

Country report – Sweden

Introduction

This paper tries to explain how the financial crisis has influenced the migrant communities in Sweden. There is a belief that the crisis has not influenced Sweden in the same way as other European countries.

1. Country Overview: Migrant groups and development trends

Both emigration from Sweden and immigration into Sweden has been playing an important role in Swedish history. Only from 1850 to 1930 about 1.2 million people emigrated from Sweden to North America and some other countries in the world. This period in the Swedish history is called the period of the Great Swedish emigration. In the times since 1940, the number of people who were leaving Sweden was numerically even larger than in the period before. The difference is that the emigration which took place 1850-1930 comprised almost a fourth of the population of that time, a fourth which was not replaced by other groups, while the new emigration is not so large in proportion to the country's population of today and it is also replaced by immigrants from other countries.

The “turning point”, when Sweden began to attract more migrants than losing people by emigration, has been reached around 1930. As the surrounding world began since the mid 1930s to be dominated by totalitarian regimes and later German and Soviet occupations, Sweden experienced till 1948 its first wave of immigration as persecuted people from Denmark, Norway, Germany, Poland, Finland and the Baltic states sought refuge on Swedish soil. Sweden received also many Jews coming first from occupied Denmark and later directly from the former concentration camps in Germany and Poland. As demonstrates the following overview, Sweden continued to attract political refugees from non-democratic states until our days:

Table 1: Immigration to Sweden of people from countries with political persecution

Nordic refugees At the end of the war in 1945, there were ca 70 000 Finnish children, 18 000 Danish citizens and 43 000 Norwegians in Sweden	ca 121 000
Balts During and after the war	ca 30 000
Refugees from concentration camps Refugees came 1945-49 through the sc. Bernadotte and UNRRA-actions and through private initiative	ca 45 000
Hungarians During the revolt 1956 and victims of political prosecutions till late 1980s	ca 15 000
Czechs and Slovaks after the Prague spring and the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, as well as in the 70s, 80s and 90s	Ca. 6 000
Polish During revolts and persecutions from the end of the 1960s, the military coup December 1981	ca 20 000
Yugoslavs during 1950s, 1960s and 1990s (Partly refugees, partly immigrant workers)	ca 77 000
Greeks (during the Junta period 1967-74)	ca 5 000

Kurds (from the beginning of the 1970s)	ca 20 000
Assyrians and Syrians (1972, 1975 and later)	ca 20 000
Vietnam Chinese boat refugees at the end of 1970s	ca 9 000
Iraqis 1980s 1990s and 2000s	ca 120 000
Iranians (Iranian Revolution 1979 and the war between Iran and Iraq 1980-1988)	Ca. 60 000
Chileans (after the military coup 1973)	ca 25 000
other Latin Americans (escaping by political prosecutions in Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Uruguay during the 1970s)	ca 10 000
Eritreans (in consequence of the war in Eritrea since the end of the 1960s)	ca 11 000
Palestinians (in consequence of the war in Lebanon)	ca 13 000
Somalis (in consequence of the war in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya during the 1980s,1990s and 2000s)	ca 37 000

Source: Swedish Migration Board and Immigrant Institute

The Agreement on the Freedom of Movement between Nordic Countries (1954) can be considered to be the beginning of the second immigration wave (till 1972), which began with the influx of a large number of Finns to Sweden. Between 1954 and 1974, ca 500 000 Finnish moved in to Sweden as a result of the open labor market between the Nordic countries. Now a vast majority of these Finns has returned to Finland.

Similar to other industrialized Western European countries did also Sweden experience during the booming years of the post-war period a lack of domestic workforce, which could no longer be compensated solely with workers from other Nordic countries. In reaction to this situation Sweden opened its borders also for workers from other parts of the world (e.g. Greece, Yugoslavia, Italy). Many southern Europeans were directly recruited by companies while others travelled to Sweden on their own initiative. While this seems to resemble both the development in other Western industrialized countries of that time it is crucial to know that Sweden did not launch a guest worker scheme yet approached the immigrants as future citizens. Co-operating closely with the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO), which had to give its permission to the recruitment of foreigners, the state guaranteed that migrants would enjoy the same wage levels and rights as Swedes, including access to unemployment benefits.

