

REGIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SÁPMI AND THE SAMI PEOPLE

by

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Content

1	The Samis: One people in many territorial states	1
2	The Sami language situation in Norway, Sweden and Finland	3
2.1	Administrative Area for Sami Language in Scandinavia	3
2.2	Who speaks Sami?	3
2.3	The language situation in Norway	4
2.4	The language situation in Sweden	7
2.5	The language situation in Finland	8
2.6	Language preservation and language switch	10
2.7	Organisation of Sami language in Fenno-Scandinavia	11
2.8	The language usage policies of the Sami institutions	13
3	Political empowerment	15
3.1	Self-confirmation	15
3.2	The term "Sami"	15
3.3	The Sami Council	17
3.4	The Sami Parliaments	18
3.5	The Sami Parliaments' political mandate - given by the people	24
3.6	The Sami political argument	24
3.7	Strengthened Nordic collaboration	24
4	Economy, higher education and research	26
4.1	Economy	26
4.1	Higher education and research	27
	References	31

Item of information:

Sami, Lappish, Sápmi: The term “Sámi” is substituted for the commonly known and used word “Lappish”. Sámi is the genitive and accusative case of “Sápmi”, the general concrete and abstract concept referring to the Sámi people, land and spirit – in the Sámi language (Sammallahti, Pekka (1998).

The terms Sámi, Sami and Saami are equal. However, it is now recommended that “Sami” be used as the “correct” spelling.

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1 The Samis: One people in many territorial states

Today, Sápmi¹ embraces in its entirety a territory inhabited by at least seven (7) ethnic groups: Samis (also called Lapps), Kvens, Norwegians, Finns, Swedes, Komis and Russians. The most recognised researchers agree that the Samis, based on relatively dependable sources, categorisations and historical continuity, are an indigenous people in the area that is also known as Sápmi (see e.g. Norwegian Public Reports NOU 1984:18, NOU 1994:21 and Figure 1).

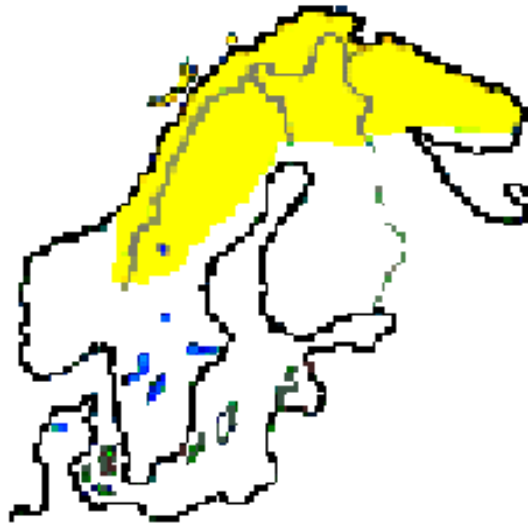


Figure 1 Map of Sápmi

The area has borders spanning from the Kola Peninsula in Russia in the northeast, across the northern parts of Norway, Sweden and Finland, along the range of mountains to Engerdal in Norway and Idre in Sweden, as shown in the map.

In an historical Sami perspective, the formation of national states in this area is a relatively new governmental decree that has resulted in fewer territories and places where the Samis and their traditional modes of living, customs, practices and economy dominate.

¹ Sápmi is a common term for the Sami's own language for both the geographical area "Sameland" and the Sami ethnic group – *Sápmelažžat* (Norwegian Public Reports NOU 1984:18, p. 69; Keskitalo 1994:7).

The Sami ethnic group in Sápmi totals approximately 90,000 persons. Estimates indicate that 20,000 live in Sweden, 10,000 in Finland, about 50,000 in Norway and about 2,000 in Russia (Kola Peninsula).

The figures are uncertain, and depend on which criteria or criterion are used as the basis for calculation: Race, language, history, culture-geographic, business association, ethnicity or subjective discretion. By way of comparison, the majority population in the national states is approximately 1,900,000 persons; see Table 1.

Table 1 *Sami and other populations in the North*

Country	The Sami population	The total population	The Sami population in % of total population
Norway (counties of Nordland, Troms and Finnmark)	50,000	462,800	18.8
Sweden (Norrbotten)	20,000	258,100	7.7
South Samis in Norway and Sweden	2,000	775,300	0.3
Finland (Lapland)	10,000	197,600	5.1
Russia (Kola Peninsula)	2,000	1,018,100	0.2
TOTAL	84,000	2,711,900	3.1

(According to Norwegian Central Bureau of Statistics 1999; Swedish Statistics 1999, Statistics of Finland 1998, Russian Statistics Agency FS 1998)

In spite of the great dialectic language and natural geographical distances between the settlement areas of the East, North, Lulea and South Samis, the Samis as one *people* have stuck together socially, culturally and industrially (see e.g. Aikio 1992); see also Figure 2.

These are the conditions that are discussed in the following chapters: First the language situation, then the political situation, and finally the situation for Sami economy, higher education and research.

2 The Sami language situation in Norway, Sweden and Finland

2.1 Administrative Area for Sami Language in Scandinavia

As previously stated above, the Sami population spans across four national borders. With a background in the administrative areas in Norway and Sweden and the Homeland area in Finland, this entire area can collectively be called “The Administrative Area for Sami Language in Scandinavia”.

The following municipalities belong to the Administrative Area: Kåfjord, Kautokeino, Karasjok, Porsanger, Tana and Nesseby in Norway; Arjeplog, Gällivare, Jokkmokk and Kiruna in Sweden; and Enontekiö, Enare and Utsjoki, together with the Lapland Reindeer Husbandry Act’s area in Sodankylä Municipality, in Finland. See Figure 2.

