailed reports on Finnish (and Romani) apply for all matters concerning Meänkieli, Sami and Yiddish, and bits of information concerning these languages are missing altogether. The Committee of Experts also reminds the Swedish authorities to ensure the dissemination of the Committee of Experts' evaluation reports and related Committee of Ministers recommendations on their official websites.

Education

7. The Swedish authorities confirmed that the National Agency of Education could be tasked with collecting data on national minority languages teaching at preschool level, since no such statistics exist at present. There is a special regulation in the Law on National minorities and minority languages (2010) for Finnish, Meänkieli and Sami, providing the possibility to receive preschool services fully or to a substantial part in the respective minority language. It seems that almost 20% of the municipalities of the administrative areas of the three languages have spent no money at all for preschool education⁵. For municipalities outside the administrative areas, there are no statistics for the use of national minority languages in preschool. The Swedish authorities have taken no steps to increase bilingual education for the three Part III languages, Finnish, Meänkieli and Sami.

Staff reductions in public media

8. The Committee of Experts was informed by the representatives of the speakers of Finnish that Swedish public service media are compelled to reduce their staff, including those for the minority languages. According to the representatives of the speakers, this action violates the terms outlined in the Swedish media license agreement for public media (2020-2025). The reductions in staff are disproportionate when compared to general cuts, and there has been a lack of consultation with representatives of the national minorities affected. Given that media play an important role in the promotion of minority languages, the Committee of Experts asks the authorities to ensure their stable presence in media platforms, so as to support the use of these languages in public life. The Committee of Experts asks the authorities to report on this development in the next periodical report.

⁴ See, for example, the Evaluation by the Committee of Experts of the Implementation of the Recommendations for Immediate Action contained in the Committee of Experts' seventh evaluation report on Hungary ([MIN-LANG \(2020\) 14](#)), para. 6, or the Evaluation by the Committee of Experts of the Implementation of the Recommendations for Immediate Action contained in the Committee of Experts' fifth evaluation report on the United Kingdom and Isle of Man ([MIN-LANG \(2021\) 3](#)), para. 7.

⁵ See, <https://catalog.lansstyrelsen.se/store/39/resource/288>.

II. Recommendations for immediate action

1. Finnish

Recommendation for immediate action

a. Extend the number of hours dedicated to teaching of and in Finnish in primary and secondary schools.

Implementation measures taken by the Swedish authorities

9. The authorities state that they are not currently setting a number of hours dedicated to teaching of and in Finnish in primary and secondary education. According to them, in both compulsory⁶ and upper secondary schools, there is a shortage of teachers for minority languages due to the limited number of speakers. The Swedish National Agency has been assigned by the government the task to coordinate and plan the accessibility of education in minority languages, aiming to address this shortage and attract more qualified teachers in the future.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

10. The Committee of Experts notes that the number of hours dedicated to teaching of and in Finnish in primary and secondary schools has not been increased and therefore concludes that the recommendation has not yet been implemented.

11. The Committee of Experts reiterates that in order to become fluent and able to transmit a language, it is necessary that a pupil is exposed to a sufficient number of teaching hours. For that reason, an increase in the number of teachers dedicated to teaching of and in Finnish is needed. In this context, measures should be taken to enhance the attractiveness of a teaching career in minority language education. This could include offering a cost-of-living allowance for teacher candidates, providing scholarships for participants in primary and secondary school teacher training, and working towards improving the overall esteem of the teaching profession.⁷ As stated in the eighth evaluation report, teaching of Finnish mostly takes place after school hours, and consists of one hour per week. This affects the prestige of the minority language teaching, and the willingness of pupils to choose instruction of Finnish as a mother tongue. In addition, the government has proposed that the extra teaching hours (Swedish *elevenst va!*) will be cancelled on 1 July 2024.⁸ At least for some pupils, this has been a possibility to have more than one hour per week of mother tongue instruction. The Committee of Experts asks the Swedish authorities to report on the effects of this in the next periodical report.

