



Sámediggi
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Saemiedigkie
Sametinget

MINERALS AND MINES IN SÁPMI

THE VIEWPOINT OF THE
SWEDISH SAMI PARLIAMENT



The Viewpoint of the Swedish Sami Parliament on Minerals and Mines in Sápmi has been prepared in 2012-2014 and was adopted by the Plenary Assembly in Åre, Sweden on 20 May 2014.

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Introduction

We the Sami are the indigenous people of Sápmi (northern Scandinavia and the Cola peninsula). Our people have lived here since time immemorial, living on and managing the lands and waters with utmost respect. We are one with the landscape of Sápmi. Our lives – our trades and cultural expressions – adapt to maintain a flexible balance between what nature provides and what we can take without exhausting it.

Our deep relationship to nature is difficult to express in words. To live with and be able make a living off of what is provided creates an immediate relationship between us and nature – the animals and each other. We rely on a living relationship to Sápmi, our home. If we – or someone else – destroy nature, we also harm our culture.

The Sápmi environment is delicate, and sustaining its viability requires that we use it with great care. A long-term perspective and a sustainable way of life have always been the foundation of our traditional trades. If the natural conditions faltered in a certain area, the possibility to use alternative resources was available while the weakened area was given the chance to recover and renew itself.

Sápmi contains enormous natural resources of considerable natural and cultural value. We now stand before substantial pressure to extract the natural resources in the form of minerals, forests and energy exploitation. The way the Sami use the land is based mainly on using sustainable natural resources. For millennium, the Sami have lived off that which nature provided and developed a way of living by using but not depleting the natural resources. We wish to pass on this approach and these opportunities to coming generations.

To clarify the standpoint of the Sami Parliament on how the natural resources within Sápmi shall be managed and especially in relationship to minerals mining, this strategy has been produced on behalf of the Sami Parliament Assembly.

This strategy shall be considered as a political standpoint as well as a comment to the Swedish government and counties in their development work and to the authorities who in different ways decide on and follow issues pertaining to environment, business development, land-use planning, resource exploitation and permit management. It is also interesting for the mineral exploration and mining companies, in Sweden and abroad.

The Joint Direction We Chose

The Sami Parliament's environmental program Eallinbiras, which was adopted in 2009, states the direction of how we Sami see our lands and waters and how these shall be used. The principles and values stated in Eallinbiras are also the foundation of the Sami Parliament's view on the conditions for minerals extraction in Sápmi.

Our overall objective expressed in Eallinbiras is a viable and sustainable Sami living environment.

We wish to live in a viable Sápmi rooted in a sound nature and a living Sami culture. Man and nature shall have a long-term capability to renew themselves and sustainability to further develop – even in times of considerable changes. Both nature and culture in Sápmi shall feel enriching for the rest of the world. We believe that it is important that:

- areas particularly valuable for our culture and our trades are protected against infringement and other disturbances
- all operations are sustainable and run according to the precautionary principle
- precautionary and sustainable use is realized
- no additional large-scale exploitation is to take place
- the combined use of natural resources within the traditional Sami areas of settlement are in harmony with the ecological system within which the trades are carried out (since sustainable reindeer husbandry, hunting, fishing, gathering and farming depend on a long-term use of natural resources)
- the use and exploitation of land and water resources do not further deplete the needs of the Sami trades.

We believe that land and water resources in Sápmi are for the needs of our trades and the survival of our culture. In order to achieve this in relationship to the extraction of minerals and large-scale mining, great demands are set on changes in legislation, on authorities' implementation and practice in relationship to enforce rights and on the Sami Parliament's own work with questions of land use.

On 28 August, 2013, the Sami Parliament Plenum adopted the united statement "The Sami Parliament cannot accept continued exploitation of Sápmi" with demands that were sent to the Swedish government.¹

On 20 February, 2014, the Fourth Sami Parliamentary Conference adopted the Umeå Declaration², the theme of which was minerals exploitation.

The focus of this report lies on clarifying a few basic principles of the Sami rights of influence over the extraction of natural resources in Sápmi, which changes need to be made in the current mineral legislation and how the Sami Parliament shall work to carry out the suggestions laid out in this policy. (The Sámi Parliament's responsibility is not included in the English version.)

