

Linguistic consultation services in Sweden

The mission of the Language Council of Sweden is to monitor the development of spoken and written Swedish and, in addition, monitor the use and status of all other languages spoken in Sweden. Primarily, that means promoting the use of Swedish Sign Language and the five official minority languages, Finnish, Meänkieli, Sami, Romani and Yiddish. Another task is also to strengthen the Nordic language unity. The Council has about 20 employees, the majority being language planners. Similar language councils exist in the other Nordic countries.

Ten years ago, the Swedish Language Board (Svenska språknämnden) and the Swedish-Finnish Language Board (Sverigefinska språknämnden) merged to become the Language Council of Sweden (Språkrådet). It is the primary institution for language cultivation in Sweden and a department of Sweden's official language authority, The Institute for Language and Folklore (Institutet för språk och folkminnen), and has been since the institute was founded in 2006.

The two language boards were joined by the Plain Language Group that had previously been a part of the Government Offices of Sweden. The Language Council of Sweden was also given entirely new sections when language planners representing Romani and Yiddish joined, as well as language planners for the Swedish Sign Language.

The Language Council of Sweden advises the general public and people working professionally with language, such as translators, writers, journalists, communicators etc, but also professionals who write as a part of their job, but might not have extensive language training, such as politicians, civil servants etc.

Consultation services are available through several channels; the language planners for Swedish, Finnish and Swedish sign language can daily be contacted by telephone and by e-mail. The public can also post questions about Swedish and Finnish on Facebook and about Swedish on Twitter. Counseling about Romani and Yiddish is available one day a week. All the sections also make extensive use of the web page to reach the public (<http://www.sprakochfolkminnen.se/>). The web page can of course be reached day and night. The consultation services answers a large amount of questions every year: Swedish expects to answer approximately 8000 questions during 2016, Finnish 500, Romani 200, Yiddish 50 and the Swedish Sign Language 140.

The future comes with hopes as well as challenges. We hope that we during 2017 will have recruited a language planner for Meänkieli. We also hope to be able to offer a better technical solution to make our web services more available to the public. Among the challenges are that

the number of questions have decreased somewhat over the past few years, as well as the development of a more complex language situation.