In reaction to the economic downturn and discussions within the trade unions, Sweden decided to stop recruitment of foreign labour in 1970. The years after and until 1992 the access to the Swedish labour market was limited to citizens of the Nordic countries and foreigners already in the country. This did not stop for refugees to come to Sweden and apply for asylum and residence permit. Many applications were rejected and the asylum seekers had to leave the country. Another important immigration channel was family reunification. Both developments were the basis for the Third Migration Wave to Sweden, while Sweden's accession to the EU in 1995 marks the beginning of the current period. As a member of the EU, Sweden had to open again its labour market for people from non Nordic states. However, as migration is dominated by people from non EU member states (refugees and family reunification of accepted refugees), this did not bring a significant change. Sweden was also among the three EU member states that decided in 2004 not to impose any limitations to citizens from the new member states seeking to work in Sweden.

However, in difference to Ireland and Great Britain, which absorbed in the years after 2004 a very large number of migrants from Central and Eastern Europe, Sweden did not experience

an influx of similar scale. One explanation for this might be the attractiveness of the English language, another one the much more regulated Swedish labour market, where migrant work cannot be offered much cheaper than the work of the domestic workforce.

The most recent changes in Swedish migration policy brought a re-acceptance of labour migration at the end of 2008. The key document is the work permit, which can be given to anybody who finds a job for at least one year.

It is interesting to notice that Sweden does not distinguish between qualified and non-qualified workers. Nowadays, immigrants originate from all countries of the world. At the end of 2009 the total population of Sweden was 9,34 million people. The immigrant population represents 14,3% of the total. Together with their children they represent 22% of the population. Around 800 000 persons were born in Sweden with at least one parent born in other countries. Still more than 20 000 persons from outside the European Union and the EEC countries applied for work permit in 2009 and 21 584 persons in 2010. The impact of the reform has to be seen within some years, when we may see the decreasing of asylum seekers and the increase of people coming with work permits.

The reasons for migrating to Sweden can be various. As the table below shows, there are different categories of migration and a trend to migrate has been increasing over the last six years. Furthermore, as the table shows labour migration has increased after the new law in December 2008, but still at a very low level.

Table 2: Migration to Sweden in the last six years:

Category	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Work and studies	12822	13588	18779	25699	35069	35772
EU/EES	18069	20461	19387	19398	17606	18480
Family reunion	22713	27291	29515	33687	34704	25076
Refugees	8859	25096	18414	11237	11265	12130
Totalt	62463	86436	86095	90021	98644	91458

Source: Swedish Migration Board

Table 3: The 20 biggest Migrant Communities by Countries of Origin 2009

Finland	172218
Iraq	117919
Former Yugoslavia	71578
Poland	67518
Iran	59922
Bosnia-Hercegovina	56127
Germany	47803
Denmark	46002
Norway	43819
Turkey	40766
Somalia	31734

Thailand	28739
Chile	28320
Libanon	23701
China	21202
Great Britain and Nordern Irland	20368
Syria	19646
Rumania	18532
USA	16555
India	16457

Source Central Bureau of Statistics, 2010

Table 4. Immigration and emigration last years

Year	immigrants	of them as Swedish	emigrants	of them as Swedish
2000	58 659	16 030	34 091	21 515
2001	60 795	16 678	32 141	19 439
2002	64 087	16 484	33 009	18 813
2003	63 795	15 807	35 023	19 889
2004	62 028	14 448	36 586	20 565
2005	65229	13932	38118	22266
2006	95750	15352	44908	24875
2007	99485	15949	45418	24990
2008	101171	13388	45294	20648
2009	102280	13985	39240	16732
2010	98801	14870	48853	21173
	872 080	166 923	432 681	230 905