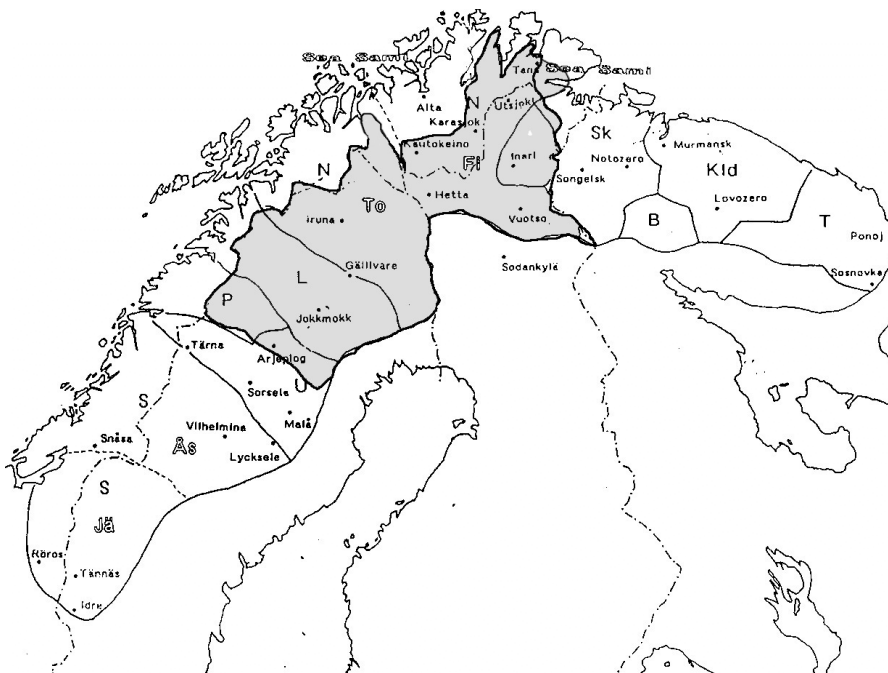


Figure 2 Map of Administrative Area for Sami Language in Scandinavia (marked with grey). The map is adapted according to Korhonen (1981).

2.2 Who speaks Sami?

The majority of Samis learn the language as children. For the most part, this concerns the North Sami area, where the parents and other family members are the most

important source for learning Sami. In the South Sami area, however, there are almost as many who first learn Sami when they reach adulthood.

Sami is primarily used in the near surroundings such as the home, with parents/relatives and friends/acquaintances. It is seldom used with doctors (most often because the doctor does not know Sami), the National Health Service and other public institutions. It is primarily here that they also miss not being able to use Sami more.

In 1995, Ole Henrik Magga estimated the number of Sami-speaking individuals to be approximately 35,000 (Magga 1975: 38). The term “Sami-speaking” is somewhat vague, as it depends on what one uses as the criterion, i.e. how well a person must know the language, and how regularly he/she must use it to be considered Sami-speaking.

2.3 The language situation in Norway

Norway has three official languages: “Bokmål” (the literary language), “nynorsk” (New Norwegian) and Sami. With the Act of 1990 (in accordance with the regulations in Chapter 3 of the Sami Act), Sami was put on a par with Norwegian, making Sami and Norwegian equal languages. By Sami, we mean all Sami languages, but the language regulations of the Sami Act mainly have reference to North Sami. See “Administrative Area for Sami Language in Scandinavia”.

Sami is divided into different language groups/dialects, which are often linguistically widely separated from each other. In Norway, there are three main Sami dialects that could just as well be spoken of as different languages: North Sami, Lulea Sami and South Sami. All three have their own orthographic system.

The language’s legal status

In the Sami Act of 1987, there are two new and important principles that have been built on: The establishment of Sametinget (the Sami Parliament), and the equal status of Sami language and Norwegian language within certain administrative areas and within a closer geographically-defined and demarcated area. The Sami Act was amended in 1990, at which time a new paragraph was added regarding the Sami

language: *Sami and Norwegian are equal languages. They shall be equal languages in accordance with the provisions in Chapter 3.* The language rules apply in a geographical area, the Administrative Area for Sami Language in Scandinavia. The following municipalities encompass the Administrative Area: Karasjok, Kautokeino, Nesseby, Porsanger, Tana and Kåfjord.

The Day-Care Centre Act of 1995 provides Sami children in day-care centres in Sami districts an offer built on Sami language and culture.

The Education Act of 1998 grants Samis in Norway an individual right to teaching in the Sami language in primary school and in sixth forms/high school.

In Norway, there is separate legislation with regulations regarding public use of Sami place names. The Place Name Act regulates the use of Sami and Norwegian names. This Act is under evaluation. As part of the follow-up of the evaluation of the Act, the government in Norway wants to evaluate initiatives for Sami place names in connection with a review of regulations and consulting services.

Practical use

Recent studies show that 53% of the 25,000 Sami-speaking individuals in Norway speak, read and write Sami. 22% understand and speak Sami, but cannot read and write it, while a mere 8% state that they only understand Sami. In terms of percentage, it is among those who know Lulea Sami that we find most people who speak, read and write Sami (SEG 2000: 1).

Sami-speaking individuals can use their language in their contacts with public agencies (every state and municipal agency). The majority of public documents are in Norwegian, but the Act states that laws, regulations, announcements and applications/forms of particular interest for all or parts of the Sami population shall be translated into Sami. In the judicial system and in the health- and social sector, everyone who so desires may use Sami.

An enactment in law in 1985 opened the way for both teaching of and teaching in the Sami language. In 1967, it was possible for the first time to select Sami as first

language in primary school in Norway, and from 1972, students were given the opportunity to study Sami as second language.

In higher forms of school outside the Sami sixth forms/high schools, Sami is losing its position as a mandatory subject and becoming an elective subject (SEG 2000:89). In Norway, however, a student can take his/her examination in two first languages and have this entered on his/her diploma.

Sami education at higher levels is only somewhat established by law. There is, however, a built-up offer for teaching of Sami and for teaching in Sami. The Samis have a separate Sami teacher education programme at Sami University College, which also has other university college offers. Here, Sami is the language of instruction in the basic studies and in the majority of other educational offers. The College also offers vocational educational studies of the Sami language on line with university subjects. Sami studies are concentrated to Sami University College, University of Tromsø, Bodø University College (Lulea Sami) and Levanger University College (South Sami). There are also built-up offers within adult education.

