

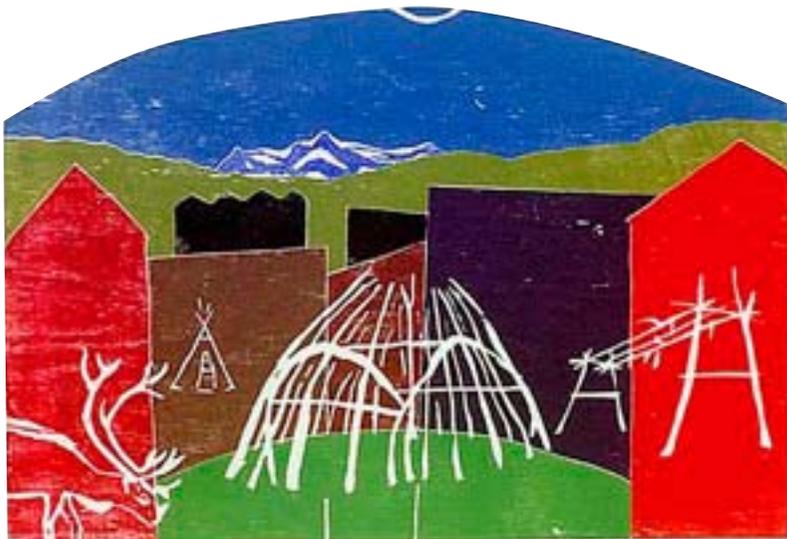


NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Summary

Summary of Sami Policy

White Paper No. 28 (2007-2008)



Summary of White Paper No. 28 (2007-2008) Sami Policy

The Norwegian Government's Sami policy is founded on the Government's overall values of justice and fellowship, viable democracy, sustainable development, social involvement and criticism and humanistic values and ideas. Together with the obligations of international conventions, national legislation and active cooperation with the Sami Parliament, the Soria Moria Declaration forms the Government's basis for preserving and developing Sami culture in Norway.

Developments in Sami policy during recent years lie at the heart of the work on this White Paper, including the resolutions, reports and initiatives of the Sami Parliament. In work on the White Paper, the Government has also sought views and input from organizations, institutions, schools, municipalities and private individuals.

The White Paper has five main parts, and covers most sectors of society. Part 1 presents the overall principles and value platform of the Government's Sami policy, the national and international legal basis, Nordic and international collaboration and the strategy of the High North. Part 2 The Diversity of Sami Society describes the various Sami language areas, adaptation of livelihoods and settlement patterns. Attention is also given to identity issues, discrimination, homosexuality and gender equality. Part 3 Sami Interests in Public Administration and Services raises the need for a knowledge of Sami language and culture in the public sector and the distribution of roles and responsibilities in relation to Sami-related issues in the various administrative areas. Part 4 The Sami Parliament addresses the formal status and authority of the Sami Parliament and the Sami Parliament's collaboration, participation and influence in relation to

other parts of the public administration. Part 5 Sami Policy in the various social sectors is divided into chapters dealing with specific issues such as health, children and adolescents, day care facilities for children, basic education, higher education and research, traditional knowledge, culture, church, voluntary work, media, language, resource exploitation and wealth creation. Resource exploitation and wealth creation involve work on legal matters in Sami areas, public regulations affecting the use of outfields, reindeer husbandry, the fishery and aquaculture industries, agriculture, outfield industries, duodji (Sami handicrafts), the tourist industry and general commercial and regional policy measures.



Figure 1. The South Sami Area

Rights development, institutional development and formalization of the dialogue between the public authorities and the Sami have so far had a central place in Sami policy. Statutes, regulations and arrangements have been established to strengthen Sami language, culture, commerce and society. Of particular importance are the Finnmark Act and the Procedures for Consultations between the State Authorities and the Sami Parliament. The Government will follow up previous and ongoing investigations of rights and rights arrangements, including the newly established Finnmark Commission, the Uncultivated Land Tribunal, plans for follow-up of the Sami Rights Committee II and the Coastal Fisheries Committee and further work on the Nordic Sami Convention.

