United Nations Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

EMRIP

Public Statement on the Passage of Amendments to the Sámi Parliament Act by the Parliament of Finland

23 June 2025

The Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) warmly welcomes the decision by the Parliament of Finland to adopt long-awaited amendments to the Sámi Parliament Act. This development marks a significant step forward in upholding the rights of the Sámi people and affirms Finland's commitment to international human rights standards.

EMRIP is especially pleased to see a positive outcome from its country engagement mission, which took place in Finland in 2018. Our Advisory Note from that mission offered technical advice grounded in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), focusing on the collective right to self-determination in relation to the Sámi Parliament's electoral roll, and the State's duty to engage in good faith negotiations with the Sámi Parliament.

We commend the Finnish authorities for legislative reforms that reflect these principles, through strengthened provisions on Sámi self-identification, the obligation to negotiate, and institutional autonomy.

While implementation will require ongoing care and vigilance, this legislative achievement represents meaningful progress in addressing long-standing human rights concerns. This exemplifies the critical role of legislative reform in achieving the objectives of the Declaration, in line with the recent EMRIP study.

EMRIP commends both the Sámi Parliament and the Government of Finland for their persistence and dialogue in achieving this result. We also pay tribute to the Sámi People, whose unwavering efforts and advocacy over more than 30 years have been vital in bringing us to this significant achievement.

We welcome the constructive forward-looking outcome of this process, to which the EMRIP country engagement has made a valuable contribution alongside the dedicated efforts of Indigenous Peoples and national stakeholders. EMRIP takes this opportunity to invite States and Indigenous Peoples to utilize the crucial and instrumental country engagement element of its mandate and calls for its continued and effective functioning during these difficult times of a UN liquidity crisis.