¹ www.sametinget.se/61416

² www.sametinget.se/73165

The Overall Standpoint of the Sami Parliament

All natural resources above and below ground within the traditional Sami land areas belong to the Sami people. This is clarified in, among others, article 26 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The right to self-determination is in its nature a collective right for a people and is therefore directly relevant to the management of natural resources. The right to self-determination follows Articles 1 and 27 of the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as Articles 3 and 4 of the Declaration of Indigenous Peoples.

The provisions of Article 27 of the UN Covenant grant indigenous peoples the right to protection of their culture. This is an absolute and protects the Sami in practicing their culture, religion and traditional trades, as well as the modern ways that the traditional trades are practiced and the areas and natural resources that make up the foundation of these trades.

According to the Minority Languages Act (2009:724), opportunities shall be promoted for the Sami to sustain and develop their culture. Especially stressed is the development of children's cultural identity. This law should be applied in processes pertaining to mineral exploitations.

The fundamental principle for indigenous peoples on the right to participation and influence in all parts of the decision-making process in accordance with the right to property is expressed in the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent. This principle must be regulated in relationship to the Minerals Act and the Environmental Code.

Free, Prior and Informed Consent

The principle of indigenous people's rights to free, prior and informed consent is based on that indigenous people have the right to say yes or no to operations that have an impact on their traditional land areas, before the operations start. Specifically, this means the following:

Free

- The stakeholders (the Sami Parliament, concerned Sami and concerned Sami reindeer-herding and economic districts) shall have been informed of their right to say yes or no.
- The indigenous people shall have accepted the decision-making process and work process that will be used in every operation.
- The information initiative responsibility lies with the company, the information shall be transparent and objective.
- The process shall be free from bribery or coercion.
- Meetings and decisions shall take place at locations and times and in the languages and formats determined by the Sami.
- Mediation shall be implemented if an agreement cannot be met.
- The company undertakes to not continue the process without the consent of the indigenous people.

Prior

- The information shall be provided as early as possible.
- Sufficient time must be provided to understand and analyse all relevant information and the consequences thereof.
- The decision-making process required in order to be able to submit their consent must be respected despite delay.

Informed

- Be objective, covering both the positive and negative consequences.
- Be complete, covering the spectrum of potential social, financial, cultural and environmental impacts as well as the impacts for the rights of the indigenous people.
- Be accessible, transparent, clear and in the language designated by the indigenous people.
- The indigenous people shall have the opportunity to be accompanied by advisors.
- The information shall be made available to all groups within the indigenous people.

Consent

- A freely given decision that may be a “Yes or a “No” to the proposed measure.
- The right to change one’s mind if new information comes to light.
- Shall be provided in the manner and through the decision-making process decided by the indigenous people.
- Not the same as consultations.
- Not indefinitely valid.

A consultation procedure based on the principle of free, prior and informed consent places great demands on nations, authorities and legislation that must be adapted. Free, prior and informed consent also places great demands on how those companies who want to establish operations in Sápmi conduct their work.

Convention on Biological Diversity

The Convention on Biological Diversity, CBD, is a very important international agreement that decrees how we shall relate to the environment and utilize our natural resources. The convention determines three main objectives: the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of the components of biological diversity and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. The convention includes, among others, provisions (Article 8j) on that the nations shall respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application, with the total picture of infringement on the Sami. It requires the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices. According to the Convention (Article 10c) the nations shall also protect and encourage customary use of biological resources in accordance with traditional cultural practices that are compatible with conservation or sustainable use requirements. On Sweden’s part, the convention concerns the Sami and compels Sweden to encourage the preservation and development of traditional Sami trades and culture. Reindeer husbandry is also a prerequisite for Sweden to be able to reach their environmental objective of a Magnificent Mountain Landscape.

In May 2000, the cooperating nations moved to adopt voluntary guidelines, Akwé Kon-voluntary guidelines, for the conduct of cultural, environmental and social impact assessments regarding developments proposed to take place on, or which are likely to impact on, sacred sites and on lands and waters traditionally occupied or used by indigenous communities. The Akwé: Kon guidelines play a key role for the nations to be able to live up to, among other, Article 8j in the CBD.

The Swedish Minerals Act

Today's Minerals Act is a purely exploitation law, where the intention of the legislation is to increase the knowledge of the mineral assets and to provide the country's and world's demand for mineable minerals.

