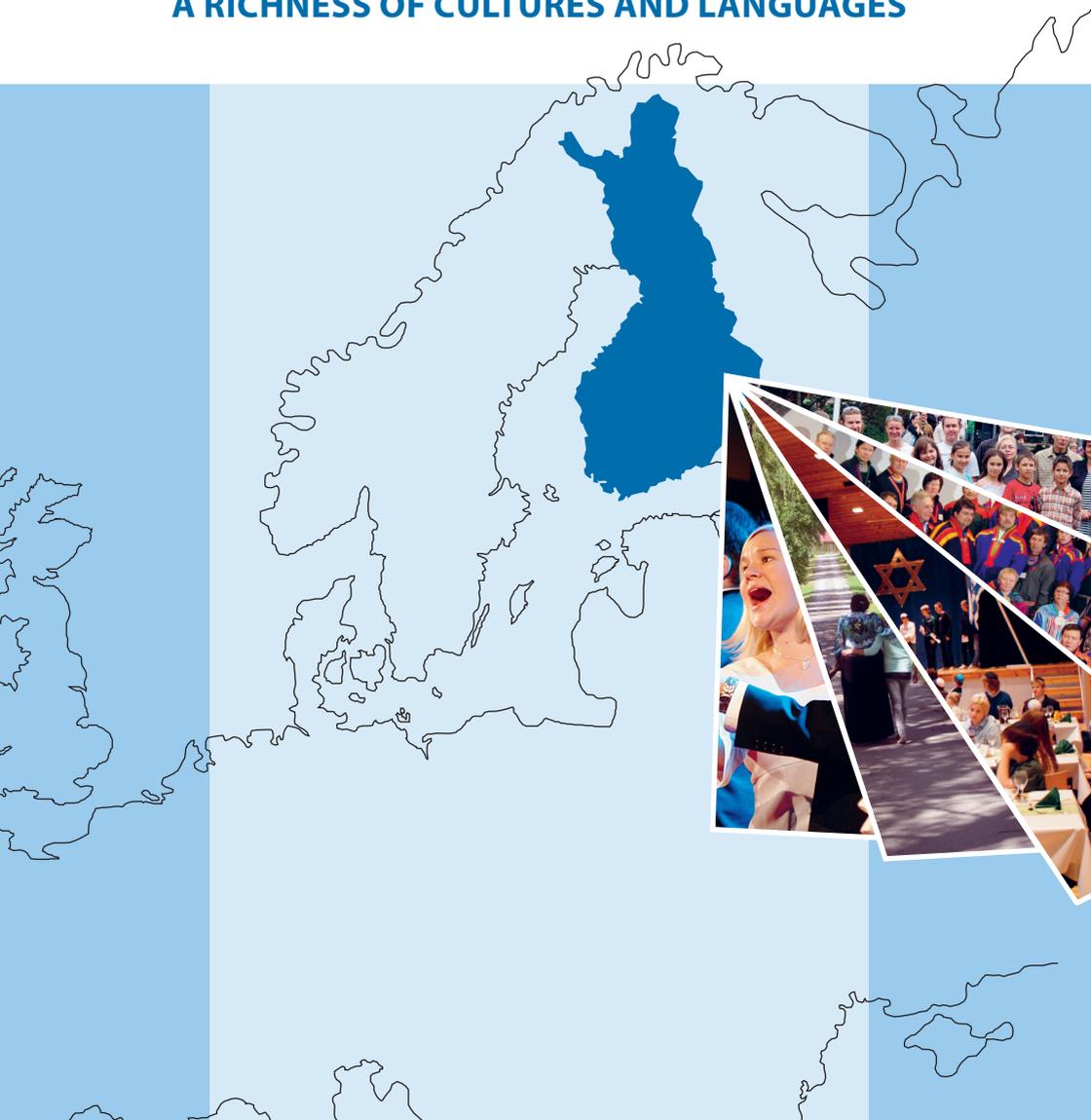


Suomi
Finland
100

Minority Rights Group Finland

NATIONAL MINORITIES IN FINLAND

A RICHNESS OF CULTURES AND LANGUAGES



ISBN: 978- 951-807-111-X

National Minorities in Finland – Richness of Cultures and Languages
Published in 2016.

Translated and updated from:
"Suomen kansalliset vähemmistöt – kulttuurien ja kielten rikkautta" (2012).

Publisher: Minority Rights Group Finland.

Editors: Okan Daher, Lauri Hannikainen, Karoliina Heikinheimo-Pérez.

Translation from Finnish to English: Anne Holopainen / Kielikosmos.

Layout: Esa Noresvuo, Pia Hermes.

Cover: Pia Hermes.

Printed in Dardedze holografija, Riga, Latvia, 2016

National Minorities in Finland

– Richness of Cultures and Languages

Foreword	4
Introduction	6
Basic information	8
On the Nature of Minority Rights in International Law and in Finland	13
Finland-Swedes – Swedish-speaking Finns	25
Sámi as an Indigenous People and the Future of Sáminess	36
Roma in Society – We Are Different	56
Russian-speaking Minority – in the Past, Today and in the Future	75
Finnish Jewry – a Well-organised Minority	88
Tatar Minority – Fully Integrated into Society	95
Karelian-speaking Karelians	105
Åland Islands – A Special Autonomous Region	114
New Minority Groups – New Resources of Diverse Society	119

FOREWORD

We are all different, but equal. Finland is a strong advocator for the universality of human rights. Human rights belong to everyone in all countries, without any discrimination.

We attach great importance to ensuring that also persons belonging to all national, ethnic, religious or linguistic communities and groups can fully participate in the society, both here in Finland and outside our borders. Freedom of expression and association as well as freedom of religion and belief are cornerstones of a democratic and pluralistic society and must be protected. In promoting these rights, Finland is guided by the universality, indivisibility, inter-relatedness and interdependence of all human rights, whether civil, political, economic, social or cultural.

As Finland approaches the 100th anniversary of its independence (December 6, 2017), it is particularly important to honor the richness of cultures living here in our country. It is indisputable that strong and lively minority communities will make any society more prosperous as a whole.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland continues to engage closely with persons and groups representing different minorities in Finland. We also have regular discussions with international civil society organizations about questions related to minority rights. Our overall goal is to strengthen human rights protection and the role of civil society in all countries.

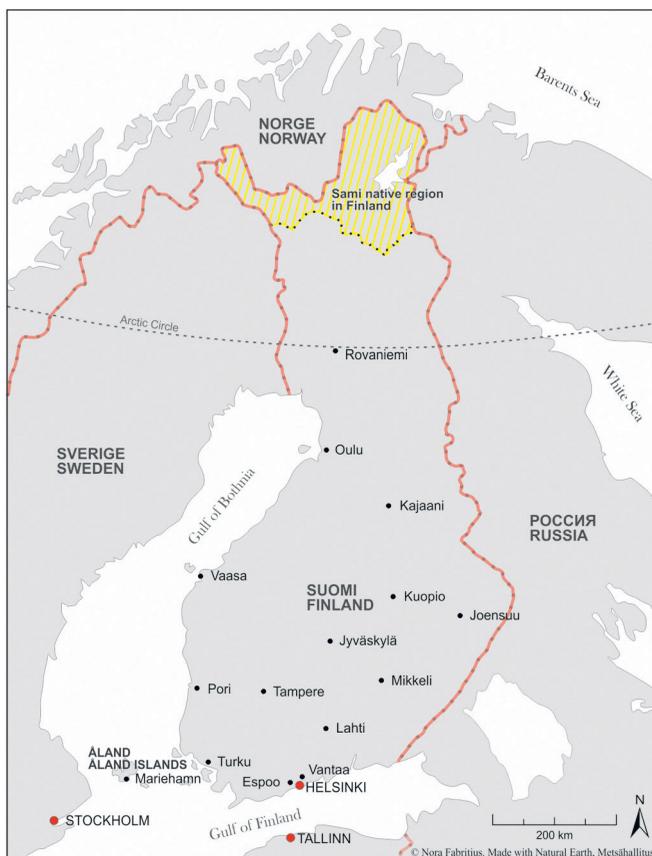
It goes without saying that discrimination – let alone violence – against a minority can never be tolerated. It is paramount that those persons that have committed hate or other crimes are brought to justice and held accountable for their actions. We all shall be equal before the law. We should also listen to and learn from one another. Together we can build a society that is truly open and inclusive and thus safe, resilient and dynamic.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs would like to thank the Minority Rights Group Finland for the publication at hand as well as its distinguished and uncompromising work over the years for preserving minority cultures in Finland.

Rauno Merisaari

Ambassador on Human Rights

Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland



INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of the book *National Minorities in Finland – A Richness of Cultures and Languages* is to provide the reader with information on what are known as traditional ethnic and linguistic minorities in Finland. The publication includes a separate chapter on each minority written by an active member of the minority concerned. These chapters clearly reflect not only the writer's own outlook but also the special characteristics of the minority they represents. The chapters provide information on the history, language, culture and legal status of minorities. Some chapters focus more on the language and culture, while others emphasise the legal status and current situation.

The book begins with four text boxes which give basic information on the topic. These are followed by a chapter on the nature of minority rights. This chapter describes how minority rights are based on international human rights law. Then comes the main content of the publication, which consists of seven chapters on different minorities, starting from the largest group, i.e. the Swedish-speaking minority, and continuing with chapters on the Sámi indigenous people, the Roma, the Russian speakers, the Jews, the Tatars, and the Karelians.

At the end of the book there are two chapters which call for explanation. There is a chapter on the autonomous Åland Islands, a region which 1) is Swedish-speaking, 2) has a special autonomous status, and 3) is both demilitarised and neutralised. The great majority of Ålanders are Swedish-speaking and form, thus, a part (10 %) of the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland. Åland's status is unique in Europe and has raised great interest in many countries – also outside Europe – because it is functioning well. The hundred years old Finland can proudly refer to the Åland model/example which itself also will soon fill hundred years.

The last chapter actually goes beyond the title of the publication as it discusses new minority groups consisting of migrants. It was included

because it was thought that this kind of publication should also contain basic information on newer minority groups, which are referred to in Finland's Constitution and which may later be granted the legal status of a traditional minority.

This book has been produced and edited by the Finnish branch of the distinguished Minority Rights Group International, i.e. MRG Finland. Its board consists of representatives of traditional minorities in Finland and external experts. MRG Finland seeks to act as an expert body which can present well-founded opinions on minority affairs both in Finland and on the international level.

We thank the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland for its financial assistance, which made it possible to translate this publication into English and print it. We also thank the Finnish Peace Committee, which was responsible for the technical implementation of this publication. We extend our warmest thanks to the actors who have made the publication available on their websites for potential readers: the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman and the Finnish Peace Committee.

The Finnish edition of the publication dates from 2012. We would like to thank Anne Holopainen, Master of Arts and Master of Social Sciences, for a high-quality translation of the publication's slightly modernised version into English.

In Helsinki in December 2015

Okan Daher, Chair of MRG Finland

Lauri Hannikainen, Emeritus Professor of International Law
Board member of MRG Finland

Karoliina Heikinheimo-Pérez, Secretary of MRG Finland

MINORITIES IN FINLAND

The main purpose of this publication is to provide information on 'traditional minorities' in Finland, i.e. on such ethnic and linguistic minorities that have existed in Finland for at least a century. They are often also called national or cultural minorities. Some of these minorities also have a religion different from that of Finland's Evangelical-Lutheran majority.

These minorities are the Swedish-speaking Finns, the Sámi, the Roma, the Jews, the Tatars, the Karelians and a group known as the 'Old Russians'. Each minority will be described below in separate chapters. It will be fascinating to read how different these minorities are both from one another and from the ethnic Finns. Two of the minorities – the Swedish-speaking Finns and the Sámi indigenous people – have a specific legal status.

The Swedish minority includes the majority population of the Åland Islands, a special autonomous region under Finland's sovereignty. A separate chapter is dedicated to Åland.

This book also contains information about the fast-growing group of 'New Russians' since they have the same ethnic origin, mother tongue and religion as the Old Russians and Russian is a traditionally spoken minority language in Finland. This group is often also considered to include Russian-speaking persons who have come to Finland from the former Soviet Union, including even Ingrian returnees who do not speak Finnish. At the end of 2015, the Russian-speaking population in Finland amounted to circa 70,000 persons, of which the majority were immigrants who had moved to Finland in recent decades.

The last chapter goes beyond the main topic of this publication as it discusses new ethnic, linguistic and religious immigrant groups. Most of these people have lived in Finland for less than 25 years. Many originate from societies and cultures that differ considerably from Finnish society and culture. Their principal goal is to integrate into their new home country, and in this process they receive help from people of their own culture and religion. Muslim immigrants, in particular, have created close communities mainly according to their countries of origin. In several European countries, Muslims are having difficulties with integration, but in Finland they have been adaptable and conciliatory. They have started to form their own religious, ethnic and linguistic minority groups, and together the Muslims constitute a relatively large religious minority group with more than 60,000 persons.

Section 17 of the Constitution of Finland provides an important legal basis for minority rights (Act No. 731/1999). First, the Section stipulates on two leading population groups: 'The national languages of Finland are Finnish and Swedish; the public authorities shall provide for the cultural and societal needs of the Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking populations of the country on an equal basis.' Subsection 3 of the provision deals with other population groups: 'The Sámi, as an indigenous people, as well as the Roma and other groups, have the right to maintain and develop their own language and culture.'

EUROPE'S MINORITIES

Europe has a large number of ethnic and linguistic minorities. First of all, there are three pan-European minorities, i.e. minorities living in most European countries. Two of these are traditional minorities, i.e. the Jews and the Roma (gypsies). The third minority group – Muslims – is a traditional minority group in some parts of Europe and an immigrant group in many countries.

It is typical for European countries to have minorities originating from a neighbouring country. This is particularly common in Eastern Europe. For example, many Hungarians with a minority status live in Hungary's neighbouring countries, while Hungary accommodates minorities originating from its neighbours.

A third category is made up of minorities that exist in only one or two states and have no ethno-linguistic mother country, such as Catalonians in Spain, Basques in Spain and France, and Sorbians in Germany.

Small indigenous peoples, which are at the same time both ethnic and linguistic minorities, are a fourth category. These include the Sámi in Finland and three other countries,

the Inuits in Greenland and several small indigenous peoples in Northern Russia, such as the Nenets and Chukchi.

Finland has minorities from all the four categories. We have the Jewish and Roma minorities, while Muslims are represented by the Tatar minority and communities of Muslim immigrants. Neighbouring countries are represented by the Swedish-speaking population and Russians/Russian-speaking population. Finland also has one of the two indigenous peoples of Western Europe, i.e. the Sámi. Karelians live both in Finland and in Russia, and in Finland they constitute a linguistic minority.

KEY INTERNATIONAL TREATIES AND DECLARATIONS CONCERNING MINORITY RIGHTS

The following list includes four conventions and two declarations by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly. The conventions are binding on the states that have ratified them. The General Assembly declarations are not legally binding but may have considerable political and moral authority. The documents are easily accessible on the Internet.

1. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 1966. This Covenant drafted at the UN has been ratified by nearly 170 of the 193 UN member states, including Finland. Article 27 recognises that persons belonging to ethnic, linguistic, or religious minorities have the right to their own culture, language and religion. Compliance with the ICCPR is monitored by the International Human Rights Committee.

2. Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, 1995. This European Convention drafted at the Council of Europe has been ratified by 39 states, including Finland. The Convention provides for many rights to persons belonging to national minorities as well as obligations to the contracting states. Compliance with the Convention is monitored by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, which is assisted by an advisory committee of experts.

3. European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (i.e. Charter), 1992. This Charter drafted at the Council of Europe has been ratified by 25 states, including Finland. The Charter seeks to provide protection for minority languages which are traditionally spoken in the countries that have ratified the Charter.

Compliance with the Charter is monitored by the Council of Europe Committee of

Ministers, which is assisted by a committee of experts. Finland has undertaken specific obligations in respect of the Swedish and Sámi languages.

4. Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, 1989. This convention was drafted at the International Labour Organization ILO, and it has been ratified by 20 states. Finland has not ratified it. The Convention recognises several rights of a collective nature to indigenous and tribal peoples, such as land rights and rights to natural resources. Its compliance is monitored by the ILO's international monitoring mechanism.

5. Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities, 1992 (Resolution No. 47/135). This declaration was adopted unanimously by the UN General Assembly. The UN Working Group on Minorities monitors how states implement the Declaration, which in practice specifies Article 27 of the ICCPR.

6. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007. A majority approved the Declaration in the voting at the UN General Assembly, but four states voted against it and eleven abstained. Finland voted for the Declaration. This progressive Declaration supports several collective rights for indigenous peoples, such as the right to autonomy and to areas inhabited by them. The states that were against the Declaration have subsequently toned down their objections to cautious acquiescence.

WHAT MINORITY RIGHTS ARE RECOGNISED BY INTERNATIONAL TREATIES?

In addition to the human rights belonging to every human being, such as equality and non-discrimination, minorities and/or persons belonging to them have the following rights:

- The right of a minority to exist.
- The right of a minority and persons belonging to it to their own identity and culture.
- The right of a minority and persons belonging to it to participate in the public, social, economic and cultural life of their home state. This means the right to integrate into national society.
- The right of a minority and persons belonging to it to participate in national and local decision-making, particularly in matters concerning their rights and interests.
- The right of minorities to their language includes various aspects. At the minimum, all persons belonging to a minority have the right to use their own language and learn it. The government must guarantee school children belonging to traditional minorities the right to learn their mother tongue. Linguistic minorities have the right to establish their own media. If a larger number of minority language speakers are concentrated in a certain province, the minority language should be given a semi-official status by, for example, enabling schooling in the minority language and by allowing its use in dealings with public authorities.
- Religious minorities have had less need to refer to minority rights than linguistic minorities since the freedom of religion is one important fundamental freedom. The

freedom of religion includes a broad right to profess and practise one's religion and to establish religious communities, etc. The freedom of religion covers every person's right to choose their religion, change it and renounce it altogether. International human rights treaties allow limitations to the freedom of religion on account of public order, health, moral or the fundamental rights of other people.

- According to Article 9 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the parties shall facilitate access to the media for persons belonging to national minorities. According to Article 12, the parties shall foster education and research of the culture, history and religion of their national minorities. The states shall provide adequate opportunities for teacher training and access to textbooks.
- Indigenous peoples also have rights to traditional territories inhabited by them and to their natural resources and natural environment. These rights extend both to land and water areas. Respect for the traditions and lifestyles of indigenous peoples has been expressed in stronger terms than in the instruments on minorities.

Reference material:

Ahmed, Tawhida: *The Impact of EU Law on Minority Rights*, Oxford 2011.

Benedikter, Thomas (ed.): *Europe's Ethnic Mosaic – A Short Guide to Minority Rights in Europe*, EURAC Research, Bolzano 2008.

Thornberry, Patrick & Estebanez, Maria Amor: *Minority Rights in Europe – Work and Standards of the Council of Europe*, Strasbourg 2004.

A handy way to follow the development of minority rights in Finland is to read documents relating to the international monitoring of two conventions of the Council of Europe, i.e. the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (www.coe.int/en/web/minorities/country-specific-monitoring) and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/minlang/Report/default_en.asp).

Lauri Hannikainen

Emeritus Professor of International Law at the University of Turku

Matti Jutila

University Lecturer of International Relations at the University of Turku

ON THE NATURE OF MINORITY RIGHTS IN INTERNATIONAL LAW AND IN FINLAND

International law and constitutions of states recognise several human rights which belong to every human being by virtue of equality. These include various freedom rights, such as the freedom of speech and freedom of religion, right to privacy, political rights (especially for citizens), security rights, economic rights related to working life, and social rights in the form of various social benefits. In addition, they provide cultural rights including educational and linguistic rights. Prohibition of discrimination is an essential consequence from the equality of humans; this prohibition runs as a thread through the norms of human rights treaties.

When the long list of human rights belonging to every human being is viewed from the perspective of minorities, a question arises of whether they are not adequate also for people belonging to minorities. Is it not the prohibition of discrimination that guarantees the protection of minority rights?

