



STATEMENT: PARLIAMENT OF SÁMI VILLAGES IN FINLAND AWAITS RESPONSE FROM THE SÁMI PARLIAMENT

Neither the previous Sámi Parliament administration nor the one before it has responded to the contact request. The Parliament of Sámi Villages in Finland now hopes that the next administration will respond to the invitation for negotiations.

The Parliament convened at the beginning of July in connection with the Sámi Villages' Summer Days held in Kittilä. At the meeting, the Sámi Parliament's handling of the election process raised concern. While the re-run of the elections was seen as a step in the right direction, a large number of Sámi individuals who fulfill the so-called "Lapp criterion" under Section 3(2) of the current Sámi Parliament Act were once again excluded from the electoral roll.

The Parliament of Sámi Villages in Finland considers that in order to move forward, the Ministry of Justice must convene both the Sámi Parliament and the Parliament of Sámi Villages in Finland at a joint negotiating table. The acting Chair of the Sámi Parliament, Pirita Näkkäläjärvi, has herself emphasized the importance of dialogue and discussion. The next Chair now has the opportunity to fulfill those promises, as the Sámi Parliament has yet to respond to the negotiation invitation from the Parliament of Sámi Villages in Finland.

The Sámi Villages' Summer Days in Kittilä gathered a crowd of over one hundred participants. Held in conjunction with the Kittilä Fair, the event featured panel discussions, lectures, and workshops. The keynote speech was delivered by Sara Seppänen (Finns Party), a Member of Parliament from Lapland, who emphasized that no one else can define an individual's right to self-identify. "Do we need approval from those who do not value us?" Seppänen asked.

Panelists and guest experts included Sámi Parliament election front-runner Kari Kyrö from Inari, a legendary journalist Jari Porttila, and university researcher Juha Joona. This year, the event was organized by the Kittilä Sámi Village. In 2025, it will be hosted in Salla.

The Parliament of Sámi Villages in Finland is a cooperation body representing the Sámi villages in the historical region of Kemi Lapland. One of its core goals is to gain recognition—both from the Finnish state and internationally—for the Indigenous people of Central Lapland. In the meeting, Timo Helaniva from Kittilä was elected as First Vice Chair.

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