



Swedish integration policy

The goal of integration policy in Sweden is equal rights, obligations and opportunities for all, regardless of ethnic or cultural background.

The policy goals are to be achieved mainly through general measures for the whole population, regardless of country of birth or ethnic background. The general measures are supplemented by targeted support for the introduction of newly arrived immigrants in their first years in Sweden.

In September 2008 the Government decided on an overall strategy for integration for the years until 2010. The strategy identifies seven areas that are especially important to work on to achieve the goal. These are:

- Faster introduction for new arrivals
- More in work, more entrepreneurs
- Better results and greater equality in school
- Better language skills and more adult education opportunities
- Effective anti-discrimination measures
- Development of urban districts with extensive social exclusion
- Common basic values in a society characterised by increasing diversity

An overall focus of the strategy is to increase the supply and demand of labour, and to create quality and equality in schools.

Actors in Swedish integration policy

In Sweden each minister, each ministry and each government agency is responsible for integration issues within its respective area. For example, the Ministry of Employment has the main responsibility for issues concerning integration in the labour market, and the Swedish Public Employment Service is to support all unemployed people regardless of background. The Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality, under the leadership of Minister Nyamko Sabuni, coordinates the Government's integration work. The ministry has its own responsibility for issues concerning such things as:

- the introduction of new arrivals to Sweden
- Swedish citizenship
- combating discrimination and racism
- the promotion of democracy and human rights
- the development of urban districts with extensive social exclusion
- follow-up and evaluation in the area of integration

The municipalities have great responsibility for many issues that are important for integration. Municipalities

are responsible for schooling and for housing planning, for example. The main responsibility for health and medical services is with the county councils at regional level. The county administrative boards represent central government in the regions. They contribute by coordinating the work of central government agencies, municipalities and county councils in the area of integration.

Current integration issues in Sweden

Reform for faster introduction of new arrivals

In Sweden the state has particular responsibility for supporting the introduction of newly arrived refugees and others in need of protection, as well as their families. The Government presented a Bill in autumn 2009 proposing reforms in this field. The Government wishes to use this reform to speed up introduction to working and social life. The incentives for both activity and work will increase, the division of responsibility between agencies will be clarified and the skills of the new arrivals will be utilised better than before. The proposal means that:

- The state, via the Swedish Public Employment Service, will have a coordinating responsibility for introduction measures. The main responsibility lay previously with the municipalities.
- The Swedish Public Employment Service is required to produce a personal introduction plan together with the new arrival. This plan is based on the individual's previous education and work experience and should always contain courses in the Swedish language, civic orientation and employment preparation activities.
- An introduction benefit that are equal for everyone regardless of where one lives will be introduced. This introduction benefit is paid to newly arrived immigrants who actively participate in introduction measures. The benefit is designed so that it pays the recipient to work alongside his or her introduction activities.
- A new actor – an introduction guide – is to help the new arrival find a job. This guide is an independent actor, working on the instructions of the Swedish Public Employment Service. New arrivals will be able to choose their guides themselves.
- New arrivals who have an introduction plan are to take part in civic orientation.

These reforms will be regulated in special introduction legislation. Subject to the Riksdag decision, the reform will enter into force on 1 December 2010.

Other initiatives for new arrivals

Step-in jobs

Step-in jobs are specially subsidised employment aimed at faster entry into the labour market and better language learning. Step-in jobs can be offered to unemployed newly arrived immigrants and are to be combined with courses in the Swedish language. The subsidy amounts to 75 per cent of employer wage costs.

Introduction dialogue

The introduction dialogue means that as soon as a residence permit has been granted, new arrivals receive information on where in Sweden there is a demand for the skills that they have or think they could acquire. The dialogue aims at better matching between the skills of the individual, the needs of the labour market and the supply of courses. The dialogue is to result in a plan for employment, place of residence and housing, courses, and other initiatives.

Introduction dialogues were introduced as a pilot project in parts of the country in 2009. In 2010, these activities will be extended to the whole country.

Better surveys

The Swedish Migration Board surveys the education and work experience of asylum seekers. The aim is to enable the Swedish Public Employment Service to provide adequate support soon after a residence permit has been granted. This survey may also improve opportunities for employment even during the period in which an asylum case is being considered. The Swedish Migration Board and the Swedish Public Employment Service have been tasked with improving this survey in 2010. Methods and method support are to be produced.

Mentoring schemes

The lack of a network is one of the factors hampering the introduction of newly arrived immigrants in Sweden. Mentorship is a proven method for creating networks and skills development. The Government therefore intends to initiate a three-year mentorship project, where new arrivals are matched with mentors on the basis of their occupation and education. The project will be implemented during the period 2010–2012. SEK 5 million a year has been allocated to these activities.

Organised resettlement

Many new arrivals choose to settle in a small number of municipalities in the metropolitan counties. At the same time, there are other municipalities where there are good conditions for employment and education. The Government has therefore initiated efforts to make it easier and to support re-settlement from municipalities receiving many immigrants to municipalities receiving fewer immigrants and where there is access to a good labour market.