1. Equality regardless of minority status

The promotion of equality and non-discrimination by means of the mere prohibition of discrimination could work if societies and states were neutral in terms of languages, cultures and religions. If a state did not promote the use of a certain language through its actions

or the practices of a certain religion were not prevailing in society, then it would not be sensible to talk about a majority population, and minorities cannot exist without majority populations. In most states one language, culture or religion is stronger than the others and the state supports the position of the strongest through its actions. However, there are also states where two or even more languages, cultures or religions are strong and enjoy a special status in society. In Finland, the state acts in Finnish and to some extent in Swedish, and even though the state and the church have been formally separated from each other, several national holidays are based on the Evangelic-Lutheran calendar. Those who speak other languages and practise other religions are in a disadvantageous position. Actual equality necessitates that the state must also support minorities through its actions.

Who, then, are minorities? A minority could not naturally exist without a majority, and therefore the organisation principle of states also plays a key role in the definition of minority. In the 19th century, nationalism gradually became stronger, and after the First World War, when the map of Europe was redrawn, national groups became the foundation of states. 'One state for each nation and only one nation in every state' was the leading principle of the era. Nation-states are still central political units, regardless of the European integration. However, the idea of a nation-state can never be fully realised in practice. There are so many ethnic groups in Europe that it would be very difficult to give a state to each of them. Even Finland would have to be divided into a few parts. On the other hand, persons belonging to different ethnic groups live side by side, for which reason it is impossible to draw borders which would follow national differences. How has this diversity been responded to?

Historically, the ideal of a nation-state has often been realised by force. Minorities have been forced to assimilate, people have been

transferred from one state to another, and entire ethnic groups have been murdered. However, even the most violent coercive measures have not succeeded in building nationally, culturally or linguistically homogeneous states. This means that the principle must have yielded to the practice. States have assumed very different practices for managing diversity. States may include autonomous areas, such as Åland Island in Finland. On the other hand, cultural rights may have been guaranteed to minorities without regional autonomy. Diverse practices have partly been harmonised by means of international treaty arrangements. Their purpose is to safeguard a minimum level of minority rights in all states.

2. UN policy and requests for changing it

The central organisation for international cooperation founded after the Second World War, i.e. the United Nations (UN), strongly emphasised the rights of every human being on the basis of equality and gave little attention to minority rights. It was thought that if all individuals have adequate rights, people belonging to minorities do not need specifically defined rights. Over time, ethnic and linguistic minorities as well as indigenous peoples started to argue that realisation of the UN human rights ideology is leading to a gradual assimilation of minorities and indigenous peoples into the majority population. According to these arguments, the groups concerned were losing their own language, culture and lifestyle and hence their own identity. It was not sufficient to safeguard equal rights to every human being, but it was also necessary to protect the equality of different groups. Specific group rights were demanded for minorities.

In Finland, this particularly concerned the Sámi indigenous people and the Roma: many young Sámi and Roma people no longer learnt their group's mother tongue. In the 1970s, the authorities still

thought that these 'primitive' population groups should be brought back to 'civilisation'. The prevailing belief in progress did not regard the minorities' own cultures as worth preserving.

3. International breakthrough

A breakthrough took place around the time when the Cold War ended at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s. Several international organisations adopted instruments reflecting another kind of thinking. According to this, people belonging to ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities have the right to their own identity, culture, language and religion as well as the right to participate in social life and in decision-making on issues concerning their rights and interests. In a multicultural society minority groups should be supported in their efforts to preserve and develop their own culture and language.

To establish the nature of minority rights, it is necessary to discuss the following three questions in more detail:

- 1) Does international law recognise minority rights only for traditional minorities, i.e. minorities that have existed in their state of residence over a long period?
- 2) Are minority rights primarily or exclusively rights of individuals? Would collective rights (group rights) belong only to indigenous peoples, which have rather typically had traditional territories in common use and have recognised no private land ownership?
- 3) Are minority rights special rights, i.e. different from the rights of persons belonging to the majority population? Or something more?

4. Minority rights only for 'traditional minorities'?

In the international arena – and particularly in Europe – minority rights belong only to 'traditional minorities'. For example, a hundred-year existence of a minority group in their area is regarded as a time limit in Hungary and Luxembourg. Hundred years seems to be quite a long time. In Finland, the Swedish-speaking Finns, the Sámi, the Roma, the Jews and the Tatars fulfil the criterion of hundred years, but in the case of Old Russians the situation is more ambiguous. The group of Old Russians is small and has partly assimilated into the majority population. The group of New Russians is several times larger than that of Old Russians and is growing constantly. How should the government treat this minority group as a whole? Government policy is described in more detail below in the chapter dealing with the Russian-speaking population in Finland. The reader may reflect on this issue further. In any case, Russian has been used in Finland for a long time – is it therefore a minority language?

If we take a closer look at the composition of other traditional minorities, e.g. the Finnish Jews, we see that in reality part of the minority group consists of immigrants who have lived in their new home country only for a limited time, for example ten years. Will the newcomers also have access to minority rights and special treatment? The response of international bodies to this issue is that the government should not make a clear distinction but treat the newcomers as part of the traditional minority.

When do immigrants then become traditional national minorities? What is, for example, the situation of Vietnamese immigrants living in Finland? Hundreds of Vietnamese refugees arrived in Finland at the end of the 1970s. They have preserved their Vietnamese identity but were for a long time unable to organise themselves as a separate population group. Finally in summer 2007, they established their own organisation called the Vietnamese

Society in Finland. The society's secretary Nhan Huynh writes that the Vietnamese community is fragmented and has been passive in promoting its culture and social affairs.

Of course people belonging to new minority groups also have the right to practise their own culture and religion and speak their own language, but when we talk about minority rights, we often refer to something more, i.e. positive actions by the state in favour of a minority group. States are not willing to take an effort until a population group has clearly expressed its collective will to retain its own characteristics. States cannot be assured about this until after minorities have lived in their area for decades. A minority should thus prove its distinctiveness to be recognised as a minority.

The Constitution of Finland expresses a well-informed opinion on the issue. According to Section 17, the national languages of Finland are Finnish and Swedish; the public authorities shall provide for the cultural and societal needs of the Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking populations of the country on an equal basis. This means that from the legal perspective, the status of the Swedish-speaking population is clearly stronger than that of a national minority.

Section 17 further prescribes that the Sámi, as an indigenous people, as well as the Roma and other groups, have the right to their own language and culture. Hence, the Constitution does not make a clear distinction between traditional minorities and other minority groups. It is not considered to be only the right of the state to define a minority, but the views of the persons belonging to the group on their status are also essential. On the other hand, even though the ethnic origin of a person were absolutely clear, this does not mean that he or she would have to belong to this ethnic group. Nobody may be forced to belong to a certain group, but identity is largely about how a person sees themselves.

5. Individual or collective rights

The collective nature of several rights of indigenous peoples has been widely recognised. They are stronger than the group rights of minorities. International instruments formulate minority rights as individual rights with the expression 'in community with the other members of their group'. Consequently, minority rights include both an individual and a collective element. In principle, they are rights of the individual, but without the strong collective element minority rights could not protect a minority against assimilation. An important ground for the collective element is formed by the protection of the minority against assimilation into the majority population and culture, and against other external threats. It is not only individuals belonging to a minority who should receive an equal treatment with other human beings; the minority as a group should be treated equally with other groups of people in society.

The individual element of minority rights should not be understated. Every person belonging to a minority has all the same individual human rights as every person belonging to the majority. Minority leaders do not have the right to limit the individual human rights of minority group members in the name of collective interests of the minority. Human rights are primarily rights of individuals and belong to each and every person – whether he or she belongs to a majority, indigenous people or minority group. Most human rights belong to citizens as well as to other persons residing in a country.

6. Special rights?

In principle, minority rights are not special rights but usually something less – or at most temporary special rights. International human rights treaties allow special rights or special treatment for minorities and persons belonging to them temporarily for the purpose of assisting a minority to become actually equal with the majority and other groups. This means that formal equality is not always enough but it is necessary to consider the actual situation.

Minority rights are also needed to protect minority languages and cultures from disappearance. States are ready for resource-intensive protection activities only if a minority group has clearly expressed its will to preserve its language or culture. This may necessitate long-term special rights or special treatment. In most cases special treatment is adequate. In effect, it is about special measures for the achievement of real equality.

A good example is the teaching of minority languages: the government needs to use resources for the teaching of minority languages at schools. This entails producing teaching materials in minority languages and training of teachers. It requires slightly more resources than the teaching of the majority language. However, reservation of such 'extra' resources for the teaching of minority languages cannot be regarded as a huge sacrifice. The outcome should be equality: pupils belonging to minorities can learn their mother tongue (or even study in it) in the same way as majority group pupils.

Systems created by states where minorities have a special status in elections can be considered as special rights. In this case, the minority has quota places in bodies to be elected or the electoral threshold is lower. Several other kinds of arrangements can also be created to increase the participation opportunities of minorities. Usually these are mainly about special treatment and not about

definite special rights. No matter which one is concerned, the treatment is clearly based on the idea of collectivity.

Indigenous peoples do not only have more collective rights than minorities but also special rights. Many of these have a historical basis: they are usually related to established land use rights. The most far-reaching special right – even an exclusive right – is the reindeer husbandry right of the Sámi in Northern Norway and Sweden. It is believed that reservation of reindeer husbandry exclusively to the Sámi will ensure preservation of the Sámi culture. Instead, in Finland the Sámi do not have a corresponding exclusive right but, in principle, any person residing more permanently in the reindeer husbandry area can practise reindeer husbandry in Finland, provided that they are EU citizens. The Sámi in Finland find this worrying.

7. Need for public support

Minorities need most public support for issues related to the teaching of their own language and to the right to use it in public life. Minority groups can practise their own culture without a lot of material resources, whereas mental resources are primary. However, the government should, at least to some extent, support minority cultures, both to safeguard their existence and to promote their development. In principle, more support should be given to traditional minorities and less to newer minority groups.

Religious minorities do not usually need support from the government to the same extent as linguistic minorities. It is most important to religious minorities that their freedom of religion is respected and they can thus practise their own religion among themselves. However, there are matters in which a religious minority may also need special attention from the government. An

example of this is graveyards. The Finnish Jews and Tatars have their private graveyards, where the members of these groups are buried according to their religious ceremonies. However, purchase and maintenance of graveyards are expensive. The fast-growing groups of Muslim immigrants in Finland have not been able to acquire their own graveyards. The religious rights of Muslims have also been problematic in several Western European countries in respect of the burial issue. The problems can be solved best with the help of public authorities.

In recent years, the measures to improve the position of minorities and immigrants have also faced growing opposition in several European countries, including Finland. The parliamentary group of the Finns Party, which has grown strongly since the parliamentary elections of spring 2011, adopted a statement where it requested that all favouritism of minority groups should be stopped. It did not accept special treatment which aims at promoting the status of minority groups with a weaker position towards equality. The same viewpoint was accepted by the Youth League of the National Coalition Party. According to them, all the resources used for supporting minorities reduce the resources available for the rest of the population, which may even be discriminatory against the majority.

Let us examine the issue in the light of the following example. The City of Helsinki grants special financial support to comprehensive schools that have clearly an above-average number of 1) pupils of parents with the lowest income and education level or 2) foreign pupils. The purpose of the special support is to contribute to the success of such pupils at school, since Helsinki officials think that the support increases the possibilities of equality and promotes the achievement of common goals. What is your opinion, dear reader? Would it be better to divide the amount corresponding to the special support equally between all comprehensive schools in Helsinki?

In Finland, the government is concerned about the marginalisation of young people even before they enter working life. Among them, there are many young people of foreign and Roma origin. These young people need support so that their marginalisation can be prevented. Would such special support not be a wise integration policy?

As regards special support measures for minority rights, there is usually no self-evident panacea suitable for every situation. When decisions are evaluated, it must always be examined how they promote actual equality in society. The right to education in one's own mother tongue, not only everybody's right to study in the official language, is clearly a measure which increases the actual equality of all individuals and at the same time protects minority languages.

Examination of special rights, special treatment and public support granted by governments to minorities on the European scale reveals quite a diverse picture. Some minorities or persons belonging to them have special rights. Special treatment and public support are more common, but many minorities have no access to any of the above-mentioned benefits. Their only benefit is that they can apply for support for projects from public sources, also from the EU.

According to our assessment, traditional minorities in Finland and to certain extent also newer minority groups have a relatively good position in European terms. It remains to be seen whether the reader will agree with our assessment after having read this book.

Reference material:

Pentassuglia, Gaetano: *Minorities in International Law*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg 2002.

Kymlicka, Will: *Multicultural Odysseys: Navigating the New International Politics of Diversity*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007.

The Rights of Minorities – A Commentary on the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, ed. Marc Weller, Oxford 2006.

Thornberry, Patrick: *Indigenous Peoples and Human Rights*, Manchester 2002.

Thürer, Daniel (ed.): *International Protection of Minorities – Challenges in Practice and Doctrine*, Zürich 2014.

Weller, Marc & Blacklock, Denika & Nobbs, Katherine (eds.): *The Protection of Minorities in the Wider Europe*, London 2008.

Website of the Minority Rights Group International: www.minorityrights.org.

Kjell Herberts

Researcher at Åbo Akademi University

Markus Österlund

Secretary-General at the Swedish Assembly of Finland.

FINLAND-SWEDES – SWEDISH-SPEAKING FINNS

In terms of their number, Swedish-speaking Finns constitute a minority, but Finnish legislation guarantees them a stronger status than is usual for national minorities. According to the Constitution of Finland, Finnish and Swedish are the two national languages of Finland and the public authorities shall provide for the cultural and societal needs of the Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking populations of the country on an equal basis. This provision reflects the actual situation relatively well, since Swedish-speaking Finns are a vibrant force in Finnish society and constitute an integral part of its identity and culture. In effect, they only have one major concern: de facto access to public services in Swedish. This arises from inadequate application of the legal statutes concerning the national languages in Finland, partly due to deficient language skills among civil servants and to lack of motivation.



Introduction

Finland has traditionally relied on two languages, Finnish and Swedish. Swedish has been spoken as a mother tongue in Finland at least since the 12th century. Swedish-speaking Finns are thus natives of Finland, and they perceive themselves as Finnish people who speak Swedish as their mother tongue. According to statistics, Swedish-speaking Finns amount to slightly over 291 000 (5.4% of the population). The proportion has been steadily diminishing, but today the population of the minority group is stable and is, in fact, slightly increasing in numbers, since the majority of parents from bilingual families register their children as Swedish speakers.

The vast majority of the Swedish-speaking Finns live in the coastal regions of Uusimaa/Nyland, Turunmaa/Åboland and Pohjanmaa/Österbotten provinces. Approximately 12 000 of them (4%) live in Finnish-speaking municipalities elsewhere in Finland. Åland Islands is an autonomous Swedish-speaking area with approximately 28 000 inhabitants. The daily and working lives of Finnish and Swedish-speaking population groups are rather similar. A large number of both Finnish and Swedish speakers work in the public or private service sector. However, the share of Swedish-speaking Finns is greater across all professional groups in the fields of trade, transport and agriculture.

Most of Swedish-speaking Finns live in bilingual municipalities, that is, in an environment with a considerable influence of the Finnish language. By law, all municipalities in Åland are Swedish-speaking. Municipalities are bilingual if the minority accounts for at least eight per cent of the residents or consists of at least 3 000 persons, while every individual can officially have only one mother tongue. In Finland, the mother tongue of every citizen is registered.

The area inhabited and influenced by the majority of the Swedish-speaking population is called Svenskfinland (Swedish

Finland). This is not a mere geographical concept but rather refers to networks of Swedish speakers.

The new Constitution of Finland entered into force in March 2000. Like the previous Constitution Act, the Constitution guarantees the status of Finnish and Swedish as national languages of the country. According to the Constitution, the public authorities shall provide for the cultural and societal needs of the Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking populations of the country on an equal basis (Section 17). This means that citizens must be offered, for example, public services, education at schools and other institutions as well as information in both languages. The law also provides that the Finnish administration is bilingual, and thus all acts, decrees and other important documents must be available both in Finnish and in Swedish.

Linguistic rights and obligations are defined in more detail in language legislation. The Language Act has been amended, and its new provisions entered into force on 1 January 2004. According to the new Language Act, every Finnish person has the right to use their own language in their own affairs, i.e. in their dealings with government offices and other public services. Authorities must offer services in both languages without a specific request. They also have to ensure that signs, forms, brochures and the like are available in both languages.

Swedish language in Finland

Every child in Finland has the right to attend day care, preschool and school in their own language. For Swedish speakers, as well as for many bilingual families, Swedish-language day care, preschools and schools are a natural choice. Language instruction is an essential precondition for Swedish language and culture to remain vibrant.

This is guaranteed by a separate Swedish-language education administration, which has an equal position with the Finnish-language education administration. Schools play the most important role in the network of Swedish speakers as it is often schools that connect Swedish-speaking Finns together. Children between 7 and 15 years of age receive education in Swedish at about 300 Swedish comprehensive schools.

In addition to comprehensive schools, Swedish-language education is offered at secondary level, i.e. at upper secondary schools and vocational institutions. There are three Swedish polytechnics in Finland: Arcada, Novia and the Åland University of Applied Sciences. Young people and adults can also study in Swedish at adult education institutes and folk high schools. Furthermore, open universities and summer universities provide thousands of people with the opportunity of studying in Swedish at the university level.

The highest level of education is catered for by two Swedish universities: Åbo Akademi University and the Hanken School of Economics, as well as by bilingual universities: the University of Helsinki, the Aalto University and the University of the Arts Helsinki.

Finland has two main churches: the Evangelical-Lutheran Church and the Orthodox Church. The bilingual status of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church is based on an old tradition in Finland. Since the Reformation, preaching has taken place both in Finnish and in Swedish. The Evangelical-Lutheran Church is divided into nine dioceses, one of which, the Diocese of Porvoo, is Swedish-speaking. The Swedish diocese was founded in 1923. Congregations belonging to the Diocese of Porvoo are Swedish congregations or bilingual congregations with Swedish as the majority language.

Monolingual congregations also have a linguistic responsibility for their linguistic minorities. If necessary, services and other activities must be arranged in Finnish or Swedish or in another

language. For example, christenings, confirmation classes and solemnization of marriages must be provided, upon request, in the language of the church member. There are also several revivalist movements operating in both languages within the Evangelical-Lutheran Church.

Our other main church, i.e. the Orthodox Church, regularly arranges services and other activities in Swedish. Swedish-speaking Finns can also participate in a number of Free Churches with Swedish congregations.

Finland has compulsory military service for men, and Swedish speaking men as well as women volunteers normally choose to do their military service in the garrison of Dragsvik at the Brigade of Nyland, the only brigade providing military training in Swedish. Swedish-language military training is an important connecting factor of Finland's Swedish-speaking population. The province of Åland is demilitarised, meaning that there are no armed forces and the residents of Åland are exempted from military service.

Media

Finland has a large number of Swedish-language media outlets. Ten newspapers are published in Swedish. A few of them have the same owner, and thus they work in close cooperation. Hufvudstadsbladet is the largest Swedish daily newspaper with a circulation of over 50 000 copies. The next largest newspaper in terms of circulation is Vasabladet, which is issued in the Pohjanmaa region. Other newspapers are mainly local papers. In addition to dailies, a large number of Swedish magazines from various fields are published in Finland.

The Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE has a separate Swedish unit. There are two stations broadcasting radio programmes in Swedish: Radio Vega and Radio Extrem. The television channel YLE

Fem broadcasts its own programmes in Swedish complemented with programmes of the Swedish Broadcasting Company (SVT). Furthermore, the Swedish television SVT or some of its broadcasts can be received in most parts of Finland's Swedish-speaking regions. There are also cable television companies that produce their own TV programmes in Swedish.

Social actors

Economic, social and cultural interests of the country are also safeguarded from the linguistic perspective on different levels of decision-making. The Finnish Parliament has 200 members. The Swedish People's Party of Finland is a liberal-centrist political party, aiming to represent the interests of the Swedish-speaking population in Finland. More than 70 per cent of the Swedish speakers vote for the party, which won nine seats in the latest parliamentary elections (2015). The residents of Åland are represented by one Swedish-speaking MP. Bilingual parties also have a number of Swedish-speaking representatives in Parliament. The Governments of independent Finland have usually included Swedish-speaking ministers.

