

Comments received for
ISO 639-3 Change Request
2015-046

Outcome: Accepted after appeal
Effective date: May 27, 2016



SIL International ISO 639-3 Registration Authority

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Registration Authority decision on Change Request no. 2015-046: to create the code element [ovd] Övdalian .

The request to create the code [ovd] Övdalian has been reevaluated, based on additional information from the original requesters and extensive discussion from outside parties on the IETF list. The additional information has strengthened the case and changed the decision of the Registration Authority to accept the code request. In particular, the long bibliography submitted shows that Övdalian has undergone significant language development, and now has close to 50 publications. In addition, it has been studied extensively, and the academic works should have a distinct code to distinguish them from publications on Swedish. One revision being added by the Registration Authority is the added English name “Elfdalian” which was used in most of the extensive discussion on the IETF list.

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May 4, 2016

This is an appeal by the group responsible for the IETF language subtags to the ISO 639 RA to reconsider and revert their earlier decision and to assign an ISO 639-3 language code to Elfdalian.

The undersigned members of the group responsible for the IETF language subtag are concerned about the rejection of the Elfdalian language. There is no doubt that its linguistic features are unique in the continuum of North Germanic languages. The reasons supporting rejection are weak and invoke mainly arguments from outside of the field of linguistics. These arguments, originating from one particular Swedish governmental agency, are successfully rebutted in the other contributions, all of which support the addition of Elfdalian to ISO 639-3. The rebuttal documents (given in http://www-01.sil.org/iso639-3/cr_files/PastComments/CR_Comments_2015-046.pdf) provide convincing evidence that Elfdalian is not merely a dialect, but rather is as distinct from Swedish as Norwegian is (indeed, as distinct from Swedish as Icelandic is); those have separate language codes. No reasoned responses to those documents and their evidence was provided by the ISO 639 RA.

We understand that the Swedish government considers it a dialect of Swedish, but that seems to be a political decision, not a linguistic one. Certainly, Elfdalian is influenced by the national language, Swedish, just as Frisian is influenced by Dutch. But its grammar and phonology are clearly distinct (vowels are not lengthened in open syllables, medial /ð/ and /ɣ/ and Old Norse nasal vowels are retained, and four cases (nominative, accusative, genitive, dative) are preserved at least in definite nouns. The theoretical categorization about “Abstandsprache” vs “Aufbausprache” given in Kristine Zach’s MA thesis are not convincing given the actual linguistic data. Elfdalian has archaic features as well as innovative features, and is unique, being closer to Icelandic and Faroese in many ways than it is to Swedish.

We ask the ISO 639 RA to consider this. Elfdalian is a unique and independent language from Swedish as can easily be demonstrated by its phonology and morphology. The request for a language tag for Elfdalian was not made in order to establish it or give it status vis à vis any political process in Sweden. The request for a language tag for Elfdalian was to enable texts written in Elfdalian to be tagged as such.

It appears to us that the RA has evaluated the sociolinguistic status of Elfdalian in the territory of its speakers, rather than the linguistic characteristics of the language itself. If such a criterion were commonly applied, many minority languages might not have language tags at all. We believe that what the RA ought to have done is to recognize the fact that Elfdalian *is* a language, that it is not identical to or a dialect of Swedish, and to assign it a three-letter code for the identification of its name.

Our aim is to persuade the RA to reverse its decision and issue a code element. We would like the RA to recognize that it is “linguistic identity” which matters for Elfdalian, to the extent that such identity supersedes any political or diplomatic considerations for that language.

There is a legitimate user need for a language subtag for Elfdalian. Up until now, these have always been supplied by ISO 639-3. However, there is the possibility in BCP47 for registration of a language sub tag that is not based on ISO 639-3, and it has been suggested that that process be initiated. We do not wish to do this because:

- (a) There is the possibility of conflict or redundancy if the RA later approves a code element.
- (b) Some processes are incompatible with 5- to 8-letter language subtags, which would not be beneficial to Elfdalian data.
- (c) While it is an option for BCP 47, it would decouple BCP 47 from ISO 639-3 in a way which neither we nor the ISO 639 RA may want.

But we have no recourse but to consider it, if the situation does not change. It would be far better

for all users of BCP 47 and ISO 639-3 if this step were not taken, but that could depend on speedy action by the ISO 639 RA and the intent and needs of the requester. Thus we write to the ISO 639 RA in appeal, and strongly request that the language code be added to ISO 639 within two months of the receipt of this mail, to avoid this situation.

Michael Everson (BCP 47 Language Subtag Reviewer)
Mats Blakstad
John Cowan
Martin Dürst
Doug Ewell
Luc Pardon

NOTE: The Ethnologue previously had a code “dlc” for what one may suppose could now be described as a “macrolanguage”, Dalecarlian. The code “dlc” was removed when ISO 639-3 was implemented. The concept of “macrolanguage” can be very useful where it indicates, for instance, an orthography that is intended to serve a number of closely-related languages. N’Ko is an example: a compromise literary dialect used by a speakers of a number of Manden languages. In the case of the area called Dalecarlia, there are a number of dialects related to Elfdalian, but research has shown that all of those have very small numbers of speakers, and that none of them has established language associations or attempted revitalization activities. Mutual intelligibility between these dialects is closer than some of the speakers would probably credit if asked. There is no “Dalecarlian” per se, however, and Elfdalian will likely prove to be a magnet in the event that speakers of the other dialects aim for revitalization. In any case, only one three-letter code has been requested, for one language in active use. Other codes can be added later for other languages if required. Note, however, that in modern usage, “Dalecarlian” can refer to a (slight) dialect of modern Swedish. The situation several hundred years ago was of course different. In any case, the old “dlc” and the modern dialect group “Dalecarlian” is not relevant to Elfdalian.

An extensive bibliography is attached.

This list has been made with information from the [library in Älvdalen](#), the [music school in Älvdalen](#), [Ulm Dalska](#), several linguists and the library of [Institute for Language and Folklore](#). If you have corrections or additions to make, please forward them to me: Mats Blakstad <mats.gbproject[A]gmail.com>

Notes:

- Those marked with * are contained at the [library in Älvdalen](#)
- Those marked with ** are contained at the library of [Institute for Language and Folklore](#) (*Institutet för språk och folkminne*)
- In English literature the language is referred to both as Elfdalian, Elvdalian and Övdalian.