The basic premise is that the individual is free to choose his or her place of residence, but is given freedom of choice and the ability to access introduction activities that can lead to employment, sufficient income to support himself or herself and a good quality of life for the whole

family. This work is undertaken by the Swedish Migration Board, together with the county administrative boards and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, which is an umbrella organisation for local authorities in this country.

Dialogue with values-based organisations on integration

The Government has initiated a dialogue with this sector to enable it to contribute to integration, and particularly the introduction of new arrivals. The purpose of this dialogue is to clarify the relationship between the state, municipalities and the non-profit sector in efforts to ensure the introduction and integration of new arrivals. The dialogue is also to help develop forms and methods for the activities of values-based organisations.

Efforts to promote employment and enterprise

General measures to promote employment

More jobs and good conditions for enterprise contribute to better integration. The Government in Sweden has reduced tax on earned income in several stages to make it more worthwhile to employ and to work. Employers' contributions have also been reduced. Enterprise policy is aimed at creating good conditions for growth.

Measures to promote more jobs are supplemented by measures to support the return of unemployed people to the labour market. New start jobs are subsidised employment introduced for individuals and groups who are particularly detached from the labour market. The job and development guarantee means that jobseekers must be offered individually adapted activities to find a job as soon as possible. The job guarantee for young people entails special measures at an early stage for unemployed youth. The measures are aimed at getting the participants into employment or into the normal education system as fast as possible.

Support to established entrepreneurs from non-Swedish backgrounds

Entrepreneurs from non-Swedish backgrounds often find it more difficult than others to arrange financing for company growth. The Government has therefore allocated SEK 20 million per year in 2008–2010 for qualified advisory services and opportunities to participate in mentoring schemes and networks. As part of this initiative, the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth will also carry on a dialogue with employees in the banking sector concerning opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurs to receive financing. Funds will also be allocated to compile up-to-date knowledge of companies run by women and men from non-Swedish backgrounds.

Measures for improved educational achievement and equality in school

Measures for newly arrived pupils

Apart from the general quality-enhancing measures in schools, targeted measures for newly arrived pupils are also needed. On the initiative of the Government, in autumn

2008 the National Agency for Education drew up general guidelines for the education of newly arrived pupils. The measures for continuing education of teachers include the opportunity for teachers to develop their skills in teaching Swedish as a second language. The lack of qualified teachers makes it difficult for municipalities and schools to arrange mother tongue instruction. Consequently proposals are being prepared on how distance teaching for pupils resident in Sweden should be organised in schools.

General measures for quality in schools

The Government has introduced an ambitious programme to improve educational achievement in schools. An initiative to strengthen basic skills in reading, writing and arithmetic is being implemented. In the period 2008–2009 a total of SEK 900 million is being spent on measures for pupils at risk of not achieving educational objectives. Many of them are from non-Swedish backgrounds. Compulsory checkpoints in the form of national tests will be introduced at the end of years three, six and nine.

Teacher qualifications will be raised through continuing education focusing on subject knowledge and courses leading to qualification. A total of SEK 3.6 billion is being spent on the 'boost for teachers' scheme between 2007 and 2010. A programme for special needs teachers has been introduced, specialising in support for pupils who have difficulties in achieving the national targets.

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate has been set up as an agency in its own right. Combining supervision and quality review in a separate agency has strengthened inspection of schools' results.

In a Government bill in the autumn of 2008, the Government has proposed upper secondary school reforms. Upper secondary school is to offer education channels both for pupils who wish to go on to higher education and for those wishing to go directly into working life. Vocational and apprenticeship programmes of high quality will reduce the drop-out rate from upper secondary schools.

Language and education for adults

Improvements in Swedish language teaching

All new arrivals in Sweden are entitled to basic education in the Swedish language, but the standards of teaching vary considerably. The goals of teaching in Swedish for Immigrants have therefore been given a concrete form. Compulsory national final tests in all three programmes were introduced in 2009. The Government has also allocated a total of SEK 61 million in special funds to improve teachers' skills up until 2010.

On 1 October 2008, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate was established. One of its tasks is the supervision of teaching in Swedish for Immigrants.

Pilot project for Swedish for Immigrants bonus

A pilot project was begun in 2009 in 13 municipalities with a performance-based bonus for newly arrived immigrants who complete their studies in Swedish for Immigrants with a pass grade within 12 months. The aim is to test whether financial incentives for participants may help them to learn Swedish faster, and thereby improve their chances of obtaining a job.

Supplementary higher education courses

Many universities and other institutions of higher education organise supplementary courses for people with completed foreign qualifications at academic level. In the Government Bill for 2009, SEK 51 million a year was allocated to reinforce this work over the period 2009–2011.

The additional funds, which are almost double those originally allocated, are primarily intended for more supplementary courses for qualified people in health and medical care, and for teachers. Other supplementary courses, better guidance for foreign academics and more effective coordination of assessments of foreign qualifications will be implemented.

