

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

Implementation of recommendations for immediate action

6 January 2023

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1 Introduction

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

The Committee of Ministers has invited the authorities of Norway to submit information on the implementation of recommendations for immediate action by 1 January 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 on each recommendation for immediate action as presented in the Eight Evaluation Report on Norway. The recommendations follow the order in the Report.

The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development has prepared the report in cooperation with other ministries concerned.

Other documents relating to all Norway's periodical reports on the Charter are available on the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development's website:
<https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/urfolk-og-minoriteter/nasjonale-minoriteter/midtspalte/minoritetspraktak/id86936/>

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2 Take measures to ensure stronger presence of Kven in the media, including reintroducing Kven in radio broadcasting.

In 2022, the government proposed in a submission to the Storting (the Parliament of Norway), Prop 1 S (2022-2023), to emphasize NRK's obligations to offer content in the Sami and minority languages, in addition to Norwegian, as a language supporting society. The change entails a specified obligation for NRK to offer content in Sami languages, national minority languages and sign languages, but without quantitative requirements. The measure strengthens NRK's responsibility for the language and culture of national minorities.

In 2021, the Norwegian Media Authority (Medietilsynet), stated that NRK had to strengthen its offer to national minorities if NRK was to function as a tool for the representation and visibility of these groups.

To this NRK stated that it is demanding to obtain a comprehensive overview of what is offered to national minorities across different media, and the many different environments for production of content in NRK.

NRK has therefore given certain regional editorial offices a special responsibility for the individual minority cultures to be covered more systematically in NRK's content. NRK states

that the regional responsibility has been developed further in 2021, through regular contact and dialogue meetings with the minority community.

The editorial office “NRK Troms”, is responsible for Kven content. The forest Finn culture naturally belongs to “NRK Innlandet” (literally “the hinterland”, the relevant county). “Region Sørøst” (Region Southeast) has a special focus on Roma and Romani/tater culture, while the office at “NRK Tyholt” (in Trondheim) has a dialogue with the Jewish communities.

In 2021, NRK employed a journalist with Kven language skills who has created content and articles written and subtitled in Kven. This has, in addition, led to NRK offering video- and sound clips with Kven speech, including a weekly summary of national and international news with both Kven speech and text. The summary is published on [Nr.no/kvensk](https://nrk.no/kvensk).

For the fourth year in a row, the Kven New Year's speech was broadcast on nationwide television in 2022. The speech was also made available at [Nr.no/kvensk](https://nrk.no/kvensk). NRK reports good viewing figures for the TV broadcast and through the webpage. In 2021, NRK collaborated with the Language Council on the awarding of the Kven language prize, and the award was broadcasted on “NRK kvensk”. NRK states that the collaboration with the Language Council was successful and provided opportunities for more collaborations in the future.

Throughout 2021, the local broadcasts in Troms and Finnmark have had regular features about Kven culture. NRK understands that it is an important goal to reach children and young people with the Kven content and is working towards this goal.

3 Improve the situation of Kven in primary and secondary education and enhance the offer of Kven language nests in kindergartens.

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training coordinates measures to promote the Kven language in the education sector.

The NOK 800 000 over the national budget for projects for Kven in kindergartens has been given permanently each year over a long period of time. Now all kindergartens in Troms and Finnmark receive information about the funds. The purpose is to get more applicants so that more children can encounter the Kven language in kindergarten.

4 Ensure that there are incentives for students who have opted for Kven as a second language in the compulsory education to continue these studies at upper secondary level, as this is the recruitment base for teacher training for Kven.

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training has made a motivational film to get more students to opt for Kven as a second language. A film aimed at young people has also been made to continue with the subject. The films will be published and distributed in January 2023.

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training provides project support to kindergarten and school owners who have employees who take basic courses in Kven. Information about the offer is increased, as mentioned in section 3, above.

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training has included the grant scheme for teaching aids in Kven or Finnish as a second language in the ordinary grant scheme for teaching aids in collecting subjects (but earmarked) from 2022. The Directorate received more applications than before and will have a dialogue with the organisations in order to reevaluate the call for applications, to make it more targeted.

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training is conducting a pilot on the development of learning resources on digilaer.no to increase access to learning resources in the subject.

5 Ensure that the new administrative division does not have a negative impact on Lule Sami in education.

On 1 January 2020, Tysfjord municipality was split, with each part merged with the neighbouring municipalities; Hamarøy (to the south) and Narvik (to the North), respectively. Hamarøy took over the responsibilities as part of the Sami language administrative district, while Narvik did not. The Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation consulted with Narvik municipality, the Sámediggi (the Sami Parliament) and local Sami interests as to how Narvik municipality was to make provision for the users of Lule Sami in Narvik. The Ministry made special funds available to Narvik municipality in 2020 to assess and plan for these language users. We will also note that the right to education *of* the Sami language is the same outside the Sami language administrative district, and we are unaware of any demand in the relevant part of Narvik municipality for education with Lule Sami as the general language of instruction.

6 Ensure that there are incentives for students who have opted for Lule Sami as a second language in the compulsory education to continue these studies at upper secondary level, as this is the recruitment base for teacher training for Lule Sami.

The Sámediggi has its own scholarship schemes for students in upper secondary education.

