



## Recommendations for improving the Sámi literature field

From the report Johanna Domokos, *A Writing Hand Reaches Further. Report on the recommendations for the improvement of the Sámi literature field*, Culture for All Service 2018.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Institution building and institutional development are the basis for safeguarding and developing Sámi literature, which in turn supports the Sámi community and Sámi democracy. It is important to strengthen the work in Sámi cultural policy on national and Nordic levels, acknowledging the importance of literature for cultural vitality.

The following recommendations for the improvement on the Sámi literary field are based on the experiences, attitudes and descriptions obtained from the participants of the report, several literary assessments (by the Sámi Council, the Sámi Parliament of Norway and the Sámi Parliament in Sweden) and on scholarly overviews of the Sámi literary production and library work. The aim of the recommendations is to have a tool to use when approaching Nordic and Sámi parliaments, educational bodies, Nordic and Sámi literary centres, funding bodies, cultural foundations, writers' and translators' associations, publishers, and other gatekeepers in the literary field.

The financial requirements for realising the recommendations in practice should be covered from an extra budget, and not from the existing budgets of Sámi institutions. Nordic governments should give sufficient priority to Sámi institutions when it comes to financial support and formal regulations.

- 1) Strengthening the role of Sámi literature on all levels of education**, e.g. including more Sámi literary texts in the curricula of majority and Sámi children in Nordic schools.
- 2) Offering more language-specific working, publication and promotion grants for Sámi authors.**
- 3) Introducing new ways of improving the visibility of Sámi literature inside and outside the Sámi community**, such as, for example, declaring March 23rd (the birthday of Nils-Aslak Valkeapää, or any other symbolic day the Sámi literary actors prefer) the official national day of Sámi literature in all the Nordic countries.
- 4) Strengthening the relationship of the young people to Sámi literature as readers and writers.** Special attention should be paid to young Sámi people outside the Sámi regions. E.g. Nomad library busses, library events, tours of writers and translators, creative writing classes and different online initiatives.
- 5) Establishing a transnational Sámi literature exchange and export institution** (like Norla, FILI, Swedish Literature Exchange) to coordinate Sámi translations, international exchanges and promotion, invitations to festivals etc. This organization could also function as the information centre for Sámi literature that would support the distribution of the books

and offer information of new works in the Nordic countries and internationally. As long as such an organization does not exist, it is important to assure the inclusion of Sámi literature in the existing national literary exchange organizations in Norway, Sweden and Finland.

**6) Supporting Sámi literary centres in the Nordic region**

- a) Optimising and stabilising the work of Sámi literary Centres in Sweden and Norway.
- b) Establishing Sámi literary centre in Finland

**7) Establishing regular literary events where Sámi authors and their Nordic readers can meet** (e.g., as part of book fairs, national literary festivals).

**8) Organising an annual Sámi literary contest with different categories:**

- a) for a short work in one of the Sámi languages (in any genre)
- b) for translations into one of the Sámi languages or translations from one of the Sámi languages
- c) for young writers and/ or books focused for young audience

**9) Strengthening of digital presence and the digital processing of Sámi languages and literature,** e.g. technical updates, apps, vlogs, e-books, websites of associations and individual authors, blogs.

**10) Supporting printed and open online literary magazines in all Sámi languages.**

**11) Establishing an open access Sámi literary archive containing originals and translations.** This platform could include folklore material, modern literature as well as lyrics and include the original version, the text in present orthography, the historical translation (as they were often bilingually published) and contemporary translations (see for inspiration: <http://www.balticsealibrary.info>).

**12) Strengthening the relations between Sámi and other indigenous authors around the world.**

**13) Publishing of canonical literary anthologies for poetry** (from yoik to rap), prose (from story telling to modern fiction) and drama (performative, dramatic texts) in various Sámi languages, and for Sámi literature written in or translated into the Nordic languages.

**14) Establishing regular meetings for Sámi literary scholars and Sámi authors with their translators.**

**15) Providing literary publications both to the local/Nordic promoters and to international promoters of Sámi literature** (e.g. literary journals, libraries, schools, literary centres in the Nordic and other countries, universities, translators). Supporting the work of the promoters.



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Report on the recommendations for the  
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