The Swedish Assembly of Finland (Folktinget), established in 1919, is a statutory organisation of cooperation for the Swedish-speaking population of Finland. The Swedish Assembly's mission is to safeguard and promote the rights and interests of the Swedish-speaking population as well as to actively provide information about the Swedish language in Finland and the bilingualism of the country. The Swedish Assembly, which has close local contacts and representatives of parliamentary parties as its members, functions as a cooperation body of political parties. A total of 75 representatives are elected for the Swedish Assembly every four

years. Between 2012 and 2016 the composition is as follows: the Swedish People's Party of Finland (43 seats), the Social Democratic Party of Finland (10), the National Coalition Party of Finland (6), the Greens (4), the Left Alliance (3), the Christian Democratic Party of Finland (2), the Centre Party of Finland (2) and political parties of Åland (5).

One objective of the Swedish Assembly is to safeguard that the Swedish-speaking population is linguistically equal with the Finnish-speaking population. It is a recognised referral body, which issues statements on questions affecting the Swedish-speaking population to various authorities and is consulted by Parliamentary committees on a number of issues regarding the Swedish-speaking population. The Swedish Assembly also publishes reports and brochures on linguistic rights and provides information on issues related to the Swedish language in Finland. Its language rights secretary takes care of matters concerning provision of public services in Swedish on behalf of citizens. Furthermore, the Swedish Assembly hosts the main ceremony of the Finnish Swedish Heritage Day (Svenska dagen) celebrated on 6 November. This day symbolises the right of people to use their own language in Finland, while also being a national flag day for honouring the common bilingual fatherland. The Finnish Swedish Heritage Day was celebrated for the 100th time in 2008.

The Swedish Assembly is also active in issues concerning linguistic minorities in the EU and participates in networks to exchange concrete ideas and experiences in language planning and the promotion of linguistic diversity. Furthermore, it has actively sought to promote the position of Finnish speakers in Sweden. In addition, the Swedish Assembly provides regular reports on the status of the Swedish language for the follow-up of the implementation of Council of Europe conventions on language and minorities.

Network of Swedish-speaking Finland

Swedish-speaking Finns are geographically scattered, and their language has not been regionally secured except for in Åland. International researchers, such as Kenneth D. McRae from Canada, have paid attention to this fact and emphasised that it makes the language situation in Finland unstable.

Swedish-speaking Finns often interact through various organisations and associations. This network connects Finland's Swedish-speaking population regardless of geographical distances. The network is complemented by day care, educational institutions and work places. Important events of Swedish-speaking Finns include an annual two-day sports competition called Stafettkarnevalen. With a participation of almost 11 000 pupils from Swedish schools, this event is the largest annual school sports event in Europe.

Swedish-speaking school children have their own organisations safeguarding their interests, and students are actively involved in various student associations and organisations. Several trade unions also have activities in Swedish. Swedish-speaking agricultural producers have established a union of their own. Physical exercise and sports, youth clubs and cultural and local heritage societies help to maintain the Finnish-Swedish network.

Swedish culture in Finland is rich and varied in the fields of literature, theatre, film and music, among others. Finnish-Swedish fiction is particularly important for the Finnish-Swedish community and especially for the minority's self-image. Well-known Swedish-speaking contemporary writers include Jörn Donner, Märta Tikkanen, Monica Fagerholm, Lars Sund and Kjell Westö. One of Finland's internationally best-known writers is Tove Jansson (1914-2001), whose Moomin books have been translated into several languages across the world. The Moomin troll family

lives in the Moomin Valley, which has been used as a symbol for the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland, a place where ‘everybody knows one another’ and hence people lead a secure and good life.

Extensive Swedish-language cultural activities in Finland receive valuable financial support from financially solid Finnish-Swedish foundations and funds. The largest fund is the Swedish Cultural Foundation in Finland, which supports such things as research, education and organisations’ activities.

Linguistic atmosphere

Compared to most other multilingual and multicultural countries, Finland has a good linguistic atmosphere. Since the Second World War, language disputes have been waged only in newspaper columns or political contexts. In daily life, people have many contacts across the language barrier and only relatively few Swedish-speaking Finns can nowadays say that they have experienced discrimination because their mother tongue is Swedish.

In 1997 the Swedish Assembly conducted a study surveying Finns’ attitudes towards the Swedish language (Vårt land, vårt språk – kahden kielen kansa; Our country, our language – a people with two languages). A similar survey of attitudes was carried out by a Finnish research company Taloustutkimus, commissioned by the think tank Magma. The results of both studies show that about 70 per cent of the population regard Swedish as part of their national identity.

On the other hand, during recent years several critical and negative opinions have been expressed on Swedish-speaking Finns and the status of the Swedish language in Finland, particularly on the Internet. In his report on what is irritating about Swedish-speaking Finns (Mikä suomenruotsalaisissa ärsyttää), Pasi Saukkonen shows

how the arguments of Swedish and Finnish speakers differ from one another.

A simple explanation may be that Swedish-speaking Finns have a lot more contacts with Finnish-speaking Finns than vice versa. In a bilingual society, the majority language usually has a dominant position and, in practice, the minority uses two languages in daily life: one is that of the majority and the other that of the minority. There are very few contacts between language groups in Inner Finland, in particular, which is a completely Finnish-speaking region.

The stereotypical image of Swedish-speaking Finns as 'better people' evokes negative reactions in Finnish speakers, but at the same time, it also has a negative influence on the Swedish-speaking population. It may lead, for example, to a confrontation between the Swedish-speaking countryside and the urban population. However, it is a sociological fact that Swedish-speaking Finns are largely a mirror image of the Finnish-speaking population.

Future

The number of Swedish-speaking Finns has not decreased as strongly as was anticipated in the 1960s and 1970s. Nowadays, their number is slightly increasing due to the fact that Swedish-speaking Finns have more children than the whole population on average and more and more children of bilingual families are registered as Swedish speakers and go to a Swedish school.

From the sociological perspective, a crucial question for the Swedish speakers is how the growing group of bilingual persons regard Finnish-Swedish traditions. Children of bilingual families are, as already mentioned, mostly put in Swedish schools. However, nobody knows for sure whether these children will, as adults and

possibly in a bilingual marriage, consider the Swedish language as a central identity issue. The social atmosphere and general attitude towards Swedish as one of Finland's national languages will undoubtedly influence with which group bilingual persons will associate themselves.

The integration of Sweden's and Finland's economies and an increased cooperation in other fields, too, such as increased defence cooperation, have connected the countries in an unprecedented manner and will thereby also affect the position of the Swedish language in Finland. Knowledge of Swedish and vibrant bi- or multilingualism on an individual level are becoming more and more important merits on the labour market. This is manifest, for example, in the growing interest among Finnish-speaking families for Swedish immersion classes.

The future of the Swedish language in Finland is a major challenge that requires conscious choices and cooperation across the language barrier.

Reference material:

McRae, Kenneth: *Conflict and compromise in multilingual societies*.
Vol. 3, *Finland* / Wilfrid Laurier University Press, cop. 1997.

www.folktinget.fi.

www.magma.fi.

Irja Seurujärvi-Kari

Lecturer in Sámi Language and Culture at the University of Helsinki

Vice Chair of the Sámi Parliament (1996–2011)

SÁMI AS AN INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND THE FUTURE OF SÁMINESS

The Sámi, whose total number is between 75 000 and 100 000, live in four countries – in Norway, Sweden, Finland, and in the Kola Peninsula in Russia. The Sámi language is estimated to be spoken by over 30 000 people. In several contexts, the term 'Sámi language' refers to the largest and most widely spoken variety of the Sámi languages, which is North Sámi. However, there are several Sámi languages; traditionally ten different varieties are distinguished. Nowadays the specific nature of the Sámi people as an indigenous people is recognised by law, under which the Sámi have cultural autonomy implemented by the Sámi Parliament



1. Indigenous people in the North

The Sámi, sápmelaččat, constitute the only indigenous people in the European Union. The Sámi region, Sápmi, stretches from mid-Sweden and mid-Norway through the northernmost part of Finland to the top of the Kola Peninsula. According to different estimations, a total of 75 000 to 100 000 Sámi live in the area of four countries. At least 9 000 live in Finland, 25 000 in Sweden, at least 45 000 in Norway, and 2 000 in Russia (in the Kola Peninsula). The Sámi homeland in Finland covers the municipal areas of Enontekiö, Inari and Utsjoki, as the reindeer herding district of Lapland in Sodankylä (Act on the Sámi Parliament 1995, Section 4; see www.samediggi.fi).

Indigenous peoples are distinguished from national (traditional) minorities, and they have more extensive rights than minorities. The concept of indigenous people originates from Convention No. 169 of the International Labour Organization (ILO) on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (1989). The following are the essential elements of the definition included in the Convention:

- a people regards itself as the indigenous population of the region;
- a people has an unbroken connection with the region it inhabits;
- a people has a specific culture different from that of others;
- a people does not have a dominant position.

This Convention concerns the Sámi in the Nordic countries. Norway was among the first countries that ratified the Convention in 1990 and

recognised the status of the Sámi as an indigenous people. Finland and Sweden have not ratified the Convention because of unresolved land right issues with the Sámi, but they have recognised the Sámi as an indigenous people.

In the Finnish legislation, the national definition of Sáminess is based on a subjective and an objective criterion. The subjective criterion, i.e. self-identification, means whether a person considers himself a Sámi or not. The primary objective criterion is the language: the person himself or at least one of his parents or grandparents has learnt Sámi as his first language. Other criteria include Lapp descentance (the person has been entered in a land, taxation or population register as a mountain, forest or fishing Lapp) or the fact that at least one of their parents has or could have been registered as an elector for an election to the Sámi Delegation or the Sámi Parliament (Act on the Sámi Parliament No. 974/95, Section 3).

2. Sámi cultural autonomy

According to Section 121 (4) of the Constitution of Finland, the Sámi shall have cultural autonomy:

Provisions on self-government in administrative areas larger than a municipality are laid down by an Act. In their native region, the Sámi have linguistic and cultural self-government, as provided by an Act.

The cultural autonomy of the Sámi is stipulated in more detail in the Act on the Sámi Parliament, which entered into force at the beginning of 1996 (No. 974/95). Section 1 of the Act on the Sámi Parliament stipulates the following:

The Sámi, as an indigenous people, have linguistic and cultural autonomy in the Sámi homeland as provided in this Act. For the

tasks relating to cultural autonomy the Sámi shall elect from among themselves a Sámi Parliament. The Sámi Parliament belongs to the purview of the Ministry of Justice.

In other words, cultural autonomy is implemented by the Sámi Parliament, *sámediggi*. It will be elected every four years. A corresponding administrative body also operates in Norway and Sweden. The most important task of the Sámi Parliament is to plan and implement, primarily in the Sámi homeland, the linguistic and cultural autonomy guaranteed to the Sámi as an indigenous people in the Constitution. The Sámi Parliament also deals with important political issues, in particular with questions related to land rights, livelihoods, language and education. It has no legislative powers but authorities and the national Parliaments have to hear it when preparing acts concerning the Sámi. Its operation is based on an annual appropriation allocated by the government. Within this budget, it has to plan and implement its activities and decide on the allocation of public funds intended for common use. The Sámi Parliaments of the three countries have established a common Nordic body called the Saami Parliamentary Council.

The Sámi have also founded a large number of non-governmental organisations, whose umbrella organisation is known as the (Nordic) Saami Council.

3. Language, culture and identity

In this article, I will describe how the Sámi as a group, i.e. as a collective, do not only uphold their traditions in various ways, but also shape them in a new kind of multicultural environment.

I will also discuss the meaning of different cultural modernisation processes to the renewal and preservation of the Sámi culture.

Modernisation of the Sámi and Sámi culture is, in fact, about the identity, its reinforcement and renewal.

A large number of people still associate Sáminess with a unified and primitive group of people, perceiving them as a kind of relic from the Stone Age which should be brought back to civilisation. Such stereotypes have a long history. The Sámi and other indigenous peoples have over time been described as 'the noble wild' as well as doomed and disappearing groups of people. Such designations are naturally dangerous as they seek to simplify things and to underestimate the rich socio-cultural and value systems of different ethnic groups.

For decades the Sámi and indigenous peoples movements have actively resisted the adverse impacts of colonisation and modernisation, such as injustice and inequality. They call for respect for traditions and culture, while emphasising the right to cultural change in so far as it benefits the population itself. The underlying objective of the demands is simply the desire to improve the quality of their life and to preserve and convey the valuable cultural heritage and language. They also seek to restore the lost rights to practise their own culture and language and to finally make states recognise broader self-government for their own issues, i.e. the right to decide on their own matters on their own terms and on the basis of their own traditions. Central issues have, in addition to language, included the right to traditional livelihoods and to the land and water areas necessary for practising them.

Identity is usually related to the question individuality: what or who am I? There is also the concept of collective identity, which seeks to answer the question 'who are we'. One variety of collective identity is the national identity.

Culture is closely related to identity. In a broad sense, culture refers to a lifestyle adopted within a community. It essentially involves the way of perceiving the world and experiencing it

as meaningful. Culture may at the same time refer both to the similarity and the difference of people. A shared culture functions as a concrete example of the distinctive characteristic of a group both for the group members themselves and for the group's outsiders. Cultural difference and emphasising one's own distinctiveness in a changing world are actually regarded as one of the most significant historical phenomena of the modern age. However, culture is changing constantly.

Identities and cultures involve constant and dynamic production of the sameness and differences. They are created and combined over and over again in social interaction. Culture is no longer regarded only as a traditional phenomenon associated with a certain society since the significance of geographical borders has diminished considerably. Neither do they have significance to the thousands of Sámis who have moved from their traditional homeland to cities. However, it is important for the Sámi to maintain a life-long connection to their homeland and to the Sámi culture and language.

4. Sámi movement and its objective: 'nana sitkes sámisohka – strong and resilient Sámi family'

The Sámi movement has been building a national, cultural and indigenous Sámi identity for several decades. It started to operate actively at the end of the 1960s when an academic Sámi elite assumed its leadership. The Sámi movement, *sámi lihkadus*, refers to the organisation of the Sámi across local, national and state borders and to the politicisation of identity. The goal of the movement was to mobilise people to work together and make them build and reinforce the collective identity and sense of togetherness of the Sámi. Conscious efforts were taken to build the Sámi identity and culture by means of a specific 'identity policy'.

Although the Sámi culture is highly heterogeneous, the consciously built identity emphasises the idea of a community formed by similar people with uniform cultural characteristics. Typical unifying factors include the language, national culture and national symbols.

The Sámi started to define their culture from their own premises, while earlier it had been guided from outside without hearing the Sámi people. The ethno-political Sámi movement has from the beginning emphasised the importance of their own language and cultural traditions as well as the re-building of Sáminess and cultural institutions. The main objective was to reinstate the nearly lost Sámi language, *sámegiella*, and culture and to seek to preserve and convey them from one generation to another. Characteristics of the Sámi people and the most important criteria for the Sámi identity and culture are expressed in the foreword to the political programme of the Sámi (1980, renewed at the 1986 Sámi conference):

We, the Sámi, are one people and state borders should not break the unity of our people. We have our own history and traditions as well as our own culture and language.

This common identity also comprises cultural symbols and aesthetic tradition. Language is an important cultural symbol. In addition, clothing, in particular the Sámi dress, *sámegákti*, handicrafts, *duodji*, joik tradition, *juoigan*, and various rituals build the sense of togetherness. The details, design, embroidery and colours of the Sámi dress indicate where the person wearing it comes from and which language group he represents. It consists of different parts, i.e. a belt, scarf, headdress, and shoes and silver jewellery. The Sámi dress is nowadays used only on special occasions, for example at

meetings and various festivals. National symbols accepted at the common Sámi conferences, i.e. the national song Sámi Soga lávlla (Song of the Sámi family), the national day celebrated on 6 February and the Sámi flag, *sámi leavga*, are nowadays the most prominent national symbols. The common traditional region, kinship and origin also play a specific role. Kinship and origin are particularly important for those Sámi who do not live in the land they perceive as their own or who have lost the language of their ancestors. The Sámi seek to maintain this tie in various ways, e.g. by frequently visiting their homes.

In their discussions, the Sámi also emphasise the connection with nature and the knowledge thus acquired about nature, which indigenous peoples call 'traditional knowledge'. Defending nature and *Earth Mother* has developed among indigenous peoples primarily as a reaction people's destruction of nature. Loss of lands and destruction of nature have often meant the loss of traditional livelihoods to indigenous peoples and consequently social marginalisation. Nature also has a significant influence on the life of people who have for thousands of years made their living from nature even when fewer and fewer people are living in a subsistence economy. This also applies to the Sámi. Nature, culture and language go hand-in-hand. The Sámi language reflects their strong connection with nature as it includes thousands of words for describing snow (*muohta*), reindeer (*boazu*) and other natural phenomena and reindeer husbandry. This vocabulary conveys valuable cultural knowledge and traditions from one generation to another and losing it would thus be fatal both to the individual and to the people. Researchers in their environmental research nowadays also employ this traditional knowledge.

5. Sámi languages, their use and legal status

5.1 Sámi languages

The group of Sámi languages traditionally includes ten languages, which can be divided into a Western and an Eastern group. The Sámi language is estimated to be spoken by over 30 000 people. Currently there are nine Sámi languages, of which six have a writing system of their own and are used publicly at least to some extent. Most Sámi languages are rather small with a few hundred to a couple of thousand speakers; only the number of North Sámi speakers is higher.

Languages	Area	Number of speakers
Western languages:		
South Sámi	Norway, Sweden	300–500
Ume Sámi	Sweden	a few persons
Pite Sámi	Sweden	a few persons
Lule Sámi	Norway, Sweden	1 000–2 000
North Sámi	Norway (23,000) Sweden (5,000) Finland (2,000)	30 000
Eastern languages:		
Inari Sámi	Finland	400
Skolt Sámi	Finland, Russia	300
Kildin Sámi	Russia	600
Ter Sámi	Russia	a few persons
Akkala Sámi	Russia	0

Table 1: Sámi languages, areas where they are spoken, and estimated numbers of speakers.

5.2. Status of the Sámi language in legislation

Norway is the only Nordic country where legislation guarantees the Sámi language the status of an indigenous language. Swedish language policy defines the Sámi language as a national minority language, and thus it has the same status as other minority languages. In Finland, a new Sámi Language Act (No. 1086/2003) entered into force at the beginning of 2004 concurrently with the new act on the Finnish and Swedish languages. The legislation limits the linguistic rights to the Sámi homeland, for which reason it can be stated that even in the strongest areas, the Sámi language has the status of a mere regional minority language.

A problem with the legislation is that in Finland, for example, the legislation safeguarding linguistic rights includes a regional limitation, and hence in Finland the majority of Sámi children and young people do not have access to the teaching of their own language. It should also be noted that the Sámi residing outside the Sámi homeland have become the largest Sámi group in Finland after the adoption of Sámi language law in 2004, and their linguistic and cultural needs are clearly not taken into account in Finland when decisions are made on issues concerning the Sámi. This has resulted in a situation where this group has replaced their own language with the majority language. This has accelerated the linguistic assimilation of the Sámi, which is still gaining pace outside the Sámi homeland.

5.3 Use of the Sámi language and its endangered position

The linguistic landscape of the Sámi is highly diverse. Some Sámi use their language orally and in writing in the same way as people usually use their mother tongue. In the Sámi homeland, the use of one's own language is more natural than in areas on the outskirts

or outside of the homeland. Some Sámi people speak their own language but cannot read or write it. There are also Sámi people with no knowledge of the Sámi language. A large number of persons have reactivated their passive mother tongue in adulthood through studying or otherwise, such as by participating in the activities of Sámi associations or other common activities. Motivation has increased along with the fact that the position of the Sámi has improved and the Sámi language was recognised as an official language in the Sámi homeland at the beginning of the 1990s.

Sáminess and the Sámi language have provided new opportunities for many Sámi people.

Written and public use of Sámi languages and their visibility have increased over the past decades. The Sámi have Sámi-language television and radio programmes, which have also spread outside the Sámi homeland over the Internet and digital television. Sámi-language TV news with subtitles in the main languages are broadcast every weekday. Sámi-language broadcasts and subtitled TV news in the late night do not only serve the Sámi population, but also provide information on the Sámi as an indigenous people and on the Sámi culture for the majority population, which increases and promotes tolerance in society. The TV news, *Ođđasat*, and other current affairs programmes should be regularly broadcast on a certain channel across the whole country with subtitles in the national languages.

