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EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

Information Document
on the implementation of the
Recommendations for Immediate Action
based on the 8th monitoring cycle

Submitted by Sweden

**Ministry of Culture****Information Document on the Implementation of the Recommendations for Immediate Action based on the 8th monitoring cycle.****1. Introduction**

Reference is made to the Eight Evaluation Report on Sweden on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

The Committee of Ministers has invited the authorities of Sweden to submit information on the implementation of recommendations for immediate action by December 1, 2023. We welcome this invitation and hereby submit our report. We will also take this opportunity to thank the Committee of Ministers and the Committee of Experts for its efforts in drafting the opinion.

This report provides information for immediate action as presented in the Eight Evaluation Report on Sweden. The recommendations follow the order in the Report.

The Government Offices would also like to take this opportunity to notify the Committee of Ministers and the Committee of Experts of a factual error in the Eight Evaluation Report. The Evaluation Report states that “30 higher-education credits are offered as incentives to the students who continue learning Meänkieli in secondary schools”. This statement is not correct, no higher-education credits are offered to students studying Meänkieli in secondary schools.

The Ministry of Culture has prepared the report in cooperation with other ministries concerned.

1.1 Specific update

Language Centres

During the Committees visit the Government Offices of Sweden informed that language centres for Finnish, Meänkieli, Romani Chib and Yiddish have been established and are operated by the Institute of Language and Folklore (Isof). The language centres have contributed to a greater knowledge about the national minority languages in Sweden.

The centres have funding through 2024 and the Government Offices have no update regarding the funding after this period.

The language centre for Sami, operated by the Sami Parliament, has permanent funding. Besides the permanent funding, the language centre for Sami also has additional funding through 2024.

Funded projects promoting regional and minority languages

During 2022 Isof received SEK 13 million to distribute to projects promoting national minority languages. A total of 117 projects received funding. These projects have contributed to a greater knowledge about the national minority languages in Sweden.

For 2023 Isof has received SEK 10 million for this purpose.

National minorities in the curricula

From the autumn semester of 2022, the main responsibility for teaching about the culture, history, rights and situation of the indigenous people the Sami and the national minorities in Sweden lies in the subject of social studies.

In social studies, there is now broader and deeper content about national minorities in both primary and secondary school. To enable a unified content, social studies also take over the historical perspective from the history curriculum. In order to make all national minorities visible, they are now mentioned by name in the primary school's core content.

The subject contains knowledge about all of Sweden's five national minorities, including history about the roma.

It is too early to estimate what impact this change has on the teaching about the culture, language, religion and history of the national minorities. The issue will have to be evaluated only after a longer time.

Preschool education

There is no statistics on the number of preschools in national minority languages available. In the Stockholm County Administrative Boards annual report, no changes were reported regarding the information provided about preschool in a national minority language. For further information please see updates under each language.

The Swedish Curriculum for preschool states that children belonging to national minorities, which include the indigenous Sami people, should be supported in their language development in their national minority language and promoted in their development of a cultural identity. The preschool should thereby help to protect and promote the languages and cultures of the national minorities. The preschool should provide each child with the conditions to develop both the Swedish language and the national minority language, if the child belongs to a national minority.

According to the Education Act (2010:800) Chapter 8 Section 12 b, a municipality that is part of an administrative area according to the Act (2009:724) on national minorities and minority languages must offer children, whose guardians request it, a place in preschool where all or a substantial part of the education is conducted in Finnish, Meänkieli and Sami respectively. Guardians who apply for a preschool place for their child must be asked if they want a place in such a preschool.

The Education Act also states that the home municipality must, through outreach activities, contact guardians of children who are to be offered preschool and who do not have a place in preschool and inform them about the purpose of the preschool and the child's right to preschool.

2. Finnish

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

There is no ongoing work on defining a number of hours dedicated to teaching of and in Finnish in primary and secondary school.

In primary and lower secondary school there is no specified timetable for mother tongue tuition. However, pupils can choose to study their national minority language within the language choice. The total amount of hours for a language choice is 320 hours. Pupils may also study their language as an extended programme/extra hours.

In upper secondary school there is no timetable for different school subjects, neither for mother tongue tuition. There is a total of guaranteed hours for studies within a national programme and a system of “upper secondary points” for the different courses. A national programme of three years gives a total of 2 500 points. The subject of mother tongue contains three courses, and each one represents 100 points. Mother tongue tuition in Finnish and the other national minority languages can be studied within different positions in the programme structure depending on the national programme chosen, and always as an individual choice and as an extra course. It also occurs that Finnish is offered as a modern language.

Both in compulsory and upper secondary school there is a general shortage of teachers including a shortage of teachers qualified to teach national minority languages, which is related to the small number of speakers. The government has given an important assignment to the Swedish National Agency to coordinate instruction in national minority language education. This includes coordination and planning in making education in national minority languages accessible for all providers required by law to provide such education. This will be important for teachers and hopefully also attract more teachers in national minority languages in the future.

For upper secondary school a government bill passed in the Swedish Parliament in November 2023 which enable that national minority languages are to be offered even though the pupil in question lacks prior knowledge in the language (“good knowledge” was previously requested). This is already valid in compulsory school.