Books:

- * *Dalsk min Pär og Anna* by Pell Birgitta Andersson and Ulla Schutt. Picture dictionary for kids
- * *Påitjin so int willd go daiti skaulan* by Birgitta Pell Andersson. Picture dictionary for kids
- * *Rattsjin* by Kerstin Ekman, novel.
- * *Juanneswaundsjiła* (Gospel of John) translated by Lars Steensland. 1989.
- Markuswaundsjiła*. (Gospel of Mark) translated by Lars Steensland. Lund 2013.
- Lukaswaundsjiła*. (Gospel of Luke) translated by Lars Steensland. Lund 2015.
- * *Kunundsin kumb* by Hjalmar Larsson, a reading book in Elfdalian / Övdalian
- * ** *Mumunes Masse* by Rut Puck Olsson, 1987
- * ** *Mier um Masse* by Rut Puck Olsson, 1987
- * *Öwdalswaisur - bod gambler og nyer fro ymsum byum jän sockin* by Älvdalens hembygdsförening (Älvdalen home district association). Poems in Elfdalian / Övdalian
- * *Sju daer min Rod - en brindkäv fro Övdalim* by Björn Rhenström. Seven text booklets (one for each day of the week), also as audio books on CD.
- ** *Trair byönnner frå Övdalim* by Rhenström, Björn. Älvdalen 2006. 110 pages.
- * ** *Lisslprinsn* (The Little Prince) by Antoine de Saint-Exupery. Children's book with simple text. 1st edition in 2007, 2nd edition 2015
- * *Gretakluässa* by Sofia Alfredsson. Picture book for children.
- * ** 10 picture book series for children [Byönn-Byöker](#) by Björn Rhenström; *Trulldsietär, Barin og Watugrylla, Emili bākär, Emil og Lisa - Nor ulum wid läkä?, Ukin ar rennt o skaidum jär, Guänna, Barin, Braudstien, let trulldsästbuäd, len dag auto sjumm*

* 6 children books translated by Inga-Britt Petersson; *Mamma Mu fisstjer, Mamma Mu klaiv i traim, Juolnåtä i stollä, Mamma Mu byddjer ien kåja, Mamma Mu åk ruttskan, Juolä i Byllerbyn*

Elin, Elvira og yönse by Pell Birgitta Andersson. Children book.

Övdalska i fikkformat - booklet made by Ulum Dalska, 16 pages.

Somordågå i Brindbjärr by Pell Birgitta Andersson

* *Tekster* (28 p), *Uärdlistur og kommentarer* (28 p), *Grammatik Fösyöksautgav* (44 p); 3 booklets from Ulum Dalska.

* *Öwdalswaisur og odrer* by Ragnar Forslund. Contains 41 set to music songs in Elfdalian

** *Nog Övdalswaisur bod gambler og nyer fro ymsum byum järi sockin*. Älvdalen 1961. 42 pages.

Magazine:

* [Tidningen Ulum Dalska](#) (renamed "Dalskum" in 2008), a magazine from the local language association, published 2 times a year. The local library in Älvdalen have all copies from 1992 - 2014, 45 copies together (but lack some of the most recent publications)

[Skansvakten](#) from Älvdalen home district association is published once a year every midsummer, for more than 100 years. Some publications contain Elfdalian texts, scientific texts about Elfdalian, and others.

Songs/music/audio:

* *Saga i folkton* by Älvdalens Spelmanslag. Cassette tapes. 3 songs in Elfdalian.

* *Dikt och ton från Älvdalen* by Rune Westlin m.fl. Contains 8 songs in Elfdalian

* *Upi gron sät aikuonn* published Ulum Dalska (the local language association). CD with 22 songs in Elfdalian. Translations of Swedish children songs.

[Dier so kwädo](#). Älvdalingarna 1972 (Fyra skilling, FSP 25-01) LP. 6 songs in Elfdalian.

Mitt nya liv by Ewa Nylander 1974, 1976 (Round up, LPPM 40). LP. 2 songs in Elfdalian.

[Gambellieker](#) by Kristina Cederwall, Lena Willemark, Lena Werf 1982 (Amigo AMLP 707) LP. 2 songs in Elfdalian.

[Låtar från Älvdalen](#) by Älvdalingarna, Älvdalens dragspelklupp, Älvdalens spelmanslag 1985 (Round up LPRO 74) LP. 2 songs in Elfdalian.

* [När som gräset det vajar](#) by Lena Willemark 1989 (Amigo AMLP 722) LP. 2 songs in Elfdalian.

Visor och låtar med Älvdalingarna 1991 (Cassette tape) (Public Music) Cassette tape with 3 songs in Elfdalian.

* [Frifot](#) by Lena Willemark, Per Gudmundsson, Ale Möller 1991 (Caprice CAP 21383) 5 songs

* Frifot Järven 1996 (Caprice CAP 21462) CD. 3 songs in Elfdalian.

* Övdalsfuäk, [På en fåbod i barndomens dar](#) 1999 (TE99) CD. 4 songs in Elfdalian.

* Lena Willemark, *Windogur 2000* (Amigo AMCD 742) CD. 7 songs in Elfdalian.

Övdalsfuäk, [Vänskap](#) 2001 (TE01). Cassette tape. 4 song in Elfdalian.

* Frifot, Sluring 2003 (Amigo AMCD 751) CD. 1 song in Elfdalian.

* Frifot, Flyt (Amigo AMLP 762 (utgiven 2007) CD. 1 song in Elfdalian.

* Lena Willemark, *Älvdalens elektriska* 2006 (Amigo) CD. 1 song in Elfdalian.

Egon Egon Mattsson 2006 (EGON02) CD. 1 song in Elfdalian

* *Från Älvdalen till Nashville* by Larz-Kristerz, contains 1 song [Du raiter upp mig](#) [\[text\]](#) (an Elfdalian version of “You raise me up” translated by Lena Egardt)

* *Visor och låtar* by Älwdalingarna (1991). Cassette tape with 1 song [Kolmarksvisan](#) by Lena Egardt

[Oðerwais](#) by Lena Egardt. A CD with live recording of a musical entirely in Elfdalian that was held in 2004. ODCD 001. 9 songs in Elfdalian.

Trees of light ([Lyöstraini](#)) by Lena Willemark, Anders Jormin and Karin Nakagawa. A CD where Japanese traditional 25-stringed koto. Contains 7 melodies with lyrics in Elfdalian / Övdalian. [EMC Records 2406 \(2015\)](#).

[Blåferdi](#) (The Blue Journey) by Lena Willemark. Solo album, Brus&Knaster AB Brus 041 (2016). CD. 7 songs in Elfdalian / Övdalian.

