

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

Recommendation RecChL(2006)4 of the Committee of Ministers on the application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages by Sweden

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 27 September 2006
at the 974th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers,

In accordance with Article 16 of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages;

Having regard to the instrument of ratification submitted by Sweden on 9 February 2000;

Having taken note of the evaluation made by the Committee of Experts on the Charter with respect to the application of the Charter by Sweden;

Bearing in mind that this evaluation is based on information submitted by Sweden in its second periodical report, supplementary information given by the Swedish authorities, information submitted by bodies and associations legally established in Sweden and the information obtained by the Committee of Experts during its on-the-spot visit,

Having taken note of the comments made by the Swedish authorities on the contents of the Committee of Experts' report;

Recommends that the Swedish authorities take account of all the observations of the Committee of Experts and, as a matter of priority:

1. implement the proposals of the Government Commission for the Finnish and South Sami Languages, in respect of extending the administrative areas for Finnish and Sami, as well as adopting specific legislation on regional or minority languages and establishing a national agency responsible for supervising its implementation;
2. take practical measures to strengthen access to education in regional or minority languages by tackling the existing structural and resourcing problems, and in particular, develop strategies to increase the availability of teachers and provide secondary education in regional or minority languages;
3. adapt the existing models for education in regional or minority languages to Sweden's undertakings under the Charter, including improving the quality and availability of "mother-tongue" education and making appropriate provision for bilingual education;
4. adopt, as a matter of urgency, flexible and innovative measures to maintain the South Sami language;
5. establish a structured policy and take organisational measures to encourage the oral and written use of Sami, Finnish and Meänkieli in dealings with judicial and administrative authorities in the defined administrative areas;
6. encourage and/or facilitate the creation and/or maintenance of at least one newspaper in Sami and Meänkieli;
7. take steps to increase awareness and understanding concerning regional or minority languages in Swedish society at large.