The rights and interests of the Sami are not provided for with today's legislation. The Minerals Act (1991:45) came into force on 1 July 1992 and thus replaced both the Mining Act (1974:342) and the Act (1974:890) concerning Certain Mineral Deposits (the old Minerals Act). After that, there have been some changes, among others in 2005.

Sweden has not claimed proprietorship to all ore even if historically there have been proposals to such. Ever since the so-called "Crown portion" was abolished, neither has the general public any claim on any direct financial compensation for mining activities.

In the Minerals Act, a consideration has been made between the interests of land owners, prospectors and communities. Today's legislation does not ensure or respect reindeer husbandry's and other Sami's rights to land and water. The Swedish Sami Parliament cannot therefore either be liable for that the minerals extraction in Sápmi is conducted in such a way that we preserve a sustainable living environment in Sápmi in the future.

The Swedish Sami Parliament demands that the Minerals Act be changed and adjusted to the civil rights of the Sami in accordance with the basic principles that the Sami Parliament highlights in this document, especially in relationship to the rights of property.

It is also necessary that connected legislation, such as Sweden's Environmental Code and Planning and Building Act are provided with equivalent changes. The Environmental Code should be strengthened. A comprehensive view of the Sami tradition, culture, reindeer husbandry's and other Sami use of the land is required. It is therefore important the Sami reindeer-herding and economic districts as well as other concerned Sami are included in the process.

While waiting for the ratification and implementation in Swedish legislation of ILO 169 (Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989) and the Nordic Sami Covenant, the Swedish Sami Parliament feels that there shall be a moratorium on all exploitation in Sápmi.

- The Sami Parliament shall act for a long-term sustainable community development in Sápmi
- The Sami Parliament shall own the right to veto against exploitation
- Concerned Sami shall own the right to veto against exploitation
- Concerned Sami reindeer-herding and economic districts shall own the right to veto against exploitation
- The process shall proceed in accordance with the principle of free, prior and informed consent.

Before any exploitation is permitted, the Sami Parliament, concerned Sami and concerned Sami districts shall be in agreement about whether exploitation can be executed.

- Compensation for damage is passed on to rights owners. The party suffering damages shall be compensated for the loss of for example reindeer grazing grounds, fishing waters and hunting grounds.
- A minerals fee for exploitation (royalties) shall be placed in a fund for reindeer husbandry purposes, other Sami trades and Sami community development.

These items should be investigated and developed in a larger process. Concerned Sami and Sami districts shall be interpreted in a wider perspective. In cases where development is planned, consent is required from the Sami Parliament, concerned Sami and concerned reindeer-herding and economic districts. If any party says “no”, then this stops the exploitation plans.



Proposals to Change the In-force Minerals Act

Exploration Permit

The basis for granting an exploration permit today is that these activities shall be able to be carried out with the least possible damage to both nature and the cultural environment. Although, experience shows that more comprehensive exploration activities result in disturbances in reindeer husbandry and other Sami trades. Those agencies supplying the permits have very little knowledge, least of all the exploration companies, of the consequences of the impact those working with exploration have on reindeer husbandry and other ways the Sami use the land.

According to the Convention on Biological Diversity, CBD, the traditional knowledge of the indigenous people is to be heeded and taken into consideration, and it should not be possible to prospect without the consent of the indigenous people.

The Sami Parliament feels that before an application for an exploration permit can be drawn up, the prospector must consult the Sami Parliament, concerned Sami and concerned Sami reindeer-herding and economic districts. Prior to the consultation, the prospector shall draw up a report on the planned operations and in what way they shall affect reindeer husbandry and Sami interests as well as land and landscape impacts, impacts on the cultural environment, hunting and fishing.

Especially important is to report on surrounding exploration permits and current exploitations that already have an impact on the use of the land. Such a first report is not meant to correspond to the demands of an environmental impact report, but shall be enough information so that the Sami Parliament, concerned Sami, concerned Sami districts as well as the Mining Inspectorate of Sweden can be able to take a position on the exploration permit. All too often, an exploration permit is granted without taking any consideration to the impact of the exploration activities on reindeer husbandry.

The report, together with an approval or rejection of the operations from the Sami Parliament, concerned Sami and concerned Sami districts, shall accompany the application to the Mining Inspectorate of Sweden.

