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Doc. 11087

26 October 2006

Situation of Finno-Ugric and Samoyed Peoples

Report

Committee on Culture, Science and Education

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Summary

Eight years after its [Resolution 1171](#) (1998) on Endangered Uralic minority cultures the Assembly regrets that the measures it had encouraged the countries where the Uralic linguistic minorities lived, and in particular the Russian Federation, to take have generally not been implemented. As a consequence the cultural situation of Finno-Ugric and Samoyed Peoples has further deteriorated.

The Assembly indicates concrete steps to be taken urgently by itself, the Committee of Ministers, Unesco, the member states of the Council of Europe which have a Finno-Ugric population and the competent authorities of the Russian Federation to reverse the decline of Finno-Ugric languages and cultures.

A. Draft recommendation

1. The Parliamentary Assembly recalls its [Resolution 1171](#) (1998) on Endangered Uralic minority cultures in which it expressed concern at the situation of many Finno-Ugric peoples living mainly in the Russian Federation.
2. It regrets that the measures it had encouraged the countries where the Uralic linguistic minorities lived, and in particular the Russian Federation, to take have generally not been implemented. In some areas the right legislation exists but very often it is not implemented, mainly for financial reasons.
3. Education and media reforms in the Russian Federation and the redrawing of boundaries for regional administration do not take into account the needs of minorities including the Finno-Ugric peoples and are, thereby, making it increasingly difficult for them to participate in the political process and to develop their languages and culture.
4. The situation of Finno-Ugric peoples in the Russian Federation, which was already worrying in 1998, has since significantly worsened and solid measures must be urgently taken in order to reverse the decline of Finno-Ugric peoples and of their languages and cultures. As such decline also depends on the people concerned, their awareness must be raised.
5. The Assembly welcomes increasing cooperation between Estonia, Finland and Hungary and the Finno-Ugric and Samoyed Peoples (in the Russian Federation), in particular at parliamentary level. It also welcomes the establishment of the World Congress of Finno-Ugric Peoples, in Syktyvkar in 1992 and the continued series of Finno-Ugric conferences.

6. The Assembly therefore recommends that the Committee of Ministers:
 - 6.1. establish a European Centre for Finno-Ugric Languages based on the model of the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages;
 - 6.2. support training in minority peoples' issues and rights of the federal and local civil servants of the Russian Federation;
 - 6.3. support the Russian Federation in developing plans to implement the recommendations that follow below, and explore ways in which it could further support the Russian Federation in implementing such recommendations.
7. The Assembly also decides to:
 - 7.1. include in its ongoing monitoring of the Russian Federation focus on the situation of all minorities, including Finno-Ugric peoples and on the measures taken to implement related Parliamentary Assembly resolutions;
 - 7.2. establish an ad hoc committee to encourage increased dialogue with the Duma of the Russian Federation on the issue of minority rights including of the Finno-Ugric peoples.
8. The Assembly further calls on Unesco to assist the authorities of the Russian Federation in protecting Finno-Ugric cultural heritage and in particular the old town of Tsygma (Kozmodemyansk);
9. It encourages Estonia, Finland and Hungary, the member states of the Council of Europe which have a Finno-Ugric population, to support the development of a virtual Finno-Ugric university in co-operation with the Russian Federation.
10. Finally it encourages the competent authorities of the Russian Federation to:
 - 10.1. co-operate with the Council of Europe in the implementation of these recommendations;
 - 10.2. review current and planned legislative and administrative reforms with a view to ensuring that the special needs of minorities, including Finno-Ugric peoples, are taken into account;
 - 10.3. sign and ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (CETS No 148);
 - 10.4. develop a plan and programme (including education and culture, as well as administrative and legislative reform) for raising the status of the Finno-Ugric languages, providing improved opportunities for the development of such languages and cultures, and for encouraging the increased participation of Finno-Ugric peoples, in the political process and in public administration;
 - 10.5. increase markedly federal and regional funding to support print and electronic media development (including within the Internet) in Finno-Ugric languages;
 - 10.6. increase markedly federal and regional funding for the publication of books, newspapers and magazines in the Finno-Ugric languages including the compilation, and publication of a series of encyclopaedias (general, and specialised in literature, science, arts and history) and translations of the classics of world literature;
 - 10.7. aim, whenever possible, at "strong" bilingual education models;
 - 10.8. ensure access to elementary education, and increased access to secondary and post-secondary education in the mother tongue of the Finno-Ugric native peoples, increase and improve teacher training, and augment the quality and number of learning materials produced in native languages;

- 10.9. support the establishment of a virtual Finno-Ugric university in co-operation with Finno-Ugric member states of the Council of Europe;
- 10.10. explore and implement the use of content and language integrated learning (CLIL), and language immersion strategies in order to help children of Finno-Ugric peoples to recover fluency in their ancestral languages;
- 10.11. promote threatened languages with parents and communities so that their commitment to a threatened language receives support and reinforcement;
- 10.12. develop a long-term media campaign to raise awareness among Russian-speakers of the history of Finno-Ugric native peoples, as well as of native cultures, rights and concerns;
- 10.13. provide training to federal and local civil servants in native peoples issues and rights;
- 10.14. increase federal funding and support to help the autonomous republics of the Russian Federation to implement fully local legislation regarding official languages;
- 10.15. apply to Unesco to have the old town of Tsygma (Kozmodemyansk) placed on the World Heritage List.

B. Explanatory memorandum by Mrs Saks, Rapporteur

I. Foreword

1. The Committee on Culture, Science and Education appointed me Rapporteur in January 2005. Being Estonian I feel directly concerned at the situation of Finno-Ugric peoples. In preparing the present report I consulted a large amount of sources, unfortunately sometimes contradicting each other, I visited the Republic of Karelia, where I took part in a Karelian Congress, the Republic of Udmurtia and the Khanty-Mansiisk Autonomous district in June 2005, took part in the 10th International Congress of Finno-Ugric Studies, which took place in Yoshkar-Ola, capital of the Republic of Mari-El, in August last year, visited Mordovia in September and the Komi Republic in November 2005.
2. I also benefited from the invaluable assistance of Professor Janos Pusztay of the Daniel Berzsenyi College in Szombathely, Hungary, who helped in drafting the report, who accompanied me in some of my visits to the Finno-Ugric Peoples in Russia and whom I should like to take this opportunity to thank.

II. Introductory remarks

3. On 25 September 1998, the Parliamentary Assembly adopted [Resolution 1171 - Endangered Uralic minority cultures](#) regarding Finno-Ugric peoples living, above all, in the Russian Federation.
4. Of the peoples speaking Finno-Ugric (Uralic) languages, the Hungarians, the Finns and the Estonians have their own independent countries. These are the most populous members of the Finno-Ugric language family. There are about 14 million Hungarians, including those living beyond the Hungarian borders in Romania, Ukraine, Serbia-Montenegro, Slovakia and Croatia. There are about 5 million Finns and about 1 million Estonians. A few dozen Livonians remain. They are Latvian citizens living on the Gulf of Riga. The overwhelming majority of Sami people (Lapps) are citizens of Sweden, Finland or of Norway. Only a small proportion of Lapps live in the Kola Peninsula, in Russia. The rest of the Finno-Ugric (Uralic) peoples live in Russia.
5. The Finno-Ugric peoples are part of the Russian Federation's multinational mosaic. According to the 2002 census, 176 different peoples or ethnic groups, of whom some 20 are Finno-Ugric peoples (2.7 million in all), live in the Russian Federation.
6. In 1998, the Parliamentary Assembly was concerned by the endangered status of Uralic (Finno-Ugric) languages and cultures in Russia and supported continued work on the subject by the Committee on Culture and Education in co-operation with the Russian authorities. In

particular, the Assembly focused on issues related to culture and education and stated that the following principles should be taken into account:

- the development of native language programs should be a priority, first in the lower classes of elementary schools and later, by gradual extension, in higher classes;
- the development of teaching aids and learning material should be provided in those languages and efforts have to be made to support teacher training;
- newspapers, radio and television programs and other electronic media in minority languages need to be maintained or promoted as active use of languages in all written and oral communication is a prerequisite for their preservation;
- exchanges of personnel and students between the Finno-Ugric areas and universities, research institutes and state bodies should be stepped up;
- the Finno-Ugric peoples should be taken into consideration in the implementation of [Recommendation 1291](#) (1996), especially in relation to the research centre for dispersed minority cultures;
- the old town of Tsygma (Kozmodemyansk) should be placed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

7. Eight years have passed since the adoption of [Resolution 1171](#) (1998) - *Endangered Uralic minority cultures*. Sufficient time has passed to evaluate progress made in meeting the recommendations of [Resolution 1171](#) and to make new recommendations.

