

SWEDEN

I. System of Government

1. Sweden is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system of government.
2. The head of state is the King (or Queen) with ceremonial functions only. Executive power is exercised by the Swedish government—composed of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet ministers, which is held accountable to parliament. The Prime Minister is chosen by parliament upon the nomination of the Speaker. Should parliament reject the nomination four successive times, a new general election will be called unless the regular election is scheduled to take place within the next three months.
3. The national unicameral legislature is the Swedish Parliament (*Riksdag*) composed of 349 members. The members of parliament are elected by direct vote every four years under an open list proportional representation system. 310 members are elected from 29 multi-member constituencies, and the remaining 39 seats are distributed amongst parties in proportion to their national share of the vote. Parties that obtain at least 4 percent of the vote nation-wide participate in seat distribution, as do those which do not meet this threshold but obtain at least 12 percent of the vote in any constituency. Individual candidates must obtain at least 8 percent of their party's votes in a constituency to be preferred in seat allocation.
4. Elections at the regional or county level and at the municipal level are held every four years simultaneously with the parliamentary elections, also using an open list proportional representation system but with lower thresholds for seat distribution and allocation.
5. There are 6,834,169 registered voters for the 2006 parliamentary elections.

II. Electoral Legal Framework

6. Elections in Sweden are governed by the Constitution of Sweden and laws on elections passed by Parliament including government ordinances affecting elections. The Constitution of Sweden is not contained in a single document but is composed of the following fundamental laws: (a) the 1974 Instrument of Government, (amended in 1976, 1979 and 1994) which provides for the basic features of the system of government; (b) the 1810 Act of Succession which provides for the rules on succession to the throne; (c) the 1949 Freedom of the Press Act and (d) the 1991 Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression.
7. The significant laws governing elections are the: 2005 Swedish Elections Act (2005:837) which governs the elections to parliament, to county and municipal council assemblies, and to the European Parliament; the Local Government Act (1991:900) which also contains provisions affecting local government elections; and the Referendums Act.

III. Electoral Management Body

8. Elections in Sweden are the over-all responsibility of the Swedish Election Authority. It is charged with the compilation and finalization of the electoral rolls, preparation and dispatch of voting cards (which must be received prior to start of postal voting), provision of information technology support for the elections, preparation of the ballots and other election materials, distribution of parliamentary seats between parties and for appointing members of the Riksdag and their substitutes in elections to the Riksdag. The Swedish Election Authority is supervised by an Electoral Board composed of five

members appointed by the government.

9. At the county level, elections are supervised and managed by the County Administrative Board. Elections at the municipal level, including advance voting, are supervised and managed by the Municipal Election Committees. Voting station officials are appointed by the municipal election committees. One voting station is assigned to every 800 to 2,000 voters.

IV. The Right to Vote

10. Swedish citizens who are at least 18 years on the date of elections and who are, or have been, registered residents of Sweden are entitled to vote in parliamentary elections. There is no specific council or municipal residence required of the voter for elections to parliament as long as the voter is included in the population registration database 30 days before election day. For county or municipal elections, it is additionally required that the voter be a registered resident of the county or municipality. Citizens of any member state of the European Union, Iceland and Norway are also entitled to vote in county or municipal elections in Sweden provided that they are registered residents of the relevant county or municipality. Citizens of other States are also qualified to vote in county or municipal elections provided that they have been registered residents for at least three consecutive years in the relevant county or municipality.
11. In order to be able to vote, a qualified voter is also required to be registered as a voter in an electoral roll. In effect, voter registration in Sweden is compulsory since it is extracted from the population registration database.
12. Voting is not compulsory in Sweden. Voters may vote in person at the voting station where the voter is registered or in advance at designated voting stations or by mail, from 18 days before election day. Overseas voters may vote either by mail from 45 days before election day, or in person at, or by sending their sealed ballot via messenger to, a Swedish diplomatic mission abroad from 24 days before election day. A voter who voted in advance (local and overseas) may still change his/her vote by voting again in the voting station on election day. In such cases, the advance vote will be declared invalid. Voting via a messenger-delivered sealed ballot is allowed for persons with physical disability, prisoners in detention and rural postmen.