Source Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011

2. Differences in status and level of vulnerability

In the previous chapter, we were providing an overview of migrant groups and their different paths to Sweden. One way to classify the immigrant population is the initial purpose of their stay: Here we have on the one hand labour migrants and on the other hand refugees. A third, important, category are migrants who came to Sweden to be united with their family member, who had come earlier either as refugee or economic migrant. The rules that governed each of these migration paths changed over time. In the case of economic migration, these changes reflected international obligations (resulting from treaties among Northern countries, Sweden's entry to the European Union, the enlargement of the EU) and changes of the situation on the Swedish labour market, which resulted in decisions to open or close Sweden for those seeking job. In the period between 1971 and 2008, when Sweden did not allow labour migration except for a few key persons, most of those who came were refugees or

family members of migrants earlier accepted or married to somebody with right to be in Sweden. At the same time it has been more difficult to get refugee status for every year.

Permanent residence permits

The normal way of residence in Sweden is getting permanent residence permit, which generally is for three years, and it is renewed automatically every three years. People who marry to some person living in Sweden can not get a permanent residence permit until two years of residence in Sweden have passed. During that time they can get permits for one year. They may not divorce during this time. If they do, they lose the right to renew the residence permit and they have to leave the country. This rule has created problems to women who are ill treated by their husbands and want to divorce. They were expelled from Sweden as their permit were not permanent.

The application for residence permits has to be done outside Sweden through the Swedish embassies or consulates. It is not allowed to come to Sweden and apply for residence permits here. Those who try this way lose automatically the right to search for a permit. Relatives can also get residence permits but they have also to apply for residence while they live abroad, and they may not come to Sweden before the permit is granted. In general, only wife/husband and children under 18 years are accepted as relatives. Parents of adult immigrants can also get residence permit under special circumstances.

Work permit

Until December 2008 work permit was given for a few. For the majority it was not needed if they had residence permit. Now work permit is the normal permit for people coming from third country.

EU-citizens do not need either work or residence permit.

The policy of asylum

Sweden claims to have a generous refugee policy. Nevertheless in the last years the situation has changed drastically. From a country that welcomed refugees, Sweden turned into a country where the majority of asylum seekers does not get the refugee status they are asking for.

We can outline four major periods for the refugee policy.

The first period from 1930 to 1971, of acceptance of refugees, without making special difference between them and other migrants.

The second period from 1971 to 1985. The open immigration policy had ended and the only way to come to Sweden, except for some specialists and for family reunion, was applying for asylum.

The third period 1985-2010. A new law in the parliament decided that the Migration Board should be responsible for the welfare of asylum seekers after their application. During the first three years after the application of asylum had been approved the Migration Board had an agreement with the vast majority of municipalities who took care of the refugees and their families. During this period the refugees were not encouraged to search for a job until they

had got a certificate of their knowledge of Swedish. Some refugee groups had very big difficulties to enter the labour market.

The acceptance for refugees has varied during periods of time. The Migration board became more and more restrictive. In 2005 a big amount of organisations made a campaign for „amnesty“ to the asylum seekers which application had been rejected. The Swedish parliament decided in 2006 to create migration courts where asylum seekers could apply and to give a second change to those who were not accepted according to the older rules. As a result of it around 30 000 persons could get a permanent residence permit.

A major change has been made the 1st of December 2010. Asylum seekers are from the very beginning encouraged to search a job even during the waiting time before their application is accepted. The Migration board is no longer responsible for their welfare. Instead the Employment office has the overall responsibility. It means that it is now easier to match asylum seekers with potential employers.

Migration labor

From 2006 can EU/EES citizens apply for residence in a very easy way registering at the Migration Board. They can search for job even before registration.