III. Executive Summary

8. The Finno-Ugric peoples of the Russian Federation are facing setbacks. The enthusiasm of the 1990's, when native peoples had greater hope, which inspired many to work on developing and preserving their cultural identities, is diminishing. Native peoples are now understanding how difficult it is to obtain and channel resources, and to effect change.

9. In particular, the Russian Federation's efforts to further centralise and homogenise Russia as a whole, do not favour the development of native cultures.

10. Russian Federation education and media reforms, and the redrawing of boundaries for regional administration without taking into account native peoples needs are making it increasingly difficult for Finno-Ugric peoples to participate in the political process and to develop their languages and culture. Linguistic and cultural rights are seemingly being replaced by the "folklorisation" of native peoples.

11. The situation of the Finno-Ugric languages can be characterized as follows:

- they have not become the language of education;
- these languages are hardly ever used in public administration;
- the state does not address the population in these languages;
- signposts, stamps, trademarks, official documents and certificates are hard to come by in these languages;
- names in the minority languages are generally not used (personal given names and family names, names of cultural and trade societies, names of settlements, streets and institutions);
- *de facto*, people generally do not have a choice of language in practicing their religion;

- the media share accorded to native languages does not reflect the size of the native populations;
- legal and judicial services are not provided in the native languages;
- these languages are being further marginalized by the redrawing of administrative boundaries including plans to eliminate the autonomous regions and republics.

12. The highly limited or total lack of basic, secondary and university education in the native languages and the limited extent to which these languages are used in the public sphere (public administration, courts, health care, science, education, culture, transportation, broadcasting, etc.) relegates these languages to a second class status, undermines language development, and contributes greatly to their increasingly low status and social need.

13. It can also be ascertained that the printed media, textbooks, as well as radio and television programs in Finno-Ugric languages do not meet, either in their quantity or their quality, the linguistic or the cultural needs of the speakers of these languages; thus, they are unable to prevent assimilation.

14. Further, the old town of Tsikma (Kozmodemyansk) (Tsygma in [Resolution 1171-1998](#)), which the previous Parliamentary Assembly [Resolution 1171 \(1998\)](#) recommended be placed on the Unesco World Heritage List, has not received said status. In fact, it is in danger of being flooded due to the new Tcheboksary Dam.

15. Finally, the marked decline in the number of native people and decreasing fluency in native languages reflect a growing trend towards assimilation. Moreover, the poor health, low life expectancy and high suicide rate of Finno-Ugric peoples is of serious concern.

IV. The Situation of the Finno-Ugric (Uralic) Peoples in Russia

i. Demographic Situation

- Finno-Ugric Peoples are in Decline

- Some Peoples Are on the Road to Extinction

16. Based on a sociolinguistic definition, the Finno-Ugric (Uralic) peoples in Russia are considered minor peoples (between 100,000 and 1,000,000) or small minor peoples (up to 100,000). Their total number in 1989 was 3,122,900 and in 2002, it was 2,695,300. In 1959, the Finno-Ugric (and Samoyed) peoples constituted 2.5 per cent of the population of the Russian Federation of the time, and only 1.9 per cent of the population of Russia in 2002. These numbers must be seen in the context of the generally declining population of Russia.

17. If a similar rate of decline continues, by the end of this century, the number of Finno-Ugric (Uralic) people will be 1,608,240. According to demographers, the decline will be even greater.

Population Figures for the Finno-Ugric and Samoyed Peoples Residing in the Russian Federation (in thousands)

Finno-Ugric Peoples in the Russian Federation	1926	1989	2002	% of 1989 figure that remains in 2002
Besermians	3.0	
Hungarians	4.2	5.7	3.8	66.7
Vepsian	33.0	12.2	8.2	66.2
Votes, persons	73	
Ingrians (Izhors)	17.0	0.4	0.3	75.0

Karelians	248.0	125.0	93.0	74.6
Komis	226.0	336.0	293.0	87.3
Komi-Permyaks	149.0	147.0	125.0	85.2
Mansis	5.8	8.3	11.4	137.3
Maris	428.0	644.0	604.0	93.8
Mordvins	1,335.0	1,073.0	843.0	78.6
Saami (Lapps)	1.7	1.8	2.0	111.1
Udmurts	514.0	715.0	637.0	89.1
Finns	134.0	47.0	34.0	72.6
Khanties	22.0	22.0	29.0	130.5
Estonians	150.0	56.0	28.0	50.2
The Samoyed Peoples				
Nganasans	...	1.3	0.8	61.5
Nenetses	18.0	34.0	41	120.6
Selkups	1.6	3.6	4.2	116.7
Enetses	...	0.2	0.2	100.0

*Finno-Ugric and Samoyed Peoples of Russia, Syktyvkar, 2005

NB: Percentages in excess of 100 began to be noted after it was decided to make direct support payments to members of these ethnic communities.

18. The high population figures for the Western Siberian peoples, such as the Khanty, the Mansi, the Nenet and the Selkup do not reflect their substantial loss of language. The numbers indicate an increase in self-awareness and recognition of one's cultural identity and are also the result of individual based financial aid. The decline in language knowledge is so significant that these people are likely to be totally assimilated by the Russian majority. The Khanty and the Mansi languages are quite likely to become extinct in this century. The Finno-Ugric (Uralic) language family has suffered great losses in the past centuries: the Merya and the Murom, the Kamassian, the Koibal, the Taigi and the Karagas languages have become extinct and the peoples, generally speaking, assimilated.

19. When comparing demographic trends, it becomes apparent that Finno-Ugric peoples are in decline in comparison to Russians and Tatars.

Ethnic Group	Total Population	Percentage of Population Changes since 1959 Figures				
		1959	1970	1979	1989	2002
Russian Fed. Pop.	117,354,300	100.0	110.7	116.0	125.1	123.5
Russians	97,863,600	100.0	110.1	116.0	122.5	118.4
Tatars	4,074,700	100.0	116.8	123.0	135.5	136.4
Finno-Ugrics	2,985,400	100.0	104.4	102.7	104.6	90.3

*S.Lalluka., Venejän suomalais-ugrilaiset – väestolaskentojen kertomaa, Studia Fenno-Ugrica. Helsinki 2005

ii. *The Ecological Situation: Ethnic Environmental Pollution*

- Catastrophic Environmental Pollution in Finno-Ugric Regions (Gas & Oil)

- Health of Finno-Ugric People Below Average

- Life-expectancy of Finno-Ugric Peoples Below Average

- Suicide Rate of Finno-Ugric Peoples Above Average

20. The Russian report sent to the third session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (New York, May 10-21 2004) contains appalling data on environmental damage and pollution in the areas of the aboriginal peoples in Russia, as well as on their health care and educational situation. In the 2001/02 academic year, 10,000 students of 142 schools in eight northern territories (**Komi-Permyak Autonomous District, Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District, Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District**, the Amur region, Tuva, the Altai Republic, Yakutia, the Krasnoyarsk Territory [boldface indicates habitats of the Finno-Ugric (Uralic) peoples] were examined. According to the results, "the examination has indicated various health disorders in up to 40-70 per cent of first-year students, from functional disorders to chronic diseases... In the case of the tenth-year students, the proportion of healthy children is 10-12 per cent"¹

21. Above average pollution of the natural environment –water, air, soil–characterizes the environment of the Finno-Ugric peoples of Russia. Characteristics of the Finno-Ugric peoples of Russia include:

- the deterioration of personal and public health;
- the increase in illness among youth;
- the increase in the diseases of the respiratory, the digestive and the nervous systems, as well as of the sensory organs of school children;
- the increase in the illnesses that are hard to treat, such as oncological, hematological, allergological and psychological diseases;
- diseases that are the result of endemic factors due to the high level of fluoride, iron, calcium and magnesium and the low level of iodine in drinking water;
- unhealthy lifestyle;
- the worsening of the social and economic situation and of the living standard, as well as increasing unemployment;
- increased self-exploitation in order to maintain survival;
- a high rate of mortality, which is significantly higher in villages, where members of the Finno-Ugric peoples predominantly live, than in cities; and the rate of mortality of those belonging to the Finno-Ugric peoples exceeds that of the Russian population; e.g. the cause of death in more than every fourth case (27.5 per cent) among the Komis is accidents, poisoning or suicide;
- a substantial decrease in birth rates, especially in the cases of villagers (e.g. altogether 2,359 children were born in 2000 in the Komi community, which is 3.7 times less than at the beginning of the 20th century);
- low life expectancy (several years lower among the Finno-Ugric population than in the case of the Russians);
- alcoholism, social phobia: depression, suicidal acts;
- an ever-increasing rate of suicide;
- in the cases of the Western Siberian peoples, the destruction of the socio-economic structures that developed throughout history and the introduction of new forms of economy (collectivisation, organising brigades for reindeer keeping, animal farms);
- the removal of the population due to the gas and oil industry, the forced resettling of the native peoples into villages.²

22. As a result of the policy of eliminating the so-called "villages with no future", in the habitat of the Finno-Ugric peoples living in the European regions of Russia, the natural ethno cultural setting of the Finno-Ugric (Uralic) peoples has been devastated.

iii. The Status of the Finno-Ugric Peoples

23. In Russia, the non-Russian speaking peoples of Russia are called national minorities (*nacional'nye men'sinstva*), both at the political level and in related literature. The term "national

minority" is a definition that is inevitably based on, and expresses, the relationship with the Russian majority. In the case of most of the peoples concerned, including the Finno-Ugric (Uralic) peoples, the term "national minorities" should be replaced by the term "native peoples". Most of these native peoples have been living in their ancestral ethnic homeland for several thousand years. This distinction is essential from both a legislative and psychological point of view, i.e., from a national consciousness perspective. Finno-Ugric circles feel that "National minorities" is a term that is most aptly applied to peoples who are not living on their indigenous territory.

24. The enforcement of native rights is hindered not only by federally taken measures to promote national unity, but also by local anti-minority sentiment and actions, which are clearly not unrelated to the federal measures. Political forces encouraging alienation of non-native speakers of Russian from their ancient cultures and mother tongue have reappeared. The tendency is particularly evident during the current presidency in the Mari El Republic.³

iv. The Current and Future Situation of the Finno-Ugric (Uralic) Peoples from a Public Administration Perspective

- Redrawing of Territorial/Administrative Boundaries Fosters Assimilation

- Elimination of the Post of Russian Minister for Minority Affairs

- Finno-Ugric Peoples Under-represented in Politics and the Economy

25. The Finno-Ugric and Samoyed peoples in Russia currently live mostly under some form of territorial government that provides some degree of autonomy. This is about to change (see below). The more populous groups, such as the Mordvins, the Udmurts, the Maris, the Komis and the Karelians, live in **republics** while the less populous groups, such as the Mansi, the Khanty and the Nenets, live in **autonomous districts**. The remainder of the peoples have, at best, some form of **local representation**, e.g., in local village councils. With the exception of the Komi-Permyaks, all the Finno-Ugric and Samoyed peoples are a minority in the territory (republic and autonomous districts) where they live and that have been named after them. In the 1920's and 1930's, the Maris, Komis and the Udmurts were the majority in their territories.

Native Peoples as a Percentage of the Total Population in their Republics or Autonomous Regions

Native Peoples	1926	1989	2002
Karelians		10.0	9.2
Mordvins (Erzya and Moksha)	40.0	32.5	31.9
Maris	51.8	43.3	42.9
Komis	86.6	23.3	25.2
Udmurts	*59.0	30.9	29.3
Khanties and Mansis		2.0	1.4
Nenetses (in the Nenets Autonomous District)		11,9	10.0

* figure from 1921 (as a percentage)

Calculations based of census data.

26. The Russian Federation is restructuring regional governance. According to the new plan⁴, the autonomous districts and the republics will no longer exist. Two autonomous districts have been eliminated: the Komi-Permyak Autonomous District has been made part of Perm County (as a consequence the proportion of Komi-Permyaks will fall from 60 % of the population, to about 4%) while the Ust-Orda Autonomous District near Lake Baikal has been incorporated into Irkutsk County. As of 1 January 2007, the Evengi and Taimor (Dolgan-Nenets) Autonomous District will be incorporated into Krasnojarsk County.

27. According to official explanations, the reform is an economic-administrative necessity. However, it will also radically decrease the influence of native peoples in the Russian Federation, including that of the Finno-Ugric and the Samoyed peoples. After the planned amalgamations, native peoples will lose the rights that currently exist in local laws and regulations. The political position of native people will be weakened and they are likely to have less influence in both political and financial decision-making, which, in turn, may affect the cultural and linguistic development of native peoples.

28. A more important aim of the territorial restructuring of the Russian Federation is the linguistic-ethnic homogenisation of the country. The "folklorisation" of native peoples seems to be replacing linguistic and cultural rights. Komi Permyak is a case in point. The Komi and the Komi Permyak people are of the same ethnic origin and speak the same language. However, Komi Permyak is being amalgamated with Perm County, as opposed to with the Komi Republic. The Komi Permyak people will automatically become a small minority with a limited voice in the governance of their own affairs. Concomitantly, it can be said that Perm County has recently started to support the cultural development of the Jazva-Komis as an independent ethnic group.

29. The state intends to meet the needs of native peoples and resolve ethnic problems by replacing the current governing structure consisting of "national" ethnic territories with a cultural-educational structure, i.e., with national-cultural autonomy (NCA). The subjects of NCA's are usually ethnic groups who live outside their historical habitat. However, the Finno-Ugric (Uralic) peoples are native to the territories where they live.

30. Through territorial restructuring and the creation of the NCA's, native peoples will find their territories parcelled and their communities will be administratively speaking dispersed. This will make it much more difficult, if not almost impossible, for native peoples to adequately defend their interests. In turn, this will lead to further Russification. Native peoples will be relegated to the realm of statistics and colourful folklore.

31. Another example of the folklorisation trend is the elimination in the spring of 2004 of the post of the minister without portfolio for minority affairs of the Russian Federation. Native peoples issues became the responsibility of one department in the Ministry of Culture. In the fall of 2004, the Ministry for Regional Development was founded. There is no improvement in how native peoples issues are being handled, the situation is becoming worse. At the third congress of Finno-Ugric Peoples of the Russian Federation in October 2005, concern was expressed that the Russian government is not dealing with native peoples issues.⁵

32. Those in charge of restructuring territorial governance in Russia have ignored the existence of territorial rights and personal rights, both of which are believed to be necessary by a number of researchers. The territorial right is a linguistic right, to which native peoples living in a certain territory are entitled, regardless of their mother tongue. It is an important realisation made by linguistic ecology that the native peoples and their languages cannot exist apart from their ancient territories.

33. The republics and the autonomous districts have become, on the one hand, organic parts of the Finno-Ugric peoples' ethnic consciousness and, on the other, ethnically consolidating factors. Therefore, it is important to maintain them.

34. In addition to the planned reform in territorial governance, changes in election and party laws reduce the chances for native peoples to become elected and to defend their own interests. Previously, the system allowed for some candidates to be elected directly and some from party lists. The previous proportional electoral system afforded native peoples greater opportunities to get elected. It was also possible for small regional parties and independent candidates to get elected. Now, parties must have at least 50,000 registered members. Furthermore, a party must obtain at least 7% of the vote in order to obtain representation in regional councils or parliaments. In fact, in the Russian Federation, it is illegal to establish political parties that are based on ethnicity.

35. There are currently six Udmurts in the republic's elected body out of 100 representatives, despite the fact that the Udmurts make up one third of the population.⁶ In the Komi Republic, five out of 30 members of the local parliament are of Komi origin, while Komis constitute 25% of the population. In 1993, the number of Maris elected to their local parliament reflected their percentage in the general population (43%). However, today only 11 out of 52 of

the local MPs are Mari. In Mordovia there are 10 Mordvins out of 48 MP-s. Due to the new election law, the number is likely to decline even further.

36. Also, the participation of Finno-Ugric Peoples in the decision making process is further hindered by their level of education, which remains below that of Russians. To some extent this disparity in education level can be explained by the fact that native peoples live in villages, and village dwellers have a lower level of education than city dwellers.