Erland Wahlstrom (1925-1984) was a famous and popular singers and entertainer in Älvdalen. He was born in the village of Arnas but grew up in Loka. He wrote many songs mainly in Elfdalian. The recordings where he sings his songs are private, he never gave out any records. One song, [Drainggwaisa](#), can be found on youtube. In Ragnarsson Forslund book *Övdalswaisur og odrer*, you can find several of his songs on Elfdalian. He also wrote some songs in Swedish.

Video:

Wir bellum by Mats Brolin, a video documentary. Stockholm Filmcentrum [1997] (VHS) (59 min.). Photo: Erik Strömdahl ; music: Verf Lena Egardt, Kjell Tomsson ; narration and translation: Las Jakobsson. Subtitles in Swedish.

Dictionaries, grammars, lists:

- * *Älvdalska växtnamn - förr och nu* (Elfdalian plant names past and present) by Lars Steensland
 - * *Fågelnamn och fågelliv i Älvdalen med omnejd* (Bird names in Elfdalian / Övdalian and birdlife in Älvdalen vicinity) by Lars Steensland
 - * *Liten älvdalsk-svensk och svensk-älvdalsk ordbok* by Lars Steensland
 - * *Material till en älvdalsk ordbok* by Lars Steensland. 2010.
 - * *Älvdalsk grammatik* by Bengt Åkerberg. Mora 2012. 605 s. ISBN; 978-91-633-9251-1 ; 91-633-9251-8. A grammar, but also contains 23 poems written by himself and 8 others from Älvdalen, and 5 poems (translated into Elfdalian) by; Emily Dickinson, Gunnar Ekelöf, Eeva Kilpi, Maria Wine, and Britt G Hallqvists version of hymn number 200 in the Swedish Hymnal.
- Grammatik* by Bengt Åkerberg 2004
- Var åvå dier ferid?* by Lars Steensland. 235 s. 2006. Elvdalian / Övdalian names of places outside Älvdalen.
- Conspectus lexici linguæ dalekalicæ* by Arborelius, Olof Ulric. Uppsala 1813. Dictionary.
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Other use of the language worth mentioning:

Inscription in Elfdalian written in rune script since the 16th century until 20th century. (Piotr Garbacz 2010: 30). Further reading also on [Wikipedia](#).

The oldest known text of any length written in Övdalian dates from the beginning of the 17th century and is an 870 word passage in a historical drama (Prytz 1622), in which Övdalian has been used to render the conversation between farmers in Upper Dalarna and the future Swedish king Gustav Vasa.

(Piotr Garbacz 2010 : 30)

[From 17th century], we have but a few more texts in Övdalian, all rather short (Björklund 1956: 30-49). Worth mentioning is the Övdalian sample given in Eenbergh (1693) that consists of a translation of the Christmas gospel. Other brief texts in Övdalian date from the 18th century, among them a dialogue and a short language sample printed in Näsman (1733), and a text given in Arborelius (1813), the previous one reprinted in Lundell (1936: 117–118). Finally, there are a number of glossaries of Övdalian from the time between the end of the 17th century and 1768 (Björklund 1956: 45–49)

(Piotr Garbacz 2010 : 30) Further reading: Björklund 1956, Steensland 2006, s. 227, Garbacz 2010, s 30.

The collection of Övdalian text samples from the 20th century is much larger. Most of the texts are stored in the library of The Department of Dialectology in Uppsala, which is part of The Institute of Language and Folklore (Swe: Institutet för språk och folkminnen). According to Anna Westerberg, the Institute possesses 194 recordings from Älvdalen. 14 of them are folk music recordings, two are discarded and one is not dated. Out of the remaining 177, two recordings are made before the year 1935, 49 date from the years 1935 – 1950, whilst the majority, 126, are made after the year 1951. Out of all these recordings only four are transcribed. The majority of these recordings are monologues or conversations performed by native speakers. Many other recordings are also stored in Rots Skans in Älvdalen, an assembly hall for the Elfdalens Hembygdsförening (Älvdalen home district association), located in central Älvdalen.

(Piotr Garbacz 2010 : 30)

There is an ongoing work with Frost Anders diaries, about 600 diary pages written in Elfdalian in 1947, found in Älvdalen 2013. Bengt Akerberg compile and make a book of word lists,

etc. An article about the issue in Swedish here: <http://www.dt.se/allmant/dalarna/en-spraklig-guldgruva-ett-manskligt-dokument>

A keyboard for Elfdalian / Övdalian has been developed as the language use 7 letters not found in the Swedish alphabet. Information about the keyboard (in Swedish):

http://www.glottorious.net/tangentbord/instruktioner_windows.pdf

Facebook group [Älvdalska som minoritets- landsdelsspråk \(Elfdalian as a Minority Language\)](#) where people daily write in the language

Decisions March 15, 2016 in Älvdalen City Council to set up pre-school department where they only speak Elfdalian with the children, to be opened 1st September 2016:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-news-from-elsewhere-35831359>

Other online resources:

Council of Europe have asked the Swedish government to review the status of Elfdalian / Övdalian 5 times and urges them to make a scientific study of language:

http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/minlang/Report/default_en.asp#Sweden

All local political parties in Älvdalen support the recognition of Elfdalian / Övdalian as a language (Check letter from Älvdalen municipality, page 21 in [ISO 639-3 Change Request 2015-046](#))

Niclas Malmberg from the Swedish Green Party has asked the Swedish parlement to recognize Elfdalian / Övdalian as a minority language (October 2015)

https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/Dokument-Lagar/Forslag/Motioner/Klassa-aelvdalska-som-nationell_H3023243/

Ulm Dalska (The local language association) has an [online book shop](#)

A website by Mats Westerling written entirely in Elfdalian / Övdalian:

<http://www.skrievum.se/dalska/skrievum.html>

Lars Steensland has a website with literature and discussions about spelling in Övdalian:

<http://www.larssteensland.se/>

Online dictionary Swedish-Elfdalian/Övdalian: <http://aelvdalsk.ordbok.gratis/>

Text with recordings of the language:

<http://swedia.ling.gu.se/Svealand/Dalarna/Alvdalen/index.html>

Proceedings of the First Conference about Elfdalian (2004): <http://uu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:431173/FULLTEXT03.pdf>

Proceedings of the Second Conference about Elfdalian (2011): <http://uu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:431171/FULLTEXT02>

The third Conference about Elfdalian (2015): <http://elvdalsk.inss.ku.dk/om/english>

Rescue Elfdalian Sweden.....help revive a once banned language. BBC Report about Elfdalian (2015): <https://audioboom.com/boos/3169656-rescue-elfdalian-sweden-help-revive-a-once-banned-language>