The Finnish Broadcasting Company Yle started to broadcast a Sámi-language children's programme called *Unna Junná* in autumn 2007, although this was several years later than in Norway and Sweden. A 15-minute children's programme broadcast 30 times a year is not, however, adequate. For this reason, Yle should provide an opportunity for the Sámi children to regularly see and hear television programmes in their own language nationwide. Sámi children need their own Sámi-language children's programmes that

are related to their own culture, language and lifestyle, as well as to Sámi livelihoods. Making Sámi-language programmes available nationwide would be particularly important for Sámi children and young people living among the majority population. A North-Sámi newspaper called *Ávvir* is issued a couple of times a week in Norway. In Finland no newspaper or other magazine is published in the Sámi language.

Sámi-language schools are operating in the core Sámi area and the Sámi language is taught from nursery school to the university level, even though there is a severe lack of teaching materials and teachers on the higher education levels. In Finland, the language and education policy of the Sámi is particularly challenging since up to 70% of Sámi children live outside the Sámi region and cannot thus receive regular instruction in the Sámi language and/or Sámi culture.

University-level education has advanced by leaps and bounds as programmes and centres for Sámi-related research and teaching have been established at different universities in the Nordic countries since the end of the 1960s. The universities founded in Northern Finland, i.e. the University of Oulu (1956) and the University of Lapland in Rovaniemi (1978), started to teach Sámi languages. At the outset, the university in Rovaniemi had a quota for Sámi-speaking students in pedagogy and law. The University of Oulu made similar arrangements for kindergarten teachers. The teaching of the Sámi language by native Sámi speakers began in Norwegian higher education during the 1970s at the University of Oslo, but it faded due to the lack of demand and was continued at the University of Tromsø in the 1990s. Native-language teaching has been offered since 1970 at the Finnish Universities of Oulu and Helsinki, but in Sweden the teaching was transferred to the Northern University of Umeå. In Finland, the University of Oulu was given the responsibility for the training of Sámi teachers in 2001 when the Giellagas Institute for Sámi culture research was

founded. In the University of Helsinki, a Sámi Studies programme was launched in 1993, a historical global Indigenous Studies in 2015 and an assistant professor on Indigenous Studies will start in autumn 2016.

The Nordic Sámi Institute, Sámi instituutta, which is located in Kautokeino in Norway and was established in 1973, and the Sámi University College, Sámi allaskuvla (1989), have during the past years been re-organised to serve and improve Sámi-related research and education. The purpose of reorganisation was to create a new fruitful knowledge environment, diehtosiida, and also provide it with a new external setting in a building to be completed in Kautokeino in the near future. There is a Sámi museum, Siida, in Inari in Finland with hundreds of thousands of visitors annually from all over the world. A new Sámi cultural centre was completed in Inari in 2012, and it also provides the premises for the Sámi Parliament.

The Sámi have worked for the development of their linguistic rights and improvement of the position of Sámi education in the Nordic countries for over 40 years through their organisations and the Sámi Parliament. As regards the future of the Sámi, the language, education and the possibility of young people to preserve their indigenous language and Sámi identity are key issues to cultural survival. Revitalisation of the language has been going on for over a decade through various projects and ad hoc funding. In Finland, the best results of language revitalisation have been achieved from Inari Sámi language nest activities.

Despite various social and legislative improvements, Sámi languages are endangered languages, with North Sámi being clearly endangered and Inari and Skolt Sámi critically endangered. This endangered position means that the conveyance of a language to the next generation has either been interrupted or disturbed. Regardless of the endangered nature of Sámi languages, Finland has

not allocated sufficient resources for rescuing and reviving them. A revitalisation programme of Sámi languages was mentioned in the Government Report on Human Rights Policy of 2009, and Parliament has also requested the Government to take enhanced measures to revive the Sámi language and to pay particular attention to safeguarding the existence of the endangered Inari and Skolt Sámi.

So far the measures taken have been modest. At the end of 2009 the Ministry of Education and Culture founded a working group and a broad-based steering group consisting of representatives from various bodies, such as ministries, the Sámi Parliament, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, and the Finnish Cultural Foundation. They were assigned with the task of drafting a revitalisation programme for the Sámi language. The revitalisation programme was completed by the end of 2011 with a detailed list of concrete measures for strengthening the use of the Sámi language. The Finnish Government accepted the programme in 2014, which means that it should be financed by the state. That is why the programme can be said to be historical.

The most important challenges related to the situation of Sámi languages are the following:

1. The linguistic rights of the Sámi are not realised in the way as referred to in the Constitution of Finland and in the Sámi Language Act, since the municipalities in the Sámi homeland and public authorities do not have enough Sámi-speaking personnel and the on-going Government productivity programme will make it more difficult to increase Sámi-language services.
2. Problems related to Sámi education are leading to a rapid decrease in the number of Sámi speakers and to replacement of the Sámi language and identity of the Sámi people living outside the homeland.

3. Resources should be guaranteed for launching the revitalisation programme of Sámi languages as well as a plan prepared by an expert group for providing access to the programme for the Sámi of all age groups and areas across the country from the beginning to the end of school. The programme should also provide an opportunity for the adult population to revive their language and acquire reading and writing skills in their mother tongue.

4. Sámi schooling should be based more on Sámi knowledge, bilingualism should be strengthened and teacher training promoted to respond to the needs of the Sámi.

6. Contemporary Sámi literature and other arts

Sámi art is very dynamic and has a central position in the Sámi community. Sámi literature is the most productive type of arts along with handicraft art, *duodji*. Theatre plays and films are the most modern types of Sámi arts.

Sámi art, *dáidda*, is inspired by petroglyphs and folk art dating back to thousands of years, which is manifested in its most original form in the Sámi magic drum. On the other hand, contemporary Sámi art has been significantly influenced by the Western conception of art. The most interesting works have originated from the conflict between the traditional and modern conceptions of art. Several artists have also wanted to modify the traditions, and they have even abandoned the romantic and exotic symbolism and created new kinds of representations.

The concept of 'art for art's sake' has been foreign to the Sámi; instead, beauty and practicality have always gone hand in hand. This is reflected especially in handicrafts. In Sámi art it is difficult to distinguish a utility article from a work of art. When an article

becomes a work of art, its purpose of use usually changes: a utility article becomes an ornament and at the same time, unlike in folk art, the person who created it becomes important in respect of the product's value. Nowadays Sámi artists produce similar handicrafts as hundred years ago but they have acquired new meanings. For example, the milking bowl, náhppi, was originally designed for milking reindeer, but nowadays it can be used as a bowl or only as a work of art. The importance of handicraft as a specific cultural hallmark has increased and, consequently, it has become necessary to protect it both as a livelihood and as a cultural expression.

In 1982, the Nordic Sámi Council accepted a specific Sámi duodji craft certificate, which is common to the whole Sámi homeland and guarantees that the piece of handicraft has been made by a Sámi person.

The most well-known Sámi artists in Finland are Nils Aslak Valkeapää, whose Sámi name is Áillohaš (1943–2001), and Kirsti Paltto (born in 1947). Nils Aslak Valkeapää was a versatile artist and a writer, a visual artist and a musician. He was a nominee for the Nordic Council Literature Prize for the first time in 1988 for his *Ruoktu váimmus* and later in two successive years for his *Beaivi, áhčážan* (1988; in English *The Sun, My Father*), for which the prize was finally awarded in 1991. Valkeapää's poetic images are realistic and concrete without exoticism and romance. He uses creative and rich Sámi vocabulary related to nature and Sámi livelihoods, which makes it difficult to translate all the meanings in his works into other languages. Translations published in other languages are, according to the author's wishes, only annexes to the original where it is impossible to include photographs of the 'Sámi family'.

Kirsti Paltto is the most productive Sámi author. She was a nominee for the Finlandia Literature Prize in 1996 with the Finnish translation of her first novel *Guhtoset dearvan min bohccot* (1987; *Graze in Peace My Reindeer*). It is indicative of the appreciation for

Sámi literature in Finland that the translation was published before the Sámi original, for which no funding was available. Another example of writers belonging to this age group is Jovvna-Ánde Vest. The theme of her autobiographical first work Čáhčegáddái nohká boazobálggis (1988, published in Finnish in 1990) is the difficult relationship between a father and a son.

Younger writers and poets, such as Inger-Mari Aikio, Anna Stina Svakko, Petteri Morottaja and Niillas Holmberg, have set a direction for a new kind of literature. It is characteristic of these writers that they have had the opportunity to enjoy the changes in education policy: unlike their predecessors, they have learnt to read and write the Sámi language at school. The theme of Aikio's first book of poetry *Gollebiekkat almmi dievva* (1989) is love. Her fourth poetry book *Máilmmis dása* (2001) has also been published in Finnish in 2004 with the author's own translations. The theme of *Máilmmis dása* is the mellowing of a woman: a former adventurer and globetrotter, who already regarded herself as a spinster, falls in love, gets married and gives birth to a child. Aikio's poetry is characterised by nature-related metaphors associated with love and sexuality.

Niillas Holmberg (born in Utsjoki in 1990) is a poet, and he published his first poetry book *Dego livččen oaidnán iežan* (As If I Had Seen Myself) in 2009. At the age of 16, he moved from Utsjoki to Tampere to study at the Tampere Arts-Oriented Senior Secondary School. His poems introduce to the reader a young man who passionately follows his own paths and loves music and acting.

Children's literature has been published rather widely since the 1980s. One of the best-known representatives of this literature type is author Kerttu Vuolab from Outakoski.

At the moment, there is an urge to present a modern, renewable aspect of the Sámi culture and art, in particular, such as Sámi-language rap and rock music at the *Ijahis idja* music event and films produced by indigenous peoples at the *Skábmagovat* film festival

in Inari. The different forms of Sámi theatre and art originate from the Sámi oral tradition, folklore, history and culture. A new Sámi film, *Guovdageainnu stuihmi* (The Kautokeino Rebellion), goes back to a real event in the 1850s, a clash between the Sámi and the authorities, which resulted in Sámi persons being sentenced to death or life imprisonment. When the film was published in Norway in 2008, it already received several awards similar to the Jussi Award in the Finnish film industry: actor Anni-Kristiina Juuso won an award of the best leading actress, director Nils Gaup received an award for his direction, and Mari Boine, the world-known interpreter of Sámi music, obtained an award for her music.

Sámi artists are very versatile, and several visual artists, in particular, have a strong education in handicraft. Prominent artists at the moment include Synnöve Persen, Hans-Ragnar Mathisen, Aage Gaup, Ingunn Utsi, Josef Halse, Trygve Lund Guttormsen and Liisa Helander in Norway, Merja Aletta Ranttila, Marja Helander, Outi Pieski and Satu Natunen in Finland, and Majlis Skaltje, Rose Marie Huuva, Britta Marakatt-Labba and Eva Aira in Sweden. In particular Outi Pieski (visual art), Marja Helander (photographer) and Pauliina Feodoroff (theatre) have actively developed Sámi art, aesthetic expressions and Sámi culture in general, and thus they have become internationally famous. It is typical that Sámi artists are often self-educated and multiartistic.

In Sámi art traditional stories are presented in a new way, through new artistic means and styles in a new environment. Cultures and their rituals are changing constantly, sometimes slower and sometimes faster but always 'authentically'. Content represents authenticity as it is based on the cultural roots of the Sámi and expressed in the terms of the Sámi. Art reinforces and renews the cultural identity of the Sámi. One of its tasks is to revive the Sámi language. Performance or poetry, for example, may also have a uniquely healing meaning for a nation and its people who

have been suppressed for a long time. Art itself, its producers and interpreters have restored the pride of the people for its own roots.

7. Conclusion

The Sámi people currently have a strong 'we' spirit, *sámi vuoignja*, since the political and cultural organisation maintains a collective feeling. The strong self-awareness and sense of being a separate people have formed among the Sámi as a result of long-term negotiations and interaction with the majority, i.e. not in isolation. Sámi associations have been active actors in the field of Sámi culture and politics.

All in all, the Sámi culture and language have been revived in an unprecedented manner as a result of the decades-long political and cultural work of the Sámi and indigenous peoples' movement. The status of the Sámi as an indigenous people has been recognised in legislation in all the four countries where the Sámi live. The Sámi have a cultural autonomy, which is implemented by the Sámi both as individuals and as a group through the Sámi Parliament.

Furthermore, active participation of the Sámi in the international cooperation of indigenous peoples and active work for the rights of indigenous peoples at the UN have brought a unique international aspect to the Sámi identity. After some two decades of preparation, the UN adopted the UN Declaration on Indigenous Rights in 2007. The Declaration establishes a more extensive right to participate in decision-making on different levels and reinforces the right of indigenous peoples to self-government, language and culture. Adoption of the Declaration means better opportunities for these peoples to protect indigenous cultures and languages from disappearance from the Earth for ever and thus contributes to their sustainable development and well-being.

Reference material:

Alkuperäiskansat tämän päivän maailmassa, eds Virtanen, Pirjo, Kantonen, Lea and Seurujärvi-Kari, Irja. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society 2013.

Beaivvi mánát. *Saamelaisten juuret ja nykyaika*, ed. Seurujärvi-Kari, Irja. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society 2000.

Saamentutkimus tänään, eds. Seurujärvi-Kari, Irja, Halinen, Petri and Pulkkinen, Risto. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society 2011.

The Saami – a cultural encyclopaedia, eds. Kulonen, Ulla-Maija, Seurujärvi-Kari, Irja and Pulkkinen, Risto. Vammala: Finnish Literature Society 2005.

Website of the Sámi Parliament:

www.samediggi.fi

www.samediggi.no

www.samediggi.se

Webs page of the Sámi radio www.yle.fi/samiradio.

Tuula Åkerlund

Executive Director of Romano Missio

ROMA IN SOCIETY – WE ARE DIFFERENT

The Roma have for centuries been an oppressed and discriminated group, excluded from society in European countries, including in Finland. It was not until after the Second World War that Finland recognised the Roma as an ethnic group whose living conditions should be improved. Afterwards the Roma have been recognised as a national minority. It has been estimated that there are approximately 10 000 Romanis in Finland. Around 3 000 Finnish Romanis live in Sweden.

The Roma have preserved their own language and culture for centuries, although each era has posed different challenges. The position of the Roma in present-day Finland has improved during the past few decades, thanks to common efforts of the authorities and the Roma. Participation of the Roma in social activities has also increased interaction between the majority population and the Roma. It is important to support spontaneous participation of the Roma population and help them find alternative ways of influencing society. The Roma have invested in educating themselves, which gives hope for a better future and is an effective way of preventing their marginalisation.



Photo: Valfrid Åkerlund



Photo: Valfrid Åkerlund

1. Introduction

Nowadays we often meet people with different cultural backgrounds. It is difficult to understand and respect a different culture without enough information on it. Correct information helps to reduce prejudice.

When I was a child, I became a victim of several unpleasant prejudices because of my origin and because of being different. When I was at upper secondary school, my roots became important to me and I was pondering my identity. For me, inequality was a heavy burden. I felt as if I were in an aquarium, visible from every direction. I thought it was a gross injustice that I was thrown out of a bar because another Romani had misbehaved. Deep inside I was often furious when I was treated unfairly only because of being a Romani. These situations helped me to see that it is in fact easier to fit into the undesirable mould people build for different people than to show that I am not the kind of person people think I am. Fighting against prejudices requires mental resources.

It is often difficult to accept people who behave differently than we do in our routine life. We find strange and alien things bewildering. We speak for equality but many of us still think that equality means the same as similarity.

If an individual feels already at an early stage that he is considered a second-class citizen, he starts to feel himself an outsider and no healthy commitment can develop to shared 'norms'. Respect and appreciation for the environment changes into an arrogant, defensive and aggressive behaviour.

It is surprisingly difficult to overcome our prejudices and negative attitudes. Even though a person may not have had negative experiences on representatives of another group, negative labels and images are transmitted from one generation to another.

Finland is becoming more and more multicultural and international. It is therefore important to first come to terms with

our own minority groups. This also helps to understand people coming from other parts of the world and their cultures.

2. Roma in Finland

In this part I will discuss the Roma as well as their history and culture. I use the term 'Roma' since I consider it a more appropriate and positive word than the word 'gypsy', which easily evokes negative associations in many people. Some of the Roma perceive it as an epithet. The Roma constitute a linguistic and cultural minority group in Finland, which has lived here for over 500 years. It has been estimated that there are approximately 10 000 Romanis in Finland. Around 3 000 Finnish Romanis live in Sweden. The size of the Roma population in Europe has been estimated at 10–15 million people.

Most of the Roma in Finland are members of the Lutheran church. The Roma are Finnish citizens and have equal civil rights and obligations. They participated in the wars waged in Finland and have made sacrifices in defending Finland's independence. Despite their small number, they have been able to preserve their uniqueness and old cultural traditions. The status of the Roma as a national and traditional minority is safeguarded by the Constitution of Finland of 2000.

3. Journey of the Roma throughout history

To understand the Roma people better we need to know their history. The journey of the Roma has been long and tragic. They have lived scattered around Europe for nearly thousand years. Along with attempts to eradicate and destroy them, the Roma culture has always

been threatened by assimilation efforts. One state after another passed laws to deport and destroy the Roma. They did not have human rights anywhere. Laws often included the death penalty. They really were forced between a rock and a hard place. Hardly any people can go through similar experiences without them leaving a deep imprint on its culture, values, attitudes and educational objectives.

3.1. Early history

The early ages of the Roma are partly unknown. The origin of the Roma has been studied mainly on the basis of the Romani language. The language has allowed to conclude their route, along which they have assimilated loan words into their language from the countries where they have stayed. It was not until the 18th century that linguists presented an assumption that the original home of the Roma people, who had already by that time spread to different parts of Europe, would be in Northwestern India.

According to some views, the Roma had to leave India in about 1000 CE at various points. Possibly a famine affecting the country, foreign invaders or natural catastrophes forced them to move out. It is also likely that the Roma left in order to sell their goods to the West along the old trading routes, as they were well-known gunsmiths and Indian iron was famous already in antiquity.

3.2. Arrival in Europe

Historically reliable documents are available on the arrival of the Roma in Europe. The first references to the Roma in Europe have been found in Crete in the travelogue of Simon Simonis dating from 1311.

In the 14th century Europe operated under a feudal system, which was based on a strict corporative system. As new immigrants, the Roma did not 'fit' in the corporative hierarchy based on feudalism

but were left outside social classes. The Roma differed from the majority population in terms of their appearance, customs and language to such an extent that people started to persecute them as heretics. Deportations took place on a constant basis. For example, in Germany anybody was allowed to kill a Romani. In Spain they were decapitated or burnt at the stake. In countries where they were accepted they were assimilated into the rest of the population forcibly.

Unstable economic and political circumstances, in part, forced the Roma to move from one place to another to practise their livelihoods. They were already at this point smiths, fortune tellers, horse dealers and animal presenters.

The most recent persecution touching the Roma took place during the Second World War. According to estimates by researchers, between 600 000 to 2 million Romanis were executed in Hitler's gas chambers and at concentration camps. The Roma population of several countries was completely destroyed in concentration camps. This happened, for example, in the Netherlands, Estonia and Lithuania. It is amazing that despite the persecutions and difficulties, the Roma have been able to preserve their cultural characteristics surprisingly well.

3.3. History of the Roma in Finland

The first written references to the arrival of Romanis in Finland date from the 16th century. The Government of Sweden-Finland took a negative stand towards the Roma. They were denied church services, children were not baptised, marriages were not solemnised, they were not allowed to bury their dead in the consecrated land and even health care was forbidden. When Finland was made into a Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire in 1809, the state objective changed into assimilating and controlling the Roma. It was not until

in the previous century that the government gradually started to pay attention to the improvement of the Roma living conditions.

A transition of Finnish society and economic life started after the mid-20th century. Former livelihoods no longer provided a living for people in the countryside. Along with industrialisation, people started to migrate from the country to cities. This social change also influenced the Roma: a large number of them moved from the countryside to cities. During the past couple of decades the material well-being of the Roma has improved, although they are still in the midst of a strong transition.

4. Romani language

The Romani language has always been an endangered language. It has had neither status nor appreciation among outsiders. Its value has been gradually recognised and acknowledged in legislation.