Education Statistics per 1,000 Inhabitants

Educational Level		Karelia	Mordovia	Mari	Komi	Udmurtia	Khanty	Mansi	Nenets
University graduates	Native population	104	126	95	101	90	65	76	27
	Total population	137	145	142	122	136	159	159	
Persons without general elementary education	Native population	13	32	13	12	13	19	10	70
	Total population	8	21	12	8	10	2	2	

*Finno-Ugric and Samoyed Peoples of Russia, Syktyvkar, 2005

v. Laws for the Protection of Minorities and their Reinforcement

- Russian Laws do Not Favour Development of Native Languages and Cultures

- Laws of Autonomous Republics Mostly of a Symbolic Nature

- Implementing Provisions and Resources Insufficient

37. According to the 2nd paragraph of the 26th section of the Russian Federation's Constitution, all citizens have the right to "use their mother tongue and to freely choose the language for contact, education and creating ... regardless of their origins, their social and financial situations, their ethnic and national backgrounds, their gender, qualifications, religious convictions or place of residence." At the same time, certain laws seem to limit this fundamental right, e.g., the 9th section of the Language Law of 1807-1/1991 (О языках народов Российской Федерации) and the 6th paragraph of the Education Act of 3266-1/1992 (Об образовании) state that "education in the mother tongues or choosing the language of education can be ensured only for the general basic education, depending on the possibilities."

38. In the Finno-Ugric republics, but also for example in the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District (Yugra), local laws have been passed which, in theory, guarantee the fundamental linguistic and cultural rights of the native peoples. These contain two fundamental rights:

- the right to learn the official language of the state;
- the right to the mother tongue, i.e., for a mother tongue related identity, as well as education and public services in the mother tongue.

39. The following republics redesignated by law their native language as an official language:

- the Komi Republic in 1992;

- the Mari El Republic in 1995;
- the Mordva Republic 1998;
- the Udmurt Republic 2001.

40. Previously, these republics had enjoyed official status for their languages in the 1920's and 1930's.

41. In 2004, the Karelian Republic adopted a language law that regulates the use of the three Karelian languages, as well as Vepsian and Finnish. In July 2005, the Karelian Congress adopted a resolution calling for official status for Karelian; however, this will be difficult to act upon as the federal constitution forbids the use of non-Cyrillic alphabets for official languages.

42. On the surface, it appears as if there are no problems with regard to the Finno-Ugric peoples of Russia:

- there is a law on language;
- there is school education in the mother tongue and teaching of the mother tongue;
- there is printed and electronic press in the mother tongue;
- there are books published in the mother tongue, etc.

43. A closer look at the situation reveals that theory and practice are far apart and that the laws themselves are only enforced to an extremely limited extent.

44. These language laws, are not normative and compulsory, but only declarative and symbolic in nature. The established goals of native-language development have not been achieved. There is a lack of implementing provisions and needed resources. For example, the Khanty and Mansi Autonomous District has adopted many laws, which should protect the language, culture and traditions of the native peoples, but there are no implementing provisions to ensure enforcement of legislation. In Udmurtia, the action plan for implementing the language law was adopted in 2004, three years after the law came into force. In fact, a previous action plan adopted in 1994 has, to a large extent, not been implemented.

45. The language law in Mordovia obligates the implementing power to determine where road signs and other signage must be in Russian and Mordvin, however, despite the fact that the law was passed in 1998, all signage is still only in Russian. The law also allows university and vocational school applicants to take entrance exams in Mordvin, despite the fact that instruction through the medium of the Mordvin language takes place only in grades one to four and only partially.

46. The same legislative provision exists in the Komi Republic, but there is no instruction through the medium of the Komi language in public schools. There have also been problems in the Komi Republic with funding the national language program. During recent years, funding has been reduced by more than half. Budgetary restraints have been severe throughout the country. As a case in point, language programs in the Komi Republic received 62% of the planned 1.5 million rouble budget for 2002 and 55% of the planned one million rouble budget in 2003. In 2004, language programs received 430,000 roubles.⁷ The new state program for 2005-2010 does foresee an increase in funds, which should help support the achievement of program goals, should the funding actually be provided.

vi. Language Situation

- Populations in Decline

- Native Languages Have Low Status

- Decline in Use of Native Languages Among Young People

Self-Assessment of Language Knowledge - 2002⁸

Languages	Number of persons having command of the language	% of speakers among the native population
Enets	119	59.5
Finnish	51,891	*152.6
Ingrian	362	*120.7
Karelian	52,880	56.9
Khanty	13,568	67.8
Komi	217,316	74.1
Komi-Permyak	94,328	75.4
Mansi	2,746	24.1
Mari	487,855	80.7
Mordvin	614,192	72.9
Nenets	31,311	76.3
Nganasan	506	63.1
Saami	787	39.4
Selkup	1,641	39.1
Udmurt	463,837	72.8
Vepsian	5,753	70.1

* NB: Non-native speakers of the language are included in these figures.

47. Sociological research shows that:

- the younger somebody is, the less likely he or she is to declare him or herself a native speaker of a Finno-Ugric language;
- the better someone's qualifications and educational background, the less likely he or she is to identify with the native language and people;
- the older the given age group is, the more likely the person is to support the introduction of the compulsory teaching of the Finno-Ugric language, and the better qualifications and educational background, the less likely a person is to support compulsory language teaching;
- the Finno-Ugric speaking population lives predominantly in villages.

48. For example, 33% of **Karelians** in the age group 20-39 spoke their native language, while only 11% of children under 14 years of age spoke Karelian.⁹

49. In 1989, among the **Maris**, 59.1% of university students, 57.2% of secondary school students and 43.3% of elementary school students spoke and read Mari. In 2000, 59.3% of Mari grade 9 and 11 students considered Mari to be their mother tongue. Mari children use Russian two-thirds of the time to speak to each other between classes.¹⁰ Further, 57.6% of Mari families use Russian as their language of communication, 22.5% use the Mari language and 12.5% use a mixture of Mari and Russian. While speaking in public, 63.4%, of Maris used Russian, 8.1% Mari and 23.7 % a mixture of Mari and Russian.¹¹

50. In 2003, an ethno-linguistic survey conducted in the **Komi** Republic revealed that in villages 47.8% of ethnic Komis considered Komi their mother tongue, while 10.5% of ethnic Komi city dwellers indicated that Komi was their mother tongue. The more educated the respondent, the less likely he or she was to indicate Komi as a mother tongue. For example, only 9.1% of those with some university education or with university degrees indicated speaking Komi as a mother tongue, as compared to 16.7% among high school graduates and 30.8% among students with a minimum grade nine education, but without a high school diploma.

51. The same study, 25 % of 18-34 year olds indicated that they spoke Komi. However, in the same age group 17.3% of those with some university education or with university degrees indicated that they speak Komi. The majority of Komis, and an even larger percentage of Russians, considered the prestige of the Komi language to be low or insufficient.¹²

52. The ineffective nature of measures taken to develop language and culture is reflected in language knowledge statistics for 1989-2002. In most republics, the percentage of native people speaking their mother tongue has only risen a few percentage points, while the number of **Khanty** and **Mansi** people speaking their mother tongue has dropped 16% and 13% respectively.

53. The actual situation of the Finno-Ugric languages can be characterized as follows:

- they are generally not the language of education;
- they are hardly ever used in public administration;
- the state does not address the population in these languages;
- signposts, stamps, trademarks, official documents and certificates are hard to come by in these languages;
- names in the minority languages are not used (personal given names and family names, names of cultural and trade societies, names of settlements, streets and institutions);
- *de facto*, people do not generally have a choice of language in practicing their religion;
- the media share accorded to native languages does not reflect the size of the native populations;
- legal and judicial services are not provided in the native languages.

54. A partial exception is the Komi Republic, where:

- all laws as well as the resolutions and regulations of the state council of the Komi Republic and the normative legal documents of the president of the Komi Republic and of the organizations of state power are published in Komi and Russian;
- the political general department for nationalities of the Ministry for Culture and Nationalities has a department for state languages, which is in charge of organising and coordinating the implementation of the above-mentioned program, at the same time this is where the official translation of documents from Russian to Komi takes place (however, this is also an indication of the fact that the Russian language is *primus inter pares*);
- election announcements, as well as the names of settlements and other geographical names, streets, signs are posted bilingually when new signage is posted. It is noteworthy that many place names have been Russified.

55. To a limited extent, some bilingual signage has been posted in Mari El and Udmurtia, however, Russian-language signage clearly overwhelmingly dominates the visual field. Many

Finno-Ugric speakers told the author of this report about what they perceived as a prevalent negative attitude toward speakers of native languages. They claim that they are often accused of nationalism.