V. System and Procedure of Voter Registration

13. Sweden uses a voter registration system based on a civil registry. Sweden maintains a continuous population registration system for all residents of Sweden compiled by the Swedish Tax Administration. The population registration database includes the following information on each individual: name, address, county, municipal area, parish, property, marital status and date, parents, children, spouses, place of birth, citizenship, secrecy, immigration and emigration. Each individual is assigned a personal identity number. The information contained in the population registration database is shared by the Swedish Tax Administration to other government agencies, including the Swedish Election Authority, on a needs basis.
14. For every election, the Swedish Electoral Authority purchases an electoral roll for each electoral district, compiled by the Swedish Tax Administration from its population registration database. Only one electoral roll is used for simultaneous elections. The names of qualified voters included in the electoral roll are extracted from the population registration database of the Swedish Tax Administration and the land register 30 days before the date of elections. All qualified voters who are residents of Sweden 30 days before election day are included in the electoral roll. They are entitled to vote in the particular county or municipality where they are registered as residents. The names of those who are not qualified to vote in a particular election are marked excluded in the civil

register for that particular election.

15. Qualified Swedish voters abroad who have left Sweden within the last 10 years are still automatically included in the electoral roll. Thereafter, they may be included in the electoral roll only after they have notified the tax authority of their desire to be included in the electoral roll not later than 30 days before the date of elections. A special form is available for this purpose.
16. The same rule applies for elections to the European Parliament. European Union citizens who want to vote within Sweden may be included in the electoral roll for the elections to the European Parliament upon proper notification to the tax authority not later than 30 days before the date of the elections. They are however required to execute an undertaking not to vote again for the same election in another member state of the European Union.
17. A vote from a Swedish citizen who is no longer a registered resident in Sweden received by the Swedish Election Authority not later than the day prior to the date of elections is considered as a valid vote and the voter is added into the electoral roll. A vote received later than the day prior to the date of elections from a Swedish citizen who is no longer a registered resident, is not considered for the particular election but is considered as a notification for inclusion in the electoral roll for future elections and referendums.

VI. Data Management and Storage

18. Electoral enrolment information is collected and stored at the first instance, in the specialized computer database of the local tax offices. This information is then shared and updated to the regional registers and a central reference register. For every election, the Swedish Election Authority purchases the electoral roll products needed in electronic form, which are then printed and made available to voting stations. The electoral enrolment information is regularly updated as part of the continuous updating of the population registration database.
19. Day to day updating and management of the population registration system is handled by the local offices of the Swedish Tax Administration. There are 131 different registers being maintained in each local tax office, hosted by 39 computers. At the county level, the Swedish Tax Administration maintains 24 different registers. The Swedish Tax Administration also maintains a central reference register. Daytime contact between the computerized local, county and central registers is done on-line. Night time contact is in the form of block processing.

VII. Data Management Technology

20. The information contained in the computerized population registration database is shared to other government agencies using "Navet" and "SPAR". The electronic gateway to the Swedish population register database (SPAR database) is provided by InfoTorg (<http://www.infotorg.sema.se>). The usual means of access to the population registration database is via the internet. The database may also be accessed by other networks and protocols.

VIII. Type of Voters' List Generated

21. For every election, an electoral roll is prepared by the Swedish Election Authority for each electoral district. This electoral roll is extracted from the updated population registration database managed by the Swedish Tax Administration. The Swedish Election Authority receives the electoral roll in electronic format which is thereafter printed for use by each voting station. This is done using the maps and statistics provided by the Land Survey.

IX. Proof of Registration

22. The Swedish Election Authority prints voting cards for all qualified voters which are sent to the voter on the basis of the address contained in the population registration database. The voting cards are sent so as to be received by the voter before the start of advance voting 18 days before election day. The voting card contains the following information:
- a. voter's name and number in the electoral roll;
 - b. what elections the voter may participate in; and
 - c. the voter's voting station and voting hours of the specific voting station.
23. It does not have any integrity features—such as a photo or signature of the voter. The voter must present the voting card or provide proof of identity to the voting station officials, who are also required to note the procedure undertaken for the verification of voter's identity. The voting card is also required to be placed inside the outer envelope for mailed ballots.