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

Based on the convention, four higher education institutions are tasked by the government to pursue development work and education and teaching in all national minority languages. University of Lund is responsible for Yiddish, University of Stockholm is responsible for Finnish and Södertörn University is responsible for Romani Chib. Umeå university has the mission for Sami and Meänkieli.

In 2021 the government decided on changes in the steering of these special assignments, and the implementation is currently ongoing at the universities with the aim of strengthening the languages and the academic environments. The new assignments are designed to have a broader perspective, compared to the old assignments that only focused on subject teacher training. The updated assignments state that universities and university colleges should develop education and teaching based on science, including teacher education. They also state that that the work shall promote teaching on the specific minority language in all school forms (preschool, primary school, upper-secondary school and at university level).

These changes aim at increasing the possibilities in national minority language education in dialogue with speakers and respond to the challenges of the individual national languages. The wider formulation of the assignments also enables universities and university colleges to adapt better to the context and challenges of each national minority language and improves the possibilities of finding solutions which may benefit the supply of teachers in national minority languages in higher education and in Swedish schools. So far, the universities report that they are positive about the changed assignments, and that they see greater opportunities to meet the challenges. The implementation process should however be seen in a longer-term perspective, as it was recently introduced.

In addition to the annual assignments, the same universities and university colleges received a new assignment in 2022. The assignment aim at strengthening and developing the already existing measures to revitalise national minority languages. University of Lund has received an assignment in Yiddish, University of Stockholm in Finnish, University of Umeå in Meänkieli and Sami and of Södertörn University in Romani Chib. The assignment runs until 2024.

From July 2022 there is a new ordinance governing preschool teacher and teacher education (2021:1335). The ordinance enables students to include national minority languages in a teacher degree in primary school education (preschool class to year 4-6). The Swedish Council for Higher Education is currently working on the regulation on entry requirements to these courses and the regulation will be applied in 2024.

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

The Discrimination Act (2008:567) includes protection against discrimination on seven grounds. These grounds are mainly the same as follows different EU Directives on non-discrimination. There are no plans at the moment to investigate the question to expand the discrimination grounds protected in the Act.

Language is not an explicit ground of discrimination protected in the Discrimination Act. The protection against discrimination include ethnicity which could include a person's national or ethnic origin, skin colour and other similar relationship. Furthermore, national minorities are included. Discrimination on language requirements may be covered by the protection against discrimination on ethnicity.

3. Meänkieli

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

See section 2.1.

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

See section 2.2.

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

See section 2.3.

4. Romani Chib

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

See section 2.1.

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

See section 2.2.

4.3 Take steps to implement the action plan for the promotion of the Romani language.

In December 2022, the Government commissioned the National Library of Sweden to create a resource library for Romani Chib. In April 2023, the resource library opened for the public. The resource libraries function as resources to Romani Chib speakers as well as Sweden's municipalities and are tasked with promoting the provision of media in Romani Chib. In the Budget Bill för 2024 the Government announces that funds will be allocated to the resource libraries on the national minority languages until further notice.

During 2022 and early 2023, the language centre for Romani Chib has commenced its operations. The language centre has hired language promoters and has started to plan language revitalisation activities.

The National Agency for Education and the Institute for Language and Folklore have organized two professional development workshops for minority language teachers targeted specifically towards teachers in Romani Chib.

The Stockholm County Administrative Board launched a web-based course on the Act (2009:724) on National Minorities and Minority Languages on 2 June 2022. The course provides an introduction to the Act and the responsibilities of the public sector. 429 people took the course during 2022.

In April 2022, the government commissioned the Swedish Film Institute to produce a cinema-based learning material aimed at strengthening the national minority languages. After consultations with, among others, representatives of the national minorities the Swedish Film Institute

produced a teachers' guide called *Språklek med film* (Language play with film) targeted towards preschool teachers. The guide consists of five main parts: a documentary about film as a language strengthening tool for preschool teachers, digital glossaries with 20 words in each minority language, a deepening of knowledge in the history and cultures of the national minorities, a technical manual to film production on learning tablets, as well as a reading list that included movies in minority languages and scientific research. The teaching guide has been well received among the minorities, preschool teachers as well as universities who has included the material in the curriculum for preschool teacher programs.

In March 2022, the government commissioned the National Board of Health and Welfare to develop and implement training initiatives about the rights of the national minorities and people speaking minority languages targeting professions in the healthcare sector, social service, and elderly care. During 2022, the board has created a project group, analysed the needs and challenges of the target audience, and initiated a communication plan. They have also organised consultations with the minorities in order to identify priorities areas and issues. The project will continue until the end of 2024.

In March 2022, Södertörn University received an assignment aiming at strengthening and developing the already existing measures to revitalise Romani Chib (see section 2.2). During 2022, the university has recruited coordinators for the project, organised consultations with the minority and organised student led meetings for Roma students in order to facilitate networking.

The Institute for Language and Folklore is tasked with distributing grants to projects aiming at revitalising minority languages. In 2022, 15 projects received funding for efforts to revitalise Romani Chib.

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

See section 2.3.

5. Sami

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

See section 2.1.

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

See section 2.2.

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

See section 2.3.

6. Yiddish

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

See section 2.1.

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

See section 2.2.

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

See section 2.3.

Yours sincerely,

Ida Wettervik

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