Language is highly important to human beings. We are maybe not even aware how a great and significant value it has to each of us. Experts say that languages spoken in today's world are dying faster than ever before in history. Some estimate that out of 7 000 languages spoken in the world, only 600 languages will still be in use after a hundred years. It is a sad fact that when a language dies, we do not only lose its beauty but also a part of human wisdom and life experience. In a certain sense, an entire explanation of the world, the history of a people is lost.

4.1. History

Awareness of the historical background of the Romani language opens a window on the past and thereby expands the perspective into the life of the Roma. The Romani language belongs to the Indo-European

language family and more specifically to its Indo-Aryan branch. It originates from the old cultural language of India, Sanskrit, from which Hindi, Urdu, Marathi, etc., have developed. The Romani language and Hindi are sister languages, but the Romani language separated from the Indo-Aryan family tree already over two thousand years ago.

The Romani language is an international language with several millions of speakers in the world. Over time, the Romani language has split into several dialects, which have been influenced by local languages. However, according to researchers, the basic vocabulary has remained nearly the same in different dialects. This has been facilitated by the fact that the Roma have always had a lot of contacts with Roma communities living in other countries. In this sense, the Roma in Finland have been in an exceptional position due to the remote location of the country.

4.2. 'Cipher' function of the Romani language

At the beginning of the last century, the objective of official policy in several European countries, including Finland, was to forcibly assimilate the Roma. One way to do this was by destroying Romani language and culture. Since in Finland most of the Roma still led a nomadic lifestyle at the time of the Second World War, they were highly dependent on the help of the agrarian population in, for example, getting a place to stay for the night during winter. People were suspicious about the use of the Romani language and often allowed the Roma to stay overnight on the condition that they would not speak their language. Families had to live among outsiders. As they did not have a home of their own, they had to live at the mercy of others. However, the only possibility of talking about family matters and feeling at home was to use their own language. The situation was controversial. This resulted in a situation where the Roma had to be cautious and avoid speaking their own language.

The older Roma thought that the less the outsiders know about the group, its customs and language, the less they can harm the group. For this reason, the Roma have not wanted to teach their language to outsiders. The Romani language was the only property of the minority that had been discriminated against for centuries. We can best understand the protection mechanism related to the Romani language if we can identify ourselves with the situation where the Finnish language was threatened when Finland was under foreign rule. Educated young people who were members of the Saturday Society, such as Runeberg, Topelius and Snellman, had a significant task in awakening nationalism among the Finns with their writings and opinions. Finns were regarded as lazy and primitive people and Finnish as a poor language of the lower class. Runeberg's work *Peasant Paavo* and Topelius' work *The Tales of Ensign Stål* gave quite a different picture of the Finns, such as the character of Peasant Paavo – a hard-working peasant who did not give up when faced with difficulties. Our national writers were able to show how rich the Finnish language is.

4.3. Romani language in the midst of changes

By the 1960s and 1970s the older people realised that worryingly few young people knew the Romani language. The radical change of the living conditions of the Roma during the previous decades and the cultural changes inevitably contributed to the reduction in the use of the Romani language. A people who had had to travel for centuries finally settled down and tried to get used to a new kind of lifestyle and rhythm. In a way, the use of the Romani language was forgotten in the midst of this 'chaos'.

The Romani language had only been a spoken language, i.e. oral communication. It had hardly been recorded in a written format. The use of the language and its knowledge decreased especially

among younger people, and the vocabulary started to dwindle and decay in a threatening manner. Real measures for its revitalisation, were necessary.

4.4. Legal protection for the language

Finland made history in the 1990s and also attracted wider attention across the world. The importance of the Romani language and the right to use it were taken into account in the Constitution Act of Finland of 1995. The same provision was included in the new Constitution of Finland of 2000, in Section 17(3). This provision is regarded as a general provision safeguarding the minorities as it obligates the public authorities to allow and support, for example, the development of the Romani language and culture.

An amendment to the Decree on Children's Day Care entered into force in 1995. According to the Decree, the educational objectives referred to in the Act on Children's Day Care also include support for the Romani language and culture. An amendment was also made to the acts concerning education in 1995 which allowed for the teaching of the Romani language as a mother tongue to Roma children at school. The same provision was included in the Basic Education Act of 1999. The above-mentioned acts have not, however, directly obligated municipalities to arrange Romani language teaching. The Act on the Institute for the Languages of Finland was amended in 1996 so that the tasks of the institute also include research and planning of the Romani language. Minority language research was transferred from the Institute for the Languages of Finland to universities at the beginning of 2012. At that time, two researcher posts of the Romani language were transferred to the University of Helsinki. University-level education in the Romani language and culture started in 2012 when it became an official subject at the University of Helsinki.

Since then it has been possible to complete a 60-credit module in the Romani language and culture as a minor subject. The Act on the Finnish Broadcasting Company was amended in 1999 so that the duty of public services is to also provide services in the Romani language. When Finland ratified the Conventions on minorities of the Council of Europe, it also recognised the Romani language as a traditional minority language.

5. Roma in today's society

5.1. Educational tradition of Roma population

The Roma have lacked an educational tradition. Education was not highly appreciated in the Finnish agrarian society, either, and instead professions were handed over from fathers to sons and from mothers to daughters. However, the structure of Finnish society changed surprisingly rapidly and technology transformed our country in a few decades. The change did not reach the Roma equally quickly. Some of them still travelled from one house to another without a permanent home till the 1960s. There was no time to think about education since it was a hard work to bring food to the table and find a roof for the night.

It was impossible to receive education while travelling by horse and carriage. The Roma did not settle down until approximately 50 years ago, and they have had proper housing only for around 30 years. Education was also partly avoided because it was deemed to convey only the values of the majority population; the Roma needed to accept the alternatives offered by the school system as given. The values of the Roma have differed from those of the majority population in several respects. It is partly for these reasons that the Roma did not previously appreciate school education as

much as the majority population. Nowadays the development needs of the Roma education are fortunately understood as well as the importance of education to the preservation of the Roma culture.

In 2008 the Finnish National Board of Education launched a still on-going project for supporting the basic education of Roma pupils. More than 30 municipalities have participated in the project. The level of education of Roma pupils has increased considerably over these years.

5.2. Working life and livelihoods

During the same 50-year period, as the migratory Roma people settled down, Finnish society changed permanently into an educational and industrialised society where professions and income are nearly completely tied to education. This has meant that the economic opportunities of the Roma have shrunk since former occupations no longer provide a living. Many Romanis have ended up in a professional vacuum. The changed environment has compelled the Roma to consider their future prospects in a totally new manner. Time forces us to change. On the other hand, Finnish society has become more tolerant. The decision-makers have reached out to the Roma, and nowadays the legislation guarantees an accepted existence for the Romani culture and language. The Roma no longer need to be afraid of assimilation but they can educate themselves for various professions and still retain their own identity. At the same time, they have realised that a small minority group will not survive without education. It has been pleasing to note how many adult Romanis have started to educate themselves and thereby found a new zest in life. 'Even though obstacles are still abundant, we also have resilience and perseverance. We need to clear the path and will not give up.' This is what several Romanis

have told about their feelings when they have applied for a job or searched for suitable education.

Today, Romani parents encourage their children to go to school more than previously. A few young Romanis are already participating in further education at upper secondary schools, vocational schools and different university faculties. The first generation with academic education has already entered the working life. Compared to the total number of the Roma population, the percentage is still not high. However, it is a bold start into tomorrow. Positive models are needed. It is important that young people see examples of Romanis who have the courage to reach out, educate themselves, find a good job and who are still able and willing to retain their Romani identity.

6. Administration of Romani affairs and Romani organisations

6.1. National Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs

The National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs has been appointed by the Council of State, and it operates under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The task of the Advisory Board is to enhance the equal participation of the Roma population in Finnish society and to promote their economic, social and cultural living conditions. It functions as an important cooperation and expert body between the Roma and the authorities in Finland.

To make the cooperation between the authorities and the Roma more concrete, four Regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs were established in 2004 in Southern Finland, Eastern Finland, Western Finland, and in Northern Finland. The latter represents the area of Lapland. Finland's first National Policy on Roma was

drafted in 2009. In 2010, the Government made a decision in principle begin implementing the measures included in the policy.

6.2. Education services for the Roma population

A Roma Education Unit has operated under the National Board of Education in Finland since 1994. Its activities are based on the opinions of the Parliament, Government and the Ministry of Education and Culture on the development of the education of the Roma population and implementation of their culture. The task of the unit is to represent expertise in the field of education and culture and to influence the planning and implementation of teaching in such a manner as to ensure that the basic and vocational education of the Roma population is realised on an equal basis.

6.3. Nationwide Roma organisations

The **Romano Missio** was established in 1906, and it is the oldest and largest Romani organisation. Its key activities consist of Christian child protection, welfare, consultation and social work. The organisation publishes its own magazine called *Romano Boodos* four times a year. In recent years, it has specialised in the rehabilitation of Romani female prisoners.

Elämä ja Valo association (Life and Light) was established in 1964. The association is engaged in spiritual and social work among the Roma population in Finland and in different parts of the world. It publishes its own magazine called *Elämä ja Valo* five times a year.

The **Finnish Romani Association** was established in 1967. It concentrates on advocating social affairs. Over the past recent years, it has focused on work with the aged Roma population.

The National Roma Forum of Finland was established in 2007. It seeks to empower small local Romani organisations. Its goal is to promote and monitor the realisation of fundamental rights and equality under the Finnish law.

Over the years, nationwide organisations have had various projects which have concentrated on supporting the education of Roma children and young people as well as on family work, alcohol and drug education, revitalisation of the Romani language and care for elderly people, etc.

7. Romani culture

7.1. Revolution of Romani culture

To understand Romani culture it is important to realise that the culture is build around the family, relatives and community. All minority cultures have specific binding factors, such as the sense of togetherness and solidarity towards other members of the community. The Romani culture also puts a strong emphasis on relationships between people, customs and old traditions.

An important aspect of the Romani culture is also the fact that, like the rest of society, it is in the midst of revolution and change. The traditional lifestyle has started to change along with the changes in the surrounding world. When the nomadic lifestyle came to an end around 50 years ago, this also meant a totally new era in the life of the Finnish Roma. All these great changes have in fact taken place during only one generation. Settling down after travelling for centuries has, however, required getting used to it.

7.2. Manners

Genuine and real Romani culture emphasises good manners and getting along with all people. The Roma regret that the majority population often categorises inappropriate behaviour of an individual as characteristic of Romani culture. Romani culture is based on respect for elders, and most of the customs and rules are somehow connected to this. Older people always eat first, go to sauna first, etc. Older people are regarded as mental capital and an asset due to their life experience. Respect for older people is manifested in the use of decent clothing and respectful forms of address. The family usually looks after the elderly and seeks to take care of them at home as long as possible for health reasons.

7.3. Romani family

Traditional Romani families have been large. In addition to parents and children, the family often consisted of grandparents, uncles and aunts, and sometimes even included cousins. The Romani family emphasises the position of the man, but women are also aware of their value and have a lot of power within the family. It could be said that the man is the head of the family and the woman its heart.

There are clear roles within a Romani family. The man has the main responsibility for the family's income, while the woman takes care of the family's well-being and home. Parents are primarily responsible for raising children, although close relatives also have rather a significant role in their upbringing. In addition, the grandparents have an important role.

The Roma seek to raise independent children who are responsible towards their own community. Children become gradually committed to their community and start to appreciate their own roots and culture. This is one of the most important tasks of parents since

outside their community, children are subjected to a lot of negativity and prejudices. If a child does not have a strong identity, they will collapse under stress. A Romani child needs, in particular, a lot of acceptance, encouragement and support to develop into a balanced adult with a strong self-esteem.

The Roma appreciate internationally-minded people who can appreciate difference. An old Romani has expressed it this way: 'A real Romani has to know how to live in three ways: as a master, as a peasant and as a Romani.' The ability to adapt to different situations is one of the strengths of the Roma. Warmth of feelings, family unity and contacts with other Romanis are considered as virtues.

7.4. Greeting

The Roma do not greet each other by shaking hands or introduce themselves by their family name. A loud greeting at the doorstep ensures that everybody in the room will be greeted at the same time. Romanis also greet other Romanis who they do not know, and if they have time, they exchange news. A traditional Roma greeting is 'Tsihko diives' (How do you do), to which the other person answers 'Deevel mo del' (May God allow it). When saying goodbye the Roma say 'Aahhen Deuleha' (Let God protect you).

7.5. Hygiene

The Romani culture includes strict customs related to hygiene and modesty. When they were living a nomadic lifestyle, they had to take care of hygiene as well as possible. On the other hand, customs have maintained internal order and unity. Hygiene customs also function as guidelines in life. Cleanliness is both physical and symbolic. The hygiene tradition originated from the concrete need of the nomadic people to separate people and animals for health reasons in housing,

eating and health care. Notions of hygiene are also reflected clearly in the attitudes towards food and cutlery, which are not put in places where people sit or walk. On the other hand, nothing is lifted from the floor to the table. Tea towels and table cloths are not washed with other laundry. Table cleaning cloths are not used for wiping chairs or floors; there are separate cloths for them. The principle has always been that everything that is put in the mouth has to be clean.

7.6. Clothing

The Romani customs emphasise unity. Clothing expresses the originality and culture of the Roma population. The most visible external symbol is the traditional dress of a Romani woman. It is not insignificant what a Romani woman wears since she has to take into account traditional customs and the opinions of those belonging to another clan. When a girl grows into a young woman, she usually starts to wear the traditional Romani dress, which symbolises her adulthood. She is then treated as an adult and has the corresponding rights and obligations. As daughters have grown up in a community where nearly all women wear a traditional dress, wearing it feels natural to young girls.

Even though the Romani dress does not alone make a person a Romani, it is one of the most important items that strengthens identity. However, everybody will make their decisions themselves. If a Romani woman does not wear the traditional dress, she still wants to wear a decent dress to show respect to older Romani in their presence. The dress of a Romani woman is an everyday dress which does not prevent her from participating in education or working life.

The Romani men also have traditions related to clothing although they are not as visible as those of the women. Men do not wear a short-sleeved shirt or only a shirt and trousers in the presence of older Romanis. They wear either a vest, jacket or pullover over a

shirt. The clothing for the upper body may be of any colour, and neither is the material important. However, men usually wear dark straight trousers.

7.7. Religion

The Roma are deeply religious. They have probably always believed in a dominant deity and the hereafter. Even though a family were not religious, it still respects spiritual affairs. Religiousness is a part of the Romani culture, and the Roma talk openly about religion. There are probably no atheists among the Roma.

8. Summary

The preservation of the Romani culture and identity is a proof of resilience and perseverance in the midst of difficulties. Today's Finland is a multicultural and international country. It is great that the Roma have gradually been accepted in Finland and efforts are also taken to preserve their culture.

The distinctive lifestyle of the Roma is a way to exist and survive. This way of existence nowadays includes the will and possibility of educating oneself, working for common goals and living according to common rules. The Roma must be given equal opportunities and resources for achieving all of this through education, cooperation channels and services.

Reference material and links:

Romano Missio <http://www.romanomissio.fi>

Elämä ja Valo <http://www.elamajavalo.fi>

The Church and the Roma working group <http://www.evl.fi/kkh/to/kdyk/roman.htm>

Ministry of Education and Culture/legislative proposals (minority languages)
<http://www.minedu.fi/lakialoite/23.html>

Ollikainen, Marketta: *Vankkurikansan perilliset – Romanit, Euroopan unohdettu vähemmistö*, Helsinki 1995.

Strategies of the Policy on Roma, Reports of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 1999:9, Helsinki 1999.

Hernesniemi, Päivi & Hannikainen, Lauri: *Roma Minorities in the Nordic and Baltic Countries*, Rovaniemi 2000.

Anna Leskinen

Former Executive Director

The Finnish Association of Russian-speaking organisations

Irinja Karvonen

Former Executive Director

The Society for Support of the Finnish-Russian School

RUSSIAN-SPEAKING MINORITY – IN THE PAST, TODAY AND IN THE FUTURE

Russians and other Russian-speaking people have lived in Finland since at least the 18th century. Over the decades, the size of Russian-speaking population has varied, but for several centuries Russian has been a widely-used language in Finland, the mother tongue of a minority group. By the end of 2014, the Russian-speaking population in Finland amounted to 69 614 people, of which the majority were immigrants who have moved to Finland in the last few decades. Finland has recognised only the Russian population living in Finland before the Second World War and their descendants as a national minority.



The integration of the rapidly grown Russian-speaking immigrant population into Finland would require a comprehensive integration policy from the government, but so far such policy does not exist.

1. Topelius' view of Russians in Finland

'Finns and Russians live so close to each other that they naturally need to visit each other's country for trade and other affairs. It has already happened that many Finns have gone to live in Russia and many Russians have come to live in Finland. These Russians have come to work as merchants in towns, bought metal plants and farms, or come here as masons or craftsmen. Most of them live in Eastern Finland and in some parts of Southern Finland but very few live in Western and Northern parts of our country...

...During previous wars, people were not happy if they saw Russians in this country as they came here as enemies, but now they come as friends, neighbours and allies. And maybe they are a lot different from the people of this country and speak their Russian language with each other, which is not easy to learn. Yet they get along well with the habitants of this country since Russians are hard-working, cheerful, benevolent, and children loving. They are also livelier than Finns and love to play and sing. There are many Russians who have become rich through austerity and many who have helped the poor. You often see Russian soldiers who share their loaf of bread with the poor and who have the peasant's children sitting on their knee while singing their foreign-language songs to them.'

This is how one of our national writers, Zachris Topelius, described Russians in 1875 in his work *The Book of Our Land*.

2. Russian language

The Russian language is counted among the East Slavic languages, which belong to the Slavic language group and are part of the Indo-European language family. At the end of the 9th century, Greek monk brothers Cyril and Methodius developed Slavic alphabets known as Glagolitic and Cyrillic alphabets on the basis of Greek alphabets. The Cyrillic alphabets are still used in Russian and in some other Slavic languages.

It is usually said that Pushkin created the modern Russian language, although this is highly contentious. But Pushkin's influence on Russian cannot be denied. Several other authors in the 19th and 20th centuries, such as Gogol, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Nabokov, Bulgakov, etc., contributed to the development of the Russian language. Classical Russian literature still has a significant influence on the identity-building of Russians. It provides a strong foundation for the unity of Russian-speakers regardless of their country of residence.

3. Russian-speaking population in the history of Finland

3.1. Before autonomy

People speaking Russian as their mother tongue have settled in Finland at various stages and for varied reasons. Historical layers of immigration can be traced back to the beginning of the 18th century, and Russian settlement was most prominent in Karelian towns. When Old and New Finland were united in 1812, in Vyborg, for example, 30% of the population were Russians. The Russian speakers who are descendants of serfs transferred to Eastern Finland during the

Kingdom of Sweden-Finland have the longest ties to Finland. They mainly originate from the areas of Yaroslavl, Tula and Orel. They retained their language and traditions in their new home country as their assimilation into the Karelian population was minimal. When the areas of Old Finland were incorporated into to the rest of the country in 1812 and the Government of Vyborg was established, the former Russian serfs became citizens of the Grand Duchy of Finland.

3.2. During autonomy

After Finland was transferred under Russian rule and granted the status of an autonomous Grand Duchy (1809–1917), a large number of Russian officials, officers and merchants moved here. During the autonomy era, most Russians lived in Helsinki and Vyborg, but Lappeenranta also had a considerable Russian population. In 1880, some 10% of the population in Lappeenranta had been born in Russia and 20% were Russian speakers. In Helsinki there were many gendarmes, businessmen, grocers, ice cream sellers and soldiers who had moved with the Governor General. Tatars and Jews also moved to Finland with the military, and later they formed their own communities. The proportion of Russian-speaking residents in Helsinki was 12.1% in 1870 but only 4.7% in 1900.

During the period of autonomy, the Russian population was very active in Finland. Russian schools, theatres and various associations operated in Helsinki. Newspapers and books were also published in Russian. The Russian upper class and military had a significant influence on the cultural and social life in Finland. They brought with them their own parlour, dance and military music and gradually introduced it to the Finnish population.