X. Maintenance of Voters List

24. The maintenance of the electoral roll is integrated with the maintenance of the population registration database from which the electoral roll information is extracted. Every individual resident is required by law to provide the local tax office certain information (e.g. Births, residence, marriage) as well as changes or amendments to such recorded information (e.g. Marriage, transfer of residence, change of name). Other government agencies that receive information on individuals from the public (e.g. Social insurance offices, municipalities, police, etc.) also provide the Swedish Tax Administration with information. An individual voter may also verify the accuracy of his/her recorded information through the local tax office and may request amendment or correction of an erroneous or outdated entry.
25. Corrections and amendments to an individual's information on the electoral roll, and addition of a qualified voters omitted from the electoral roll, may be requested in writing not later than 12 days before election day. Requests for these amendments to the information contained in the electoral roll are considered by the county administrative board. The electoral roll, as corrected, is then sent to the appropriate municipal election committee.

XI. Quality Assurance Mechanisms

26. Each registered resident in Sweden is assigned a personal identification number composed of 12 digits unique to each individual. Access to the population registration database is regulated by the Population Registration Act and the Population Register Act. The former provides when and where a person is to be registered, when a change of address is to be made, when and how a population registration decision is to be made and the process of appeal of the decision. The latter provides for what registers are to be kept, their purposes, contents and how they may be accessed. A population ordinance also provides how information may be transferred or shared by the various registers.
27. In addition to the population register, the local tax offices also maintain a daily record book on daily registration matters that may necessitate an amendment of the records. The daily record book

contains the date the information was provided, the contents of the information, the name of the person who attended to the matter and the date of completion of the matter.

28. The local tax office has the authority to verify the accuracy of the recorded information in the population registration database. The system also provides for automatic checks and cross-references between information recorded for related persons. Surveys are also conducted from time to time to verify the accuracy of the database. A random follow-up quality check is also conducted. Every registered person also receives an annual statement containing his/her information on the register.
29. Amendments to the population register and the daily record book are also recorded in a separate transaction log which is kept at the end of the day in a fire proof locked room for security and to serve as back-up data in case of computer failure.
30. In addition to its normal database, the Swedish Tax Administration also maintains a notification database which serves as the common source for all other databases.

XII. Transparency and Accessibility to the Public

31. A voter may examine the electronic electoral roll at the local tax office. Public access to the Swedish registers is regulated by the Freedom of the Press Act, Notification Register Act, Personal Information Act and the Secrecy Act. The public is generally allowed access to the population registration database through the local tax offices unless the person to whom the information applies will suffer a disadvantage as a result of the divulgement of the information.

XIII. Voter Education

32. As the voters register is derived from the population registration database, there are no specific voter education campaigns dealing with voter registration. Information on voting rights is contained in material available on the Swedish Election Authority's website. Internet penetration and use of e-government websites are very high in Sweden. More than 80 percent of the citizens regularly use the internet and more than two-thirds have internet access in their homes.

XIV. Voter Registration Cost

33. According to the Global Survey on the Cost of Registration and Elections (CORE Study) prepared by UNDP and IFES (2005) the reported voter registration cost for Sweden is rather low. For the 2003 Swedish referendum on the European Union, the Swedish Election Authority spent the equivalent of around US\$64,000 in acquiring the electoral roll from the population registration database of the Swedish Tax Administration. The cost of dividing and printing the voters lists by voting station was 300,000 kroner (US\$38,400). Printing and distribution of voting cards to all eligible voters cost 13.5 million kroner (US\$1,728,000).
34. The county election management bodies also produced electoral district maps through the employment of Geographic Information technology provided by the Land Survey at the cost of 200,000 kroner (US\$26,000). The foregoing costs do not include the hidden costs shouldered by the Swedish Tax Administration in maintaining the population registration database (salaries and benefits of employees and other operational expenses. As of 1997, population registration was managed by 614 employees at the cost of 381 million kroner (US\$48,768,000)

XV. Performance Standards

35. No published data on performance standards was available for review.

XVI. Performance of the Voter Registration System

36. The Swedish voter registration system based on the population registration database is generally regarded as a model voter registration system using the civil registry. Information is regarded as accurate and is automatically cross-checked, validated and updated. A survey conducted in 1996 found out that there were only 1.7 errors per 1,000 entries checked. No voter register comprehensiveness data could be found for review.