In May 2009 the EU decided to open the frontiers for qualified migrant workers from non-EU/EES-countries. Sweden accepts all categories of work. The only condition is that the job seeker has to get an employment offer for more than one year. This change in the law began to be in force the 15th of December 2008. The change in the law came at the same time that it was a recession in Sweden as well as in Europe. Still more than 20 000 persons from outside the European Union and the EEC countries applied for work permit in 2009 and 21 584 persons in 2010. The impact of the reform has to be seen within some years, when we may see the decreasing of asylum seekers and the increase of people coming with work permits.

Sweden has had refugees between 1940 and 1970 who did not need to apply for asylum and their integration in the labor market was made easier. From 1970 until the end of 2008 the asylum seekers went through a list of measures without any garanty of getting work. First they had to wait unreasonably long time to get asylum, in case they succeeded. Many of those who did not get asylum or residence permit by humanitarian reasons stayed in the country and became undocumented. They had to wait for more than four years to apply for asylum again.

Those who got asylum started a new life first with courses in Swedish and in Swedish society and could not search a job before they had an acceptable knowledge of Swedish. The social authorities of the municipality where the responsible for refugees' schooling, housing and welfare.

The statistics are not always helpful if we don't see the total of permissions. Practically those who got residence permit until 2008 included the right to work without need of a second permit. We can not assume that they got a job. A very high procent of newcomers were without job the three or five first years with a big variation depending of their country of origin. Especially the Somali group has been in focus in many years without success.

From December 2008 migrants from third country can apply for a job. If they get work permit it means that they have a job, at least at the beginning and for at least a year. If they lose the job for any reason they can stay in Sweden for three months searching a new job. At the end of this period they either find a new job or they have to leave the country.

Those who get residence permit can get it for different reasons, as refugees or as family reunion. The statistics don't tell us if they have a job or not. After the new law in December 2008 the number of persons arriving to Sweden has not increased, nevertheless we see a change in the figures for every kind of permission. This change is positive, as work permit is preferable to only residence permit without having a job.

Immigrants from outside Europe without job

According to the Employment Office during 2009 and 2010 increased the number of unemployed for immigrants born outside Europe with 17000 persons to 78 000. They represent 21,6 percent, while immigrants born in Europe their unemployment rate is 12,2 percent and for the Swedish population only 7,0 percent. The big difference can only be explained by discrimination patterns from the employers.

This discrimination affects even to qualified immigrants as physicians and engineers. While there is a shortage of physicians in the hospitals the Swedish authorities recruit personnel from countries as Poland and Spain and help them to learn Swedish a half year before coming to Sweden. In the meanwhile there are many refugees with long experience in hospitals waiting to get their legitimation approved. It can take years. Some of them leave Sweden before they succeed.

3. Migrants' social rights

Immigrants in Sweden who enter the labour market are entitled to have the same health insurance as native Swedish. Work and employment are the very precondition of the health insurance, which is then paid by the employer. There is a qualification period for having right to unemployment salary as well as for full rights to the social security depending of which country they come from. For citizens of the European Union there is a right to settle in Sweden but the Migration Board ask them to show a health insurance from the home country or a private home insurance, which Swedish citizens do not need.

For newcomers it creates a difficult situation as many of them have been very little in the labor market and if they don't qualify for unemployment benefits they can stay without both health and unemployment insurance.

Undocumented immigrants have not the right to health care. A proposal is being discussed by a governmental commission and presented to the government at the end of May this year.¹ It will be hopefully presented to the parliament by the government at the autumn this year 2011. In Sweden until now there is only urgent help provided for people without residence permit. Some charity organisations have been working with undocumented immigrants and given them health care. Also some Swedish regions have been positive to give health to undocumented, but without support in the law.

¹ Statens offentliga utredningar 2011:48. Vård efter behov och på lika villkor - en mänsklig rättighet.

Similarly to health insurance the unemployment benefits are directly related to migrant's participation in the labour market. In order to get unemployment benefits the immigrant have to being working a minimum of time before they become unemployed. Otherwise they don't qualify and if they don't find a job soon they have to leave the country.

