



**ROYAL NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND MODERNISATION**

Secretariat of the European Charter for  
Regional or Minority Languages  
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Your ref

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Date

19/6036-2

13 February 2020

## **The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages - Languages covered by the Charter**

The Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation would like to draw the attention of The Council of Europe to information on the Council of Europe's web page regarding the situation with respect to minority languages in Norway:

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-charter-regional-or-minority-languages/languages-covered>. We've been made aware, from interested parties in Norway, that the information on this page is not correct, and we kindly ask the secretariat of the Council to update the information.

The Norwegian authorities are currently preparing the eight periodical report on The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (hereafter the Charter). The preparation is done in consultation and interaction with the national minorities and civil society. The "by country"- and "by language"-lists published by the Council of Europe are used by the national minorities and civil society in this and other processes. It is therefore essential that the web page correctly reflects the state of affairs.

### ***The "by country"-list***

The relevant part of the current "by country list" (page 1-5) is excerpted here, including the incorrect information:

|        |            |  |
|--------|------------|--|
| Norway | Kven       | Part II (Article 7)                              |
|        | Finnish    | Part II (Article 7)                              |
|        | Lule Sami  | Part II (Article 7) and Part III (Articles 8-14) |
|        | North Sami | Part II (Article 7) and Part III (Articles 8-14) |
|        | Romanes    | Part II (Article 7)                              |

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|  |                    |  |
|--|--------------------|--|
|  | Eastern/Skolt Sami | Part II (Article 7) and Part III (Articles 8-14) |
|  | South Sami         | Part II (Article 7) and Part III (Articles 8-14) |

The entries for Lule Sami and South Sami should be changed to "Part II" languages. Norway has not ratified Part III of the Charter with regards to these languages.

East/Skolt Sami is not covered by the Charter in Norway and should therefore be removed from the list. Although, some tentative revitalisation measures, in cooperation with Finnish authorities, have been mentioned in previous state reports, East/Skolt Sami is not in daily use on the Norwegian side of the border, and is not considered a minority language in Norway, under the definitions in the Charter.

Finnish, understood as one of the official languages in Finland, is not covered by the Charter in Norway and should be removed from the list.

Romani, the language used by the Tater/Romani People, is regarded as a (non-territorial) minority language in Norway and should be added to the list. Romani is covered by Part II of the Charter. Romani, as the language is called by the speakers, is distinct from Romanes, or Romani Chib, spoken by the Roma community.

Hence, the correct "by country list" should read:

|        |            |  |
|--------|------------|--|
| Norway | Kven       | Part II (Article 7)                              |
|        | Lule Sami  | Part II (Article 7)                              |
|        | North Sami | Part II (Article 7) and Part III (Articles 8-14) |
|        | Romanes    | Part II (Article 7)                              |
|        | Romani     | Part II (Article 7)                              |
|        | South Sami | Part II (Article 7)                              |

### ***The "by language"-list***

Accordingly, the same status as in the "by country list" should be reflected in the "by language list" (page 6-10):

- Finnish – "Norway" should be removed from the entry on Finnish (page 7)
- Lule Sami – "and Part III (Articles 8-14)" should be removed on the entry on Lule Sami in Norway (page 8)
- South Sami – "and Part III (Articles 8-14)" should be removed on the entry on South Sami in Norway (page 9)
- Eastern/Skolt Sami – "Norway" should be removed completely on the entry on Eastern/Skolt Sami (page 9)

**Minorities and languages – action page**

Furthermore, the Ministry has been made aware of a new entry on the new action page on national minorities and minority languages on the Council of Europe's Human Rights Channel: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/human-rights-channel/national-minorities#/>

According to the list the protected languages in Norway are: Eastern/Skolt Sami, Kven/Finnish, Lule Sami, North Sami, Romani and South Sami.

The correct list on the webpage should read:  
Kven, Lule Sami, North Sami, Romanes, Romani, and South Sami

The Ministry kindly asks the Council of Europe to amend the above-mentioned information on the web page in order to provide correct information to the public.

**Conclusion**

As for the legal reasoning underlying the information above, reference is made to our comments in the seventh monitoring cycle, our correspondence with the Committee of Experts on the matter, and to the process on the Recommendation from the Committee of Ministers concluding the monitoring cycle, adopted 4 July 2018.

We kindly request the secretariat of the Council of Europe to update the lists without delay, so that they can be used as a resource in the preparations for the eighth monitoring cycle.

If there are any questions in this matter, please contact Senior Adviser Cecilie Haare, phone: 0047 22 24 70 95, e-mail: [cecilie.haare@kmd.dep.no](mailto:cecilie.haare@kmd.dep.no).

Yours sincerely,

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*This document is signed electronically and has therefore no handwritten signature*

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Norges faste delegasjon til Europarådet i Strasbourg