56. Many people feel that these languages are not sufficiently developed to allow for high order thinking or to teach higher mathematics. Unfortunately, even many native speakers of the language hold this view.

57. The Finno-Ugric languages are adequate for everyday language use. A rich literature, as well as folk poetry has evolved in these languages. They are currently not capable of fully serving state language functions, as a specialized vocabulary needs to be developed for politics, public administration, science, etc. With political determination and support, the requisite terminology could be developed. Positive examples of terminology development are to be found in the work of the Udmurt and Komi terminology commissions, and the efforts to develop Vepsian and Karelian terminology in Karelia.

58. In addition to terminological development, the same amount of effort has to be made to persuade the population about the benefits of the use of the mother tongue. Politicians and intellectuals have enormous responsibility in this respect. They are the ones who need to set an example. They seem to show little willingness to do so.

59. The start and the continuation of the development of a requisite vocabulary and terminology is necessary, if the languages are to be adequate for all realms of life. Limiting the use of a language (e.g. to folklore or culture only) generates, in most cases, irreversible, and negative, processes in terms of the capability of the given language for specialised communication.

vii. Native-Language Schools

- Lack of Mother Tongue Education at All Levels

- Few Hours of Mother Tongue Instruction (Less Than Foreign Languages)

- Finno-Ugric Languages Are Not Compulsory for Non-natives

- School Closings in Villages (Finno-Ugrics are Village Dwellers)

- Lack of Learning Materials of Sufficient Quality and in Sufficient Numbers

60. Many native-language schools were closed down in the 1960's, and the language of instruction became Russian. As a result of this move, entire generations grew up without native-language schooling.

61. The new curriculum instituted by the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation in 2003 makes native-language training difficult since the "national-regional" component comprises not more than 10-12 percent of instruction time. The teaching of native languages, history, geography and a region's culture has to take place in this framework. This program does not give a decent opportunity for the study of or in the mother tongue. It interrupts the linguistic traditions of the given people. This practice is against both international norms and the Russian constitution.

62. In 2006, a new curriculum will be introduced in public education in Russia. The compulsory federal component will comprise 75 per cent of instruction time while the optional and regional component will comprise 25 percent. Minority languages and "national-regional" subjects (e.g. local history) will become optional.

63. Another concern is school closures. Schools in the countryside and smaller communities are being shut down due to declining enrolment and for economic reasons. For native peoples, transferring to a larger school usually means transferring to a Russian-language school.

64. According to the 2006 curriculum, the mother tongue can be studied for two lessons a week in the first grade and for three lessons a week in the second, third and fourth grade. As for

the four lessons of optional subjects in the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grades, the decision regarding language of instruction and content can be made freely at the regional level.

65. Education in the mother tongue (native language) is only provided in a few of the Finno-Ugric republics and only to a small number of children in grades one to four. The native languages are not used as a language of instruction after grade four. They are also not used at the secondary school or university level. (The exceptions to this rule are the Republic of Tartarstan, the Republic of Bashkortostan and the Tshuvash Republic where the native languages are used as a medium of instruction to the end of secondary school).

66. In **Mordovia**, in those schools serving Mordvin children, education takes place in grades one to four in the mother tongue. Russian language arts is one of the subjects. From grade five onward, Mordvin is studied as a subject (Mordvin language arts). During the academic year 2004/05, 2,548 Mordvin children studied in one of 277 native-language schools. Of these 2,548 students, 1,353 studied in the Moksha language and 1,195 in the Erzya language. During the past five years, the number of students studying in the Mordvin languages has declined by about 1,000. As of this academic year, efforts are being made to deliver instruction through the Mordvin languages in all elementary schools where Mordvins are in the majority. In 2004/05, 15,665 students studied one of the two Mordvin languages or in one of those languages. Taking into account that the number of Mordvin school-aged children (7-17 years old) is more than 40 000, it cannot be said that all have an opportunity to study their native tongue.¹³

67. In the Mordvin Republic, at schools where Mordvin and Tatar children comprise the majority, mother tongue language arts are taught at every level as one subject. The remainder of instruction takes place in Russian. At schools with a Russian majority, the teaching of the Mordvin languages is done on a conversational basis.

68. The number of schools where the language of instruction is delivered through a native language is decreasing in the **Mari El** Republic. In 2004/05, there were 43 such schools with only 725 children studying in Mari. In some small village schools, Mari is a language of instruction. In most village schools, only some classes are taught in the Mari language.¹⁴

69. In 2000, 73 700 students studied the Mari language as a mother tongue or as a second (official) language. In 2004/05, 18,692 students studied the language as a mother tongue and 19,879 as a second language. This constitutes a marked and rapid decline. There are close to 30, 000 Mari-speaking school-aged children (7-17 years old). Therefore, the claim by Mari officials that 80% of Mari children study their mother tongue is false. The number of hours of mother tongue instruction has been reduced. Compulsory Mari language instruction for Russian-speakers has been eliminated. Between 2001-2003, 49 schools, particularly village schools, have been closed in Mari El.

70. The **Komis** do not have any native-language schools. The Komi language as a language of instruction is not used even in the early grades, let alone in the upper grades. The language of instruction is Russian, even at schools in the countryside where the majority of the population is Komi. The Komi language is taught only as one of the subjects. In 2004/05, the Komi language was taught in 366 schools to 42,730 students. The majority of Komi children study the Komi language.¹⁵

71. Today, a third of Komi children study the Komi language for one lesson per week. In 2003, they were taught three lessons per week of Komi language arts. The number of schools teaching Komi has grown somewhat over the past five years, however, the number of hours taught per pupil has declined. Classes are not divided into groups, therefore, the children whose mother tongue is Komi often study their native language with those students studying Komi as a second language. Foreign language teaching receives more instructional time and, therefore, greater status than the teaching of Komi.

72. In the capital of the Komi Republic in Syktyvkar, there is one secondary school for the arts and a national secondary school where the Komi language and culture are taught.

73. The **Udmurts** do not have any native-language schools. Despite improvements, education in the mother tongue takes place only up to the fourth grade in villages, where in addition to studying their mother tongue, students study science and math in the Udmurt

language. In the following grades, the Udmurt language is only taught as a language arts subject.

74. During the academic year 2000/01, Udmurt was taught in 376 schools to 31 459 children. In 2004/05, the number of schools had fallen to 369 and the number of students to 24 243. The number of school-aged Udmurt children numbers 85 000 (7-17 years old). Therefore, a minority of Udmurt children are taught their native tongue.¹⁶

75. In the Udmurt capital Izevsk, there is one national (native people's) secondary school, where there is an enriched program in Udmurt culture, but where the language of instruction is mostly Russian. In 2005, the school was incorporated into a Russian-language school in the suburbs. There was considerable dissatisfaction with the move. Commenting on the issue, the Udmurt president A. Volkov stated that the native people's secondary school was an undesirable example of a reservation.¹⁷

76. In the **Karelian** Republic, schools teach Karelian, Finnish and Vepsian as mother tongues. Despite the fact that the 2004 language law allows for instruction through the medium of those native languages, this is not done. The languages are taught only within language arts classes.

77. The language-teaching situation has remained relatively stable over the past five years. In 2000/01, 2,149 students studied Karelian, 334 Vepsian and 9,993 Finnish. In 2004/05, those numbers were 2,237 and 331 and 7,315. It is noteworthy that only a third of Karelian children study Karelian, however, the number of students studying Finnish is manifold greater than the number of children of Finnish origin. Finnish appears to enjoy greater prestige than Karelian or Vepsian.¹⁸

78. In the **Khanty** and **Mansi** Autonomous District, the language of instruction is Russian. In 2003/04, there were 44 schools where the majority of students were natives. In 35 of those schools, it was possible to study the Khanty, Mansi or Nenets languages within standard language arts classes. Recent statistics show an increase in the number of students interested in studying their native tongue.

79. In the framework of the so-called national component, three lessons per week are devoted to the Mansi or Khanty language and culture in the first, second, third and fourth grade. In the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth grade, the number drops to two lessons per week. In the tenth and eleventh grade, there is only one optional lesson per week devoted to the national language and culture.