A period of oppression started in Finland in 1901 when Governor General Bobrikov carried out a number of Russification acts. A new language programme for schools entered into force

in 1903, prescribing that all school subjects with any connection to Russia should be taught in Russian. On street signs, the street names were first in Russian, then in Finnish and lastly in Swedish. The Finnish population regarded these measures as humiliating. In 1904 Eugen Schauman shot Governor General Bobrikov and then himself, which made him a national hero.

As a result of the revolution and closing of the borders, many Russians who had lived or spent their summers in Finland stayed here. Among them was a well-known artist Ilja Repin, who spent the last decades of his life in Kuokkala at the Karelian Isthmus.

3.3. In independent Finland

After the First World War, from 1917 to the mid-1920s, a large number of refugees arrived in Finland from Soviet Russia. Their number was at its peak in 1922, at 35 500. Nearly half of them were Russian emigrants and half refugees from Ingria and Karelia. After this, their number started to decline as many emigrants, especially Russian White Guard officers, travelled further to larger emigrant colonies in Paris, Brussels, Berlin, Prague and Novi Sad. However, a large number of them stayed in Finland and gradually assimilated – more or less – into the local population.

At the beginning of the Second World War, the Russian community in Finland comprised approximately 15 000 people. During the Continuation War (1941–1944), 63 000 Ingrians were transferred from the neighbourhood of the Russian border to Finland, but 55 000 of them were later returned to the Soviet Union. After the Second World War, Russians moved to Finland mainly because of marriage.

3.4. After dissolution of the Soviet Union

Immigration started to increase in the 1990s. The most common reasons for immigration have been marriage with a Finnish citizen, reimmigration of Ingrian Finns with their families, and work or studies. More and more Russians are moving here in order to work at Finnish universities.

At the beginning of 1995, there were about 17 000 Russian speakers in Finland. According to the statistics of Statistics Finland, at the end of 2014 there were 69 614 people with Russian as their mother tongue in Finland, which is slightly over 1% of the total population. The Russian-speaking population has spread across the country. Most Russian speakers live in the capital region and in the cities of Turku, Tampere and Lappeenranta. The majority live in Southern and Eastern Finland (e.g. 32 324 live in the province of Uusimaa), but there are many Russian speakers elsewhere in Finland. This makes it difficult to talk about a regional minority.

The Russian-speaking people living in Finland belong to several ethnic groups and religious communities. Among them there are at least Orthodoxes, Lutherans, Muslims and Jews. The unifying factors of this heterogeneous group are language, culture and traditions, which the Russian-speaking people who have lived in Finland over generations and immigrants seek to maintain. The Russian-speaking population has a lively cultural life. There are several theatre groups and song, dance and music groups, as well as clubs operating in Finland. Artists, singers, ballet soloists and writers of Russian origin living in Finland have won glory both in the past and in the present. Many descendants of Russian emigrants have contributed to Finland's economic development and also laid down the foundations for trade between Finland and the Soviet Union and later with Russia.

4. Teaching and use of the Russian language

In 2014, the total number of Russian speakers in Finland was 3 720 in the age group of 0 to 4 years, 3 800 in the age group of 5 to 9 years, and 7 066 in the age group of 10 to 19 years.

4.1. Nursery schools

In Finland, mainly in the capital region, there are preschools where Russian is used alongside Finnish. The largest one is the Kalinka preschool in Helsinki with places for about 100 children. All Finnish-Russian nursery schools are privately owned, being either owned by associations, cooperatives or companies. At the present, early education services are not available for every Russian-speaking family in their mother tongue. Thanks to the development of Finnish as a second language programme, preschools have also started to pay more attention to the teaching of Finnish to Russian-speaking children.

4.2. Basic education

At the end of the 19th century, Finland had numerous schools where instruction was given in Russian. Most of them were located in Helsinki, Vyborg and the Karelian Isthmus. They mainly corresponded to today's primary schools, but there were also a few dozen schools offering instruction at the secondary and upper secondary levels. Some of these schools cooperated with Orthodox congregations.

All Russian schools had significant economic problems in the 1920s and 1930s. Only the Tabunov primary school and Russian upper secondary school in Helsinki survived after the Second World War. These schools were merged into a Finnish-Russian school in 1955. Currently there are two schools in Finland where

part of the instruction is given in Russian, even though the main language is Finnish. In addition to the above-mentioned Finnish-Russian school operating in Helsinki, bilingual instruction is given at the School of Eastern Finland, which operates as an online school in Joensuu, Lappeenranta and Imatra. However, the need for bilingual instruction is considerably higher.

Russian-speaking pupils can receive mother tongue instruction two hours a week at all schools and upper secondary schools in the same way as all other pupils whose mother tongue is not Finnish or Swedish. In practice it depends on the municipality's resources whether Russian-speaking pupils in reality receive mother tongue instruction. In sparsely-populated areas the availability of mother tongue lessons is poor. In spring term 2013, a total of 4 064 pupils and in autumn term a total of 4 551 pupils received mother tongue instruction in the Russian language.

4.3. Universities

At the Department of Modern Languages at the University of Helsinki, Russian can be studied both as a foreign language and as a mother tongue. The name of the major subject module is Russian language and literature (Russian as mother tongue) and the graduates will have, depending on the choice of their minor subjects, the competence to teach Russian or work in other positions where knowledge of Russian is required. Instruction takes place mainly in Russian, although Finnish is also used since some of the courses are shared with those who study Russian as a foreign language. Students can specialise either in the Russian language or in the Russian literature. Russian can also be studied at the Universities of Joensuu, Jyväskylä, Tampere, Turku and Vaasa, as well as at Åbo Akademi University.

4.4. Religious instruction

Russians living in Finland represent various religious convictions. A considerable proportion of them are Orthodoxes. Since the Orthodox religion is one of the two official state religions in Finland, it is taught at schools. If a pupil so wishes, he is entitled to receive instruction in his own religion, although the Lutheran religion is generally taught at schools. The Orthodox Church of Finland operating under the Patriarchate of Constantinople consists of 24 parishes, which form three dioceses (the dioceses of Karelia, Helsinki and Oulu). In addition, parishes under the Moscow Patriarchate operate in Finland. We also have several Orthodox associations and two monasteries: Lintula Convent and Valamo Monastery, both located in Heinävesi. The University of Eastern Finland in Joensuu has the only university-level Orthodox theological education and research unit in Finland, which was established in 1988 when the Finnish Orthodox Seminary was closed down in Kuopio.

5. Media serving the Russian minority

SPEKTR is a monthly information leaflet issued in Finland and intended for the Russian-speaking population. It has been published since 1998. It is published 12 times a year with 20,000 copies and distributed for free at more than 70 locations, but it can also be subscribed home. (www.spektr.net)

Works of local Russian-speaking writers are published in the *LITERARUS* literature magazine, which comes out in Finland. The TV and radio channels of the Finnish Broadcasting Company offer daily news broadcasts in Russian.

Russians living in Finland can watch Russian TV channels via cable or satellite.

6. Importance of social environment

Master of Social Sciences Vesa Puuronen from the University of Kuopio has studied the attitudes towards the Russian-speaking population in Finnish society over several years. He has found that hatred towards Russians was stirred up during the first decades of independence as a result of emerging nationalism. He is of the opinion that the persistence of hatred towards Russians can be explained by the feeling of national superiority. It is most visible in the press, online discussions, bullying at schools and in hate speech on the streets. Insulting expressions, name-calling (e.g. the use of the Finnish word 'ryssä', 'Russky') and the use of terms referring to ethnicity influence the well-being of people subjected to this kind of behaviour. It has adverse effects on life, self-esteem and attitudes towards Finland and Finns. Minister Astrid Thors said in 2007 that the problems of Russian-speaking population are observable on every level of social life, from everyday life to politics.

According to the statistics, the negative attitude of Finns towards Russian speakers has declined but problems persist. The relations between Finland and Russia and their historical baggage have played a significant role in the development of hatred towards Russians as well as the historically young age of the Finnish nation and its relatively small size of population. Still, we need to be able to forgive the mistakes of the previous generations without accusing the future generation for them. According to Johanna Suurpää, who acted as the Ombudsman for Minorities between 2007 and 2010, the pejorative Finnish word 'ryssä' ('Russky') used for Russians should not be accepted as part of normal and appropriate language usage (e.g. in the media). Schools should address name-calling hate speech and bullying. In the investigation of crimes against persons with a Russian background, racist motives are usually not noticed

as Russian-speaking people differ less from the majority population than other immigrant groups.

7. Improvement of the position of the Russian-speaking minority

So far Russian has not been accepted as an official minority language in Finland. The Finnish Government only recognises the national minority status of 'Old Russians', i.e. representatives of those Russian families who have lived in Finland over several generations.

The Finnish Association of Russian-speaking organisations established in 2000 (SVYL/FARO; www.faror.com) has criticised the misleading division into 'Old Russians' and 'New Russians' since these concepts do not have clear definitions due to the fact that the groups are united by the same language and culture.

SVYL/FARO is represented at the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO) operating under the Ministry of the Interior. In 2002, ETNO published a report on issues related to the Russian-speaking population in Finland, including more than 30 recommendations for improving their situation. The report recommends that an advisory board similar to the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs should be established for the affairs of the Russian-speaking population. In practice, so far no official body in Finland has been willing and prepared to monitor the position of the Russian-speaking minority in a systematic and comprehensive manner.

In 2007, the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers gave recommendations to Finland on the position of national minorities. These also concern the Russian-speaking population. The Committee of Ministers recommends, for example, that the authorities should further improve the participation and

negotiation systems related to minority affairs. Access to Russian language instruction should be improved. The state should encourage the development of minority-language media and review the current subsidy system with a view to ensuring that the specific situation of print media is taken into account better. (www.coe.int/minorities)

It is regretted in the third report on Finland by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) that Finnish authorities have not taken sufficiently decisive measures to combat negative attitudes towards the members of the Russian-speaking community. ECRI is concerned that the Russian-speaking population is subjected to racial harassment and that Russian-speaking children are bullied at school. ECRI separately addressed the inadequate mother tongue instruction to Russian-speaking pupils and poor availability of professional interpreters in situations where it is required by law. (www.coe.int/ecri)

It is natural that interaction between two neighbouring countries is lively in different fields. Immigration will probably also continue in the near future. Russian-speaking people living in Finland seek to retain their own mother tongue and culture while adopting the languages and customs of Finnish society. Cultural and linguistic diversity will benefit Finland. This was already understood and emphasised by Zachris Topelius in the 19th century.

Reference material:

Report of the Ombudsman for Minorities on the Russian-speaking population, available since March 2009 at www.vahemmistovaltuutettu.fi.

Baschmakoff, Natalia & Leinonen, Marja: *Russian Life in Finland 1917–1939: A local and oral history*, in *Studia Slavica Finlandensia Tomus XVIII*, ed. Waldemar Melanko, Helsinki 2001.

Suomen venäjänkielisen väestönsan kysymyksiä 2002, Report of a working group appointed by the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations, Helsinki 2003.

Shenshin, Veronica: *Venäläiset ja venäläinen kulttuuri Suomessa, Report*, University of Helsinki, Alexander Institute, 2008.

Ura uusi urkenevi, SVYL/FARO ry, Helsinki, 2008. (12 articles about Russian-speakers who live in today's Finland and are active in the fields of science and arts).

Statistics; Tables of Statistics Finland 2014.

Dan Kantor

Former Executive Director of the Jewish Community of Helsinki

FINNISH JEWRY – A WELL-ORGANISED MINORITY

- Permanent Jewish settlement in Finland can be deemed to have originated in the first half of the 19th century, when Jewish soldiers (known as Cantonists), who served in the Russian Army in Finland, were permitted to stay in Finland.
- The Jews received their full rights as citizens in January 1918, after Finland became independent.
- The number of Jews has always been fewer than 2 000. Currently there are about 1 600 Jews living in Finland, the majority of them being members of the Jewish Community of Helsinki. The Community runs, for example, a nursery school and a private school corresponding to a comprehensive school (established in 1918).
- Over the last two hundred years, the Finnish Jews have integrated relatively well into Finnish society. At the same time, they have succeeded in preserving their own religion and cultural tradition, largely thanks to their efficient organisation and communalism.



1. Introduction

The two Jewish communities of Finland, i.e. the communities of Helsinki and Turku, have at the moment a total of about 1 300 members living in Finland, the majority of them belonging to the Jewish Community of Helsinki. In addition, a couple of hundred Israeli and Russian Jews live in different parts of Finland, but only a small number of them have contacts with the communities.

The Jewish Community of Vyborg, which operated till the Second World War, had 250 members, but when the Soviet Union invaded this part of Finland in 1940, all habitants were evacuated to elsewhere in Finland and the community was closed down. Some Vyborg Jews settled in Tampere, where they established a Jewish community in 1974. The Jewish Community of Tampere had at most 74 members and operated until 1981, when its activities ceased as the community members moved away. Most of the members of the Jewish Community of Tampere joined the Jewish Community of Helsinki.

Despite its small size, the Finnish Jewry has managed to maintain relatively well-organised religious and social services as well as cultural and educational activities already for two hundred years. Members of the Jewish communities live across the capital region or City of Turku, the activities of the communities being concentrated at the community centres of these cities.

2. Full service community centre

The Helsinki Jewish Community Centre is located in central Helsinki, and comprises a synagogue built in 1906 and an adjoining community building, which was completed in 1961. The community centre caters for the needs of its members from

childhood to old age. The community centre houses a nursery school and a Jewish school. The community office is also located in the same premises.

The nursery school, Gan Jeladim, is a full-time nursery. The Jewish School of Helsinki was established in 1918, and it is a nine-grade school equivalent to comprehensive school, with primary and secondary levels. In addition to the ordinary subjects confirmed by the Ministry of Education and Culture, it teaches Hebrew, Jewish religion and Jewish history. Both institutions receive annual subsidies from the municipalities or the state.

The community centre includes an assembly hall and club rooms for events of the community and private parties. Various associations also use the premises. The community also has its own library of some 4 000 books in Finnish, Swedish, English, Yiddish and Hebrew.

3. Lively associations and cultural activities

The oldest functioning association of the Finnish Jewish community is the burial society, Chevra Kadisha, which was founded in 1864. All members of the burial society work on a voluntary basis and follow strictly the habits and rituals according to the Jewish burial traditions. The community takes care of the burial of its own members and maintains its own cemetery. The Bicur Cholim association established in 1879 takes care of the needs of the sick.

A charity association of Jewish women is also operating in connection with the community. The Jewish Student and Youth Society of Helsinki and the Sports Club Makkabi founded in 1906, which is the oldest still-operating Maccabi sports club in Europe, organise youth and sports activities.

The worldwide Zionist organisations Keren Kajemet L'Israel, Keren Hayesod and WIZO also have local branches in Finland.

WIZO, for example, has over 200 members and runs a day care centre called Shaviv in Israel.

Cultural activities are offered by, for example, the Jewish choir, Judaica study group, Hebrew language club Chug ivri and Yiddish language club Idishe vort. The community publishes its own magazine, called Hakelila, quarterly. Another active association is the Finnish Jewish War Veterans founded in 1979. The community also sees to that the members of the Jewish Community of Turku receive their kosher meat products.

The Jewish Community of Turku resembles the Jewish Community of Helsinki with its synagogue building (built in 1912) and community centre (built in 1956). Regardless of its small number of members and thus limited resources, the Jewish Community of Turku has managed to maintain the most important activities, such as the celebration of Sabbath, holiday services and burial activities.

The representative democracy of the Nordic countries is reflected in the regulations of the Jewish communities. For example, adult members of the Jewish Community of Helsinki elect every third year 32 members to the Community Council, which in turn appoints seven to nine members to the Community Board and other committees and boards. The Community Council also chooses a Rabbi for the community, its highest spiritual leader.

4. Successful integration

The Finnish Jewry has largely integrated well into Finnish society. A small number of older-generation Jews are still entrepreneurs and traders, but a majority of younger-generation Jews work as various professionals or in academic fields. The Finnish Parliament has one Jewish member, and well-known scientists, artists, authors and celebrities are also of Jewish origin.

The rapidly growing integration of the Jews after the Second World War into Finnish society has also resulted in an increase in the number of mixed marriages (where only one spouse is Jewish). Even though this kind of development partly accelerates the assimilation of the Finnish Jewry, so far it has been rather slow because, for example, many non-Jewish spouses in mixed marriages have converted to Judaism in accordance with the Jewish law halacha. It is also noteworthy that a majority of mixed-marriage families put their children in a Jewish nursery and school.

Typically, most members of the community have become secular in their private life but maintain the traditions in the celebration of holidays and participate in the community activities. The services at both synagogues follow the Lithuanian Orthodox model. Such traditional festivals as Simchat Beit Ha'Schoeva of the Bicur Cholim association and Chevra Kadishan Seudat Tet Vav Kislev of the burial society have nearly disappeared as Eastern European Jewish communities were destroyed in the Holocaust. The Finnish Jewish community, which by a miracle survived the Holocaust, still upholds these old and beautiful Jewish traditions.

Unlike other national minorities in Finland, the Finnish Jewry no longer has a shared language spoken at home. The Yiddish language, which was a common language of the Jews in Europe before the Second World War, disappeared nearly completely because of the genocide during the Holocaust. However, Yiddish and Yiddish culture are gradually reviving across the world. In Finland, the revitalisation of the Yiddish language and culture has been significant. Currently there are slightly more than one hundred Jews in Finland who know more or less know Yiddish.

5. Rapidly changing population base

The Finnish Jewry mainly originates from Jewish soldiers who came to complete their military service in the Russian Army in Finland in the 19th century and from their family members as well as from immigrants who have arrived from Russia later. During recent decades, the population base has, however, changed as a result of immigration, which has grown considerably. Thanks to immigration mainly from Israel, the area of the former Soviet Union and EU countries, the number of members of the Jewish Community of Helsinki has grown by a few hundred persons over the last twenty years.

The Finnish Jewry maintains long-term and close relations with other Jewish communities in the Nordic countries. There are also Jewish communities in St. Petersburg and in the Baltic states, but contacts with them were interrupted by the Second World War. Afterwards, and especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union, contacts have been revived in particular with the Jewish community of Tallinn.

6. Active social participation

The national representative body of the Finnish Jewry is the Central Council of Jewish Communities in Finland, whose board consists of nine members, six from Helsinki and three from Turku. The Central Council represents the Finnish Jewry both nationally and internationally. The Central Council is a member of the World Jewish Congress and the European Jewish Congress.

The Finnish Jewry participates actively in dialogue between religions and in promoting minority rights. The community is represented, for example, in the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO) appointed by the Finnish Government, in the

FIBLUL (Finnish Bureau for Lesser Used Languages) and in the National Forum for Cooperation of Religions in Finland (CORE). Furthermore, it participates in the meetings between religious leaders invited by the President of the Republic of Finland.

All in all, it can be noted that during the past couple of centuries, the Finnish Jewry has integrated relatively well into Finnish society. In practice, the Jewish Community of Helsinki offers its members the most important services from cradle to grave, which is unique even on the global level, considering the relatively small number of Jews in Finland. The number of members of the Finnish Jewish community has increased steadily thanks to the considerable increase in immigration during the past few years, which has, in part, significantly helped the community to fight against assimilation. On the other hand, immigration has also posed new challenges and created new needs for the Jewish communities. The experience gained by the Finnish Jewry over the couple of centuries and the well-organised community have significantly contributed to the efficient integration of new immigrants.

Reference material:

The Jewish Community of Helsinki at www.jchelsinki.fi

Santeri Jacobsson: *Taistelu ihmisoikeuksista*, Gummerus 1951.

Taimi Torvinen: *Kadimah, Suomen juutalaisten historia*, Otava 1989.

Dan Kantor, Mindele London-Zweig, Simo Muir (ed.): *LeChaim! Kuvia Suomen juutalaisten historiasta*, Karisto 2006.

Okan Daher

Lecturer in Tatar Language and Culture at the University of Helsinki
Honorary President of the Finnish Islamic Congregation of the Tatar
Community

TATAR MINORITY IN FINLAND – FULLY INTEGRATED INTO SOCIETY

The Tatars provide a good example of successful integration: they have adapted well to Finnish society as hard-working citizens, while managing to maintain a close community. The Tatar community has not asked for outside help but has, through its own resilience, acquired good-quality premises for itself and been able to maintain two graveyards. It has also set an example for new groups of Muslim immigrants.