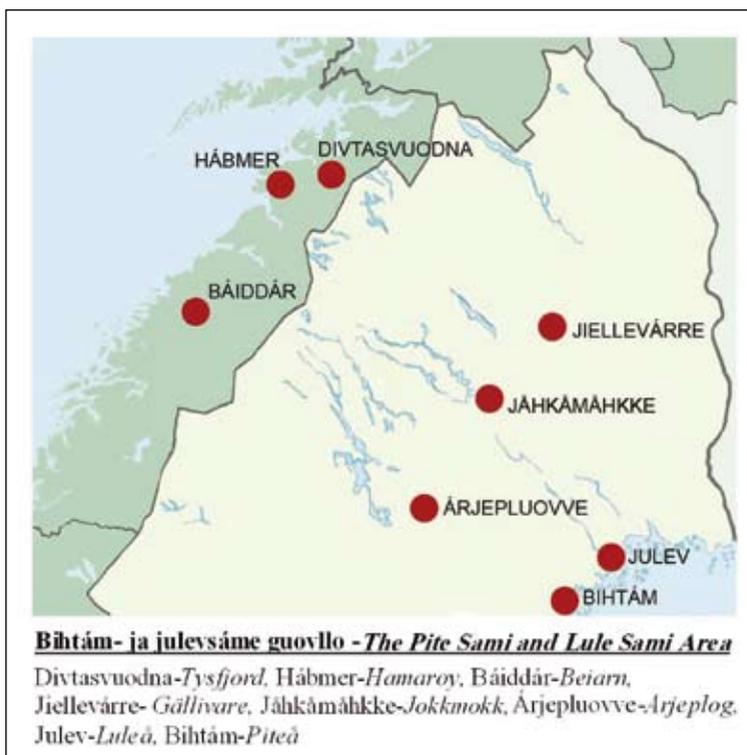


Figure 2. The Pite Sami and Lule Sami Area

Since its establishment, the Sami Parliament has strengthened its status, among other ways by collaboration with county authorities and other bodies. A number of Sami institutions have been established, including regional culture centres and language centres that constitute important Sami power centres. The development of Sami institutions in local communities has played a part in confirming the Sami presence and making it visible. An increasing number of children grow up taking their Sami identity for granted. Sami culture workers and musicians have made themselves known both at home and abroad. There has been a growing understanding and awareness of the Sami presence in Norway, and Sami culture has become part of the general cultural scene here.

At the same time, Sami language and culture still face challenges in many areas. In the administrative area for Sami language, which currently includes eight municipalities in four counties, there are still challenges associated with the implementation of the provisions of the Sami Act.

The Government will continue to build on the institutional and legal frameworks that have been created, while focusing on how the rights and policy will be expressed in practice. The Government places particular emphasis on “everyday policy”, the practical integration of Sami considerations in policy shaping and measures in all social sectors and at all administrative levels.

The Government wishes a focus to be placed on Sami users’ encounters with the public authorities. This is important because it concerns the welfare and security under the law of individual Sami. Investigations show that public bodies have an inadequate knowledge of the Sami language. There is low recruitment to higher edu-

cation providing competence in the Sami language, and it is difficult to recruit staff with Sami language competence to both private and public sectors. This has particularly serious consequences for the health sector, where there is a risk of wrong treatment owing to a lack of language proficiency on the part of medical staff. A knowledge of Sami considerations in one's own sector or agency is a prerequisite for providing satisfactory and equivalent public services to the Sami population. The Government wishes greater attention to be paid to the inclusion of Sami perspectives and considerations in central government agencies. For example, the Labour and Welfare Service's letter of allocation for 2008 provides for the agency's follow-up of Sami users. In this way, the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion plans to try out better ways of ensuring that central government agencies take the Sami perspective into account when planning their activities and designing practical measures, and of passing this on to other central government agencies. More active participation by the Sami University College in developing the expertise of the public sector has also been proposed. In cooperation with the Sami Parliament, the Government will also consider how interpretation services for the Sami population can be improved.

During recent years, a number of measures have been implemented to strengthen and develop the Sami language in many sectors. At the same time, reports show that approximately 2300 pupils attending primary and lower secondary education and approximately 500 pupils at the upper secondary level currently receive instruction in the Sami language. In view of the estimated number of Sami speakers, these figures seem low. The fall in the number of bearers of the Sami language is probably greater than the increase. It is therefore necessary to initiate targeted efforts based on an overall examination of the current work on the Sami language. The Government will invite the Sami Parliament to collaborate on developing an action plan for the Sami language.