80. Officials in the various republics explain in a similar fashion the small number of students who study their mother tongue. They state that native-language learning is an option that is freely exercised by parents and that they cannot force parents to choose native-language studies. Parental choice is determined by the fact that they cannot choose a multilingual program. For example, in Karelia, parents must choose one language from among Karelian, Finnish, Vepsian or English. Parents, who are looking out for their children's long-term interests, will often choose a foreign language. A case in point is the fact that there are three times more students studying Finnish than Karelian, despite the fact that there are four and a half times less Finns than Karelians in Karelia. Karelian has a low status and is not seen as helping young people to succeed in life.

81. Various sociological studies reveal a certain kind of linguistic nihilism among native peoples - the younger and better educated the respondent, the more negative his or her attitude toward his or her mother tongue. A study conducted in the Komi Republic yielded the following results: 28% of respondents supported compulsory Komi language education; 16% were somewhat supportive; 31% were not opposed to it; 20% did not support it; 4% were against it. In 2002, 53% of all respondents in the Mari El Republic supported native-language instruction in all schools. The number fell to 30% in 2005.

82. Preschool education, which is also seen as a preparatory stage for eventual schooling in Russian, is another important issue. Instruction in the native languages is the exception as opposed to the rule in kindergartens. For example, in the Mordvin capital Saransk of the 17,000 native-speaking children in kindergarten only 2.8-3.5% study their mother tongue.¹⁹ The mother tongue language arts lessons take place twice a week for 20-30 minutes. Nonetheless, there are some exceptions, where native language instruction receives greater attention.

83. A lack of teaching materials is hindering the teaching of native languages. The republics must finance the production of native-language teaching materials. Funding is very limited and needs are far from being met. In the Republic of Mordovia, a total of approximately 50 textbooks and teacher's guides have been published over the past five years in the Moksha and Erzya languages. The number of materials produced over the past few years has quite suddenly increased. For example, in 2004, 21 teaching materials were published. From 2001-2004, a total of 40 teaching materials and teacher's guides were published in the Mari-El Republic. (Officials reporting this figure did not define the term teaching materials.) There is a need for many times that amount of material. In Udmurtia, during the last five years approximately 50 native-language textbooks were published. In 2000, 3 textbooks were published: in 2004, that number was 17. There is a serious lack of teaching materials in the Khanty and Mansi languages. In the case of some Khanty and Mansi dialects there are no longer people capable of producing the materials.

viii. *Publication of Books*

- Few Books Published in Native Languages

- Development of Literary (Written) Language Hampered

84. In all republics, the number of books published in Finno-Ugric languages and the size of the print-runs can best be described as modest. Publications figures vacillate between a few books per year to a few dozen. Various sources give conflicting numbers and there is no accurate statistical overview of publications.

Publication of Books²⁰

	Year						Total	
	2002		2003		2004			
	Titles	copies	titles	copies	titles	copies	titles	copies
Mari El	39	40,260	51	57,350	51	38,850	141	136,460
Meadow Mari	31	38,000	46	55,550	44	34,350	121	127,900
Hill Mari	8	2,260	5	1,800	7	4,500	20	8,560
Mordovia	11	34,000	15	21,000	5	10,200	31	65,200
Moksha	6	13,000	6	8,000	2	3,600	14	24,600
Erzya	5	21,000	9	13,000	3	6,600	17	40,600
Udmurtia	7	7,000	6	21,400	5	8,500	18	36,900

85. A case in point is the information available about the publishing industry in **Mordovia**. In comparison with the figures in the above table, researchers Poljakov and Maresjev claim that in 1998-99 no books were published in the Mordvin languages. They also claim that 20 books were published in the Mordvin languages in 2002 and that the figure for 2004 is 8. The Mordvin Ministry of Culture's documentation states that 2 books were published in 2000 and that in 2004 16 works of fiction were published.

86. During recent years some 50 books a year have been published in the **Mari** language. The total number of copies printed in 2002, 2003 and 2004 is 136,460, which constitutes one book for every 4-5 persons in the Mari community. Researcher Svetlana Hämäläinen reported over the past three years the total number of copies of books funded from the federal budget was 5,500. The M.A. Castrén Society funded a total of 8,500 copies and the Mari El Republic 8,000 copies. From 2000- 2004, the Mari Republic funded the publication of 1-4 books per year. A substantive part of publications in Finno-Ugric languages in Russia were funded through international co-operation.

87. External assistance has been an important factor in getting books published in the other republics as well. According to Semjonov, the publication figures for **Udmurtia** are as

follows: 14 books in 2002, 16 in 2003 and 27 in 2004 (including textbooks and 2 dictionaries). According to Maresjev these figures are 5 books in 2000, 10 books in 2001, 11 books in 2002, 15 books in 2003 and 8 books (till November) in 2004.²¹ According to a different source, in seven and a half years 125 titles were published for a total of 325,700 copies. That makes one book for every Udmurt during a seven-year period.

88. The number of copies of books in the **Komi** language is as follows:

- 55,900 in 2000;
- 87,300 (28 books, brochures) in 2001;
- 24,800 in 2002;
- 26,700 (18 books, textbooks, brochures) in 2003.²²

Support for the publication of books is declining (4.6 million roubles in 2002, 2 million roubles in 2003, 1 million roubles in 2004).²³

89. Popular books of a scientific character are very rarely published. Although different sources give conflicting figures, all sources imply that publications in the native language are hard to come by, especially in the countryside. Publications are clearly not playing the role that they should be in cultural and linguistic development.

ix. Native Language Media

- **Closing of Local Newspapers**
- **Limited Number of Newspaper Copies Printed**
- **Occasional Low Quality of Language in Media**
- **Less Radio and TV Airtime**
- **Independent Media Almost Non-existent**

90. There are newspapers in the native language in every Finno-Ugric republic, as well as in the autonomous district. Newspapers are published once or a few times a week. There are also magazines in the republics. However, the number of copies is limited and they are hard to find. Intellectuals show little interest toward newspapers in their mother tongue. The number of local newspapers is in decline. Occasionally, there are columns in Finno-Ugric languages in the Russian-language newspapers. Finno-Ugric newspapers contain more and more Russian-language columns. There are few ethnic-related topics in the Russian newspapers.

91. The quality of language in Finno-Ugric newspapers is, in many cases, inadequate. The newspapers do not convey recently developed terminology and tend to borrow from the Russian. There are also some situations where the opposite is true and new terminology is introduced to readers.

92. According to official statistics, in 2004, there were 15 native-language periodicals in the **Mari El** Republic. They include the "national" newspaper "*Mari El*" (7,500 copies), the youth magazine "*Kugarnya*" (3,200 copies) and the arts and literature review "*Ontshyko*" (2,000 copies). By the summer of 2005, the "*Mari El*" newspaper's circulation dropped to 5,500 copies and in the capital city Joskar-Ola there were only 120 subscribers despite the fact that there are 50,000-60,000 Maris living there. The constantly expanding media market and the inability of the Mari-language publications to compete with Russian-language publications have led to a *circa* 50% drop in circulation figures of the "*Mari El*" newspaper over the past five years. The "*Mari El*" newspaper is subsidised by the Mari government (70% from government, 30% from sales). Many local newspapers have closed.²⁴ The "*Mari El*" newspaper is clearly dependent on its funder as is the case with most other publications. During the last year, opposition

publications have been prevented from publishing locally and have had to use print shops outside of the republic.

93. Nine periodicals are regularly published in the **Komi** Republic. The largest newspaper "*Komi mu*" has a circulation of 3,000. The youth newspaper "*Iologa*" has a circulation of 2,000 and the children's magazine "*Bi kin*" has a circulation of 1,900. During the last ten years the Komi-language satirical magazine has faced a twelve-fold drop in circulation and the cultural magazine four-fold drop in circulation.

Circulation Figures for Major Komi-Language Publications (Newspapers & Magazines)

Publication Name	1992 (May)	1997 (May)	2002 (May)	2002 (Oct.)	2003 (Feb.)
<i>Komi Mu</i>	7,810	4,490	6,127	4,418	3,237
<i>Iologa</i>	7,703	1,320	2,930	1,700	2,250
<i>Vojviv Kodzuv</i>	4,000	1,800	1,400	860	1,006
<i>Cuskanzi</i>	12,000	2,112	1,167	939	1,086
<i>Bi Kin</i>	7,000	4,902	4,223	2,007	2,160

94. The number of Russian-language newspapers in the Komi Republic was 31 in 1990 and 95 in 2002. By contrast, the number of Komi-language newspapers was four in 1990 and five in 2002. The figure for Russian-language magazines stood at one in 1990 and five in 2002. There were and still are three Komi-language magazines.²⁵

95. In the **Udmurt** Republic, 10 periodicals per year are regularly published. The largest paper "*Udmurt Dunie*" has a circulation of 12,500. "*Zetshbur*", a children's magazine, has a circulation of 2,700.²⁶ Another source claims that the circulation of Udmurt newspapers and magazines has steadily declined (9,720 in 1990, 4,410 in 1995, 3,091 in 2000 and 2,175 in 2002)²⁷, while the circulation figures for Russian-language publications has grown.