The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) Sámi Radio broadcasts approximately 30-40 hours of television programmes in Sami annually, and about 1600 hours of radio programmes annually. In addition, there are 400 hours of annual joint broadcasts with the Sámi radio stations in Finland and Sweden. All television programmes in Sami have Norwegian subtitles. NRK Sámi Radio has its own television text pages in Norwegian, Lulea Sami and South Sami.

There are three Sami newspapers, two of which are written in Sami, *Áššu ja Min Áigi*, which is published twice a week, and one written in Norwegian, *Ságat*, which also publishes some things in Sami and is published three times a week. There is also a Sami magazine for youth, "Š", published four times a year.

There is a relatively small amount of book production in Sami, e.g. there are approximately 50 educational books published annually. In Norway, there are three Sami publishing companies: DAT, Idut and Davvi Girji, which also publish most Sami books in Norway, Sweden and Finland.

There is also a national theatre, Sami theatre Beivváš, in addition to several museums, libraries (e.g. the Sami Special Library in Karasjok), and cultural/language centres.

2.4 The language situation in Sweden

There are several minority languages in Sweden, including Sami and Tornedal Finnish (“Meänkieli”, or “Tornedalian”). In Sweden, there are three main Sami dialects: North Sami, Lulea Sami and South Sami.

The language’s legal status

Sami received its formal legal status as a language by statutory legislation of 1999, which became effective 1 April 2000. The Act concerns the right to use Sami (spoken and written) in contact with administrative authorities and courts. According to the Act, the language rights are limited to the northernmost municipalities in Sweden, also called the Administrative Area; see Figure 2.

Practical use

The school authorities are organising pre-school offers (day-care centres) for Sami children from the age of one to six years.

The education plan for grades 1-6 in the Sami schools is designed and profiled according to the educational requirements of the Samis, attending to and developing the Sami language and culture. The language of instruction in the Sami schools is Sami and Swedish. Starting in the 7th grade, these children begin attending integrated classes in the municipalities.

There are no Sami sixth forms/high schools in Sweden, but there is one such school in Jokkmokk, which has offers for teaching in the Sami language. The students receive a few hours in Sami instruction each week (Svonni 2001: 12).

Sami studies are concentrated to the universities in Umeå and Uppsala.

There are also built-up offers in adult education, including at the County College in Jokkmokk.

Figures from Sámi Radio in Sweden in 2001 show that approximately eight hours of programmes are broadcast in Sami annually; for radio, this figure is around 261 hours annually. In addition, there are 230 hours of annual joint broadcasts with the Sámi radio stations in Finland and Norway.

2.5 The language situation in Finland

The Finnish Constitution from 1919 adopted that Finland has two national languages: Finnish and Swedish. As minority languages in Finland, there are Sami and Romany (gypsy language). In Finland, there are three Sami dialects: North Sami, Inari Sami and Skolt Sami.

Legal status

The Constitution's § 14 adopted that "Finnish and Swedish are the Republic's national languages".

In Finland, "a Language Act for the Samis" was adopted in 1991 and became effective 1 January 1992. The Act secures Sami-speaking individuals the right to be understood and to receive answers in Sami, and to individual service in Sami within public administration. In practice, the Act applies to the four northernmost municipalities. The area is called "the Samis' Homeland area", and includes the municipalities of Enontekiö, Enare and Utsjokim, together with the Lapland Reindeer Husbandry Act's area in Sodankylä Municipality; see Figure 2. The Language Act has been evaluated, and proposals for a new Language Act are complete.

The Education Act establishes, inter alia, that Sami can be introduced as a school language in the four northern Sami municipalities, and that Sami can be an elective subject in the sixth forms/high schools.

The Education Act for Vocational Subjects establishes that the school languages shall be Finnish and Sami. In higher education, a quota system has been introduced for Sami-speaking students.

Practical use

By virtue of its legal status, Sami has become more of a practical-use language in the Sami core area, both in relation to public agencies and in the school system. Because of the low status of the Sami language, e.g. in Finland, it is believed that many of the Samis who originally had Sami as their mother tongue, have registered Finnish as their first language (Aikio-Puoskari 2001: 9).

There are day-care centre offers in North Sami at Sami-Speaking Day-Care Centre (Samiskspråklig dagvård), and so-called language camps are organised with teaching in Inari Sami and Skolt Sami.

The study of Sami as mother tongue is offered from primary school up to the sixth forms/high school in all three Sami languages in the Samis' Homeland area, while teaching in the Sami language is offered in North Sami and, to a certain extent, in Skolt Sami, primarily in nursery school and the six lowest grades in primary school. It should be mentioned that the municipalities in the Homeland area have struggled in their efforts to offer this instruction because of the low number of students.

Three universities offer teaching in the Sami language: In Helsinki, Oulo and Rovaniemi. In addition to the universities, The Research Centre for National Language ("Forskningscentralen för de inhemska språk") is involved in research, educational work and development of dictionaries.

There are no Sami newspapers in Finland; on the other hand, there are two periodicals, *Odda Sápmelaš*, which is published 3-4 times a year and is free to all Sami households, and a magazine in Inari Sami, which is published four times a year for Inari-speaking households. In November 1991, a separate Sami radio station was established in Finnish Lapland.

Yle Sámi Radio broadcasts approximately 2000 hours annually, mostly in North Sami, but also in Inari Sami and Skolt Sami. In addition, there are 400 hours of annual joint broadcasts with the Sámi radio stations in Norway and Sweden. Yle Sámi Radio has its own text television pages, Sámi Info. Sami joint television broadcasts with Norway and Sweden have not yet started, but there are plans to start during year 2002.

2.6 Language preservation and language switch

In language contact situations, an ethnic group, often over several generations, may switch over to using another group's language. We say that a language switch has taken place. But the group may also continue to use its own language, despite the fact that the conditions for a language switch exist. In such a case, we are speaking of language preservation (Hyltenstam and Stroud 1991: 9).

There are many reasons why the foundation for the use of Sami language has been significantly deteriorated in many areas. The active use of Sami has been considerably weakened, and in many areas has completely disappeared. This development is now reaching the traditionally safest areas for Sami language. For example, the number of persons who have Sami as their first language has been reduced during the last generations.