Recommendation for immediate action

b. Take further steps to develop a structured policy concerning teacher training at all educational levels, in co-operation with the Finnish speakers.

Implementation measures taken by the Swedish authorities

12. The information provided by the authorities does not clarify whether they have taken further steps to develop a structured policy concerning teacher training at all educational levels, in cooperation with the Finnish speakers.

⁶ The Swedish educational system is compulsory for pupils between the age of 6 to 16.

⁷ See Evaluation by the Committee of Experts of the Implementation of the Recommendations for Immediate Action contained in the Committee of Experts' seventh evaluation report on Hungary, [MIN-LANG \(2020\) 14](#), para.9.

⁸ Government proposition, 2023/24:20, Better adapted teaching time in compulsory school, special school and Sámi school.

13. In 2021, the government took steps to give more importance to education in minority languages in four universities.⁹ This new emphasis extends beyond the training of subject teachers, as universities are now guided to actively encourage the teaching of minority languages across all educational levels, from preschool to university.

14. Starting in 2022, a new ordinance (2021:1335) governs preschool and teacher education. This ordinance allows students to include minority languages in a teacher degree for the lower levels of primary school (preschool class to year 4-6). The Swedish Council for Higher Education is currently developing entry requirements for these courses, set to be implemented in 2024.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

15. The Committee of Experts welcomes that universities will promote teaching in minority languages from preschool to university. However, it also notes that the authorities have not developed a structured policy regarding teacher training at all educational levels, in co-operation with the Finnish speakers. The fact that there are not sufficient teachers of Finnish at each stage of education hampers the provision and continuity of teaching in and of Finnish. Furthermore, the authorities should take measures so that municipalities fully implement the Charter through the Education Act and the Act on National Minorities and Minority Languages. Therefore, the Committee of Experts concludes that the recommendation is not yet implemented.

Recommendation for immediate action

c. Extend the grounds set out in the Discrimination Act so as to cover explicitly discrimination based on language.
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Implementation measures taken by the Swedish authorities

16. According to the authorities, there are currently no plans to explore the possibility of extending the provisions outlined in the Discrimination Act to explicitly encompass discrimination based on language. According to them, protection against discrimination includes ethnicity, covering factors like national or ethnic origin and skin colour. National minorities are also protected, and discrimination based on language requirements may be addressed under the protection against ethnicity-based discrimination.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

17. Given that the grounds outlined in the Discrimination Act have not been extended to explicitly cover discrimination based on language, the Committee of Experts concludes that the recommendation has not been implemented. It regrets that the authorities did not follow up on this recommendation, also formulated by other Council of Europe monitoring bodies.¹⁰

18. The Committee of Experts reiterates that violations of rights related to ethnicity and language manifest differently in daily life, with instances where language alone serves as the basis for discrimination. The legal procedure and the evidence supporting the claims based on the violation of language rights are also different and cannot be replaced with the ones intended to remedy the violation of rights based on ethnicity.¹¹ The Committee of Experts therefore urges the authorities to implement the recommendation.

⁹ See Information Document on the implementation of the Recommendations for Immediate Action based on the 8th monitoring cycle, submitted by Sweden, 4 December 2023, [MIN-LANG \(2023\) IRIA 4](#), p.6.

¹⁰ See 5th Opinion on Sweden of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, 11 October 2023, [ACFC/OP/V/\(2023\)4](#), para.69.

¹¹ See Eighth Evaluation Report on Sweden, [MIN-LANG \(2022\) 16](#), para. 13.

2. Meänkieli

Recommendation for immediate action

a. Extend the number of hours dedicated to teaching of and in Meänkieli in primary and secondary schools.

Implementation measures taken by the Swedish authorities

19. The information provided by the authorities concerning teaching of and in Finnish in primary and secondary schools (see para. 9) applies to Meänkieli accordingly.