In their assessment of permit for exploration, the Inspectorate must take into consideration previously submitted exploration permits within the same Sami district and their collective impact.

If the Sami Parliament, concerned Sami and concerned Sami districts approve the operations, the prospector and the Sami district as well as the Sami Parliament must be in agreement about the conditions of the work plan about taking consideration to Sami interests before it is sent to the Inspectorate and before it comes into force.

All changes to the conditions of the work plan while prospecting is taking place shall be approved of by the Sami Parliament, concerned Sami and concerned Sami reindeer-herding and economic districts.

The prospector must also set so high financial guarantees that the costs for the measures are covered. Early on, there should be a guarantee of decontamination and after-treatment.

Exploitation Concession

An exploitation concession can only be granted after consensus from the Sami Parliament, concerned Sami and concerned Sami districts.

In their assessment of an exploration permit, the Mining Inspectorate of Sweden must take into consideration all previously-submitted exploration permits, other exploitations, other land infringements and the cumulative effects of these within the same Sami district and their overall impact.

A complete environmental impact report (EIA) concerning the impact of the operations on reindeer husbandry and other Sami land use shall be highlighted already at this stage. An environmental impact assessment on the use of land is not complete without social and cultural impact assessments. There is a need of a comprehensive view based on the Sami Parliament Eallinbiras program. The consequences for the entire program as well as the Sami community in general need to be investigated.

An EIA in this context is not only material for assessments by permit-granting agencies, but shall also be a support for the concerned Sami and concerned Sami districts to make their own decision on free, prior and informed consent or not. Although, it shall be duly noted that it is concerned Sami and concerned Sami districts that on their own decide on whether an EIA needs to be drawn up in order to be able to come to a decision on the matter.

Compensation for Minerals and Infringement

Companies that mine mineral resources within traditional Sami land areas shall set aside funds.

The rights holders – the Sami Parliament, concerned Sami and concerned Sami reindeer-herding and economic districts – own the right to a portion of the profits (royalties) from mineral and ore mining in accordance with the Article 26 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Today the property owners have the right to a mineral compensation of 1.5 ppm of the calculated value of the ore that has been mined during the year. If there are several properties within the concession area, the compensation is determined according to each property's portion of the area. The company also pays 0.5 ppm to the government. All together, the company pays 2 ppm based on the mined ore.

Indigenous people's local community property rights to land grant a right to deny or accept access to their individual traditional areas. This means that such usually connects a coming grant of access with the requirement of a portion of the income from the use of natural resources. Usually the profit sharing for the use of natural resources in indigenous people's areas is included in an agreement.

The Sami Parliament feels that a portion of the funding from the companies operating within Sápmi shall be granted to Sami needs. This shall pertain to new establishments, current exploitations from now and in the future as well as retroactively.

The Sami Parliament feels that such funds shall reside in a fund under the Sami Parliament for reindeer husbandry and other Sami trades and Sami community development.

In addition, the rights holder shall be compensated for damages. Loss of for example reindeer foraging areas, fishing waters and hunting grounds shall be compensated to the injured party.

How the Sami Use Their Land

In 1977, the Swedish Riksdag pronounced that the Sami as an indigenous people in Sweden hold a special position. Sweden's overall objective for the Sami politics are for now to act for a living Sami cultural environment based on ecologically-sustainable reindeer husbandry and other Sami trades. Over time, there have been developments in the traditional methods for utilizing as well as the knowledge about natural resources.

Reindeer husbandry is carried out on nearly half of Sweden's land area. Reindeer husbandry is considered to be the foundation of the Sami culture with everything the reindeer have ever provided. The Sami hold the rights to reindeer husbandry.

According to the Reindeer Husbandry Act, the right to conduct reindeer herding in Sweden belongs to the Sami population. The right to reindeer herding is included in the category of special rights to property and is valid independent of agreement and is not limited in time. Equivalent to right to property, the right to reindeer herding is protected by the Swedish Constitution. Reindeer husbandry is one of the foundations of the Sami culture.

Other Sami trades such as duodji (handicrafts), hunting, fishing, Sami tourism, Sami food, Sami design, media, Sami farming are also included in the Sami culture and their customs with strong connections to land and water.