The figure below shows the situation for Sami language in areas where Sami is no longer found. It shows how a language switch has taken place, and how Sami has been lost in relation to the majority language. Within the course of a few generations, the language no longer exists; see Table 1.

Generation	Command of Sami	Command of the national languages
Great-grandparents	+	-
Grandmother/-father	+	+/-
Parents	+/-	+
Children	-	+

+ = Command only
 - = Do not command
 +/- = Command both

Table 1 Schematic representation of command of language (adapted according to Jernsletten 1982: 113, and Hyltenstam & Stroud 1991:110)

2.7 Organisation of Sami language in Fenno-Scandinavia

Language bodies on a Nordic level

The three Sami Parliaments and the Sami Council signed in Trondheim on 6 February 1997, a Joint Venture Agreement regarding Sami linguistic work, resolving thereby to establish a joint Nordic Sami Language Board placed directly under the Sami Parliaments.

The Sami Language Board is the Samis' supreme decision-making body in joint Sami language issues. The objective of the Board is to protect and develop the cultural heritage associated with the Sami language and, as such, functions as an expert and competent body in co-ordinating and adapting tasks with use and tending of the Sami language, as well acting as mediator between national Sami language bodies. The objective of the Language Board is also to get the formal position of the Sami language at the same level in all four countries in the Sami area.

The Sami Language Board is elected for four-year terms. It is composed of 12 members representing Sami language groups in Sweden, Finland, Norway and Russia. The Sami Parliaments and the Sami associations in Russia appoint three members with deputy members from each country to the Board. Each country's members represent different language groups.

The Presidential Meeting in the Sami Parliamentary Council adopted in 1998 that the Sami Language Board administratively shall work under the Sami Parliamentary Council, and that a Secretariat shall be permanently established, co-localised with the Council's Secretariat. The Sami Parliamentary Council is not yet functioning. The Language Board's Secretariat is therefore temporarily placed in co-localisation with The Sami Language Council in Norway (which closed down in 2000, at which time a two-part organisation was established, consisting of Sami Parliament's Language Department and Sami Parliament's Language Board).

The Sami-elected institutions, i.e. the Sami Parliaments in Norway, Finland and Sweden, have also established separate, expert bodies that are working on the development of Sami language. In Norway, the language regulations of the Sami Act

direct The Sami Language Council in Norway (the organisation now called Sami Parliament's Language Board), to collaborate across national borders. In Finland and Sweden, this collaboration is not imposed by law, but adopted by the Sami Parliaments.

The Nordic Sami Institute

Establishment of the Nordic Sami Institute (NSI) in 1974 strengthened the work with Sami language on the Nordic level. The Institute's objective is to strengthen and develop Sami language, culture and social and community life through research. NSI comprises part of the Nordic Council of Ministers organisation, and is a research unit whose research activities are organised in areas led by a senior researcher.

The language research conducted by NSI has been anchored under the superior topic "Sami syntax and phraseology" since the 1970s. In recent years, the Institute has also started projects that are more socio-linguistic in nature, with emphasis on linguistic revitalisation. In addition to pure basic linguistic research, NSI recognises the need for linguistic research that has its basis in language-advancing and language-stimulating work in the community, whether it is based on obligations and tasks imposed by law, or by the desire of people to revitalise the language. This includes research into the public use of Sami language and research into peoples' private use of the language.

Organisation of linguistic work in Norway

The Sami Parliament has re-organised the lingual-political work and organised a Language Board with five members. With that, the Sami Language Council was closed down on 31 December 2000. Sami Parliament's Language Department, which is also Secretariat for political management, carries out initiatives related to language-related matters, in addition to its administrative tasks.

The Sami Parliament in Norway disperses approximately NOK 20 million annually for Sami language-related initiatives.

Organisation of linguistic work in Sweden

In the Sami Parliament Act of 1992, the Sami language is particularly mentioned in association with the Sami Parliament's tasks, stating that the Sami Parliament shall lead the Sami linguistic work. The Sami Parliament has therefore established an expert council for Sami language, The Sami Language Council. The Council consists of six members with deputy members representing the North-, Lulea- and South Sami language areas. They are elected for a four-year term.

Organisation of linguistic work in Finland

The Finnish Parliament's Sami Language Committee was officially established in conjunction with the establishment of the Sami Parliament in 1996. The name was later changed to The Sami Language Council. All three languages are represented in the Council: North Sami, Inari Sami and Skolt Sami. The Sami Parliament's Secretary in charge of Sami linguistic matters is also Secretary for the Language Council.

The funds that are earmarked for Sami initiatives are language funds in the amount of FMK 500,000. These funds help to pay the Language Council's Secretary and the Sami Parliament's share to the Sami Language Council. The Language Council must apply for outside funds for language projects. However, the Sami Parliament has FMK 1.5 million to use for development of teaching aids.

2.8 The language usage policies of the Sami institutions

Many Sami institutions demonstrate a lack of will and economic ability to follow-up the minimum requirements in the body of laws in relation to the Language Act and the Place Name Act.

With a background in studies on the use of Sami in Sami institutions, it can be concluded that Sami is rather seldom used as a casework language. Casework is usually handled in Fenno-Scandinavian, which is translated to Sami. The same is true for meetings and conferences. The Language Departments of the Sami Parliaments, especially in Norway, comprise one of the few Sami institutions that have administratively resolved that the casework language shall be Sami, and that all

documents shall be in two languages. Sami University College and the Place Name Consultant for Sami place names in Norway, also have Sami as their administration language (Sami Language Council 1998: 15-16).

This review shows that the legal apparatus is relatively well covered. However, an in part lack of will and economic capacity among affected institutions, agencies, organisations and individual users in the Administrative Area for Sami Language has resulted in a language situation that is not as good as desired, especially for the smallest language groups outside the core areas in Sápmi. The situation can quickly become parallel to that outlined in Table 1, if the priority on language is not strengthened.

