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**Reports by Governments on the situation in their countries and on the
progress made in the standardization of geographical names since the Tenth Conference
(for distribution only).**

Report of Sweden

Submitted by Sweden**

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Summary

The national report of Sweden is divided into 11 sections. The first, on national standardization, gives a short overview of current legislation and of the main authorities involved in the standardization of geographical names. The second, on names in multilingual areas, comment on minority language names and the responsible authorities. The third deals with some amendments to the legislation on place-names in Sweden. The fourth presents a revised version of a booklet on good place-name practice, referring to a more exhaustive presentation in a separate Working Paper. The fifth describes how the implementation of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage is organized in Sweden. The sixth gives an overview of the development from medieval parishes and their names to modern districts (established in 2016) still preserving those names. The seventh discusses so called statistical localities in Sweden, a dynamic and changing concept that often causes name discussions and problems. The eighth informs of new names of buildings that have densified the place-name register and made many names of buildings available for other users, for example emergency and rescue services. The ninth presents a newly formed working group called The Geographical Names Network. The tenth reports that the Place-Name Advisory Board is trying to find ways to implement the UN resolution 2012:X/4 on the commercialization of geographical names. The eleventh and final section provides a list of articles and books on place-names and place-name standardization written by Swedish experts between 2012 and 2016.

Some UN resolutions particularly relevant for the work with name standardization in Sweden during the period are:

- resolution 1972:II/36 – Problems of minority languages (esp. sections 1, 2, and 3 below),
- resolution 2002:VIII/9 – Geographical names as cultural heritage (esp. sections 1, 4, 5, and 6 below),
- resolution 2007:IX/4 – Geographical names as intangible cultural heritage (esp. sections 1, 4, 5, and 6 below), and
- resolution 2012:X/4 – Discouraging the commercialization of geographical names (esp. section 10 below).

1. Swedish national name standardization – in short

The Historic Environment Act (Sw. *Kulturmiljölagen*) was revised in 2000 and 2013. Since 2000 it includes a consideration paragraph advocating 'good place-name practice' in central and local governmental activities. Emphasis is on the importance of preserving place-names as a part of the nation's cultural heritage. Place-names must be spelt in accordance with adopted linguistic rules, and established names must not be changed without strong grounds. Names that are approved by *Lantmäteriet* (the Swedish Mapping, Cadastral and Land Registration Authority) must be used in their approved form also in other contexts.

The supervision of the Act is the responsibility of the Swedish National Heritage Board (Sw. *Riksantikvarieämbetet*). However, the role as national place-name authority is performed by Lantmäteriet). The third main part involved in Swedish place-name standardization is the Institute for Language and Folklore (Sw. *Institutet för språk och folkminnen*), especially its Onomastics Department and the Swedish Language Council (Sw. *Språkrådet*).

The Place-Name Advisory Board (Sw. *Ortnamnsrådet*), appointed by Lantmäteriet, has an overall consultative responsibility. The authorities mentioned above – together with a few others – are represented on this board.

Furthermore, the local, municipal governments of Sweden (290 in all) are responsible for urban toponymy (streets, squares, parks, city blocks etc.) as well as urban and rural addresses containing a large amount of place-names.

2. Names in multilingual areas

Three of the five national minority languages in Sweden – Saami, Finnish and Meänkieli (a variant of Finnish) – are territorially and historically associated with certain geographical areas of Sweden. The national language policy states that everyone is entitled to a language, and emphasizes the right to use and develop one's own (minority) language. The Institute for Language and Folklore is responsible for language care and maintenance as regards Finnish and Meänkieli. The Saami Parliament (Sw. *Sametinget*) is in charge of the Saami languages. The responsibility of Lantmäteriet is to make sure that minority language place-names are standardized and written in a valid orthography, and used on public maps and road signs. Place-names in Meänkieli were additionally strengthened by an amendment to the Historic Environment Act in 2013 (see section 3 below).

3. Amendments to the Historic Environment Act

In 2012 the Swedish Government presented the Bill 'Diversity of the Historic Environment', which contained proposals to create better conditions for preserving, using and developing the historic environment. In the Bill the Government suggested some amendments to the then Act on Ancient Monuments and Finds (Sw. *Kulturminneslagen*, SFS 1988:950). The amended Act came into force on 1 January 2014 under its new name the Historic Environment Act (SFS 1988:950, revised SFS 2013:548). One amendment is that Meänkieli is now expressly mentioned in the consideration paragraph concerning good place-name practice (earlier it was considered as included in 'Finnish'), which means that Meänkieli now must be used along with the Swedish, Saami and Finnish names on maps and on signs in multilingual areas. The Swedish national map series present over 1.2 million place-names. These names are stored in a database that functions as a national register/gazetteer of Swedish geographical names. Lantmäteriet is responsible for approving and standardizing most of those names as well as updating the database and maintaining a web service concerning Swedish place-names. In a final amendment to the paragraph on good place-name practice the normative role of Lantmäteriet was further emphasized.