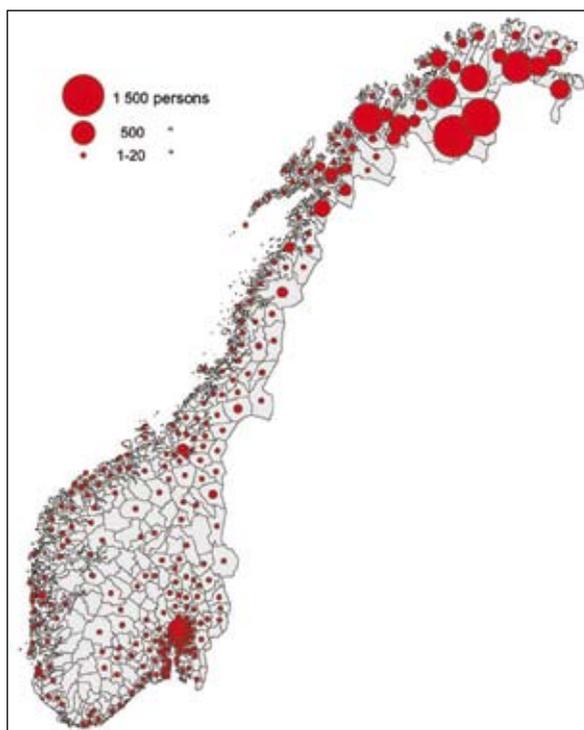


Figure 3. The Electoral Register of the Sami Parliament

Decisions and policy at the municipal and county levels are of decisive importance for the extent to which Sami language, culture, industry and society can develop satisfactorily. The municipalities are the main providers of welfare, and the Government is concerned to ensure equivalent provision of welfare to the Sami population, where linguistic and cultural needs are taken into account. This includes child welfare, day care facilities for children, basic education, health and social services, care of the elderly and the cultural sector. The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion will invite the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities and the Sami Parliament to take part in closer collaboration on the municipalities' work on Sami issues. An assessment will also be made of the role of the County Governor in relation to the municipalities as regards Sami matters.

The Government is concerned to ensure the Sami Parliament genuine influence in areas of importance to Sami society, and to make clear the free status of the Sami Parliament. The Government will continue to build on the positive experience with the Procedures for Consultations between the State Authorities and the Sami Parliament. The Government wishes to develop new budget procedures to ensure that the Sami Parliament is able, at an earlier stage and to a greater extent, to enter into a dialogue with the Government concerning the budgetary needs of the Sami community. The Government proposes that extensive work be started on drafting proposals for legislative amendments necessary for establishment of the Sami Parliament as a separate legal entity and otherwise to bring the law into line with current practice. Extension of the authority of the Sami Parliament to issue provisions concerning the election of the Sami Parliament will also be considered.

The Government attaches importance to further developing cross-border collaboration at the Nordic level and in the High North, among other ways, in connection with linguistic work, education and teaching aids, research and higher education, children and adolescents and industrial development.

The Government has allocated funds to strengthening the work on the East Sami/Skolt Sami language and culture. Cross-border collaboration with Finland and Russia plays an important role in this work.

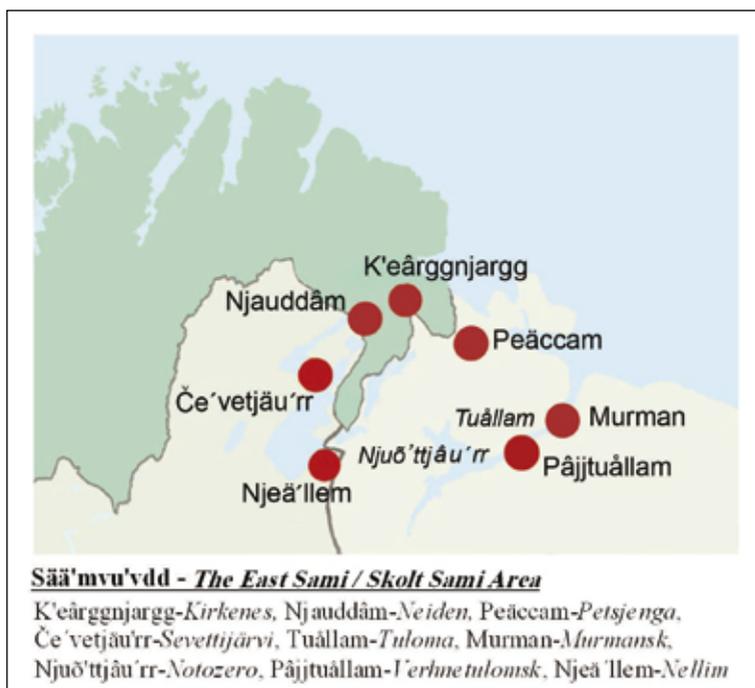


Figure 4. The East Sami / Skolt Sami Area

The Government proposes the establishment of a separate post for work on gender equality and discrimination issues in Sami society. The Ministry of Children and Equality will initiate a survey of the life situation and living conditions of lesbian and homosexual Sami.