Many Sami live in an immediate and close relationship with nature. The Sami use of the land is based for the most part on using renewable resources. For thousands of years, the Sami have lived off that which the landscape provided and developed a way of living by using, but not exhausting, the natural resources. We want to pass on this way of thinking and its possibilities to coming generations. Many Sami do not live in direct relationship to nature but still cherish and practice the cultural customs and values. Environmental long-term thinking and managing natural resources is a central part of the development of the Sami culture and an ecological and financially sound community is the utmost guarantee for preserving the high environmental and cultural values found within Sápmi.

The Sami point of view on how natural resources should be used is a model for others who wish to find a suitable approach to how land and water should be used. In many ways, the majority community can learn from the way the Sami think. In these times when we all must find new ways to live to prevent climate change, the Sami approach can be a model for others. In this context, the Sami Parliament wishes to, in accordance with environmentally sustainable and long-term thinking, point out the need to invest more in taking advantage of already mined metals and recycling, rather than increased exploitation and new mining.

The environment, seen from the Sami perspective, is about the relationship between nature, man and the animals. All questions that touch on the relationship between them are environmental questions.

The Sami environment can also be seen from a landscape perspective. There are relationships and contexts in nature that have had and still have great meaning in the Sami community. Access to clean water and undisturbed land is a prerequisite for reindeer husbandry and other Sami trades and a viable Sami culture. The Sami Parliament's view on environmental questions is developed in the Sami Parliament's living environment program Eallinbiras.

Reindeer husbandry must be seen from a comprehensive point of view as a living and vital part of the Sami culture. Reindeer husbandry also depends on flexibility. The reindeer are steered by weather and surrounding disturbing factors. The reindeer need to have a variety of foraging grounds, where they can move around depending on the current weather conditions. This is an essential condition for both the well-being of the reindeer as well as the economic situation of the reindeer herder. The flexibility means that the reindeer herder may need to change the time for when a grazing area can or cannot be used, the way the migration shall be carried out and which route shall be chosen. The Sami reindeer-herding and economic district is also steered by set demands on orderly reindeer herding and to live up to environmental demands that are regulated in the Reindeer Husbandry Act. Reindeer herding and the reindeer are a condition for Sweden to be able to live up to the environmental objective of a Magnificent Mountain Landscape.

It is vital that the Sami land and waters are managed so that the needs of the Sami to use them for reindeer herding, hunting, fishing, culture, spirituality as well as other areas, are provided for first hand.

Today there is no collective picture of how the Sami use their land. To increase understanding, it is important that all parties in an exploitation case take part in the current research that illustrates how reindeer are impacted by disturbances. It is important to see the effects of disturbances both on a regional level and on cumulative, long-term effects. Many Sami districts feel that their lands are so incredibly pressed that they cannot withstand any further exploitation.

There are many Sami outside Sami reindeer-herding and economic districts that use land and waters to make a living through hunting, fishing and farming. They must also be ensured their rights to land and water. Great consideration taken to these is a demand. Even these voices must be heard in this context.

The Sami lands also contain the Sami cultural history and a spiritual dimension. The Sami spirituality is reflected in, for example, a large portion of the village names and names in the terrain bear witness to the Sami spiritual connection to the land (holy mountains and other places). This is expressed in Article 25 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which says that indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard.

Appendix 1 The Mining Inspectorate of Sweden

Exploration, exploitation, prospecting and mining all require adhering to strict laws and regulations, which of course vary depending on which country they are carried out. The Mining Inspectorate of Sweden is the agency responsible for decisions concerning permits for exploration and mining. Information about the processes, regulations, laws are available on their website <http://www.sgu.se/en/mining-inspectorate/>.

Appendix 2 Responsible Mining Enterprises

Within international law there is also a close connection to the ethical guidelines, which many international financial institutes and larger companies commit to. The work with CSR (Cooperate Social Responsibility) is becoming increasingly more interesting, particularly for the slightly larger companies. The World Bank does not approve, for example, investments in an indigenous peoples area if a social consequence analysis has not been carried out.

In working to support a sustainable approach in relationship to the Sami and other indigenous peoples in the Arctic, CSR constitutes a very important instrument.

OECD guidelines

The OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises are common recommendations to enterprises from 39 governments. The guidelines were negotiated in 1976 and have been renegotiated five times since, the latest of which was in 2011.