4. The booklet *Good place-name practice. A guide to name standardization*

Ortnamn och namnvård [‘Place-names and name care’] is a publication series from Lantmäteriet. Each issue covers a specific topic within the field of place-names, name care and name standardization. The series is intended for readers with an interest in place-names who wish to learn more. In 2016 a revised edition of the guide (orig. publ. in 2001) *God Ortnamnssed. Ortnamnsrådets handledning i namnvård* (84 pp., in Swedish only) on place-name standardization and good place-name practice was published. It is primarily aimed at local authorities in Sweden involved in official naming activities. The guide is more exhaustively presented in Working Paper no. XXX.

5. Implementation of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

Sweden ratified the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH, 2003) in January 2011. The Swedish Government assigned the implementation of the Convention to the Institute for Language and Folklore. The institute has thus developed a model which includes a central coordinating authority and four so called ‘nodes’ for four different areas (oral traditions, handicraft, music, and nature and intangible cultural heritage), each of these with its own broad network within the domains of the Convention. The safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage does not imply a process where the heritage becomes frozen in some pure form – it simply means that communication and transfer of the knowledge, skills, and meanings within that heritage is continued.

Successful safeguarding methods ensure that the intangible cultural heritage is relevant to its community and transferred from one generation to the next in a continuous and fluid process. Good place-name practice includes preserving established place-names in their correct linguistic forms as long as the group of name-users to whom the names ‘belong’ still acknowledges them in active or passive usage.

6. From medieval parishes to new districts

Most of Sweden’s parishes can be traced back to early Middle Ages. However, the majority of parish names were not names of parishes from the beginning but had already existed for many years as names of especially villages and farms. These old names were transferred to the parishes and are therefore usually referred to as secondary parish names. Primary parish names mean those names that were created when the parishes were formed, such as *Stenkyrka socken* [‘Stone church parish’].

The concept of ‘parish’ has, in principle, corresponded to the same territorial area from the Middle Ages and into our time, although terms such as *land register parish*, *church parish* and *civil parish* have occasionally caused uncertainties regarding delimitation and meaning. In general, however, the parish have implied an unambiguous concept with very strong

traditions and important social functions far into late times. The parishes probably had their strongest position from the 17th century and until 1862, when the first municipal reform was carried out, turning the parishes into primary church and civil municipalities at the same time. However, the division of the land was largely unchanged after the reform, as were the names, in most cases still corresponding to the old parish names. But with the next municipal reform in 1952, this administrative organization was altered and the names of the church parishes were given a legally stronger position.

The land property register was still organized according to civil parishes, so that the parish was the area within which all the names in the register were unique. But, through the property data reform, carried out from 1976 to 1995, this administrative task for the civil parish also ceased. After the reform, the municipalities make up the basic register area, not the civil parishes, which means that the parish names have a living function only in exceptional cases. In other words, the civil parish and the parish name have no longer a role to play here. With this development, the division into church parishes (congregations) has long been the only reminiscence that reflects the old parish division and the parish names.

In recent years, unfortunately, the existence of the church parishes has also been threatened by the merging of a number of parishes, mainly for economic reasons, and with associated name problems. This has accelerated since the parish division at the turn of the century ceased to be state-regulated. Many smaller parishes and their names are at risk of disappearing forever. Nowadays, the parishes and their names are an internal matter for the Church of Sweden. In the long term, the entire hierarchical structure of the name stock is also at risk of being destroyed, since the parish is the cohesive concept at the level above villages and farms. For a thousand years or so the parish has been the geographical unit within which the place-names have always been naturally unique. It has therefore been important to find a way to ensure the survival of the old parishes and their names. A new district division (see below) linked to the population register means such a safeguarding, as it essentially corresponds to the former parish division.

From 2016 Lantmäteriet shows in the land property register to which civil parish a property belongs. The parish and the parish name, which have remained as popular concepts in many parts of the country, can thus be ensured a continued life, and a large-scale cultural heritage can be saved.

On January 1, 2016, a new administrative division (*Ordinance (2015: 493) on districts*) was introduced in Sweden, in which districts (Sw. *distrikt*) replaced church parishes as register units for the national population registration. The new district division corresponds to the parish division at the turn of the year 1999/2000, when the Church of Sweden was separated from the state. The borders of these districts are frozen. Information on a certain district is now added to population register where every person is registered with his/her municipality, property and address. The district names were established and standardized by the Swedish Parliament 2015 following a proposal from Lantmäteriet and after a wide consultation process.