1. Introduction

The Tatar community is one of Finland's historical and national minorities. There are now about 700 Islamic Tatars of Turkic origin



in Finland, of which most, approximately 600 persons, are members of the Finnish Islamic Congregation (Suomen Islam-seurakunta), formerly Finnish Mohammedan Congregation, and some 100 people belong to the Islamic Congregation of Tampere founded in 1943. A uniform linguistic and religious minority started to form during the latter half of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century. Its members mainly originated from Tatar villages in the neighbourhood of Volga area in the Government of Nizhny Novgorod in the Tsarist Russia, which were neighboured, for example, by Finno-Ugrian Mordvins and Russians. They had practised agriculture as smallholders in their home villages, but cultivated areas had decreased over years and become unprofitable due to land ownerships. Trading activities started to develop alongside agriculture within their own province. Gradually trade trips stretched all the way to Saint Petersburg along the railway and further to the Grand Duchy of Finland via Terijoki (now known as Zelenogorsk) and Vyborg.

The new land proved to be favourable for trade. At first, the Tatars were engaged in itinerant and market trade, but soon they established market halls. As trade changed into business activities practised at certain localities, the Tatars began to establish textile, clothing and fur shops in towns and provincial centres. Stable income thus guaranteed a living for Tatar families. Trade has often broken down old barriers, brought peoples into interaction and thus created new cultural connections. This way a small and unitary cultural community started to evolve in our country at the turn of the century, person-by-person and family-by-family. There was no room for marginalisation, since earning a living required adjustment, and consequently the Tatars integrated quickly and seamlessly into Finnish society. Because the structure and sound system of their mother tongue resemble Finnish, it was easy for the Tatars to learn the new language. It was also known that

Finns are relatives of Moksha Mordvins, who had been their good neighbours.

2. Double identity

The Tatars became citizens of independent Finland and builders of Finnish society, and integrated into the Finnish culture while retaining their own cultural characteristics, even in the fifth generation. What has enabled the building and preserving of this fruitful double identity? The first and the second generation created a strong mental and material basis for building the community through their industriousness, will power and mutual solidarity. The community is centred on the family, the home, which is supported by a well-organised community. Traditions followed within the community provide young persons with a clear awareness of their own roots and identity as well as with a strong self-esteem. Close ties with the family and relatives create a sense of togetherness and security, which is reflected positively in the whole of society. The fostering of Tatar cultural heritage has, however, required enormous efforts.

Over the last century, the Tatars developed a Finnish identity alongside their own culture; Finland is, after all, the native, home and fatherland of the community members. Since the early years of Finland's independence, the community has shared the same ups and downs with all the other Finns. 156 young men and 21 women of the community participated in the Winter and Continuation Wars between 1939 and 1944. Ten Finnish Tatar soldiers were killed defending the independence and interests of Finland.

Finnish identity starts to form already at an early stage in children's yard games and Finnish play groups. At comprehensive schools and upper secondary schools, children come in close touch with the Finnish culture through instruction, school friends

and their families. The foundations for working life are laid at universities, institutes and vocational schools, which expand the individual's living environment. The majority culture has an immense influence, and marriages have created bilingual families where two cultures meet every day on all levels. In summary, the community members have built their identity in a balanced manner based on their own linguistic and cultural heritage and religion as well as the values of the Finnish majority society.

3. Rich and lively language

The mother tongue of the Finnish Tatars is a dialect of the Tatar language, more specifically its Western dialect, Mishar Tatar. The Tatar language belongs to the Kipchak branch of Turkic languages, and it is spoken commonly within families and the community and so children learn it as their first language. The starting point for everything is upbringing of children, for which not only parents but also grandparents and relatives are responsible. Learning is supported by a children's play group, which the congregation organises on weekends, and by mother-tongue courses in the autumn and spring terms and during summers. Young people are included from early on in the activities of organisations operating in connection with the congregation. They participate, for example, in choir and theatre performances arranged by a cultural society. In general, lively interaction, close ties with the family and relatives, and events arranged by organisations are particularly suitable for promoting the use of mother tongue. Mother tongue teachers usually come from within the community, but in earlier days additional resources were also received from Turkey. The community has its own writing method, which is based on the Latin spelling of Turkish and Finnish. It is clear that mastering

one's mother tongue is the basic requirement for all learning. It is also one of the characteristics of national identity.

Even though the Finnish language has influenced the minority language, the Tatar community still has a clear and vital linguistic identity. Cultural connections with the Republic of Tatarstan, which belongs to the Russian Federation, and with the cultural circles in its capital Kazan have also contributed to the appreciation of the language. At the same time, the language has been enriched by Turkish and the contemporary Tatar language of Kazan over the century. As internationalisation has proceeded, the community has built contacts with Tatar communities around the world, e.g. in Sweden, Estonia, Turkey, Australia and the United States, which considerably increases opportunities for the use of the Tatar mother tongue.

The Tatar community in Finland has a rich and diverse cultural heritage. Folk songs and music live within the community and bring its members together to cultural evenings and other common events. Theatre plays based on the classics of Tatar literature are also popular. The Finnish Tatars have produced their own literary works, including song books, religious text books, poetry, fiction and their occasionally published magazine and newspaper Mähallä Habärläre.

4. Community spirit of the congregation

Religion is highly important to a small community. It is primarily a strong personal conviction but also a resource which gathers members together and unites them. The Tatars have inherited the Islamic religion from their ancestors, the ancient Bulgars who lived in the Volga area and adopted Islam already in the 10th century. The Finnish Mohammedan Congregation, whose name was changed

into the Finnish Islamic Congregation in 1963, was entered into the register of religious communities in 1925. This was enabled by the first Act on Freedom of Religion that entered into force in 1923. In fact, Finland was one of the first European countries that officially recognised an Islamic congregation. The congregation was preceded by a Charitable Muslim Society of Helsinki (Helsingin musulmaanien hyväntekeväisyysyhdistys) established in 1915, which united the Tatar population and furthered its issues.

The congregation takes care of the religious education of school children during the school year and at summer camps. Religious education is given by the congregation's imam in the Tatar language. Since the early 1960s the congregation has invited imams for its service from Turkey – and after the collapse of the Soviet Union from the Tatar communities of the Russian Federation – to conduct prayer events and sermons, solemnise marriages and perform other religious ceremonies. The selection requirements have included the knowledge of the Tatar language and the ability to adapt to new circumstances and to Finnish society. Community members also volunteer actively for various duties at the congregation.

The congregation is not only a religious community but also a unitary linguistic and cultural society, which fosters the cultural heritage and at the same time provides both mental and economic support for cultural and sports clubs operating within it. A cultural society called Finlandiya Türkleri Birliği FTB was established in 1935 and a sports club called Yolduz in 1945. The Tatars also had their own primary school in Helsinki between 1948 and 1969, named the Turkish Primary School – which in addition to the Finnish primary school curriculum gave instruction in the Tatar language, religion and history of Turkic peoples. For a short period, it also taught Turkish language. The school was maintained by a Support Association for the Turkish Primary School, which also received financial assistance from the City of Helsinki and the

congregation. In addition, other cultural organisations founded by active members have operated in the cities of Helsinki, Tampere and Turku.

The congregation centre is located in central Helsinki. The building, which is owned by the congregation and was completed in 1960, houses a mosque, assembly hall, kitchen, congregation office, club room, teachers' room, small library and two class rooms as well as meeting rooms for the congregation board and various organisations. Furthermore, there is a mosque completed in 1943 in the City of Järvenpää, which used to be the northernmost mosque in the world. Prayer rooms are also found in the cities of Turku and Kotka. The congregation takes care of the burial of its own members and maintains graveyards in Helsinki and Turku.

5. Cultural characteristics

Important religious holidays and evening events gather community members to common celebrations, as well as national festivals, such as the Sabantuy summer festival organised in connection with summer camps.

Traditional banquets and national dishes have an important place in the Tatar culture. Well-known dishes include various pies (e.g. *peremech*) and soups (*shorba*). The cultural society has also published a Finnish and Tatar-language cookbook with recipes for traditional dishes.

A special social characteristic of the culture is that the Tatars take care of their elderly at home as long as possible. Weekly meetings organised by the congregation provide recreational activities and an opportunity to meet each other for pensioners and the aged.

On the other hand, sport gathers young members together to pursue various hobbies. In wintertime the sports club organises

winter-holiday camps for school children and families. Some members also play tennis and golf. The football team of the Yolduz sports club has participated, in addition to league matches of the Helsinki division, in friendship matches against football teams of other minorities in Finland, such as the teams of the Jews (Makkabi) and Arabs (Saikus). The football team of the Estonian Tatar community has also visited Finland, while Yolduz has travelled to Algeria, Turkey and Tatarstan to play against their local teams in friendly tournaments.

6. Integration

The structure of the community has naturally changed over the decades and has been influenced by new social developments and internationalisation. The members' close interaction with the country's majority population has contributed to the emergence of bilingual and bicultural families. Such families require particularly strong efforts by the community to preserve the minority language and culture. The older generation often stressed that persons belonging to a minority must work a lot harder than the rest to succeed in the Finnish competition society. Education was already appreciated in former home villages, and hence the Tatars have also invested in children's education in Finland. Thanks to the high level of education in Finland, community members have found employment at various government and municipal bodies and organisations as well as in the private business sector as entrepreneurs and employers. Community members have given their contribution to Finland's national, cultural and economic development.

The community's message to new immigrants has been that minorities should seek to preserve their own language, religion and cultural heritage. At the same time, they should adapt to

Finnish society in a flexible and constructive manner and comply with the country's legislation. Learning the Finnish language as well as education and employment are naturally very important aspects. Fruitful integration requires consistent long-term efforts and arises out of mutual respect and open dialogue. In addition to their own heritage, people should draw strength from the rich cultural environment. The language skills and cultural knowledge of minority populations also constitute a resource for the country, which has already been utilised in cultural and trade relations.

7. Social participation

The Finnish Islamic Congregation functions as the national representative body of the Finnish Tatars. Its board consists of the chair, five members and three alternate members as well as of the congregation's imam. The congregation represents the community both nationally and internationally in various bodies, such as the World Congress of Tatars. Community members have also been engaged in state visit delegations and trade missions led by Finland's heads of state.

The Finnish Tatars participate actively in a dialogue between religions and cultures. The community is represented, for example, in the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO) appointed by the Finnish Government, in the FIBLUL (Finnish Bureau for Lesser Used Languages) and in the National Forum for Cooperation of Religions in Finland (CORE). Furthermore, it participates in the meetings between religious leaders invited by the President of the Republic of Finland.

Reference material:

Muazzez Baibulat: *Tampereen Islamilainen Seurakunta: juuret ja historia*. Jyväskylä 2004.

Kadriye Bedretdin (ed.): *Tugan tel. Kirjoituksia Suomen tataareista*. Finnish Publications of the Finnish Oriental Society, No. 39. Jyväskylä 2011.

Okan Daher: *Orthographical traditions among the Tatar minority in Finland*. In Juha Janhunen & Volker Rybatzki (eds.): *Writing in the Altaic World*. Studia Orientalia 87, pp. 44–48. Helsinki 1999.

Harry Halén: *Suomen tataarit*. In Markku Löytönen and Laura Kolbe (eds.): *Suomi. Maa, kansa, kulttuurit*. Finnish Literature Society Publication No. 753. Jyväskylä 1999.

Tuomo Hirvonen (ed.): *Suomen Islam-seurakunnan veteraaniteos*. Finnish Islamic Congregation. Jyväskylä 2006.

Kari Karvonen (ed.): *Suomen Islam-seurakunta 1925–1975*. Finnish Islamic Congregation. Helsinki 1975.

Antero Leitzinger: *Suomen tataarit; vuosina 1868–1944 muodostuneen muslimiyhteisön menestystarina*. Tampere 2006.

Tatarica: *studia in honorem Ymär Daher, anno MCMLXX sexagenario*. Edendum curavit Abdulla Tukai Cultural Society, ed. Lauri Kotiniemi. Vammala 1987.

Pertti Lampi

Secretary of the Karelian Language Association

KARELIAN-SPEAKING KARELIANS

The main part of Karelians live in Finland and in Northeast Russia. In Finland they are spread around the country but their main areas are Northern Karelia in Eastern Finland and the Helsinki capital region. All Finnish Karelians belong to the same ethnic group, though it is heterogeneous in respect of its language and culture, somewhat like the Irish. The Karelians have much in common, although there are also differences between the cultures of different areas. As border region residents, Finnish Karelians were first subjected to the assimilation policy of Sweden and then to that of Finland. The rulers have consistently even denied the fact that Karelians constitute a separate ethnic group. In other parts of Europe Karelians have been regarded as a separate people for over thousand years.

Some history

Karelia was part of the area of Eastern Christianity over thousand years ago. Now, most of the Finnish Karelians are Lutheran Christians. Until the end of the Middle Ages, nearly all Karelians spoke the Karelian language. Now most of the Finnish Karelians speak Finnish dialects. Over time, their language has changed to resemble Finnish due to evacuations and state actions.

The first centuries of the last millennium were the time of grandeur for the Karelian people. At that time, Karelians lived in most parts of the present area of Finland. Karelians, who were known as a trading people, moved along Russian river routes all the way to

Byzantium. They were also active in the West, at least in Swedish trade centres. A large number of Karelians lived in the trading town of Old Laatokka and in the trading republic of Novgorod, exerting an active influence on them. According to the chronicles, Karelians were allies of Novgorod since the 13th century.

Karelians have acted as a cultural bridge between the East and the West. It is exactly for this reason that a distinctive culture with an on-going influence evolved in Karelia. People nowadays know only a fraction of this heritage through the Finnish national epic, Kalevala, written down by Elias Lönnrot and based on Karelian folk poems. The mythology has been influenced by the great cultures of the East, including Egypt and India. In fact, the greatest contribution of the Karelians to the culture of the world is Karelian folk poetry, which is regarded as belonging to the richest oral heritages in the world. Through Kalevala, this heritage continues to have, by way of example, an influence on the development of the identity and culture of young nations. It is well known that Kalevala and Karelian poetry were crucial to the development of the Finnish culture and national identity.

In most parts of Karelia, Karelians were allowed to cherish their rich traditions, with the exception of religion, and speak their own language nearly at peace till the end of the 19th century. The rise of the Finnish national movement and social development, however, led to a strong 'Finnicisation' of the Karelians. Like other European states, Finland also started to strive towards a centralised and unitary state. The government, church and educational system no longer wanted to accommodate minorities. Surprisingly, however, linguists started to study the Karelian language and regard it as a separate language. The creators of modern standard Finnish, in particular Elias Lönnrot, included a lot of Karelian vocabulary in the new standard language. Up until Finland's independence in 1917, a relatively large number of Karelian fiction and non-fiction

books were published. Publishing was quite active till World War II, and in the 1930s efforts were also taken to create a common standard language.

However, development of the Karelian language and culture became significantly more difficult when an ultra-nationalist movement similar to Nazism arose in Finland in the 1920s, known as the Academic Karelia Society. It did not recognise the Karelian language but regarded it as a Finnish dialect. The movement also considered the Karelian culture to be only part of ancient Finnish tradition. The society soon started a strong Finnicisation campaign. In addition to intensive propaganda, Karelians were forced to change, for example, their first and family names into Finnish ones and use only Finnish standard language. Even though the society was closed down in autumn 1944, the influence of its campaigns continued in practice till the end of the 1980s.

As a result of World War II Finland lost a part of Finnish Karelia to the Soviet Union. Nearly all persons – circa 400 000 – moved from the ceded territory to Finland and had to be settled in the country. Of them approximately 40 000 were Karelians. In Finland Karelian refugees did not lose their language and culture but these were



"NIIN HE'ÄN SANUO SOATTO:
MI MUNASS' YLINI PUOLI,
PEÄNI OM PEÄLLÄ TAIVOSEKSE!
MI MUNASS' ALANI PUOLI
MOAKSE ALLA JALKOJENI!
MI MUNASSA VALKIETA,
SE PÄIVÄKSE TAIVAHALLA!
MI MUNASSA RUSKIETA,
SE KUIKSE KUMOTTAMAHE,
TÄHTILÖIKSE TAIVAHALLA."
(SKVR:11 58A)

The birth of the Earth according to Karelian folklore, drawn by Ritva Lampivuo.

fostered by Karelian families. Karelian associations and Orthodox congregations also provided a refuge for the Karelians. There they could practise their own traditions and speak Karelian freely. Adult education of Karelian also began as early as in the 1950s.

Liberalisation of Europe also enabled revitalisation of the Karelian language

European cooperation developed rapidly from the beginning of the 1950s. After the acceptance of status quo, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in 1975 brought human rights and the treatment of minorities to the forefront. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Block, it became possible to conclude new human rights treaties. New conventions on minorities were also adopted shortly after this: the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 1992 and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in 1995. Finland accepted the Conventions in 1998.

Revitalisation of the Karelian language had already begun at the end of the 1980s in the Karelian areas of Russia. Finland gradually followed the example. More and more institutes began to offer Karelian language instruction, and Karelian organisations also started to organise courses. Systematic revitalisation work was initiated in 1995 along with the establishment of the Karelian Language Association.

Fight for the status of the Karelian language

Efforts were taken to boost the revitalisation of the Karelian language at the turn of the millennium, but it was soon realised that it was

impossible to move forward on the issue without an official definition of the status of the language. The Karelian Language Association launched negotiations with the Ministry of Culture and Education in 2002. At the same time, the issue was advanced at Parliament. The decision of a parliamentary committee provided impetus for a study on the situation of the Karelian-speaking population. The study was completed in summer 2004. It initiated a negotiation process, which lasted for several years and was not concluded until in 2009. It was clear from the beginning that the status would need to be guaranteed by an amendment to the implementation decree of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The association strongly advocated a change in attitudes and made several proposals to the authorities, with no result. After that, it turned to the Council of State, but its officials were also very slow in handling the issue. However, the Karelian Language Association received support from all the political parties and thus the issue could be taken forward. While lobbying for a change in attitudes, the association also sought for support from the Council of Europe expert committees. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs arranged inclusion of the Karelian language and Karelians in the periodic review of the minority conventions. In 2007, an agreement was made with the Ministry of Education and Culture on the establishment of a professorship in the Karelian language and culture at the University of Joensuu and on targeted grants for revitalisation activities. These measures finally also contributed to the solving of the status issue.

At last the issue concerning the decree moved forward when the Council of State appointed a working group to prepare it in 2008. It proposed an amendment to the decree that would define the status of the Karelian language. After this, the matter finally got a push forward in spring 2009. In March 2009, the association managed to organise negotiations with the Prime Minister, where it was agreed that the decree amendment would be implemented.

Then it was necessary to negotiate with the Minister for Foreign Affairs at the beginning of June. In the autumn the President still needed to expedite the matter. The decree was finally adopted on 27 November 2009. Consequently, the Karelian language was granted the status of a minority language in Finland. According to the practice of the Council of Europe, the Karelian speakers also constitute an ethnic minority, even though no separate decree amendment has been adopted to this effect.

Finnish Karelians in the 2010s

In 2015, the number of Karelians in Finland was estimated to be approximately 300 000. They form the Karelian minority in Finland. Around 30 000 persons are deemed to belong to the Karelian language minority. Their identity consists of their own language, Orthodox religion and modern and traditional Karelian culture. They are bilingual in the same way as other national minorities. Around 5 000 persons use the Karelian language on a daily basis, and it is understood and spoken, at least on an elementary level, by about 25 000 Karelians. These figures include some 3 000 Karelians who have later immigrated to Finland. Most of Karelian speakers live in the Helsinki region, in other larger cities and in Eastern Finland. Many of those 270 000 persons who do not use Karelian language have at least some Karelian identity. Many of them master some Karelian dialect. Most of them are Lutherans by religion. The fact that these Karelians are concentrated to live in certain regions, mostly in Eastern Finland, i.e. Northern and Southern Karelia, has contributed to the livelihood of Karelian culture and maintenance of Karelian identity.