3. Political empowerment

3.1 Self-confirmation

Identification of itself as a people has been the bearing foundation for Sami political activity during most of this century. The Sami demand to be respected as a people has been, and still is, a fundamental Sami political principle. In some cases, however, this principle has been subjected to internal opposition, since it has not always been in agreement with some special Sami interests. However, it is the state assimilation policy and the general stigmatisation of Sami that has been the strongest challenge to the Samis' common identity.

In spite of these conditions, the Sami today have confirmed their position as a people more strongly than ever before. The Sami national identity and basis is expressed, for example, in the Sami Political Programme 2 of the Sami Council:

- “1. We, the Sami, are one people, and state borders shall not divide our people's unity.*
- 2. We have our own history, our traditions, our own culture and our own language. From our fathers, we have inherited the right to land and water and the right to livelihood.*
- 3. It is our inalienable right to care for and develop our livelihoods and our societies on the basis of our own common conditions, and in fellowship we will care for our fields, our natural resources and our national inheritance the generations to come”.*

3.2 The term “Sami”

Apart from the criteria in the Nordic Sami Acts connected with the right to vote, be elected and present proposals in relation to elections to the Sami Parliaments, there is no formal definition of the term “Sami”. These criteria have no formal relevance and significance outside the Acts' area of application, and can therefore not be seen as a general definition of the term “Sami”. However, these criteria do indicate who are considered to be Sami.

The Norwegian Sami Act of 12 June 1987, No.57 §2-6, stipulates the following criteria for the right to be included in the Sami census:

“Everyone who declares that they consider themselves to be Sami, and who either

- a. Has Sami as home language, or*
- b. Has or has had parents or grandparents with Sami as home language has the right to be enrolled in the Sami census in the region of residence.”*

In 1995, the Sami Parliament in Norway reviewed the rules for election to the Sami Parliament and in that connection proposed changes in the above criteria in order to give more persons the right to participate in parliamentary elections. The Sami Parliament has proposed to add a great-grandparent criterion to the parent- and grandparent criterion.

The Swedish Sami Act (Sami Parliament Act, passed on 17 December 1992) stipulates the following criteria in §2.

“Sami according to this Act is anyone who considers himself to be Sami and

- 1. Can confirm that he has or has had Sami as home language, or*
- 2. Can confirm that one of his parents or grandparents have or have had Sami as home language, or*
- 3. Has a parent who is or has been eligible for the Sami Parliament*

The recently passed Finnish Sami Act, in effect from 1 January 1996, stipulates the following criteria in § 3:

“A Sami according to this Act is anyone who considers himself Sami on the condition that

- 1. He himself, or at least one of his parents, or grandparents, learned Sami as first language,*
- 2. He is descended from a person who is recognised as a mountain, forest or fishing Lapp in the census, or*
- 3. At least one of his parents is recognised or could be recognised as eligible to vote for the delegation to the Sami Parliament.”*

As can be seen, the Nordic Sami Acts use both objective and subjective criteria. The fundamental element in the criteria is the subjective self-identification as Sami, that a

person considers himself/herself to be Sami and therefore belonging to the Sami people. The common objective criterion is related to the Sami language, that the person himself/herself, one of his/her parents or one of his/her grandparents have or have had Sami as first language or possibly as home language.

In addition to this formal basis, the term “Sami” of course also has a Sami origin. The term “Sami” comes from the Samis’ own name for themselves, more specifically from the Sami term for themselves as a people and for the traditional Sami territory. This is expressed in the Sami language by the Sami term “Sápmi”, a term found in all Sami dialects.

3.3 The Sami Council

Since 1956, Sami political collaboration across state borders in the Nordic countries has mainly gone through what was then called the Nordic Sami Council. In 1992, the Council changed its official name to the Sami Council, after the Sami in Russia were included as full-fledged members of the Council. The Nordic Sami Council had been founded because Samis in the Nordic countries found it imperative to have a Pan-Sami organisation for collaboration in order to promote the Samis’ interests and rights as one people.

The Sami Council consists today of 15 representatives: Five from Norway, four each from Finland and Sweden, and two from Russia. The Sami Council’s representatives are elected at the Sami Conference, which is normally held every four years. The Sami Council is a body for collaboration among the Sami organisations and the publicly-elected Sami Parliament in Finland.

Since it was founded, the Sami Council has worked actively to ensure that the Sami is acknowledged and treated as one people. The goal of the Sami Council is to protect and develop the Sami people’s economic, cultural, linguistic and social rights and right to livelihood. The Sami people’s rights to land and water and the resources residing in them have had a central place in the Sami Council’s political efforts since it was founded.

3.4 The Sami Parliaments

Today, elected Sami bodies exist in Finland, Norway and Sweden, although the three Sami Parliaments do not have exactly identical functions and tasks. They share the ability to freely – and on their own initiative – raise questions and issue statements on all questions within their area of activity. The Sami Parliaments' formal mandate or area of activity is not defined, except that it comprises all questions that, according to the parliaments, relate to and are of special interest and significance for the Sami.

Apart from the purely administrative authority given to the Sami Parliaments, they do not have very much formal political authority. Formally, the Sami Parliaments have only an advisory status, but actually, they play a central political role within the national constitutional system in relation to Sami political questions. Since the political and economic frameworks vary for the three Sami Parliaments, the actual general economic and political conditions for their work are somewhat different.

The Sami Parliament in Norway

The authority for establishing a Sami Parliament in Norway is found in the Sami Act's § 1-2, which states that the Sami shall have their own national Sami Parliament elected by and among the Sami. Concerning the background for the establishment of the Sami Parliament, the Government has, in its announcement to the National Parliament on Norwegian Sami policy, stated:

“The Sami Act of 12 June 1987 No. 56 was passed on the recommendation of the Sami Rights Commission, NOU 1984: 18, which is based on the recognition that the Royal Kingdom of Norway is established on the territory of two peoples, the Norwegians and the Sami, and that the Sami have thus lived within and by the present Norwegian state borders as long as Norway has existed as a State. This fact distinguishes the Sami from other minority groups in this country.”

