



Three Presidents photographed in February 2005. Lars Anders Baer, the Sámediggi, Sweden, Pekka Aikio, the Sámediggi, Finland and Sven-Roald Nystø, former President of the Sámediggi, Norway. PHOTO: MIN ÁIGI.

The Nordic Sámi Convention

THE CONCEPT OF A NORDIC SÁMI CONVENTION was first raised by the Sámi Council – a pan-Sámi non-governmental organisation, established in 1956 – at its periodic four-year conference, the Sámi Conference, in 1986. The Sámi Conference reiterated its recommendation in 1992. The issue was brought up in 1998 in a joint meeting of the Sámi Rights Committees in Finland, Norway and Sweden.

During the 46th session of the Nordic Council (joint body of the Nordic States) held in Reykjavik, Iceland on 28 February 1995, the Ministers responsible for Sámi issues from Finland, Norway and Sweden met and decided to start the work on a Nordic Sámi Convention.

In the autumn of 2002, the Ministers responsible for Sámi affairs in Finland, Norway and Sweden, together with the Presidents of the Sámediggi (Sámi Parliaments) in these three countries, appointed an expert group to prepare a Nordic Sámi Convention. After three years of intense work, the group of experts submitted its proposal at the annual joint meeting of the Ministers responsible for Sámi affairs and the Presidents of the three Sámediggi on 16 November 2005 in Helsinki. The expert group was led by former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Norway, Professor Carsten Smith.

The proposal for the Convention consists of 51 articles divided into seven chapters. The overall objective of the draft Convention is to affirm and strengthen the rights of the indigenous Sámi people with particular emphasis on securing and developing the Sámi language, culture, livelihoods and society. The draft Convention recognises the Sámis as the indigenous people of the three countries, and as one people residing across national borders. The proposed Convention contains a set of proposed minimum standards, based on existing and emerging international human rights standards.

The Expert Group proposes that the Convention should be subject to ratification by Finland, Norway and Sweden, and that ratification should not take place until the three Sámi Parliaments have given their approval. The draft Convention is currently under discussion in the three countries.

www.samediggi.no

www.galdu.org

www.dep.no/aid/

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