In Sweden there is an agreement in the labor market between employers and the trade unions called „the last in the first out“. This means that the last employed is the first to leave if there is a shortage of manpower in the enterprise. Often the immigrants are the last to be employed and therefore often he first to leave.

Refugees get support during the period of learning Swedish

Refugees and persons with refugee-like status get paid by the local community during the time they learn Swedish. For some years ago the whole family got support if one in the family went to the Swedish courses. Since December 2010 even the wife has to go to the Swedish courses if she wants to get economic support by herself. This is conceived as a reform for equality as women can get support by their own, not as wives to somebody.

It has been very difficult for refugees to come in to the labor market. A recent investigation in the area of Stockholm made by the regional authorities shows that it takes many years before refugees get their first jobs. There is also a strong variation between groups, which show that it exist some kind of discrimination depending of which country the refugees come from.²

The status and opportunities available to refugees have changed with the new legislation as of December 2010. If, in the past, were refugees dependent on the government in a form of payments by community and Swedish language courses, new legislation has brought changes in a form of a greater opportunity for self-reliance. The new authority for the welfare of the refugees was changed from the Migration Board to the Employment Office. The refugees are thus considered as capable of getting a job and not as people needing help. However, it has been impemented for a short period so far, and the results of this initiative will need to be evaluated later on.

Shortage of protection for migrant workers

The new law from December 2008, which allows labor migration for the first time after almost 40 years of restricted migration lacks of control on the employers. The level of vulnerability of migrants has increased. It has brought a greater opportunity for exploitation of migrants by their employers, as the trade unions have withdrawn from the recruitment process.

When an employer offers a job for more than one year the Migration Board gives work permission. The Migration Board only controll that the working conditions and the salary are correct. Once the permission is given there is no further controll. It has been found out that some employers have had a big movement of people on the payrolls. Moreover, conditions such as long working days nad low salaries have been common in Sweden. Those who want to complain can loose their work permits and the government is now trying to find the way to control the employees and to protect migrants from such inconsitencies on the labour market.

² Flykting i Stockholms län. Så gick det sedan. Rapport 2011:20.
<http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/stockholm/SiteCollectionDocuments/Sv/publikationer/2011/rapport-2011-20.pdf>

Furthermore, undocumented migrants have been exposed to practices of exploitation to a much greater degree. Instances of slavery and dishonest practices have occurred. These people can become subjects as they are non-existing in the records of the migration board.

The role of trade unions

The trade unions have played an important role defending the migrant workers rights. Nevertheless they have also played a negative role in order to keep the frontiers open. At the end of the 1960s it was decided to close Sweden for labor migration. For every person applying for labor migration the trade unions had the decision at their hands. According to the law labor migration was permitted only if the trade unions accepted it. A condition to accept labor migration has been that employers could not find any person within Sweden to do the same job. Some examples were cooks in Chinese or Indian restaurants. This rule has lasted until December 2008 when a new law opened Sweden for labor migration. By this new law the role of the trade unions has dismissed as they no longer are needed for the decision making of giving or not giving work permit.

Normally there is no further control of the employers once the permit is given. Therefore we have seen behaviors not in accordance with the spirit of the law. After two years of the new law the government has initiated an investigation of how the negative effects we already see can be avoided. At the same time the right-wing government doesn't agree with the trade unions in giving them more power. The government believes that only the employers know who they need to employ and any restriction on this right has to be avoided.

Sweden is not free from undocumented immigrants as labor force. For many of them the exploitation they are object of is bearable as long as they still hope that one day they can get permanent permission. This doesn't happen, and they leave the country after some years, while others come instead. The trade unions are not concerned with this exploited group. The main reason is that they believe that if they act for them they are in some way recognized as part of the labor force. This dilemma makes the situation for undocumented immigrants still more difficult, as nobody cares about them.

Foreign workers from non-EU countries

All foreign workers with work permission has the same rights as nationals once they have got a job. The qualification time for unemployment security is the same, the salary has to be the same for the same job and so on. The biggest difference is that foreign workers have to leave the country if they become unemployed before they have got permanent permission, normally after two years. Foreign workers from the EU-countries have a better protection, but also they have to leave the country if they don't find a job in time.