Sweden is short of qualified staff in the health care and medical services. This is why the Government has also initiated a new, legally secure and effective procedure for recognising health and medical care qualifications from third countries.

Vocational training for adults

Access to vocational training is important to break exclusion in the labour market. Being able to supplement previous training or vocational experience as an adult may be very important for enabling immigrants to obtain a job. The Government has decided to radically increase the number of places in vocational courses for adults at upper secondary school and post-secondary school level, starting in 2010. The number of places per year will be tripled from 7 100 to 22 800.

Many immigrants have sound vocational experience that is required in the Swedish labour market. A validation procedure will enable individuals to find out whether and how their skills should be supplemented to make it easier for them to get a job. Validation can also make it easier for an employer to assess the skills of an applicant. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education has been given national responsibility for validation of foreign vocational skills. A total of SEK 15 million has been allocated for validation of foreign vocational skills in 2009–2010.

Anti-discrimination initiatives

Measures to prevent discrimination have high priority in the Government's work for integration. On 1 January 2009 a new Anti-Discrimination Act entered into force in Sweden. With the introduction of the new Act, much of the earlier anti-discrimination legislation in different sectors of the community and on different grounds was combined into a common framework.

The aim was to create a more effective, transparent regulatory framework to combat discrimination. A new penalty, compensation for discrimination, was introduced into the Act which is to compensate for the offence resulting from discrimination and to deter people from discriminating against others.

At the same time as this Act entered into force at the beginning of this year, the four separate discrimination ombudsmen were merged into a single ombudsman authority.

Initiatives for urban districts with extensive exclusion

Local development agreements

Most of the larger cities in Sweden have urban districts where exclusion is extensive. Many newly arrived immigrants live in these districts. To define the responsibilities of municipalities and the state regarding development in urban districts where there is extensive exclusion, the Government has entered into local development agreements with 21 metropolitan municipalities.

The Government has tasked the police authorities, the Swedish Social Insurance Agency and the Swedish Public Employment Service with entering into local partnerships with municipalities that have signed local development agreements. The purpose of the partnerships is to enable agencies and the municipality to effectively coordinate their work in these urban districts.

New start offices

The Government has established new start offices in nine cities where exclusion is particularly prevalent. These new start offices are intended to be one stop shops that offer individually adapted guidance and support in, for example, starting and running a business. The new start offices are connected with the services and cooperation offices for agencies and municipalities that already exist.

Common basic values

Dialogue on common basic values

In 2008, the Government initiated work to strengthen people's involvement in issues concerning democracy and human rights. As a first step, the initiative was targeted at supporting non-profit organisations in their work on a dialogue concerning basic values. The dialogue is based on human rights issues, and addresses the question of how we can achieve a society whose development is characterised by mutual respect for differences within the limits set by the fundamental democratic values of society. The Government has allocated a total of SEK 6 million for the dialogue on common basic values over the period 2009–2011.

Funds for activities to combat racism

In 2008, the Government established a support organisation for activities to combat racism and similar forms of intolerance, expressed in the form of, for example, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, Afrophobia and anti-Ziganism. SEK 6 million a year has been allocated to this support.

Basic facts on immigration and immigrants in Sweden

Sweden's population

Fourteen per cent of Sweden's 9.3 million inhabitants were born in other countries. Four per cent of Swedes were born in Sweden with two foreign-born parents and a further six per cent have one parent who was born abroad. The proportion of the Swedish population with a foreign background can be compared with that of the USA and Germany, and is higher than, for example, that of the UK, France and the Netherlands.

During the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s many people came to Sweden to work from Finland, southern Europe and Turkey. Since the 1970s, Sweden has received refugees, first from Latin America and East Asia, and subsequently more from the Middle East and Africa. Since Sweden's membership of the EU in 1995, immigration from the rest of the EU and the EEA countries has increased.

The largest immigration groups, coming from

Finland	175 000
Iraq	109 000
Yugoslavia	72 000
Poland	64 000
Iran	58 000
Bosnia and Herzegovina	56 000
Germany	47 000

The majority of immigrants in Sweden have lived in this country for more than ten years, and some 60 per cent are Swedish citizens. In general, foreign citizens can apply for Swedish citizenship after living in Sweden for five years. In one year, around one in ten foreign citizens living in Sweden acquire Swedish citizenship.

Immigration to Sweden 2008

In recent years, Sweden has received more immigrants than ever before in its history. During 2008, a total of 90 021 people received residence permits or registered right of residence in Sweden.

- 25 699 Work or studies
- 19 098 EU or EEA citizens
- 11 237 Refugees, etc.
- 33 687 Family ties (marriage, family reunification, adoptions, etc.)
 - 10 665 of whom are relatives of refugees



REGERINGSKANSLIET

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Questions about the content of this fact sheet can be addressed to the Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality, tel: +46 8 405 10 00. Additional copies of the fact sheet can be printed from the Government website: www.regeringen.se

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