Equivalent provision of health and social services must be available to the whole population. The Government will achieve this for the Sami population by means of an improved knowledge base for employees of municipal services and through owner control of specialist health services. The Ministry of Health and Care Services will make it clear in the annual letter of instructions to the regional health authorities that the rights and needs of Sami patients for adapted services must be investigated and clarified in planning and studies and in the decision-making phase. The Ministry will also strengthen the guidance provided to municipal and county services.

In the area of basic education, the Ministry of Education will survey the extent to which pupils' right to a satisfactory educational provision in Sami is not fulfilled, and will investigate ways of improving this. The Ministry will conduct a survey of how Sami pupils attending basic education, including those who do not reside in Sami areas, perceive their own educational situation. The Ministry will consider whether provisions can be made to offer instruction in the Sami language to more pupils who wish to receive it, for example by means of distance learning. The Ministry of Education will also initiate a project on Sami mother tongue illiteracy, strengthen distance learning, establish a work group to prepare a development plan for Sami teaching aids, consider setting up a preliminary course for students of Sami and consider the establishment of a scholarship to increase recruitment to Sami teacher training courses.

The Government will consider appointing a committee to examine more closely the challenges in the area of higher education and research outlined following the publication of White Paper No. 34 (2001-2002) The Quality Reform - on Sami Higher Education and Research.

As regards cultural policy, the Government will continue to concentrate its efforts along two main lines in order to safeguard the state's responsibility for Sami culture. Firstly, the Government will make provisions to enable the Sami Parliament to pursue an independent cultural policy, among other ways, through the administration of a number of Sami institutions and arrangements. Secondly, the Government will pursue a general and overall cultural policy where Sami culture has a natural and important place. It is proposed that the Sami Parliament be given full responsibility for prioritizing between relevant cultural building projects, and that as a rule the tenancy arrangement (husleieordningen) be applied in state financing of new cultural buildings given priority by the Sami Parliament.

In 2008, the Government allocated funds to a wealth creation programme for combinations of industries including the development of the Sami tourist industry. The arrangement is to be administered by the Sami Parliament. The main objectives are to promote viable undertakings and to foster sustainable development in Sami society. In connection with these investments, the Government wishes to discuss with the Sami Parliament strategies for development of out-field industries in Sami areas and improvement of the framework conditions for the duodji industry, including recruitment.

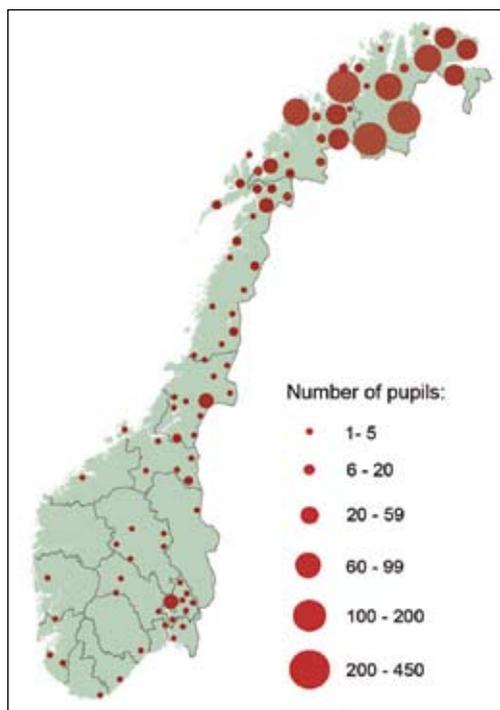


Figure 5. Pupils in the primary and lower secondary school who receive instruction in Sami

Where reindeer husbandry policy is concerned, the implementation of the new Reindeer Husbandry Act will have high priority in the time ahead. The drafting of rules of use will be important in this connection. In order to ensure viable reindeer husbandry in the future, it will be necessary to secure the land areas used for reindeer husbandry. This particularly applies to the land areas necessary for sustainable reindeer husbandry. Active efforts will therefore continue in relation to land issues in the reindeer husbandry industry. In order to reinforce these efforts, interministerial collaboration has been initiated with the aim of achieving a more holistic approach to land management.

The most important Sami policy issues in the marine sector involve follow-up of the recommendations of the Coastal Fisheries Committee for Finnmark. The Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs attaches importance to ensuring that the Sami Parliament is given the opportunity to submit opinions and proposals concerning the regulation of fisheries.

The Sami Parliament has been informed concerning the work on the White Paper and on its contents. Consultations will be conducted with the Sami Parliament concerning consolidation and implementation of the measures presented in the White Paper.

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