The guidelines make up a part of the OECD Declaration on International Investment and Multinational Enterprises. The OECD member countries have committed to promoting the guidelines by, among others, establishing a National Contact Point (NCP). The Swedish government has stated that they expect Swedish enterprises to follow the OECD guidelines.

The OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises contains among other items:

General – Respect human rights, contribute to sustainable development and the education of the employees.

Information – Provide good information about their operations as well as products and services, both financially as others.

Environment – Strive for continuous improvement. Protect the environment, health and safety, for example, through environmental management systems and to apply the precautionary principle.

Develop and supply products and services without inappropriate environmental impact.

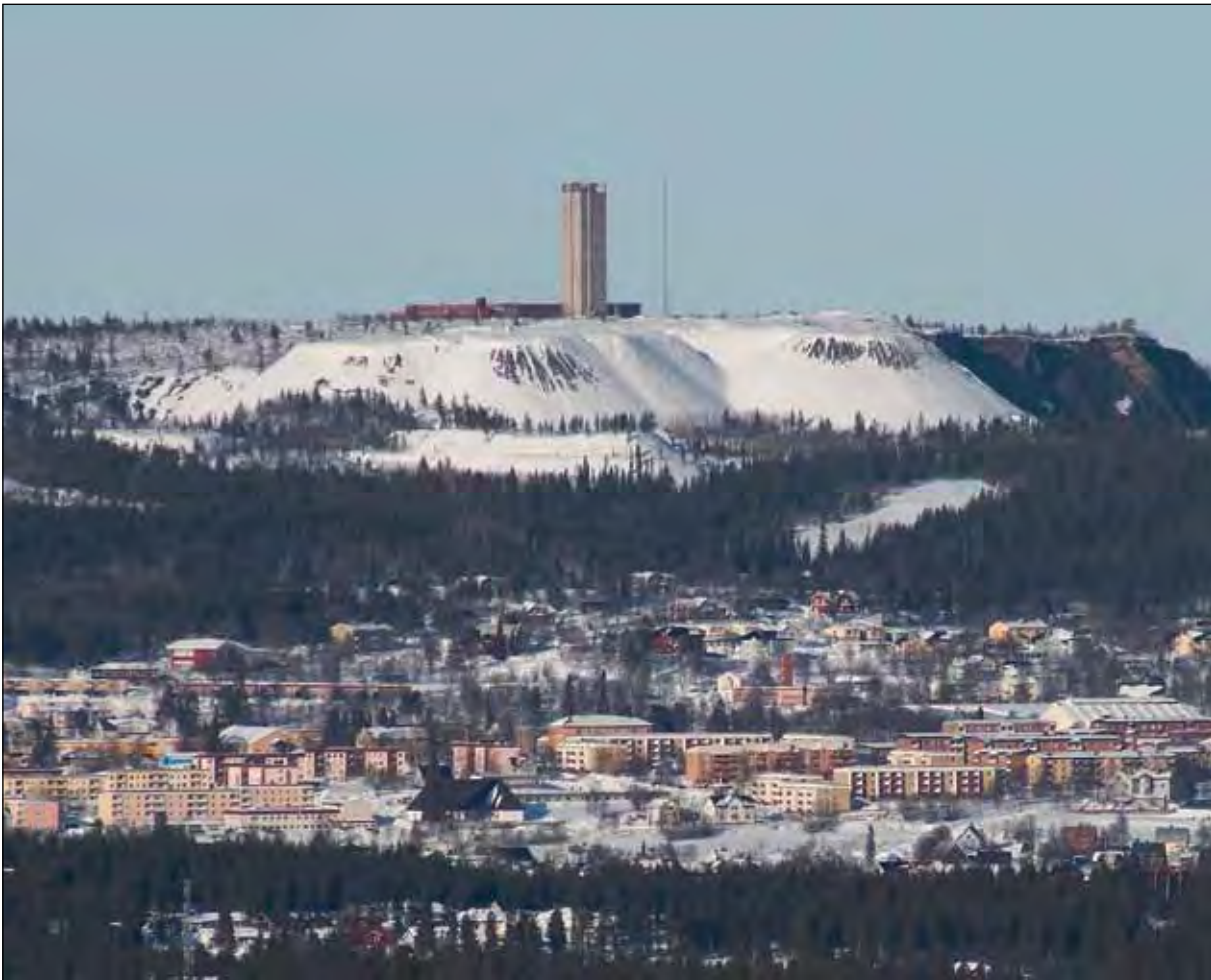
Regarding the respect for human rights, enterprises shall apply guidelines with appropriate care regarding the risk of having a negative effect on human rights. Special caution is attributed operations that have an impact on the rights of indigenous peoples.