Sprogforskerne fandt en skat i skoven. (The linguists found a treasure in the forest.) Article in Danish, Politiken (2015): <http://politiken.dk/kultur/ECE2650274/sprogforskerne-fandt-en-skat-i-skoven/>

Hoppet finns kvar för Nordens minsta språk. (There is still hope for Scandinavia's smallest languages). Article in Swedish, Svenska Dagbladet (2010): http://www.svd.se/hoppet-finns-kvar-for-nordens-minsta-sprak_4588231

Fight on to preserve Elfdalian, Sweden's lost forest language. The Conversation: <https://theconversation.com/fight-on-to-preserve-elfdalian-swedens-lost-forest-language-41642>

Ei framtid for elvdalsk. (A future for Ölvdalian) Article in Norwegian, Forskning.no (2015): <http://forskning.no/blogg/oystein-vangsnes-blogg/framtid-elvdalsk>

Det sjette nordiske språket (The sixth Nordic language). Article in Norwegian, morgenbladet.no (2015): <https://morgenbladet.no/aktuelt/2015/12/det-sjette-nordiske-spraket>

Is Elfdalian an Ancient Norse Dialect? Or language? Medieval Histories 5/5 2015 <http://www.medievalhistories.com/elfdalian-an-ancient-norse-dialect/>

Viking 'forest' language set for Nordic preschool. The Local, 4/5 2015 <http://www.thelocal.se/20150504/viking-forest-language-set-for-nordic-preschool>

Comments received for
ISO 639-3 Change Request
2015-046

Outcome: Rejected
Effective date: January 15, 2016



SIL International ISO 639-3 Registration Authority

7500 W. Camp Wisdom Rd., Dallas, TX 75236
PHONE: (972) 708-7400 FAX: (972) 708-7380 (GMT-6)
E-MAIL: iso639-3@sil.org INTERNET: <http://www.sil.org/iso639-3/>

Registration Authority decision on Change Request no. 2015-046: to create the code element [ovd] Övdalian.

The request to create the code [ovd] Övdalian is rejected at this point. However, the Registration Authority is sympathetic to the request and notes that the outcome of a future request might be different following further clarification of decision-making principles in the standard that are anticipated to come out of the current work item to produce a revision of the text of the standard.

The source of the problem in this case is that the ISO 639-3 standard lies at the convergence of two different perspectives on defining language versus dialect.¹ The perspective that is dominant in the ISO 639-2 standard (which forms a subset of 639-3) is the functional perspective in which a language has a standardized written form and a dialect is an unstandardized oral variety. Thus a major part of the evidence that must be presented in the application for a new Part 2 code is evidence that at least 50 works written in the language are held in libraries. Beyond the Part 2 subset, the perspective that is dominant in the ISO 639-3 standard is the structural perspective in which a language is a grouping of related dialects that are intelligible to each other, whereas if dialects are different enough to be unintelligible, they represent different languages—standardization does not enter in. Thus a major part of the evidence that must be presented in the application for a new Part 3 code is evidence of substantial linguistic difference and of non-intelligibility.

The change request and the supporting comments give compelling evidence from the structural perspective that Övdalian is a different language than standard Swedish. On the other hand, the objecting comments take the functional perspective and argue from that point of view that Övdalian should not be recognized as a separate language.² The vast majority of languages covered by Part 3 codes do not exist in a geographical or political context in which they fall under the “roof” of a more dominant standardized language that already has a Part 2 code. In such contexts, it is appropriate to rely solely on the structural perspective and not to require evidence of functional standardization as a prerequisite to granting a code. However, in the context of a language with an existing Part 2 code, this does not seem appropriate and the standard needs to more fully articulate the principles and requirements of evidence for making decisions in this situation. The RA is thus waiting for clarification on this point to come out of the revision of the standard that is in process.

¹ This is explained in “Terminology and language aspects in language coding”, by Gary F. Simons, presented at the TKE 2014 workshop on *Language Codes at the Crossroads*, Berlin, Germany, 21 June 2014.

<https://tke2014.coreon.com/slides/2014_06_21_104_1030_Simons.pdf> Internet archive:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20160108125555/https://tke2014.coreon.com/slides/2014_06_21_104_1030_Simons.pdf>

² The RA has discovered a recent thesis on the question of whether Övdalian is a language or a dialect and it comes to essentially the same conclusion: it is clearly an Abstandsprache but is not an Ausbausprache. See: Zach, Kristine. (2013). *Das Älvdalische-Sprache oder Dialekt?* (Masters thesis, University of Vienna). <http://othes.univie.ac.at/26671/1/2013-02-27_0748117.pdf>

August 26, 2015

ISO 639-3 RA
SIL International
7500 W. Camp Wisdom Rd.
Dallas, TX 75236
United States of America

Dear Ms Lyons,

I hereby submit the following comments on change request number 2015-046: “Övdalian”. For want of better alternatives, I use the standard Swedish name, Älvdalska.

1. NAMES AND IDENTIFICATION

Älvdalska is also called Älvdalsmålet in standard Swedish.

2. TEMPORAL DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION

No comments.

3. MODALITY AND LINGUISTIC AFFILIATION

No comments.

4. LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND USE

b) “No, the Swedish government has so far refused to acknowledge it as a language, and consider it a dialect of Swedish.”

- Älvdalska is traditionally regarded as a Swedish dialect, because it is spoken in Sweden and closely related to all other Scandinavian vernaculars. If it had been spoken in Norway, it would have been

looked upon as a Norwegian dialect. While the traditional dialects are naturally developed from Old Scandinavian, modern standard Swedish and Norwegian (Dano-Norwegian and New Norwegian) are constructions resulting from official language cultivation.

“At the moment there is a dialogue between Ulum Dalska, Älvdalen Municipality and the Swedish Government about giving Elfdalian status as minority language.”

- According to information given by the Government Offices, there is currently no dialogue going on about the status of Älvdalska. On the part of the Swedish Government, the case is closed.

“Most linguists consider it a language and mention it as such in publications, conferences etc.”