Three main dialects of Karelian are spoken in Finland: Livvi Karelian, i.e. Olonets Karelian, the Southern dialect of Karelian proper, and the Northern dialect of Karelian proper, i.e. White

Sea Karelian. Livvi Karelian, which is the most commonly used variety, has been developed into a complete standard language in the Republic of Karelia in Russia and in Finland. Karelian-language publications are nearly exclusively in Livvi Karelian. A few books are also published in White Sea Karelian and in the Southern dialect of Karelian proper. Efforts are being made to develop these into standardised languages. So far the Finnish Karelians have followed Norway's example: dialects are used side by side in perfect harmony.

The ELDIA research project funded by the EU carries out research on 15 minority languages in Europe. The project, which was launched in 2010, also includes the Karelian-speaking Finns. An objective is to create a barometer for following language development. On 12 May 2010 the researchers participating in the project issued a statement that strengthened the position of the Karelian language. According to the statement, "the ethnic language of the Karelian-speaking minority is unambiguously an autochthonous language in Finland and thus fully comparable to the Finnish language in respect of its linguistic status; both languages have been 'traditionally' spoken in the area of present Finland and for an equally long time. Until the World War II, Karelian was an autochthonous and regional minority language, but after territorial cessions it became an autochthonous non-regional minority language in the sense referred to in the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages."

Karelian Language Association

The Karelian Language Association is the only Karelian organisation which that has, since its establishment, focused, in a future-oriented manner, on revitalisation of the language and culture. Societies

of former Karelian villages are also members of the association, meaning that the association and its member associations have several thousands of Karelian members. The Karelian Language Association is the best representative of the views of the Karelian-speaking minority. It has already submitted a large number of initiatives to the authorities. Some have been successful, while others need to wait for better times. The most successful example of lobbying is the establishment of a professorship in the Karelian language and culture at the University of Joensuu. The professor assumed his position at the beginning of 2009. The association cooperates closely with Russian Karelians. Its revitalisation activities have focused on strengthening the identity as well as on language and culture education, language nests, rather extensive publishing (more than 60 books or audiobooks), arts, Karelian media, including the association's online magazine *Karjal Žurnalu*, and online services.

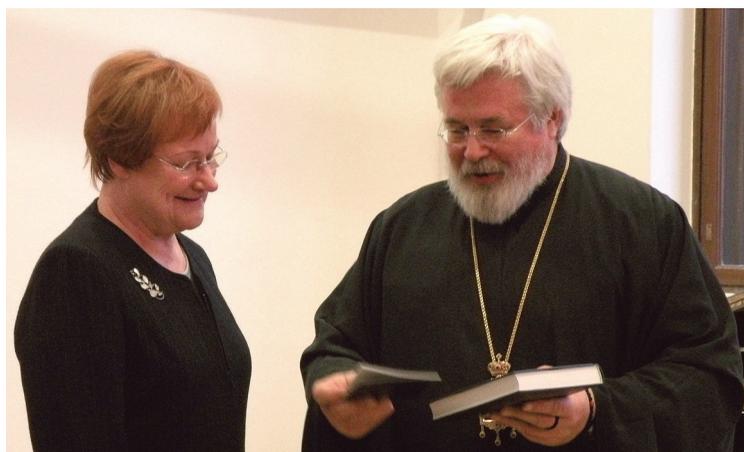
Karelian homeland and revitalisation programme

The Karelian Language Association has drafted a revitalisation programme of the Karelian language and culture, which rests on the establishment of a Karelian homeland in Northern Karelia. The revitalisation activities will focus on this area. Other Karelian centres will be connected closely to the activities in the homeland through networks. The main objective of revitalisation is to increase the daily use of the language and to strengthen the role of Karelian traditions and modern culture in the daily life of the Karelians.

Language teaching naturally has the key position from language nests to retirement homes. An integral part of revitalisation is the pursuit of Karelian and Karelia-themed arts, handicraft, gastronomy and other cultural activities both as hobbies and as professions. At the same time, traditions are being revived in a manner suitable for the present.

The media and especially native-language newspapers and radio and TV programmes are important areas in the revitalisation work. The Karelian Language Association takes care of the implementation of the revitalisation programme and homeland project in cooperation with the state and local authorities. The association has already started negotiations on the funding of the programme with authorities and political parties. This project should be launched during 2016 with the help of an annual state subsidy. Funding for the sub-projects of the programme will also be acquired from provincial-level sources, municipalities, EU programmes, funds and companies.

Regardless of the highly endangered position of the Karelian language, the possibilities for revitalising the language and culture are relatively good. The Karelians and Karelian-speaking people can thus also in the future contribute to the development of Finnish society and cultural life at least as effectively as they have done so far.



President of Finland, Ms Tarja Halonen, and Orthodox Archbishop Leo, who is the Chair of the Karelian Language Association, discuss the Kalevala saga which was published in Karelian on 3 December 2009.

ÅLAND ISLANDS – A SPECIAL AUTONOMOUS REGION

The Åland Islands form an autonomous region under Finnish sovereignty and have constituted a demilitarised zone since 1856, and a neutralised zone since 1921. The guarantees for the special status of the Swedish-speaking Åland Islands, a region home to nearly 29,000 inhabitants in the Gulf of Bothnia between Finland and Sweden, are found in international agreements and customary law as well as in national legislation.

The Åland Islands were demilitarised under the 1856 Paris Treaty that brought the Crimean War to an end. After the Russian military base capitulated in Bomarsund, Åland in 1854, the islands were initially offered to Sweden, which rejected the suggestion with consideration to its neutrality during the ongoing war. However, during the peace negotiations in 1856, when the sovereignty over



the Åland Islands was discussed, Sweden claimed supremacy over the islands. Russia refused to surrender the islands to Sweden but accepted an international convention demilitarising the Åland territory. Through the convention, the demilitarisation of Åland became an object of international law. Demilitarisation means that there may be no military presence on the islands and that the islands may not be fortified.

The treaty from 1856 did not specify the status of Åland during war. When the League of Nations resolved the issue of Åland's constitutional affiliation in 1921, a decision was taken to draw up an international agreement; the agreement confirmed the demilitarisation of 1856 and added neutralisation of the islands. Neutralisation means that all acts of war against or inside the zone of Åland are prohibited.

In addition to confirming the demilitarised and neutralised status of Åland, the decision by the League of Nations in 1921 granted the newly independent Finland sovereignty over Åland. Finland was, however, placed under an obligation to guarantee the population of the islands their Swedish culture and language, their local customs and a system of self-government.

Nationally, Åland's autonomy is regulated by the Act on the Autonomy of Åland passed by the Parliament of Finland. An amendment of the Autonomy Act must follow the same legislative procedure as a constitutional amendment, but requires the consent of the Parliament of Åland. The division of power between Åland and Finland can thus only be changed on a consensual basis. The current Autonomy Act, the third in line, entered into force on 1 January 1993. Åland's autonomy gives the islands the right to exercise its own budgetary power as well as pass laws in areas relating to the internal affairs of the region. These areas are, for example, education and culture, building and planning, the protection of nature and the environment, social welfare as well

as municipal elections and municipal taxation. Åland's legislature, its parliament, is called Ålands lagting. This lagting appoints the regional government, known as Ålands landskapsregering. Furthermore, one seat is reserved for a representative from Åland at the Parliament of Finland.

Under the Autonomy Act, Swedish is the only official language in Åland. This means, among other things, that Swedish is the language used by regional, municipal and State authorities in Åland. The authorities in Åland have the right to communicate in Swedish with any administrative authority in mainland Finland, and publications and documents sent by the Finnish Government to Åland must be in Swedish. The language of tuition in publicly funded schools is also Swedish. A citizen of Finland has in personal matters the right to use Finnish before a court of law and other State officials in Åland.

The right of domicile in Åland is a requirement for the right to vote and stand for elections to the Åland Parliament, own or be in possession of real estate in Åland, as well as for the right to conduct a business in Åland. The rules concerning the right to own or be in possession of real estate were introduced to ensure that the land would remain in the hands of the local population. The right of domicile is not, however, required for buying a flat or a house in a planned area; therefore the right of domicile does not prevent people from settling on the Åland Islands.

The right of domicile is acquired at birth if it is held by either parent. Immigrants who have lived in Åland for five years and have an adequate knowledge of Swedish may apply for the status, provided that they are Finnish citizens. The Åland Government can, occasionally, grant exemptions from the requirement of the right of domicile for those wishing to acquire real estate or conduct a business in Åland. Those who have lived outside Åland for more than five years lose their right of domicile. Those who

have the right of domicile and have taken up residence in Åland before having reached the age of 12 can, instead of carrying out military service, serve in a similar way at the pilotage or lighthouse services or within another civilian administration. According to the Autonomy Act, such service should be provided by a State law with the consent of the Åland Parliament. Since such a State law has never been enacted, men with the right of domicile are in reality exempt from military service or any substitute civilian service.

Foreign affairs are not an area transferred to Åland under the Autonomy Act, but remain under the control of the Finnish Government. Even so, Åland has a degree of influence on international treaties that contain provisions relating to areas where Åland is the competent authority.

Thus, when Finland became a member of the European Union in 1995, Åland's accession was dependent on the consent of the its parliament. Åland's relationship to the EU is regulated in a special protocol. The protocol, which is part of Finland's Treaty of Accession to the EU, states that Åland shall be regarded as a third territory with respect to indirect taxation. It also contains certain special provisions relating to the purchase of real estate and the right to conduct a business in Åland, as well as confirms Åland's special status under international law.

Reference material:

Hannikainen, Lauri & Horn, Frank (eds.): *Autonomy and Demilitarisation in International Law: The Åland Islands in a Changing Europe*, The Hague 1997.

Hannikainen, Lauri: *Autonomy in Finland: The Territorial Autonomy of the Åland Islands and Cultural Autonomy of the Indigenous Saami People*, *Baltic Yearbook of International Law*, Vol. 2, 2002, p. 175-198.

Hepburn, Eve: *Forging autonomy in a unitary state: The Åland Islands in Finland*, *Comparative European Politics*, Vol. 12, 2014, p. 468-487.

Spiliopoulou, Sia (ed.): *The Åland Example and its Components – Relevance for International Conflict Resolution*, Mariehamn 2011.

Suksi, Markku: *Sub-State Governance through Territorial Autonomy*, Berlin 2011.

Web pages:

www.aland.ax/en/

Merja Pentikäinen

Doctor of Laws, Researcher, Human Rights Expert

NEW MINORITY GROUPS – NEW RESOURCES OF DIVERSE SOCIETY

The international community of states has recognised minority rights for ethnic and linguistic groups that have resided for long in their country of residence, i.e. for old or national minorities, or rather for people belonging to these groups. However, states have not been willing to recognise similar rights for newer groups consisting of migrants. On the other hand, international human rights bodies have shown a greater understanding for newer minority groups. Due to this unwillingness of states, the key sources of migrant groups' rights consist of universal human rights, in particular the right to equality and non-discrimination. A successful integration into their new home country, involving learning its language, access to working life and participation in society, has been regarded as the most important issue for migrants. It has been recognised that they have the right to maintain their own language and culture.

Introduction

Nowadays, people move from one country to another and settle more or less permanently in a new country to a greater extent than ever before in the history of humankind. Finland was for long an emigration country, which people left in the hopes of a better living to Sweden or North America, for example, but in the 1990s the direction of migration changed and Finland became an immigration country. Finland adopted immigration policies in 2006 and 2013 to support active and especially labour-related immigration. The policies are motivated by a concern for the decrease of labour force as the population ages, and an increase of immigration has

been regarded as a remedy for the increasing need of labour force. International migration has created new kinds of cultural, ethnic, linguistic, religious and other minority groups in states, including Finland. Finland's population has grown, and forecasts suggest it will continue to grow especially because of immigration.

Unclear legal status of new minority groups

People belonging to new minority groups are protected by universal human rights norms included in international law. Such groups are also given special attention in international norms on discrimination and racism and in their interpretation. States have not generally accepted human rights conventions concerning migrants or migration, but the status and rights of migrant workers are covered by numerous international instruments, notably by the norms of the International Labor Organization (ILO), the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Among international instruments, the UN Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families provides the strongest protection for migrant workers and their family members. However, the significance of the Convention is considerably undermined by the fact that most immigrant-receiving states have refrained from ratifying it. These include all the EU member states, the USA, Canada and Australia, i.e. nearly the whole 'Western world'. Due to the low number of ratifications, migrants' human rights have to be sought in other sources.

International norms regarding minorities, which provide protection for national, ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious minorities, usually concern 'old' minorities and not newer minorities established through immigration. Only the article on

minorities (Article 27) in the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights has been most clearly interpreted so that it would not be limited only to old minorities. The Human Rights Committee, which monitors the Convention internationally, has stated that Article 27 also provides the protection defined in it for migrant workers and even for those who are only visiting a state. On the other hand, the groups receiving minority protection are required to have some degree of permanence. As already noted in this publication, there is no clear time limit after which a new minority group becomes an old minority. The practice differs greatly from one state to another.

In general, states have been highly cautious about accepting norms that mean approval of differences and special characteristics of various groups. This cautiousness is clearly influenced by the fact that a wide approval of difference is regarded as a threat to state unity. Nowadays it is often talked about social cohesion, which has sometimes been aptly described as the 'glue' that holds a community together. The increasing cultural, ethnic, religious and other kind of diversity is regarded as a challenge to this cohesion.

New minority groups and integration

Among the minority groups that have emerged as a result of growing immigration to Finland in the 1990s, Muslims and Russian speakers have received most attention, including publicly. As regards Muslims, their religious customs and traditions, such as the clothing rules of Muslim women, have prompted debate. Russian speakers receive attention in particular because they are not only the largest foreign-language group in Finland but also the fastest growing minority group, in which Russia has also shown interest.

The greatest challenges of the newer minority groups are related to the integration of those belonging to them into Finnish society. Integration challenges also clearly distinguish new immigrant minorities from the old minorities, since persons belonging to the older minorities have usually integrated into the surrounding society. Despite this, it should be noted that integration challenges are still relevant in respect of the Roma population, defined as an old minority in Finland.

During the past few years, integration of people belonging to new minority groups into society has become one of the key questions regarding minorities in Europe, where states actively want more workers, also outside of the area. Due to numerous recent international crises, the war in Syria in particular, a historically large number of asylum seekers have sought asylum in Europe, including in Finland, and many of them will stay in Europe.

A general problem in the integration debate is the ambiguity of the terms employed. The practical meaning of integration is often unclear. This terminological challenge is because earlier integration was identified with assimilation, which has generally referred to adaptation of people belonging to minorities to the majority culture and ignorance of their special characteristics. Subsequently the assimilation policy clearly favoured earlier by states has acquired a rather negative meaning, for which reason actors have over the past few years tried to make a difference between the terms of integration and assimilation. Today integration usually refers to inclusion and access of various groups to society through accepting and respecting the differences of such groups. Nowadays we also talk about integration of society, which requires adaptation to difference and readiness for change from everybody – both from the minorities and the majority.

International expert bodies have tried to clarify the concept of integration, emphasising, for example, the following aspects as requirements of successful integration:

- non-discrimination and prevention of racism and other forms of intolerance;
- learning of the country's official language with an opportunity to maintain and learn the minority's own language;
- participation in and influence on society;
- access to citizenship;
- role of schools and education;
- training of authorities;
- enabling of diverse and changing individual identities; inclusiveness of the national and common social identity;
- interaction and dialogue between cultures, religions and different groups;
- importance of a comprehensive national plan, strategy and policy regarding immigration and integration;
- increasing public understanding for integration policy both among the minorities and the majority;
- importance of a public debate on immigration and integration;
- role of politicians, political parties and media in the public immigration and integration debate;
- housing policy;
- importance of news and other programmes produced on the national level for minorities, also in the minority language and by minorities;
- collection of information on integration;
- support of integration measures directed at individuals through incentives and not through sanctions.

Attention has also been paid to the role of police in a multicultural society, for example to that the police institution should take the diversifying society into account in the recruitment of police officers, and also recruit persons belonging to minorities. Since access to working life is considered an important means of integration, the role of various social actors, such as trade unions and businesses, has been widely emphasised over the past few years in improving the employment of people with an immigrant background. Finnish business actors are also increasingly talking about the positive effects of recruiting different people of various backgrounds for business operations and about diversity management.

The division into old minority groups (protected by norms) and new minority groups (mainly not protected by norms), which is included in international minority norms and upheld particularly by states, needs to be reviewed critically in the light of the current large-scale international migration. International expert bodies have questioned the meaningfulness of this division. Since the number of new minority groups is constantly increasing in proportion to old minorities, the international norms should be reviewed from the perspective of whether the existing norms respond to the needs of the present minority groups in the best possible way. For example, the opportunity to maintain one's own language is generally regarded as an important element of people's identity and as completely independent of the fact whether a minority group is defined as an old or a new minority. However, current international minority norms essentially provide only people belonging to older minorities with the possibility of receiving support from the state for preserving their own language.

It is naturally important to remember that persons belonging to new minority groups have different kinds of challenges and that their integration requires particular attention. Learning of the country's official language is emphasised strongly as a 'key'

to society. In Finland, a major problem has been the inadequate support of society to this kind of language education. It is also important to pay attention to the potentially different integration challenges of people belonging to different groups. For example, Russian speakers living in Finland face partly different challenges than, for example, Somalis. Furthermore, men and women as well as boys and girls may require different kinds of support for integration into a new society. In Finland, a significant problem has been that the integration policy has not been designed comprehensively and it lacks due consideration of such important policy areas as minority, language and security policies.

Difference as a resource and limits of difference

A key challenge of diversifying societies is to maintain their functionality along with the increase of cultural, religious and other forms of diversity. The anti-difference model adopted in France does not provide a sustainable road forward; instead, difference should be accepted and actively harnessed as a resource. In Finland, we also have a lot to learn and do on these questions. The Finnish identity of the 21st century must reflect a wide variety of ethnicities, various cultural characteristics and different languages and religions as part of Finnishness. It would be important to learn to realise the numerous positive aspects of difference and diversity, such as their resource-related dimensions.

On the other hand, we should not accept all kinds of differences and demands, but we also need to discuss the limits of difference. In analyses on diversity and differences, particular attention has been paid to differences related to ethnicity and religion and to the emphasis put on them since differences defined by such criteria are often more absolute than, for example, cultural and linguistic

differences. Drawing lines between groups according to religion, which in practice means grouping people into members and non-members of a religious community, i.e. 'us' and 'others', can be stricter than divisions based on culture. Language issues also involve a lot of tension. Instead of strict lines between groups, diverse societies need to pay attention to the characteristics and issues that are common to all human beings.

Tolerance has become a key requirement of a diverse society in Europe in general and also in Finland. However, it would be necessary to discuss what this frequently used term means in practice. For instance, tolerance is a different thing from respect. Respect for different people is an important premise, but it is not the same thing as accepting people's different acts, traditions and customs. It should be possible to consider people's acts as well as their traditions and customs critically, and we should not tolerate, let alone accept, everything. For example, circumcisions of girls, crimes of honour and forced marriages have been generally regarded as contrary to human rights norms and values, for which reason these acts should always be addressed appropriately.

Societies should have general discussions on the limits of difference; persons belonging to new minority groups – both women and men as well as girls and boys – should be allowed to participate actively in these debates. Furthermore, both the majority and older minorities should be able to review critically their own traditional customs and practices. For example, the culture of violence strongly associated with Finnish culture should be vigorously questioned.

Even though diversifying societies need to learn to appreciate difference, it is important to find and define values common to everybody to ensure the functionality and vitality of such societies. These values are precisely the 'glue' that strengthens the togetherness and cohesion of a community. In Finland, a common value base

can be easily built, for example, on the long traditions of equality and democracy, which can and should be developed to correspond to the challenges of today's diversifying society. Finland's broad commitment to international human rights norms and the respect for the human dignity of every human being included in the core of human rights contribute significant support for building a diverse, inclusive and stable Finnish society.

Reference material:

Pentikäinen, Merja: *'Social Integration of 'Old' and 'New' Minorities in Europe in Views of International Expert Bodies Relying on Human Rights: Contextual Balancing and Tailoring'*, Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe, Vol. 14, No. 1, 2015
(<http://www.ecmi.de/fileadmin/downloads/publications/JEMIE/2015/Pentikainen.pdf>)

Pentikäinen, Merja: *Creating an Integrated Society and Recognising Differences: The Role and Limits of Human Rights, with Special Reference to Europe*. Rovaniemi 2008.

Website of the International Organization for Migration:
www.iom.int.