20. Representatives of the Meänkieli speakers have also informed the Committee of Experts that the number of teaching hours for Meänkieli in primary and secondary schools has not increased.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

21. With regard to the implementation of the recommendation, the Committee of Experts refers to its conclusion regarding Finnish (see paras. 10 and 11), which applies to Meänkieli accordingly. There are very few pupils being taught Meänkieli as mother tongue. The Committee of Experts stresses that the lack of implementation of this recommendation is detrimental to the vitality of the Meänkieli language.

Recommendation for immediate action

b. Take further steps to develop a structured policy concerning teacher training at all education levels, in co-operation with the Meänkieli speakers.

Implementation measures taken by the Swedish authorities

22. The information provided by the authorities concerning Finnish (see paras. 12, 13, and 14) applies to Meänkieli accordingly.

23. Representatives of the Meänkieli speakers have informed the Committee of Experts that teachers who want to get a formal degree in Meänkieli have to finance their further training themselves, unlike speakers of Sami and Yiddish who wish to become teachers.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

24. With regard to the implementation of the recommendation, the Committee of Experts refers to its conclusion regarding Finnish (see para. 15), which applies to Meänkieli accordingly.

25. The Committee of Experts notes that measures increasing the attractiveness of the profession of teachers are an essential aspect of a structured policy concerning teacher training. It therefore invites the authorities to explore the aforementioned complaint about financing the further training for becoming a teacher from the representatives of the Meänkieli speakers in consultation with those concerned.

Recommendation for immediate action

c. Extend the grounds set out in the Discrimination Act so as to cover explicitly discrimination based on language.

Implementation measures taken by the Swedish authorities

26. The information provided by the authorities concerning Finnish (see para. 16) applies to Meänkieli accordingly.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

27. With regard to the implementation of the recommendation, the Committee of Experts refers to its conclusion regarding Finnish (see paras. 17 and 18), which applies to Meänkieli accordingly.

3. Romani

Recommendation for immediate action

a. Extend the number of hours dedicated to teaching of and in Romani in primary and secondary schools.

Implementation measures taken by the Swedish authorities

28. The information provided by the authorities concerning teaching of and in Finnish in primary and secondary schools (see para. 9) applies to Romani accordingly.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

29. The evaluation by the Committee of Experts concerning the number of hours dedicated to teaching of and in Finnish in primary and secondary schools (see paras. 10 and 11) applies to Romani accordingly.

Recommendation for immediate action

b. Take further steps to develop a structured policy concerning teacher training at all education levels, in co-operation with the Romani speakers.

Implementation measures taken by the Swedish authorities

30. The information provided by the authorities concerning Finnish (see paras. 12, 13, and 14) applies to Romani accordingly.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

31. With regard to the implementation of the recommendation, the Committee of Experts refers to its conclusion regarding Finnish (see para. 15), which applies to Romani accordingly.

Recommendation for immediate action**c. Take steps to implement the action plan for the promotion of the Romani language.****Implementation measures taken by the Swedish authorities**

32. According to the authorities, in 2022, the Södertörn University took on a project to strengthen and develop measures for revitalising the Romani language. The university recruited project coordinators, organised consultations with the Roma minority, and facilitated student-led meetings to enhance networking among Roma students. The authorities further state that the Institute for Language and Folklore is entrusted with awarding grants to projects dedicated to revitalising minority languages. In 2022, 15 projects received funding to support efforts aimed at revitalising Romani.

33. In 2023, The National Agency for Education and the Institute for Language and Folklore have organised two professional development workshops for minority language teachers addressing teachers of Romani.

34. In 2022, the government asked the National Library of Sweden to establish a Romani resource library which functions as resource to Romani speakers and Sweden's municipalities and is tasked with promoting the provision of media in this language. The resource library opened to the public in April 2023.

35. The Stockholm County Administrative Board launched a web-based course on the Act (2009:724) on National Minorities and Minority Languages in 2022. The course provides an introduction to the act and the responsibilities of the public sector.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

36. The Committee of Experts notes that the authorities have taken steps to promote Romani in different fields of public life, including education and media. It welcomes these measures and invites the authorities to design and implement further promotional measures relevant under Article 7 of the Charter.