- Most linguists in the world are not familiar with Älvdalska. In fact, the intense academic focus on Älvdalska in recent years has mainly been limited to a few linguists at a few universities in Scandinavia.
- Anyone with some insight into the subject matter would agree that Älvdalska is very different from standard Swedish. However, this could be said about many other Swedish dialects too.
- Some of the linguists who devote themselves to the study of Älvdalska prefer to view it from a narrow perspective, claiming that it is essentially different in every respect, not only from standard Swedish but also from all other Swedish vernaculars. If you take a broader perspective on Älvdalska, you will discover that most of its grammatical features are also found elsewhere, not only in neighbouring areas but also in northern Sweden and in the parts of Finland where Swedish is traditionally spoken. Many interesting examples of this are presented by Östen Dahl in a recent online publication entitled *Grammaticalization in the North*.
- Modern Älvdalska is very different from the archaic form that is usually highlighted. Many of the most characteristic features of the latter are receding or absent today, especially in young and middle-aged speakers. This process of simplification and levelling is analysed from a sociolinguistic point of view by John Helgander in a paper entitled *Älvdalsmål i förändring – några reflektioner kring en fallstudie* (English: *The Changing Älvdalen Dialect – Some Reflections Based on a Case Study*), which is published online as a part of a conference volume (2005, pp. 55-85, with a summary in English).

c) “The people of Älvdalen do not claim to have a different ethnicity than Swedish people, but to speak another language.”

- This is by no means exceptional in Sweden. On the contrary, many traditional Swedish dialects are so different from standard Swedish that they are regarded as separate languages by their speakers.

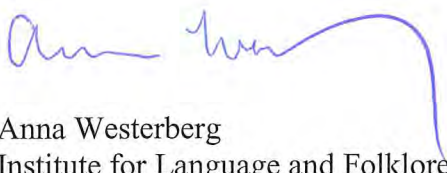
5. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

“The supporters of this applications have all studied the language.”

- The supporters of this application choose to disregard the fact that there are still many traditional Swedish dialects that are very different from standard Swedish and therefore regarded as separate languages by their speakers. In my opinion, the idea of proclaiming Älvdalska to be more important than all the others is deeply problematic. This is also the official view of the Institute for Language and Folklore (Swedish: Institutet för språk och folkminnen), which is a Swedish Government agency (see the link below).

<http://www.sprakochfolkminnen.se/om-oss/verksamhet/about-the-institute.html>

Sincerely,



Anna Westerberg
Institute for Language and Folklore
Uppsala, Sweden
anna.westerberg@sprakochfolkminnen.se

A reply to Anna Westerberg

Anna Westerberg (AW) has raised some objections against giving Övdalian a specific language code, claiming that Övdalian is a dialect of Swedish, and not a separate language. AW is "förste forskningsarkivarie" at the Institute for Language and Folklore, meaning, in practice, that her word carries significant weight in the Swedish Government's position versus Övdalian. It comes as no surprise that she is skeptical regarding the status of Övdalian as a language, since the Institute has never endorsed the possibility to upgrade traditional dialects, regardless of any type of linguistic evidence.

As for the ongoing dialogue, Ulum Dalska and their representatives are constantly struggling to meet and discuss this issue with the Swedish Government. Previous ministers (such as Erik Ullenhag) have met Ulum Dalska, but the current minister Alice Bah Kuhnke has informed Ulum Dalska that she has no possibility to meet. However, Ulum Dalska has not received the message that "the case is closed", as AW puts it. Still, whether there is an ongoing dialogue or not is of course no argument with any bearing on the linguistic status of Övdalian.

As for the number of linguists interested in Övdalian, AW claims that only "a few linguists at a few universities in Scandinavia" have their eyes on Övdalian. This is simply not true. In May 2016, there will be a conference (Gramino: <https://gramino.wordpress.com/>) on the grammar of Danish, Faroese, Icelandic, Norwegian, Swedish and Övdalian in Gothenburg. In the program committee, 22 prominent Scandinavian linguists from 12 Scandinavian universities participate. Still, the number of dedicated linguists should not have any impact on the linguistic status of Övdalian.

As for the remaining issues discussed by AW, I agree that Övdalian is changing, and that there are more varieties of Swedish that might qualify as languages on linguistic grounds that also are changing. This I interpret as arguments for the protection and recognition of these varieties. However, I would like to point out that no one has suggested that Övdalian is "more important than all the others", as AW puts it. The reason for arguing for a changed linguistic status of Övdalian is simply that it stands out among the many language varieties in Sweden, and

that the speakers are deeply concerned about their language, and are fighting for some form of official recognition.

In the future, I would welcome an objective survey of potential candidates for upgrading from dialect to language in Sweden, based on linguistic evidence and not on traditional divisions that are more than a century old. However, as long as traditional dialectologists (such as AW) have a crucial influence on the Government's policy for minority languages, this will certainly not be realized, and numerous interesting Swedish language varieties will pass away within a few years.

Henrik Rosenkvist

ass. professor in Scandinavian Languages

The Dept. of Swedish

Gothenburg University

Comments on request number 2015-046: "Övdalian"

The status of Övdalian/Elfdalian (Swedish: Älvdalska), spoken in the province of Älvdalen in central Sweden, has in recent years been the subject of much discussion and is certainly in need of careful, open and unbiased consideration. No doubt the issue is a contested one and there is no general agreement among scholars. Seen in isolation and, for example, from a purely linguistic point of view a good case could be made out for recognizing Övdalian as a language in its own right, separated from standard Swedish. Such a view is, however, rather too simplistic. For a fuller understanding of the problem the perspective must be broadened to include the entire linguistic landscape in Sweden, taking into account not only other speech varieties in neighbouring Upper Dalarna but also in the country as a whole. At least some of them diverge from the standard variety to such an extent that their speakers might claim — as indeed some of them have (with no support from professional linguists though) — that they should be regarded as independent languages, if Övdalian is awarded that status.

Furthermore it should be kept in mind that Övdalian has never been either uniform or static. There have always been differences between different villages, but even more striking today is the gap between generations. In the highly variable Övdalian of younger speakers many of the allegedly unique features, typical of the "genuine" form are absent. Thus, as a result of this ongoing simplification and levelling process (affecting all linguistic levels, the lexicon as well as phonology, morphology and syntax), modern Övdalian is approaching a stage reminiscent of other local speech varieties in Upper Dalarna (or elsewhere in Sweden), which have never attracted the attention of linguists in the same way, nor have they ever, as pointed out above, been seen as separate languages. It goes without saying that Övdalian in its modern form is no longer as unintelligible to outsiders as before.

Against this background it is understandable that the Swedish Institute for Language and Folklore (Swedish: Institutet för språk och folkminnen) has come to the conclusion that Övdalian is best classified as a Swedish dialect, rather than as a separate language. The arguments, rather sketchily outlined above, have been developed both convincingly and in more detail by two other Swedish linguists, Olle Josephson and Maj Reinhammar. Their important contributions, written in Swedish, can be found in *Saga och sed, Kungl.Gustav Adolfs Akademiens årsbok*, 2007 (pp. 86-92 and 80-83).

