

VIRTUAL NORDIC EXPERT SEMINAR: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY & PROTECTION OF SÁMI TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE 22 OCTOBER 2020

MODERATED PANEL DISCUSSION ON CURRENT TOPICS AHEAD OF THE EVENT DURING PRESIDENCY OF NORDIC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS 2021

Magne Svineng, Sami Parliament in Norway (translated by John Utsi)

Co-operation between the Sami Parliaments- intangible cultural heritage as an example

I thank you for the invitation to talk about this important issue. I am happy that I and my colleagues from the Finnish and Swedish side get the opportunity to talk about the good cooperation that we have across the borders.

As the president of the Sami Parliament, Aili Keskitalo mentioned the Sami Parliamentary Council (SPC) has in its action plan decided to - - investigate the situation of Sami cultural heritage and traditional knowledge. This exiting project started when the Finnish Sami Parliament organized the Urban days in 2018 - - and I want to thank and praise the Finnish Sami Parliament for leading and starting up this process.

It is a vital principle that Sami and Sami representatives can participate and influence in matters that we are affected by. One example is “public domain”, or publicity, the distress that Sami feel of the consequences of this. Among other things this can lead to an unduly commercialization - - which can lead to obliteration or exploitation of a culture that already is in a fragile condition. - One example is when the Tirén archive collection in Sweden was published - and added it to the Memory of the world register of Unesco, this without consulting the Sami. A consequence of this is that we lose our right to our own culture heritage and property. This and similar examples highlight the structural challenges that are important to solve, and this can only be achieved on a Scandinavian and national level. If we don't protect our traditional knowledge and cultural resources we will lose them.

Our common objective in this cooperation in to elaborate joint Nordic principles on how to manage and benefit from Sami cultural heritage and traditional knowledge. We will examine what the needs of protection are and what means are in place today. The final objective is a

joint management of Sami cultural heritage and traditional knowledge. That we manage this together.

According to the action plan of the Sami Parliamentary Council a pre-project has started. This will go on until the end of this year and our intension is to make it a 3- year project where we together investigate this issues. We are analysing our systems and mapping different parts of Sápmi to see if there are existing common methods and activity models in place. We also map what and which areas needs protection and then we look at how existing day laws and international agreement respond to our needs.

One part of this is to look over in what way we could improve the cooperation across borders. Our starting point is that we ourselves estimate our needs and then look at how the legislation and international treaties respond to our self-determination, comprehension of property and principles of statutes.

In this phase of cooperation we think that many issues could be solved within the legal system of today, and for those that cannot be solved there is a need to find political solutions that can drive things forward. Here it is very important that this discussion is on Nordic level, as Aili mentioned, and we are very content that Finland and other Nordic countries has started to find solutions.

Today we are working with the structure of our joint project, how to finance and manage this project together. We also have to find answers to the questions that Aili Keskitalo mentioned and that our offices almost daily have to answer to. The questions area about who is entitled to utilize our traditional knowledge and cultural resources. This that we Sami have begun to take more responsibility of our traditional knowledge and cultural resources is connected to long term work with strengthening our identity and constructing our society. This will need a long time, the outside world must understand this, and the Sami society has to mature to this, but we are patience. It will take time, but we will succeed.

Even though this is a challenging issue we can see many possibilities in this. Building legal security also brings about more freedom for our art and the artists.

Improved legal security also gives the opportunity to develop our way of living in an sustainable way and with this it will be a support to our economic development and cultural endurance.

This important work has just started, both to strengthen the cooperation between the Sami Parliaments across borders and in the meantime secure the future for our cultural heritage.

Thank you / Giitu mu ovddas.