Recommendation for immediate action**d. Extend the grounds set out in the Discrimination Act so as to cover explicitly discrimination based on language.****Implementation measures taken by the Swedish authorities**

37. The information provided by the authorities concerning Finnish (see para. 16) applies to Romani accordingly.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

38. With regard to the implementation of the recommendation, the Committee of Experts refers to its conclusion regarding Finnish (see paras. 17 and 18), which applies to Romani accordingly.

4. Sami

Recommendation for immediate action

a. Extend the number of hours dedicated to teaching of and in Sami in primary and secondary schools.

Implementation measures taken by the Swedish authorities

39. The information provided by the authorities concerning teaching of and in Finnish in primary and secondary schools (see para. 9) applies to Sami accordingly.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

40. The evaluation by the Committee of Experts concerning the number of hours dedicated to teaching of and in Finnish in primary and secondary schools (see paras. 10 and 11) applies to Sami accordingly.

Recommendation for immediate action

b. Take further steps to develop a structured policy concerning teacher training at all education levels, in co-operation with the Sami speakers.

Implementation measures taken by the Swedish authorities

41. The information provided by the authorities concerning Finnish (see paras. 12, 13, and 14) applies to Sami accordingly.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

42. The evaluation by the Committee of Experts concerning teacher training for Finnish (see para. 15) applies to Sami accordingly.

Recommendation for immediate action

c. Extend the grounds set out in the Discrimination Act so as to cover explicitly discrimination based on language.

Implementation measures taken by the Swedish authorities

43. The information provided by the authorities concerning Finnish (see para. 16) applies to Sami accordingly.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

44. The evaluation by the Committee of Experts concerning Finnish (see paras. 17 and 18) applies to Sami accordingly.

5. Yiddish

Recommendation for immediate action

a. Extend the number of hours dedicated to teaching of and in Yiddish in primary and secondary schools.

Implementation measures taken by the Swedish authorities

45. The information provided by the authorities concerning teaching of and in Finnish in primary and secondary schools (see para. 9) applies to Yiddish accordingly.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

46. The evaluation by the Committee of Experts concerning Finnish (see paras. 10 and 11) applies to Yiddish accordingly.

Recommendation for immediate action

b. Take further steps to develop a structured policy concerning teacher training at all education levels, in co-operation with the Yiddish speakers.

Implementation measures taken by the Swedish authorities

47. The information provided by the authorities concerning Finnish (see paras. 12, 13, and 14) applies to Yiddish accordingly.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

48. The evaluation by the Committee of Experts concerning teacher training for Finnish (see para. 15) applies to Yiddish accordingly. In addition, the Committee of Experts asks for a more detailed report on the efforts to develop teacher training for Yiddish.

Recommendation for immediate action

c. Extend the grounds set out in the Discrimination Act so as to cover explicitly discrimination based on language.

Implementation measures taken by the Swedish authorities

49. The information provided by the authorities concerning Finnish (see para. 16) applies to Yiddish accordingly.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

50. The evaluation by the Committee of Experts concerning Finnish (see paras. 17 and 18) applies to Yiddish accordingly.

Communication to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe

The Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, while acknowledging the efforts of the Swedish authorities to comply with their undertakings under the Charter, has in its eighth evaluation report (MIN-LANG (2022) 16) made “recommendations for immediate action” and “further recommendations” on how to improve the protection and promotion of the regional or minority languages in Sweden.

In accordance with the Committee of Ministers Decisions of 28 November 2018 (CM/Del/Dec(2018)1330/10.4e), Sweden had to present information on the implementation of the recommendations for immediate action, which contain the priority measures that should be taken by the state party. Sweden presented this information on 4 December 2023. In the present evaluation, the Committee of Experts has examined the implementation of these recommendations.

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

1. take note of the evaluation made by the Committee of Experts of the implementation of the recommendations for immediate action by Sweden and invite the Swedish authorities to disseminate it to the competent national authorities and relevant stakeholders;
2. reiterate its Recommendation CM/RecChL(2023)2 and invite the Swedish authorities to present their next periodical report by 1 June 2026 in the required format.