To sum up, before a final decision is made on the status of Övdalian, all the relevant aspects must be taken into very serious and careful consideration.

John Helgander

sociolinguist, lecturer (retired) Linköping University and University College Dalarna, Sweden

Ulm Dalska,
The Association for the Preservation of Elfdalian
Älvdalen, Sweden

ISO 639-3 Registrar
SIL International
Dallas, Texas
United States of America

Älvdalen, November 26 2015

Regarding: ISO Language code for Elfdalian

Dear Registrar,

I would like to confirm that Ulm Dalska, the Association for the Preservation of Elfdalian, gives its unambiguous support to the request for an ISO language code for Elfdalian submitted by Mr. Mats Blakstad. Such a code would be of great value to us, the speakers of Elfdalian, in finding Elfdalian-language websites, using the language select function, digital and bibliographical word lists and dictionaries, desktops as well as other language resources. Such a code would also help us digitalize Elfdalian-language material and exchange information on different platforms in our language.

Our Association Ulm Dalska (“We shall speak Elfdalian”) was founded in 1984 with the aim of saving the threatened Elfdalian language. Although most of our members live in Älvdalen, we have members in other parts of Sweden and beyond. Since the foundation of the association, we see a renaissance of our language in the sense that we, Elfdalian-speakers, are regaining pride of our native tongue, speaking and developing it, teaching it to our children and producing literature and culture in it. We are also helping people from outside Älvdalen who wish to take part of our linguistic treasure, to study and research it. Our association cooperates with the Municipality of Älvdalen, with Råddjörum, the Elfdalian Language Council, as well as with a great number of academics and other persons and organizations who are interested in Elfdalian. Ulm Dalska promotes Elfdalian in different ways, through publishing a newspaper several times a year, organizing language courses, organizing or sponsoring the organization of academic conferences and the publication of children’s literature, grammar books and dictionaries, as well as through *Glåmåkelder*, conversation evenings and *Kweðåkwelder*, singing evenings. Moreover, we award a “Language Grant” to school children who show proficiency in Elfdalian. Next year, we will hopefully see the first Elfdalian-language kindergarten and likewise Elfdalian in school further ahead. Additionally, we are in touch with Swedish authorities and with the Council of Europe

in order to have Elfdalian recognized as a Regional or Minority Language according to the European Charter of the Council of Europe. Recently, the first open access Elfdalian-Swedish-Elfdalian dictionary was published online. See:

<http://älvdalsk.ordbok.gratis/#>

We are happy to see parents once again proud to speak Elfdalian to their children and small children who start kindergarten with fluent Elfdalian. With Elfdalian in kindergarten and in school, by teaching genuine Elfdalian words and expressions to our children, we hope to see these children carry on using and developing their mother tongue as adolescents and adults as well.

In the original parish of Älvdalen there are about 5,000 inhabitants, of whom about 2,000 speak Elfdalian. A large part of the remaining 3,000 understand Elfdalian to some extent. However, if one tries to speak Elfdalian to people from outside Älvdalen, there is usually little or no mutual understanding. This goes for Elfdalian-speaking children as well as adults. But in all cases when speaking to outsiders, Elfdalian speakers switch over to Swedish or a third language.

Our language has an old history. In written form, it is recorded as early as in the 17th century and in printed form already in the 18th century. The first wedding poems published in Sweden which were not in Standard Swedish, were in Elfdalian. In Älvdalen, a special form of the Runic script was developed and used until the beginning of the 20th century, long after it was extinct in the rest of Sweden.

For our association there is no doubt that Elfdalian qualifies as a language according to the charter of the European Council, as it has been traditionally spoken in a well-defined territory and it differs substantially from the majority language, Swedish. In order to visualize these differences, an extract from Antoine Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince* in Elfdalian, Swedish and English is presented on the next page.

Finally, we are well aware of and have a great respect for the fact that there are other, highly interesting linguistic varieties, in Sweden and around the world, and see no contradiction between our right to preserve and develop our mother tongue and other groups' right to do the same. On the contrary, our association has sympathy towards initiatives to promote minority languages and dialects elsewhere. Hence, we were also happy to hear that the Elfdalian children's book *Mumunes Masse* from 1987 had been a source of inspiration for other groups and translated to no less than forty-four Swedish dialects.

Frekåelsningger, Best wishes,

Karin Trapp

Board of Ulum Dalska



Elfdalian (*Lisslprinsn*, Second edition, published in 2015)

Mes ig war sjäks år såg ig ien fantastiskan bild iessn i ien buok so andleð um Urskuo'n. Å ietteð "Sannbirettelse", og bildn waist ien boa-uorm so jält å sweg iet wildkrytyr. Sån såg bildn aut.

I Buotjin las eð: "Boa-uormär sweg ruoved sett ielt, autå te tegg eð. Sę dugå dier it brågå laingger, atå såvå sjäks månaði åvenda, mes dier smelt jätå."

Ig fundireð mitjið å ollt spennend so war auti djungglen, og dugd siuov, min ien fergklit, rit main fuost tekkningg. Tekknindję main nummer 1. Å såg aut sånę:

Swedish

När jag var sex år, såg jag en gång en underbar bild i en bok som handlade om Urskogen. Den hette "Sanna berättelser" och bilden föreställde en boaorm i färd med att sluka ett vild-djur. Så här såg bilden ut.

I boken stod det: "Boaormarna slukar sitt byte helt och tuggar det inte. Sedan kan de inte längre röra sig utan sover ett halvår i sträck, medan de smälter maten."

Jag funderade mycket över allt spännande som hände i djungeln och lyckades själv med en färgkrita göra min första teckning. Min teckning nummer 1. Den såg ut så här:

English

Once when I was six years old I saw a magnificent picture in a book, called *True Stories from Nature*, about the primeval forest. It was a picture of a boa constrictor in the act of swallowing an animal. Here is a copy of the drawing.

In the book it said: "Boa constrictors swallow their prey whole, without chewing it. After that they are not able to move, and they sleep through the six months that they need for digestion."