In the Spring 2023 the government will submit a white paper to the Storting on Sami language, culture, and social life, the theme of which will be “competence and recruitment” – especially for kindergarten, primary school, upper secondary school and higher education and research. The white paper will, *inter alia*, deal with how to increase the recruitment of students with a Lule Sami background for teacher training. The government has received input from a number of universities and colleges, from municipalities and other important actors.

7 Ensure that health and social care facilities such as hospitals and retirement homes offer services in North Sami.

A Sami interpreting service has been established in the Northern Norway Regional Health Authority. There is also a permanently employed North Sami interpreter at Hammerfest Hospital who has office hours from 07:30 to 15:00 on all weekdays. The Ministry of Health and Care Services is also aware that it is planned to hire a day interpreter at the University Hospital North Norway (UNN).

There are six part-time North Sami remote interpreters who work in shifts so that there is always an interpreter on duty all weekdays between 08:00 – 22:00. Today, all interpreters can interpret via audio/video. The interpretation service at The Sami National Centre for Mental Health and Substance Abuse (SANKS) also has an agreement with one of the remote interpreters who assists with interpretation assignments at *Sámi klinihkka* when needed, i.e., the interpreter is then physically present during assignments. All General Practitioners (GPs) and patients can pre-book an interpreter.

Since 2019 NOK 1,2 million has been allocated in the National budget for competence-enhancing measures in the care services for Sami users (e.g., retirement homes and home services). The purpose of the grant scheme is to help build up, implement, and strengthen the quality of the health and care services for users with Sami language and cultural background through professional development and competence enhancement. The measures shall be aimed at areas that include inhabitants with both North Sami, Lule Sami, and South Sami language and culture.

8 Ensure that there are incentives for students who have opted for North Sami as a second language in the compulsory education to continue these studies at upper secondary level, as this is the recruitment base for teacher training for North Sami.

The Sámediggi has its own scholarship schemes for students in upper secondary education.

The government will submit a white paper to the Storting on Sami language, culture, and social life, which will deal with competence and recruitment, see section 6, above.

9 Encourage the use of Romanes, in speech and writing in public life, particularly in education in co-operation with the speakers.

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, the Language Council, and the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development are in dialogue to look at possible measures to promote Romanes – in general, and in education in particular. Any measures must be drawn up in close cooperation with the minority itself. n

10 Promote the inclusion of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to Romanes among the objectives of education, teacher training and media.

The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development has created an e-learning program for employees in municipalities and county councils. The purpose is to give employees more knowledge about national minorities, who the groups are, what rights they have, and what obligations public authorities have towards minority groups. The course will also address when the authorities should involve the minorities before a decision is made in a case.

Furthermore, we would also like to mention that in the framework plans for the various teacher education programs, perspectives on diversity, inclusion and bullying are extensive.

The government will present a new action plan against racism and discrimination by the end of 2023. The development of the plan is coordinated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion. The focus of the plan will be on how to become part of working life and on the challenges of racism and discrimination faced by young people. The plan will have a general scope and include all groups that are exposed to racism and ethnic and religious discrimination, including national minorities and the Sami.

Dembra (Democratic preparedness against antisemitism and racism) offers development programs for schools and teacher training institutions to prevent prejudice and exclusion. Dembra covers various challenges to democracy, such as racism, islamophobia, antisemitism, hate speech and extremism. Dembra's concept is based on the knowledge that democratic culture, based on participation and critical thinking, and competence in diversity, provides the best prevention of attitudes that threaten democracy – such as group hatred and anti-democratic ideologies. Schools at all levels, from primary school to upper secondary education, can participate in Dembra. The cooperation with teacher training institutions (Dembra LU) aims to strengthen the students' professional competence related to the prevention of prejudice, group hostility and discrimination.

Bufdir (The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs) has its own knowledge portal on equality and living conditions among the Sami and the national minorities. The portal covers topics such as hate speech and attitudes in the general population. Bufdir also manages the website <https://ny.bufdir.no/likestilling/hatytringer/>. Dialogue meetings are being held around the country about racism and discrimination in general. This is under the auspices of regional equality and diversity centres in collaboration with Bufdir. The situation for national minorities has been raised at several dialogue meetings.

The Ministry of Culture and Equality provides operational support to the Norwegian *Stop hate speech* network. Stop hate speech aims to give young people and youth organizations the tools, knowledge and skills that are necessary to recognize hate speech and to be able to act against violations of human rights online.

11 Encourage the use of Romani, in speech and writing in public life, particularly in education, in co-operation with the speakers.

In the inter-agency dialogue mentioned under Romanes, section 9, above, The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, the Language Council, and the Ministry of Local

Government and Regional Development have started looking into possible measures to make it easier to promote Romani in general, and in education in particular. Any measures must be discussed and prepared in cooperation with the minority itself.

12 Promote the inclusion of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to Romani among the objectives of education, teacher training and media.

See section 10, above.

13 Provide forms and means for the teaching and study of South Sami at all appropriate stages, including by distance learning.

As mentioned above, in section 6, the government will soon submit a white paper to the Storting on Sami language, culture, and social life, which will deal with competence and recruitment. We refer to section 6 for more detailed information.

14 Ensure that there are incentives for students who have opted for South Sami as a second language in the compulsory education to continue these studies at upper secondary level, as this is the recruitment base for teacher training for South Sami.

The Sámediggi has established its own scholarship schemes for students in upper secondary education.

We refer to section 6, above, for information on the white paper that will be submitted spring 2023.