In its wording, the Sami Act's statement of purpose is almost identical to the formulation in § 110a of the Constitution, which states that the authorities shall ensure that the Sami in Norway shall be able to protect and develop the Sami language, culture and society. § 110a states:

“It is the obligation of the State authorities to create the conditions necessary for the Sami to protect and develop their language, their culture and their society.”

The Sami Parliament must be seen to be the central element in the fulfilment of the provision of the Constitution. The substantial legal and political content of the provision appears somewhat unclear, and it is at present difficult to formulate the provision's content in especially concrete terms.

The Norwegian Sami Act § 2-1 defines the following areas of activity and authority for the Sami Parliament as follows:

“The Sami Parliament's area of activity includes all questions that the Parliament considers to relate to the Sami. The Sami Parliament can on its own initiative raise and issue statements on all questions within its area of activity. It can on its own initiative also raise questions before public authorities and private institutions, etc. The Sami Parliament has the authority to make decisions when this follows from other provisions in the law or is decided in another way.”

When the Sami Parliament received its mandate, the national authorities presumed that it should primarily have an advisory function. Experience shows that the Norwegian authorities do not always follow this admonition. The Sami Act's § 2-2 states:

“Other public institutions ought to give the Sami Parliament the opportunity to make a statement before making decisions in questions within the Sami Parliament's area of activity.”

The Plenary of the Sami Parliament is its highest body, and it is sovereign in the execution of its duties within the framework of the Sami Act. The Plenary also adopted rules and procedures of the Sami Parliament as well as its sub-committees.

The Sami Parliament itself has defined its mandates as twofold: (1) to be the Samis' elected political body, and (2) to carry out the administrative tasks delegated to the Sami Parliament. The Sami Parliament has given priority to its political activity with the goal of more real political authority. The Sami Parliament wishes to avoid

administrative tasks that could just as well be carried out by other bodies that are either under the authority of the Sami Parliament or independent of it.

The Sami Parliament in Sweden

The Sami Parliament in Sweden began its activities in August 1993. Establishment of its own elected Sami body was the fulfilment of the most important goal of the Sami in Sweden. It also represented a great step forward in relation to the expressed need for formal Nordic Sami collaboration between the Nordic Sami elected bodies, since thoughts about such a collaboration could not, of course, be realised without the existence of a Sami-elected parliament in Sweden.

The Sami Parliament's mandate is defined in the Sami Act's Chapter 2 § 1:

“The Sami Parliament shall work for a living Sami culture and thereby take initiative to work and propose measure that promote this culture.

The Sami Parliament's tasks especially include:

- 1. Making decisions about the distribution of State funds and means from the Sami Fund to Sami culture and Sami organisations, and of other funds that are placed at the collective disposal of the Sami*
- 2. Appointing the Board for the Sami schools as provided in Chapter 8 § 6 of the Education Act (198: 1100)*
- 3 Directing the Sami linguistic work*
- 4. Participating in society planning and monitoring that Sami needs are taken into consideration, along with other of reindeer husbandry's interests in the use of land and water*
- 5. Disseminating information on Sami matters.”*

The Sami Parliament in Sweden has a formal mandate that distinguishes itself significantly from the mandates for the Sami Parliaments in Finland and Norway. The Sami Parliament in Sweden has a more concretely formulated mandate, since it more clearly defines the tasks of the Parliament.

In the Sami Act's introductory provisions (Chapter 1 § 1), the Sami Parliament's formal role in Sweden is defined as follows:

“This law makes provision for a special authority - the Sami Parliament - with the purpose to deal in the future with questions that concern the Sami culture in Sweden.”

The Sami Parliament in Sweden, as an elected Sami body and a state authority, represents a central element in the development of the indigenous-people dimension of the Swedish democracy. The Sami Parliament’s most important political task is to take the initiative in issues that concern the Sami, for the purpose of strengthening Sami society.

The relatively strong political position that the Sami Parliament in Norway has gradually won for itself and the position the Sami Parliament in Finland now has, are essentially a direct result of the work carried out by the Parliaments since they were established. On the basis of experience from these two countries, it must be foreseen that the political position of the Sami Parliament in Sweden will probably be strengthened considerably in the course of the years to come as a result of its own work and political dialogue with the central State authorities.

However, the Sami Parliament in Sweden has a formal administrative position that is stronger than of the Sami Parliaments in Finland and Norway. In Sweden, the Sami Act expressly states that the Sami Parliament is a State authority, and at the same time, the Act gives the Sami Parliament administrative authority in several areas.

The Sami Parliament in Finland

The Sami Act and the new provision in the Finnish Constitution represent an important strengthening of the Samis’ formal legal and political position in Finland. These changes recognise the Samis’ cultural autonomy within a limited geographic area called the Sami Homeland. This cultural autonomy also influences the Sami Parliament’s political mandate, since it is the Sami Parliament that, on behalf of the Sami (according to the Sami Act: §1, 2nd sentence), shall practice and protect Sami self-determination.

From the Constitution, 10 § 51a:

“The Sami as an indigenous people shall, according to the provisions in the law, be ensured cultural autonomy within their Homeland area, in relation to their language and culture.”

This provision stands out now as the central legal and political guarantee for the Sami in Finland. It recognises the Samis’ right to cultural self-determination in the highest and most honourable form imaginable in a political and constitutional democracy. The passing of this constitutional provision is a milestone in the Samis’ struggle for their rights.

In many respects, this political and legislative argument for the new Finnish constitutional provision is a recognition that goes further than is the case in both Norway and Sweden. For example, it is expressly recognised that in earlier times, the Sami only officially belonged to the Finnish population, and they were only formally included in the Finnish general administration, administrative structure and service. In other words, the Samis’ own society existed relatively undisturbed and independent of the formal Finnish society structure. Thus, significant emphasis is given to the fact that the purpose of the Finnish authorities’ revision of the law is not to change the Samis’ position in Finland, but to give the Sami a political position that to a greater degree reflects their earlier political and administrative position. RP 248/1994, page 15, states:

“This proposition strives not to change the Samis’ position in society, but to recreate it so that it better matches their earlier political-administrative position. The Samis’ ancestors, the Lapps, constituted a distinct group of fellow citizens in our country. They lived and decided over their own lives on the basis of the laws then in effect and in the practice of their own culture, their own language and their own lifestyle. Later, the Lapps’ legal position was weakened by no fault of their own. This negative development has meant that Samis in the municipalities and in the state have suffered under a form of political and administrative guardianship that has resulted in their passivity, frustration and integration into the majority population. In recent times, the state has striven in various ways to change this development in a more positive direction for the Sami.”