I pondered deeply, then, over the adventures of the jungle. And after some work with a coloured pencil I succeeded in making my first drawing. My Drawing Number One. It looked like this:



Stockholm, November 27, 2015

ISO 639-3 RA

SIL International

7500 W. Camp Wisdom Rd.

Dallas, TX 75236

United States of America

Reference: Change request number 2015-046 “Övdalian”

The committee of Språkförsvaret (literally: The Language Defence) supports Mats Blakstad's application, also signed by nine professional linguists, regarding an international language code for Övdalian (Elfdalian, Swedish Älvdalska). Anna Westerberg, who represents the government organization Institute for Language and Folklore in Sweden (Institutet för språk och folkminnen), has however objected to this application. The Språkförsvaret committee agrees in principle with Henrik Rosenkvist's and Guus Kroonen's criticism of Anna Westerberg's objection. In the following text, we present our own position on the subject.

1. Anna Westerberg writes:

”Älvdalska is traditionally regarded as a Swedish dialect, because it is spoken in Sweden and closely related to all other Scandinavian vernaculars. If it had been spoken in Norway, it would have been looked upon as a Norwegian dialect. While the traditional dialects are naturally developed from Old Scandinavian, modern standard Swedish and Norwegian (Dano-Norwegian and New Norwegian) are constructions resulting from official language cultivation.”

It is true that Övdalian, both as standard Swedish and standard Norwegian (Bokmål and Nynorsk) emanates from Old Norse as well as Icelandic and Faroese. The latter are of course accepted as separate languages. According to a Swadesh test, as implemented by the linguist Östen Dahl, Övdalian is equidistant from Standard Swedish as Icelandic, while Övdalian and Icelandic are the same distance from each other. The argument about Norwegian language policy is purely hypothetical.

According to the linguists we have consulted, there is no variety of language in Norway, emanating from Old Norse, that is as far from standard Norwegian as

Övdalian is from standard Swedish. Also, there has been no application to the Norwegian authorities, that the official status of a Norwegian variety be changed from dialect to a regional language. Even if that were the case, that would be an irrelevant argument from a scientific viewpoint. Each language variety must be subject to an independent investigation.

2. Anna Westerberg writes:

” According to information given by the Government Offices, there is currently no dialogue going on about the status of Älvdalska. On the part of the Swedish Government, the case is closed.”

Anna Westerberg is jumping ahead here. The government has never officially declared the case to be permanently dismissed. Indeed, that would be a strange approach, given that the Council of Europe has, in recent years, continuously urged the Swedish government, in about five of the supervision rounds, to reconsider the position of Övdalian, or at least to let an independent research group to investigate the issue.

Moreover, there is no reason to believe that the Swedish Government would continue to turn a deaf ear on growing public support for a change of status of Övdalian, which is certainly the case today. Who could have imagined in 2005 that a unanimous parliament (sv. riksdag) in 2009 would establish the position of Swedish as Sweden's main language?

3. Anna Westerberg writes:

”Most linguists in the world are not familiar with Älvdalska. In fact, the intense academic focus on Älvdalska in recent years has been limited to a few linguists at a few universities in Scandinavia.”

Most linguists are only familiar with a few languages; there is of course no linguist in the world who is familiar with all of it's languages. Very few linguists are familiar with the phenomenon of discontinuous noun phrases in Old Icelandic. But should this fact have any consequences for the status of Old Icelandic [as a language]? The International Conference on Elfdalian in Copenhagen, 7-8 May 2015, gave rise to considerable public attention about Övdalian, both within and outside the Nordic countries (<http://www.språkförsvaret.se/sf/index.php?Id=400>). The comprehensive study "Studies in Övdalian Morphology and Syntax" (<http://www.jbe-platform.com/content/books/9789027269133>) published by John Benjamin Publishing House in 2015, has been internationally commissioned by over 3,000 university libraries. There are about 16,000 to 18,000 universities in the world.

4. Anna Westerberg writes:

”Anyone with some insights into the subject matter would agree that Älvdalska is very different from standard Swedish. However, this could be said about many other Swedish dialects too.”

And further:

“If you take a broader perspective on Älvdalska, you will discover that most of its grammatical features are also found elsewhere, not only in neighbouring areas but also in northern Sweden and parts of Finland where Swedish is traditionally spoken.”

Anna Westerberg states that many other dialects also differ greatly from standard Swedish. But do they differ as much, or more significantly, from standard Swedish as Övdalian does? If so, Anna Westerberg should invoke a Swadesh test which shows this. The crucial question in this context is whether all the language features that distinguish Övdalian from standard Swedish, also are found in some other language variety in the Swedish-speaking areas of Sweden and Finland. Anna Westerberg admits in fact that this is not the case. Are there, for example, nasal vowels in any other language variety in the Nordic countries? This phenomenon has even disappeared in Icelandic.

Övdalian sound system, grammar, syntax and vocabulary has been addressed in a number of treatises, essays, articles, speeches and parliamentary motions (listed at the end of this letter). The differences between Övdalian and standard Swedish are systemic differences. We believe that the evidence is overwhelming for Övdalian being so different from standard Swedish, that it must be characterized as a separate language.

5. Anna Westerberg writes finally:

”The supporters of this application choose to disregard the fact there are still many traditional Swedish dialects that are very different from Standard Swedish and therefore regarded as separate languages by their speakers. In my opinion, the idea of proclaiming Älvdalska to be more important than all the others is deeply problematic...”

Anna Westerberg seems to assert something like the "Law of Jante" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law_of_Jante) of dialects, when she states that one should not proclaim Övdalian as more important than any other language variety in Sweden. In fact Övdalian is probably the second most studied and codified language variety, derived from Old Norse, in Sweden after standard Swedish. There is a local language council in Älvdalen, which has helped to standardize Övdalian; there are grammars, dictionaries and a standardized orthography, adapted to the Övdalian sound system. There have been books published in Övdalian, and also educational material

about Övdalian at university level. There is instruction in Övdalian in primary schools in the Älvdalen Municipality and even university courses.

Övdalian, which has around 2,500 speakers, has a very strong local support. Ulum Dalska (Association for Övdalian conservation), founded in 1984, is probably Sweden's largest language association with nearly 2,000 members. Its Facebook group has nearly 3,000 members, most of them writing in Övdalian. The Älvdalen municipality, which supports Övdalian, has about 7000 inhabitants. The northern parishes, Särna and Idre, however, do not belong to the Övdalian language area. Last but not least, there is a strong interest among professional linguists, both nationally and internationally, for this unique language.

