

# Swedish Code of Statutes



**SFS 1999:1175**

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## **Act concerning the right to use the Sami language in dealings with public authorities and courts**

promulgated on 9 December 1999.

In accordance with a decision by the Riksdag, the following is enacted.

### **Scope of the Act**

**Section 1** This Act governs dealings with local government and state regional and local public authorities operating in a geographical area that wholly or partly coincides with the administrative area for Sami.

The administrative area for Sami (the administrative area) refers to Arjeplog, Gällivare, Jokkmokk and Kiruna municipalities.

The Act also applies to dealings with county administrative courts, district courts, lands tribunals, environmental courts or maritime courts with ambits that wholly or partly coincide with the administrative area.

### **The right to use the Sami language in dealings with public authorities**

**Section 2** A private individual is entitled to use the Sami language in his/her oral and written dealings with a public authority in matters concerning the exercise of public authority in relation to him/her, provided the matter is connected with the administrative area.

If the private individual uses the Sami language in such a matter, the authority is obliged to give an oral answer in Sami. A decision in writing in a matter of this nature shall contain information in Sami that the decision may be orally translated into Sami by the authority at the request of the individual.

The authority shall strive in other respects, too, to use the Sami language with Sami speakers.

**Section 3** The public authorities may prescribe special times and a special place for visits and telephone calls from Sami speakers.

### **The right to use the Sami language in dealings with courts of law**

**Section 4** Any person who is a party to or a representative of a party to a case or a matter at a court of law is entitled to use Sami during the hearing

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of the case or matter, provided the said case or matter is connected with the administrative area.

The right to use Sami also extends to the courts where a judgment or an order is appealed in a case or matter referred to in the first paragraph.

**Section 5** The right to use the Sami language in court cases or matters, includes the right to submit documents and written evidence in Sami, the right to have documents pertaining to the case or matter orally translated and the right to speak Sami in oral hearings before the court. The court shall translate documents and written evidence into Swedish unless this is clearly unnecessary.

In its other dealings, too, the court shall strive to use Sami for Sami-speaking parties or representatives of parties.

**Section 6** Persons wishing to use Sami during the court hearing of a case or matter as provided in Section 4, must so request at the opening of the case or matter or when the party is to make his/her first statement in the case or matter. If a request to use Sami is presented later, it may be rejected.

A request to use Sami may also be rejected if it is clearly for improper purposes.

**Section 7** If a party or a representative of a party is permitted to use Sami in court proceedings, an interpreter shall be called in under the provisions of Chapter 5 Sections 6-8 and Chapter 33 Section 9 of the Code of Judicial Procedure and Sections 50-52 of the Administrative Court Procedure Act (1971:291).

**Sami in pre-school activities and care of the elderly**

**Section 8** When a municipality in the administrative area offers pre-school places in accordance with Chapter 2 a Sections 1 and 7 of the Education Act (1985:1100), the municipality shall offer children whose guardian so requests the option of a pre-school place in activities which are wholly or partly carried on in Sami.

**Section 9** A municipality in the administrative area shall offer those who so request the option of having all or parts of the services and care provided by the elder care system carried out by personnel who have a command of Sami.

**Exceptions**

**Section 10** If there are special reasons for doing so the Government may prescribe that a specific authority accountable to the Government shall be exempted from applying Section 2. Correspondingly, by authority of the Government, county council assemblies and municipal councils may exempt local government authorities accountable to them.

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This Act enters into force on 1 April 2000. It applies to cases and matters at courts of law instituted after entry into force of the Act.

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On behalf of the Government

GÖRAN PERSSON

ULRICA MESSING  
(Ministry of Culture)