The Finnish Sami Act also provides that the national authorities have an obligation to negotiate.

In the future, this obligation to negotiate can prove to be an important protective mechanism for Sami interests and rights. The Sami Act § 9 has the following provision for the obligation to negotiate:

“The authorities shall negotiate with the Sami Parliament on all extensive and important questions that can directly or distinctly influence the Samis’ position as an indigenous people and that in the Samis’ Homeland area apply to:

- 1) Society planning*
- 2) Protection, use, rental and transfer of state fields, protected areas and wilderness*
- 3) License applications regarding mining concessions of minerals and mining prospecting*
- 4) Changes in legislation or administration regarding livelihood that is part of Sami culture*
- 5) Development of education using the Sami language or in the Sami language, and of the social and health services, and*
- 6) Other similar areas that influence the Samis’ language, culture or position as an indigenous people.*
- 7) To fulfil the obligation to negotiate, the relevant authorities shall give the Sami Parliament the opportunity to be heard and to negotiate any specific question. The fact that the Sami Parliament does not utilise this opportunity shall not prevent the authorities from continuing to consider the question.”*

As can be seen from the above, this obligation to negotiate is very comprehensive and represents far better protection of Sami rights than was formerly the case. There is no similar provision in either the Swedish or Norwegian laws. The Norwegian Sami Act § 12 states that other public bodies “ought” to give the Sami Parliament the chance to “issue a statement” before any decisions are made regarding cases within the Sami Parliament’s area of activity. In other words, there exists no direct obligation to consult, much less conduct negotiations, with the Sami Parliament in Norway. Experience so far indicates that other public bodies in Norway do not always follow this request by the legislators. The Swedish Sami Act §13 is completely silent on these matters. The nearest it comes is to state that the Sami Parliament shall contribute to society planning. In accordance with the White Paper on Sami rights, this obligation to negotiate that is now a provision in the Finnish Sami law is based on the principles of

ILO Convention No.169, which states that such negotiations shall always take place before legislation or administrative action that can directly influence indigenous peoples is even considered.

3.5 The Sami Parliaments' political mandate – given by the people

The political mandate given to the Sami Parliaments through formal and legal legislation is only part of the Parliaments' total political mandate. The political mandate given by the Sami people is at least just as important for the Sami Parliaments as the mandate given via the respective Sami Acts. The Sami Parliaments are comprised of elected representatives who are all elected to the Sami Parliament on the basis of their own political programmes. The elected representatives of the Sami Parliaments therefore have a strong political and moral obligation to their voters to fulfil the political position entrusted to them in accordance with their political programmes.

3.6 The Sami political argument

The decision of the joint meeting of 1993 of the Sami Parliaments rests on the Sami political principle that the Sami are one people and that state borders must not divide the Sami community. The decision is in this regard in accordance with the Sami Political Programme approved earlier, which states: *“We, the Sami, are one people, and state borders shall not divide our people's community.”*

Both the Sami Parliaments' decision to collaborate across state borders and the Sami Political Programme are expressions of the Samis' wish and will to exist as one people.

3.7 Strengthened Nordic collaboration - also the goal of the Sami Parliaments

Collaboration across state borders is natural for the Sami, since the formal borders between states mostly only represent an official line of separation between them. The borders do, however, create important problems for the traditional Sami way of life, and have sometimes been a threat to the Samis' existence as one people. Therefore, it has been natural that the Sami not only seek to maintain, but also strengthen collaboration across state borders. The Samis' efforts have been directed toward

collaboration between Samis as well as collaboration between the states. The most probable important reason for establishment of the Nordic Sami Council in 1956 was precisely this need for collaboration and the will to carry it out. The Sami considered it of decisive significance to establish such a formalised collaboration.

The Sami institutions and organisations all seem to recognise that the need for co-operation across state borders is now greater than ever. This is because the general political conditions of life in today's societies increasingly take place at the international level.

As a consequence, the Sami Parliaments have recently worked hard to try to formalise collaboration between the Sami elected bodies. Such collaboration is considered not only natural, but also as absolutely decisive for any joint Sami political development across state borders. The Sami Parliaments express the need for a permanent collaboration between the Sami elected bodies in order to co-ordinate questions affecting Sami in more than one country, and questions that concern Sami people. Such body is now established.

There also seems to be the national states' goal of co-ordinated Sami policy, and a great degree of agreement between Finland, Norway and Sweden, that a need exists to strengthen the Nordic collaboration on Sami political questions. The Nordic states have thus all recognised to a certain extent that it is necessary for the state authorities to use new means to promote joint Sami development across country borders. Agreement seems to exist that the Sami Parliaments' active role in this collaboration is of decisive significance, and that the Sami Parliaments must jointly be the central actor in future development of Sami society across the Nordic borders.

4 Economy, higher education and research

4.1 Economy

Basic principles

The traditional forms of Sami industry have always taken their point of departure in a comprehensive view. The forms of industry have been adapted to the special ecological conditions that prevail in Sápmi. If the conditions for production were absent for a certain length of time, it was possible to use alternative resources until the previous resource recovered. However, this natural self-regulation that is built into the Sami industrial structure through a combined exploitation of both traditional and modern industries, is changing. The Sami combination industry, through no fault of its own, has already been replaced by a more unilateral use of nature, largely because of the competition for the basic resources, especially hunting and fishing.

Geographical differentiation

The economic activity in the Sami settlement area can be divided into different areas, i.e. inland-, coastal-, fjord- and city/town areas. The inland area includes the majority of the Sami settlement area in Finland and Sweden. On the Norwegian side, the inner parts of the counties of Nord-Troms and Finnmark, together with the remaining border area, are considered inland areas.