We do not understand why it would be "deeply problematic" to give Övdalian the status of a regional language. Probably lurking in the background is a fear that such a decision will lead to a domino effect. It has perhaps crossed Anna Westerberg's mind that a number of representatives of different dialects in Sweden will join the queue and insist that their dialects should be recognized as regional or minority languages. These fears are much exaggerated. The overwhelming majority of dialects in Sweden are transition dialects. Very few are at the extreme end of a dialect continuum and can demonstrate the same linguistic distance from the standard Swedish as Övdalian. Övdalian thus shows systematic differences at all levels against standard Swedish. The vast majority of dialect speakers are content to continue to use their dialect in its accepted locality and context. They simply do not want to spend time and resources needed to raise their own dialect to the status of minority language, which in principle means developing its own written language, grammars and dictionaries. However, this is what the Övdalians have been prepared to do, which says a lot about their linguistic self-esteem.

There are already a number of similar minority or regional languages in Europe, whose status has changed in recent decades. This applies to Aranese (around 4700 speakers) in Spain, to Kashubian (around 108,000 speakers) in Poland, to Cornish (about 500 speakers) in the UK, to Scottish English in Scotland, and to Rusyn / Ruthenian (about 23 000 speakers) in Serbia and Slovakia. The Italian Parliament passed a law in 1999, which acknowledged twelve minority languages. Of these Catalan, Franco-Provençal, French, Friulian, Ladin, Occitan and Sardinian - like the Italian language - originate from Latin in the same way as standard Swedish and Övdalian originate from Old Norse. To our knowledge this has not led to any great flood of applications from dialect speakers wanting to change the status of their own language varieties in the countries mentioned.

In our view, the issue of a language variety being recognized as a minority or a regional language in relation to standard Swedish in Sweden must be decided case by case. Two criteria must be met; the language variety must be incomprehensible to a

user of the standard Swedish and the language variety must as well be supported by such an involvement of the users that there is a reasonable chance that it survives.

The committee of Språkförsvaret

by

Christer Janson/Per-Åke Lindblom/Arne Rubensson

Note: Språkförsvaret (literally: The Language Defence) is a grassroot organization (NGO) in Sweden, founded in 2005. Its goal is to defend the Swedish language, advocate multilingualism and inter-nordic language comprehension.

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Kristianstad, December 1, 2015

Dear Registrar,

Råddjärum, the Elfdalian Language Council, warmly supports the request for an ISO-code for Elfdalian submitted by Mats Blakstad.

Råddjärum was founded in 2004 by request of Ulum Dalska, The Association for the Preservation of Elfdalian, with the purpose of helping the Elfdalian speech community with linguistic matters. The Elfdalian Language Council comprises persons who have been active in different ways in documenting, preserving and promoting the Elfdalian language.

Our first task was to construct a standard uniform orthography for Elfdalian. A standard orthography would serve Elfdalian in several ways: firstly, it would ease the written communication between the speakers of Elfdalian; secondly, it would unify the minor dialectal differences between the speakers and thirdly, it would help the speakers better represent the spoken language, whose phonetic and phonological structure strongly differs from that of Swedish.

The standard orthography was presented and approved by Ulum Dalska in 2005. It includes seven letters in addition to the letters of the Swedish alphabet. The standard Elfdalian orthography has been used successfully ever since, sometimes with small modifications, in Elfdalian language resources, newspapers, literature, grammars, dictionaries and online forums.

Being linguistically well-acquainted with Elfdalian and Swedish alike, we also support an official recognition of Elfdalian as a minority or regional language in Sweden according to the European Charter. Elfdalian shows structural differences from Swedish on all linguistic levels: phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax etc. According to Dahl (2005), who measured the distances of different dialects and languages from Swedish with the help of Swadesh' glossary, the lexical distance between Swedish and Elfdalian is as big as the distance between Swedish and Icelandic. According to Melerska (2011) 50% of the parents, 58% of the students and as

many as 88% of the municipality workers, who took part in her survey in Älvdalen, consider Elfdalian to be an independent language.

Moreover, we are now witnessing a growing use of Elfdalian in social media, digital dictionaries and web pages as well as plans to introduce Elfdalian in a preschool and a school in Älvdalen.

Råðdjärum, the Elfdalian Language Council, has confidence that an ISO-code for Elfdalian will help satisfy the needs facing the Elfdalian speech community.

Best wishes,

Yair Sapir,

Coordinator of Råðdjärum, the Elfdalian Language Council
Associate Professor of Swedish Language, Kristianstad University

Östen Dahl, Professor Emeritus of General Linguistics, Stockholm University

Gunnar Nyström, Former Head of the Dialectal Dictionary of Sweden, SOFI

Inga-Britt Pettersson, former teacher at the Municipality of Älvdalen

Ulla Schütt, former teacher at the Municipality of Älvdalen

Lars Steensland, Professor Emeritus of Slavic Languages, Lund University

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Älvdalen, December 1st, 2015

Concerning: Request for an ISO-code for the Elfdalian Language

The municipality of Älvdalen confirms hereby its support the request for an ISO-code for Elfdalian submitted by Mats Blakstad on June 23, 2015.

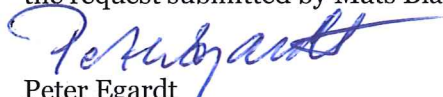
Since 2005, the municipality of Älvdalen has been conducting a positive policy towards the Elfdalian language. In a decision from that year, all the political parties in the municipality agreed to support the recognition of Elfdalian as a regional or minority language in Sweden according to the charter of the European Council. To this end, the municipality of Älvdalen has been an active party in the talks with the Swedish authorities and the Council of Europe.

The municipality of Älvdalen has likewise been cooperating with universities and Ulum Dalska, the Association for the Preservation of Elfdalian, in supporting cultural and academic activities in or about Elfdalian, such as the organization of three conferences about the language. On several occasions, the municipality has offered Elfdalian as a school subject to Elfdalian-speaking school children. Due to the strong desire of Elfdalian-speaking parents and children, we are now looking into the possibilities to soon open our first Elfdalian speaking preschool, which will hopefully be succeeded by Elfdalian-speaking school classes.

Elfdalian is not an extensively used language, but it has a distinct character, speakers who are eager to save it for the coming generations, and a good deal of people outside Älvdalen who show a great interest in it.

There is no doubt that an ISO-code for the Elfdalian language would help us considerably in preserving our ancient language, instructing our teachers and teaching our children. A large part of the instruction and the use of Elfdalian takes place digitally and an easy access to Elfdalian language homepages, possibilities to identify, store and classify Elfdalian language material, dictionaries and grammar is of great importance to the speakers of Elfdalian.

Therefore, I sincerely hope that SIL International will respond positively to the request submitted by Mats Blakstad.



Peter Egardt
Municipal Commissioner Älvdalen Municipality