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National standardization: office treatment of names

Good place-name practice in the Swedish Heritage Conservation Act: evaluations undertaken in 2006 and 2011

Summary**

In July 2000, a paragraph on good place-name practice was included in the Swedish Heritage Conservation Act. To implement the paragraph, two booklets were produced and distributed to all municipalities in 2001. The report presents the paragraph in full and provides comments on two evaluations made to examine its possible effects. In 2006, a first evaluation was undertaken to ascertain how the paragraph and the two booklets had been received to date. A questionnaire was distributed to the municipalities and the responses presented in a printed report. In 2011, a second and almost identical questionnaire was distributed to the municipalities. The evaluations show that the paragraph is gradually becoming known, accepted and understood in the parts of Swedish society that handle most of the local place-name affairs. Awareness has increased when it comes to considering names to be part of cultural heritage and when dealing with their linguistic form and spelling. The municipalities continue, however, to call for greater support, training, experts for consultation, forums for discussion and more websites and online databases, among other things.

The paper also contains a description of a process aimed at including Meänkieli in the Act. Meänkieli is an officially recognized minority language in Sweden with the same legal status as Sami and Finnish. The Government of Sweden, as part of a political strategy to strengthen minorities in the country, considers this a useful way of enhancing awareness and protection of place names in minority languages.

* E/CONF.101/1.

** The full report was prepared by Staffan Nyström, Sweden, and is available in the language of submission only from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEgn/ungegnConf10.html>.