The reindeer industry is primarily an inland industry, where fjord- and coastal areas are used for summer grazing. In Sami coastal- and fjord areas, agriculture and fishing are the most important Sami industries. Sweden and Norway also have Sami settlements in city/town areas. In Finland, the Samis' Homeland area is limited to the municipalities of Enontekiö, Inari and Utsjoki, with the addition of the Sami reindeer grazing area in Sodankylä Municipality. The Samis' home area is defined in the Finnish Constitution, which grants the area an official status.

The traditional occupations in Sápmi are reindeer husbandry, hunting, Sami agriculture, fishing and Sami handcrafts ("duodji"). However, the majority of Samis are employed within non tradition-bound Sami occupations.

Today, the Sami economy is wholly dominated by so-called “micro-businesses”. The majority of businesses have no employees. The Sami businesses are predominantly small family businesses with considerable amounts of seasonal work. Because of their special character, these businesses are unfortunately difficult to reach with traditional business- and labour market policy measures.

Good conditions are also present in the Sami area for development of what users refer to as “cultural industry”. Businesses that produce and distribute cultural products, i.e. music, theatre, book publication, craft design, recording studios, photography, art, etc. The background for this is that, among other things, there is a specific identity and culture, a strong music (“joik”) tradition, good knowledge within design and design tradition, and a lot of creative people who work within these sectors.

A general hindrance for a modern Sami industrial and commercial development has been – and is – the lack of capital and competence. It has always been difficult to get various public community agencies to prioritise capital reinforcement for long-term investments in special Sami development initiatives, generally with a basis in small-scale economic activity. It is also obvious that the lack of continuity in such prioritisations is a large part of the reason why the Sami areas are characterised by unilateral and weak economic activity, high unemployment and a low-income level, as well as a number of social and cultural problems. However, a joint exploitation of natural resources and human resources leads to a reduction in the area’s vulnerability and a strengthening of the Sami economy.

4.2 Higher education and research

The Nordic Sami Institute

The Nordic Sami Institute (in Sami: Sámi Instituhtta) was established in 1973 on the initiative of the Sami Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers, who decided to establish a research institute for the Sami people. The Institute was localised to the Sami village of *Guovdageaidnu*, Kautokeino, in Norway, where it still is.

The original objective of the Sami Institute was to form a basis of Sami research in the context of Sami thinking and needs, and to enable the Sami to develop their own

expertise in a number of scientific disciplines, notably with respect to language, historical rights and the environment.

The activities of the Institute are organised into research groups on the Sami language, legal rights (Sami law), and society. As the Sami language has acquired a more official status and is taught in schools, the Sami Institute has turned to developing a language database to assist in more in-depth language research. Social research has focused on how internal and external factors have traditions, and sustainable development.

The legal rights group has conducted research on questions pertaining to trade, economics, law, environment, reindeer herding, the Lapp Codicil, hunting and fishing, and land title rights. Today, the emphasis has been further refined to cultural sustainability and the legal conditions necessary for securing the material basis of Sami culture based in their own traditional livelihood on lands they have occupied since time immemorial.

The Institute's social science research analyses processes of change and the individual's and the community's ways of relating to these processes. This knowledge ensures that the individual is aware of the historical processes that have helped shape the community and, in light of this, understands the changes that are taking place today. Social science research at the Institute also documents factors that may form the basis for planning and government interventions.

The Nordic Sami Institute plays an instrumental role in crystallising a Sami presence within the academic milieu. The success of such a specialised research body serving a population of less than 100,000 over four nations will be a continuing ability to identify subjects fundamental to Sami culture.

The Sami College

Sami University College was established in *Guovdageaidnu* (Kautokeino) in 1989. It was established to cover the needs of higher education and research of the Sami community, and to strengthen Sami professional qualifications in various fields. The college has a responsibility for Sami higher education in general, and particularly for teacher education.

The strategy on which our educational and research activities is based on the following core elements:

- Language and language development
- Sustainable development and environmental and natural resource management
- Sami education and understanding

The Sami University College is the only Sami institution offering higher education. Our academic basis is combined with traditional knowledge and strong indigenous perspectives. In addition to educational activities, our staffs work with research and development activities.

In order to enable the College to offer high-level research-based education, research and development activities are of great importance to the Sami society, and to the Sami University College. Therefore, the institution continuously works hard to strengthen the quality of its educational programmes. The on-going work strengthens teaching of the Sami language and strengthens teaching in the Sami language.

The Sami University College requires the usual qualifications for admission to higher education institutions. In addition to these, we require fluency in the Sami language for admission to most of our studies. Students who are not fluent in the Sami language may be recommended to take preparatory language courses.

For admission to most of our postgraduate studies, we require that the student has accomplished a professional study programme from college or university.

A separate Sami University

During the time that the few Sami educational institutions have existed, they, together with the Sami Council (Samerådet), the national state Sami Parliaments and the governments, have chiselled out reciprocally-binding tertiary tasks, the objective of which is to maintain, develop and disseminate knowledge through, inter alia, education, consultation and research.

In their efforts to increase the efficiency of and strengthen these community tasks, and to meet the future needs and requirements of the Samis and the general public, the parties to the initiatives have found it necessary to develop the competence that already exists within Sami higher education, consultation and research.

The planning of Sámi University (in Sami: Sámi diedalas allaskuvla) can therefore be seen as a link in this work. At the same time, it must be stated that the planning of the highest tertiary Sami institution is no simple task. The participation of many parties is necessary in order to achieve the best possible foundation and the legality that is required to increase the efficiency of the decisions underway.

Such a joint tertiary institution in Sápmi will be a necessary – if not adequate – initiative if the objective is to meet the needs and challenges that are already waiting for solutions, and those that will probably arise in the future. It can therefore be established that a co-ordinated tertiary activity is all the more important in order to preserve the quality in the communities in a sustainable way. Seen in this way, the planning is itself a continual joint venture project where the governments, Sami Parliaments, organisations, community groups and individuals in the countries in which the Samis live, are invited to participate together with employees and students in the presently existing tertiary institutions.

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