A statistical summary of the current situation:

- 2 437 civil parishes in the property register
- 2 517 church parishes in December 1999, only 1 364 today
- 2 523 districts in the population register 2016

7. Statistical localities

Statistics Sweden (Sw. *Statistiska centralbyrån*) is the Swedish government agency responsible for producing official statistics regarding our country. Statistics Sweden uses the notion *statistical locality* (Sw. *statistisk tätort*) for continuous settlements with at least 200 inhabitants and not more than 200 meters distance between buildings. Every 3 years a new investigation is carried out resulting in a revised list of statistical localities presented together with a map representation. In the most recent measuring in 2016, nearly 8.7 million people in Sweden (87 % of the population) lived in one of the then 1 979 localities. Each locality is given an individual code and a name. Most of these ‘statistical names’ are based on traditional place-names, but since the demarcations are defined by settlement density, the statistical locality and the traditional settlement with the same name do not always match, which easily causes confusion and lively discussions. Therefore the names of the statistical localities are to be used for statistical purposes only.

The ten largest statistical localities in Sweden (source: www.scb-se)

| | | Number of inhabitants | | | Difference in percent |
|-------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------------|
| | | 2015 | 2016 | Difference | |
| T0336 | Stockholm | 1 515 017 | 1 538 517 | 23 500 | 1.6 |
| T4368 | Göteborg | 572 799 | 581 822 | 9 023 | 1.6 |
| T3604 | Malmö | 301 706 | 307 496 | 5 790 | 1.9 |
| T0656 | Uppsala | 149 245 | 152 617 | 3 372 | 2.3 |
| T0384 | Sollentuna och Upplands Väsby | 139 606 | 141 964 | 2 358 | 1.7 |
| T6376 | Västerås | 117 746 | 119 372 | 1 626 | 1.4 |
| T6188 | Örebro | 115 765 | 117 543 | 1 778 | 1.5 |
| T1152 | Linköping | 106 502 | 108 640 | 2 138 | 2.0 |
| T3452 | Helsingborg | 104 250 | 106 338 | 2 088 | 2.0 |
| T1192 | Norrköping | 93 765 | 95 618 | 1 853 | 2.0 |

8. Review of reported names of buildings

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In an ongoing project to further supplement and develop the national place-name register/database Lantmäteriet has completed a quality control of over 60.000 names of buildings. This process has involved all 290 Swedish municipalities, who have reported names of buildings to Lantmäteriet. Experts at the place-name section have reviewed the reported names in order to determine if they qualify to be stored in the place-name register or not. This work has also resulted in a written, tutorial guide for municipalities on how to update and report names of buildings in the future. The outcome has densified the place-name register and made many names of buildings available for other users, for example emergency and rescue services.

9. The Geographical Names Network

Following an initiative from the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs the Geographical Names Network (Sw. *Namnårsgruppen*) was established in 2013. The purpose of this group of experts is to raise awareness and gain knowledge about how to use foreign names of countries and other important geographical places in the world in the best (standardized) way. The group also advise on how to pronounce and spell foreign personal names and how to use names of authorities, organizations and job titles in public situations such as news reporting and other official circumstances. The aim of the group is to provide guidance on matters of principle, as well as to develop Swedish terminology, to promote good place-name practice, and to make recommendations on individual name issues, for example concerning the use of diacritics in Swedish and Saami. For further information on the Geographical Names Network, see Working Paper no. XXX.

10. Discouraging the commercialization of place-names

The Place-Name Advisory Board (see above) supports Lantmäteriet in applying a correct use of place-names and promoting good place-name practice in every other respect. The aim of the board is – in cooperation with the appropriate national authorities – to develop principles and guidelines for a good national policy regarding place-names. The core members of the board, appointed by Lantmäteriet, are the Swedish Institute for Language and Folklore, the Swedish National Heritage Board, the Saami Parliament, The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, the Swedish Transport Administration, and the Swedish universities. When necessary, the board can be extended temporarily with authorities and organizations that are not permanently represented.

In order to follow up on the implementation of UN resolution 2012:X/4 *Discouraging the commercialization of geographical names*, the Place-Name Advisory Board is currently working on a recommendation to discourage and counter the creation and use of place-names for commercial purposes. This recommendation is due to an increasing commercialization of urban place-names that threatens to undermine the official, more thoughtful, naming.

11. Publications

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