96. In the **Karelian** Republic, 8 periodicals were regularly published in 2004. The Finnish-language newspaper "*Karjalan Sanomat*" had the largest circulation (1,100). As of 2003, this newspaper is only published once a week as opposed to twice. Two Karelian-language newspapers were published: "*Oma Mua*" (700 copies) and "*Vienan Karjala*" (600 copies). "*Vienan Karjala*" is published only twice a month. The newspaper "*Kodima*" is a bilingual publication in Vepsian and Russian with a circulation of 990.

97. In the Republic of **Mordovia**, 8 periodicals were regularly published in 2004. The Erzya-language newspaper "*Erzan Pravda*" has a circulation of 3,250 and the Moksha-language newspaper "*Moksha Pravda*" has a circulation of 4,500. These publications have lost about half of their readership over the past years. They are dependent on government subsidies that have grown from year to year. In 2004, native language magazine circulation figures have dropped from 9,500 to 6,500²⁸. Regional newspapers are published in Russian, but contain an Erzya and Moksha-language supplement.

98. There are also independent newspapers in native languages, which are published in the Republic of Mordovia and where it is possible to express ideas that are in opposition to the official stance.

99. Three periodicals are regularly published in the **Yamal-Nenets** Autonomous District. These include the Khanty-language newspaper "*Luh Avt*" with a circulation of 500 and the Nenets-language paper "*Narjana Nerm*" with a circulation of 930. There is also a Nenets-language children's paper with a very limited circulation.

100. In the **Khanty-Mansi** Autonomous District there is Khanty-language paper called "*Hanty Jasang*"(900 copies) and a Mansi-language newspaper named "*Luima Seripos*"(600 copies).²⁹

101. In Bashkortostan, where there is a significant minority of Finno-Ugric peoples, one Mari-language and one Udmurt language newspaper are published.

102. With respect to the electronic media, the Law on Languages of the Peoples of the Russian Federation provides that broadcasts of the "all-Russian" TV and radio programmes are conducted in the Russian language. Radio and television airtime for native languages has been reduced. Federal funding of local programming has been eliminated. Although efforts have been made to fund programming from local budgets, the access of Finno-Ugric natives to media in their mother tongue has declined.

103. In 2005, the total number of hours of broadcasting in Finno-Ugric languages on Russian national radio and television has declined. Funding from the Russian federal budget was eliminated for specific local production broadcasts with the exception of news programs. Now in addition to producing their own programming, republics must purchase time on the national airwaves or develop local channels.

104. From 2000-2004, there were on average 450-500 hours of **Mari**-language radio broadcasts per year or over one hour per day. As of 2005, the number of hours of native-language broadcasting on federal national radio has been reduced to 271 hours.³⁰ Mari-language TV broadcasts were moved to a less frequently viewed cultural channel. Similar problems exist in the other republics.

105. As of the summer of 2005, an FM radio station is being funded by the Mari El Republic. The station started by broadcasting four hours per day. In autumn, broadcasting increased to eight hours a day and in February it should reach 11 hours a day. The number of listeners is low (around 3,000 receivers), in particular, due to the lack of FM radios, however, the number of listeners is on the rise. There are plans to expand transmissions so as to cover all of Mari El. The station is becoming more popular and this could serve as a basis for developing an independent media channel. At the moment, the station is under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture.

106. Unfortunately, the same opportunities do not exist in all the republics. **Karelian**-languages programming is broadcast on a pan-Russian radio channel. There are a total of seven hours per week of radio broadcasting in the Karelian languages, as well as in Finnish and Vepsian – the morning news and one hour in the evening. One hour of TV programming is broadcast twice a week.³¹

107. In the **Komi** Republic, following the reorganisation of the Public television and radio broadcaster "Komi gor", the national channel "As mou bilin" (On its land) is broadcasted on the frequency of the channel "Russia" since March 2005. The channel "Komi gor" produces and broadcasts interregional Finno-ugric programmes in the Komi and Russian languages on ecological issues and children's programmes on the channel of the Komi Republic since January 2005. Also since January 2005 "Komi gor" carries out the radio project "Miyam kad" in Komi language on the social, economic and cultural life of the Komi Republic. All these projects and broadcasts are financed by the budget of the Komi Republic. In addition the national channel "Culture" broadcasts one hour long programmes and films in Komi three times per week. On the other hand however, according to information sent to me by Komi associations, Russian language is used more and more in Komi TV programmes without translation.

108. There are 22 local newspapers, in **Mordovia** none of which are in the Erzya or Moksha languages. This is the case even in regions where the native peoples constitute 70-80% of the population. Sometimes Russian-language newspapers include Erzya or Moksha-language inserts.

109. The portion of time allotted to native-language radio broadcasts does not reflect the portion of native peoples in the population at large. According to the newspaper "*Erzyan Mastor*", Erzya-language broadcasts constitute 8.4% of radio broadcasts. In total, there is 45-60 minutes of Erzya, Moksha and Tatar-language broadcasting per day and one TV broadcast. A TV channel whose viewership is in the capital and its surrounding area is preparing Erzya and Moksha-language broadcasting.

110. In the **Udmurt** Republic, when federal broadcasts in the local language were cut back, a local radio-TV company "Moja Udmurtia", which produces news programs and various other broadcasts, was established. Udmurt-language radio broadcasts constitute 12% of airtime. Out of the 25 regions in the republic, 22 have local radio stations that offer Udmurt-language broadcasting.

111. More recent forms of media are under-utilised in the Finno-Ugric republics. In May 2005, in the Mordvin, the "INFO-RM" news agency provided online news regarding the Mordovia

in the Moksha and Ersä languages. As of the summer of 2005, online Mari-language news is available from a Mari-language radio station.

x. Other Cultural and Educational Scenes

112. There is at least one native-language theatre in each Finno-Ugric republic. There are two in the Mari El Republic and two in the Komi Republic. Some of these are bilingual – native-language and Russian. It is generally true, however, that there are fewer and fewer new shows in Finno-Ugric languages, and the prestige of the native-language theatres is decreasing.

113. The spread of popular culture through the Finno-Ugric languages is a sign of progress. For example, young people have created rap music in the Mari and Mordvin languages that is very popular among their peers.

114. Local governments have given attention to the development of native peoples' handicrafts. Related centres and handicraft clubs in schools have received support. Young people have been taught how to make national costumes and the wearing of traditional dress is becoming more popular. Folklore events are supported by government. An example of this is the song festival in Mari El.

115. People's congresses play an important role in the development of cultural identity. In 2004, congresses were held in the Mordvin Republic, the Komi Republic, the Mari El Republic and in the Udmurt Republic and in Karelia in 2005. Congresses serve as milestones, where accomplishments are assessed and future directions defined. The Congress of the Finno-Ugric Peoples of the Russian Federation was held in the autumn of 2005. The Russian Duma (parliament) also discussed the current state of affairs of Finno-Ugric peoples during hearings in 2005. (13.10.2005)

xi. Training of Personnel

116. All Finno-Ugric autonomous republics have universities and colleges where teachers are trained. In Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District, teachers are trained in the university. Universities have native languages and cultures departments where teaching is delivered in native tongues. In some cases it is possible for students majoring in other fields to take some classes in their native language. These classes are not obligatory. Future lawyers and doctors have no obligation to study the native languages.

117. Universities work on language and terminology development and help to prepare learning material for schools. Terminological development requires co-operation with other state institutions, which has been difficult to achieve.

118. Universities that have Finno-Ugric Departments co-operate amongst each other and with Hungarian, Finnish and Estonian institutions of higher learning. Within the framework of this international co-operation some foreign lecturers occasionally work as visiting lectures in the Finno-Ugric republics of the Russian Federation.

xii. International Co-operation

119. Various forms of international co-operation take place. As of 1960, science and research congresses are held every five years. The last one took place in Joshkar Ola in 2005. Conferences, seminars and summer schools are also held. From time to time, a shortage of funds prevents events from taking place. Scientists/researchers from the Russian Federation often do not have the funds to take part in international conferences. Exchanges of university students, professors and researchers take place with colleagues in Hungary, Finland and Estonia.