Regardless of whether or not national legislation takes enough consideration to the human rights, the enterprises shall as a minimum apply the Convention on Human Rights, Convention on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Concerning the rights of indigenous peoples, refer specially to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

International standards

There are a great many different standards, guidelines etc. for enterprises to commit to, for example the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). Some of the general aspects for responsible mining operations can be summarized with:

- Focus on social and environmental impacts, which are investigated before operations begin. Such investigations can take up to two years before they are complete.
- No social or environmental consequences are to be held secret for those who are affected by the operations. Groups of people affected, including local communities, own the right to independent technically and judicially knowledgeable advisors to be able to participate and cooperate with the impact investigations.
- If those who are affected by the planned operations do not want the mining project to continue, this is to be respected by the company.
- Mining operations shall not have an all too extensive impact on biological diversity or land and water resources.
- Responsible mining companies uphold all international conventions and guidelines regarding their social and environmental responsibilities.
- It must be ensured that all relevant costs for the mining operations' social and environmental impacts on the local community are reported.
- Necessary guarantees must be set so that the social and environmental obligations held by the company can be carried out.



Appendix 3 Minerals and Mines within Sápmi Today

Minerals

The mining industry in Sweden estimates increasing their production of metal ores by 150 % between 2011 and 2020 – from about 60 million tonnes to almost 160 million tonnes. A similar trend can be traced foremost in Finland. Even Norway predicts a development, even though they are from rather low initial levels. There are quite a few projects planned all over Scandinavia, mainly concerning iron ore but also base metals, and in Finland, precious metals.

Mining industries in parts of Sápmi – the counties of Norrbotten and Västerbotten

The employment in mines concerns mainly LKAB's iron ore mines in the municipalities of Kiruna and Gällivare as well as in Boliden's copper mine in Aitik, in Gällivare municipality. Västerbotten has more active mines than in Norrbotten, but the volume produced and numbers employed are less. There are advanced plans for new mines in both Västerbotten and Norrbotten. Of Sweden's total ore production, more than 96 % comes from the mines in this region. Under 2011, there were 13 mines operating in Sweden, whereof 10 are in the region – 4 mines in Norrbotten and 6 mines in Västerbotten.

National and regional minerals strategy work

National minerals strategy

During 2012, the Swedish Government worked on producing a strategy for long-term and sustainable use of Sweden's mineral resources, as an answer to the comment the European Commission presented on an integrated vision for the challenges on the raw produce market. The work has been carried out by the Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications together with other ministries. The Geological Survey of Sweden has assisted the government in preparing the Minerals Strategy.

Regional minerals strategy for the counties of Norrbotten and Västerbotten

The County Administrative Boards of Norrbotten and Västerbotten have jointly produced a proposal to a common regional minerals strategy for the two counties. The bearing vision of the minerals strategy is that the counties of Norrbotten and Västerbotten in a decisive manner shall contribute to that Sweden shall be the world-leading mining nation. The Sami Parliament wishes to point out that the strategy focuses on the development the mining sector has shown over the past few years, but omits the fact that the entire mining sector is characterized by returning cycles with considerably lower profitability due to the instability and vulnerability of the minerals market. The dependency on business cycles is of vital importance for the local communities that are affected by the mining projects, most of all from a long-term sustainable perspective, where the environmental and social consequences can be far more costly than what the mining project can eventually produce.

The Sami Parliament feels that the regional strategy omits argumentation about short-term profits in the form of employment opportunities versus the social costs that are generated if the mining project is not long-term. There should be a larger analysis of the impact on opposing interests and in which cases and under what conditions the mining project can be approved of from a comprehensive point of view. It is also important to point out that the Sami trades contribute to both immediate employment opportunities and secondary work/activity opportunities to many of the small communities in both Västerbotten and Norrbotten counties.