120. The World Congress of Finno-Ugric Peoples was established in Syktyvkar in 1992. It meets once every four years in a different location. The Congress has its own youth organisation. The next Congress is planned for 2008 in Khanty-Mansiisk. During the four years between congresses, a consultative committee of 22 representatives (17 Finno-Ugric peoples of the Russian Federation and 5 from abroad) organises joint activities. The committee is funded by Hungary, Finland and Estonia. Also, the consultative committee represents the Finno-Ugric peoples in communications and co-operation with international organisations.

121. Co-operation with the Estonian, Finnish and Hungarian parliaments is increasing for the autonomous Finno-Ugric republics and the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District. Several meetings took place during 2005 that culminated in a joint discussion in the Russian Duma on Finno-Ugric issues (15.09.2005).

V. The Sami people in Nordic countries

122. The Sami people in Nordic countries belong to the group of Finno-Ugric people. (There are approximately 40 000 Sami in Norway, 15 000 in Sweden and 8 000 in Finland.)

i. Language rights

123. The Sami Language Act in **Finland**, adopted in 2003, contains provisions on the right of the Sami to use their own language before the courts and other public authorities, as well as on the duty of the authorities to enforce and promote the linguistic rights of the Sami. The goal is to ensure the right of the Sami to a fair trial and good administration irrespective of language and to secure the linguistic rights of the Sami without them needing specifically to refer to these rights.

124. An authority must not restrict or refuse to enforce the linguistic rights provided in this Act on the grounds that the Sami know also some other language, such as Finnish or Swedish. Authorities shall also use the Sami language in communications addressed to the public. Official advertisements, notices and promulgations and other information released to the public, as well as signs and forms intended for use by the public, with their instructions, shall, in the Sami homeland, be prepared and also issued in the Sami language.

125. Similar rights are given to Sami people in **Sweden** and **Norway**. In Sweden the language law concerning minority languages was passed in April 2000. A person has the right to use the Sami language in contacts with the authorities, such as local governments and courts.

126. In **Norway** the Act concerning the Sami parliament and other legal matters was amended in 2003. This act gives Sami people an extended right to use the Sami language in the judicial system and regulates the use of the Sami language in statutes and regulations, in forms to be used in connection with local or regional public body and in announcements by public bodies which shall be made in both Sami and Norwegian.

127. Employees in a local or regional public body are entitled to paid leave in order to acquire a knowledge of Sami when the said body requires such knowledge. In addition, that authority shall provide training or take other measures in order to ensure that the personnel have the knowledge of the Sami language that is necessary for the performance of its functions.

ii. Education

128. In all Nordic countries the education in the Sami language is available at least in primary and lower secondary schools in Sami areas and as a mother tongue in all territories.

129. In 1980 the government in **Sweden** decided to establish a Sami School Board, with a majority of Sami. The Sami School Board is now responsible for Sami education, from day nursery to upper secondary school. Today there are Sami schools in six places in the northern part of Sweden: Karesuando, Lannavaara, Kiruna, Gällivare, Jokkmokk and Tärnaby.

130. In **Norway** the Sami pupils in upper secondary education have the right to receive Sami tuition. The Ministry may issue regulations concerning alternative forms of such tuition when this cannot be provided by teachers at the school attended by the pupils. In certain schools, courses or classes provide tuition in or through the medium of Sami or in specific Sami subjects in upper secondary education. The county authority may also offer such tuition.

iii. Broadcasting

131. There are three Sami broadcasting centres in the Nordic countries, situated in Kárášjohka / Karasjok (Norway), Aanaar / Inari (Finland) and Giron / Kiruna (Sweden)

belonging to the respective public broadcasters. The centres co-operate closely and broadcast in 4-5 different regional variants of Sami.

132. Yleisradio (Yle) transmits 2000 hours radio programmes a year, with news, in Sami to the **Finnish** Sami speaking region. In **Norway** the scale of production is the same as in Finland and these programmes are broadcast on the same channel throughout the day for Sami people. In co-operation with Norway there are also 15 minutes TV news every day. The total number of TV broadcasts in Sami in Norway is half an hour per day, included children's programmes.

133. The public broadcaster in **Sweden**, STV, produces around 10 hours of Sami programmes a year which are broadcast regionally. Regional radio in Kiruna produces 4 hours of Sami language programmes per day.

▶[Link to the card](#) ◀

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Reporting Committee: Committee on Culture, Science and Education

Reference to Committee: [Doc. 10548](#), Reference No. 3006 of 08.10.2004

Draft Report unanimously adopted by the Committee on 02.10.06

Members of the Committee: Mr Jacques **Legendre** (Chairman), Baroness **Hooper**, Mr Josef **Jařab**, Mr Wolfgang **Wodarg** (Vice-Chairpersons), Mr Hans Ager, Mr Toomas **Alatalu** (Alternate: Mrs Katrin **Saks**), Mr. Kornél Almássy, Mr Emerenzio Barbieri, Mr Rony **Bargetze**, Mrs Marie-Louise Bemelmans-Videc (Alternate: Mr Dick **Dees**), Mr Radu-Mircea Berceanu, Mr Levan Berdzenishvili, Mr Italo **Bocchino**, Mr Ioannis **Bougas**, Mrs Anne Brasseur, Mr Osman **Cořkunođlu**, Mr Vlad Cubreacov, Mr Ivica Dačić, Mrs Maria **Damanaki**, Mr Joseph Debono Grech (Alternate: Mr Joseph **Falzon**), Mr Stepan Demirchyan, Mr Ferdinand Devinski, Mrs Kaarina **Dromberg**, Mrs Åse Gunhild Woie **Duesund**, Mr Detlef **Dzembitzki**, Mrs Anke Eymmer, Mr Relu Fenechiu, Mrs Blanca Fernández-Capel, Mrs Maria Emelina Fernández-Soriano (Alternate: Mr Iñaki **Txueka**), Mr Axel **Fischer**, Mr José **Freire Antunes**, Mr Eamon Gilmore, Mr Stefan **Glăvan**, Mr Luc Goutry, Mr Vladimir Grachev, Mr Andreas Gross, Mr Kristinn H. Gunnarson, Mrs Azra Hadžiahmetović, Mr Jean-Pol Henry, Mr Rafael Huseynov, Mr Raffaele Iannuzzi, Mr Fazail Ibrahimli, Mrs Halide **İncekara**, Mr Lachezar Ivanov, Mr Igor Ivanovski, Mr József Kozma, Mr Jean-Pierre Kucheida, Mr Guy Lengagne, Mrs Jagoda Majska-Martinčević, Mr Tomasz Markowski, Mr Bernard **Marquet** (Alternate: Mr Christophe **Spiliotis-Saquet**), Mr Andrew **McIntosh** (Alternate: Mr Robert **Walter**), Mr Ivan Melnikov, Mrs Maria Manuela **de Melo**, Mr Paskal **Milo**, Mrs Fausta Morganti, Mrs Christine Muttonen, Mrs Miroslava Němcová, Mr Jakob-Axel Nielsen, Mr Edward **O'Hara**, Mr Andrey Pantev, Mrs Antigoni Pericleous Papadopoulos, Mrs Majda Potrata, Mr Duřan Proroković, Mr Lluís Maria de Puig, Mr Anatoliy Rakhansky, Mr Johannes Randegger, Mr Zbigniew Rau, Mrs Anta Rugāte, Mr Piero Ruzzante, Mr Volodymyr Rybak, Mr Pär-Axel **Sahlberg**, Mr André Schneider, Mr Vitaliy **Shybko**, Mrs Geraldine Smith, Mr Yury Solonin (Alternate: Mr Anatoliy **Korobeynikov**), Mr Valeriy **Sudarenkov**, Mr Mehmet Tekeliođlu, Mr Ed van Thijn, Mr Piotr Wach, Mrs Majléne **Westerlund Panke**, Mr Emanuelis Zingeris.

N.B. : The names of the members who took part in the meeting are printed in **bold**

Head of the Secretariat: Mr Grayson

Secretaries to the Committee: Mr Ary, Mr Dossow

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