Special situation for those who are undocumented before coming to Sweden

Since some years, Sweden perceives a problem with asylum seekers who come to Sweden without any personal documents that confirm their identity. The situation has been partly caused by the implementation practice of the authorities who doubted that asylum seekers were really persecuted when they had been able to get a passport and other documents from their government. The problem is that they are not trusted either, if they do not have any documents, as the Swedish authorities have no confirmation of their identity.

Today, Swedish authorities register that almost 85% of the asylum seekers lack documents. Many asylum seekers are told to throw their documents away before they cross the Swedish border so that they cannot be sent back to other European transit countries. This is partly a result of the Dublin Convention.

A very special situation was with refugees coming from Somalia, Eritrea or other countries of East Africa, where it was difficult to get documents at all. These persons could get residence permits while the war in Somalia or Eritrea was on, but not any longer.

For those who can stay legally in Sweden the every day life is made very difficult, as they can not get identity cards or Swedish citizenship. Identity cards are requested everywhere, even to buy tickets on the train.

4. Economic crises and the migrant communities

The economic crisis in Europe has resulted in an increasing number of unemployed persons in the total population, both Swedes and immigrants . It has not been any general discussion of how the crisis has influenced different groups, partly because there is a consensus that all with the right to live in Sweden has to be treated in the same way.

Refugees waiting to come in into the labor market

Since 1985 when the Migration Board became responsible for the welfare of the refugees until they were established in the society with a work of their own, it has been difficult fo refugees to get a job. For some groups they needed to wait even more that ten years.

Therefore, when the economic crisis started to give effect this refugees got bigger difficulty to get in into the labor market. They did not become unemployed, as they already were. There is no discussion about this problem in the main stream, unless by the political forces against immigration, who uses this situation to argument against refugee as well as labor migration.

Newcomers are less protected

As new immigrants are often the last to come in the labour market they loose their jobs first according with the rules of the Swedish labor market. The other result of the crisis is that there is a high procentual number of persons who didn't come into the labor market before the crisis and now are still waiting their first job.

According to a recent survey by the government³ it has been very difficult for people with asylum to come in to the labor market. The government emphasizes a special group, women. Their rate of employment is 20% lower than the women born in Sweden. It takes for them almost 10 years from the permission day to get a job. After three years in Sweden only 30% of women get a job. In 2009 the procent rate of employment for women (20-64 years) born in Sweden was 79,3 procent while it was 60,3 procent for women born in other countries. Even for men the employment rate was only 69,5 procent, also almost 10% lower than for women born in Sweden.

³ Utrikes födda på den svenska arbetsmarknaden. Steffan Ericsson. Bilaga 4 till LU2011. <http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/15/67/80/4e37a363.pdf>

Perhaps the most vulnerable people are asylum seekers who have had a difficulty to get into the labour market not only in Sweden but elsewhere. The government hopes that the changes of the last law of December 2010 by which asylum seekers are registered at the Employment Office and not only at the Migration Board can give them some possibilities to get a job during the waiting time.

5. Practices to provide social protection and to prevent mistreatment (depending on what you were able to find)

The social protection in Sweden is totally in the hands of the authorities. The social laws cover all the facets of life from the birth until death. It is a part of the welfare state in which all the political parties believe.

Therefore the work volunteer charity organisations do on the first hand is to create opinion in cases the law needs to be changed. Neither the trade unions nor the socially engaged organisations have a direct role in the welfare of the immigrants.

Reforms 1965 – 2010

To summarize, this table gives an overview over reforms in the field of immigration.

1965 All immigrants have the right to free courses in Swedish provided by the Swedish evening schools.

1996 The government appoints a working group on immigrant questions. Finnish-Swedish Council is created in order to improve the education of the Finnish minority.

1967 Immigration from outside the Nordic countries is regulated. Persons from other countries need work permit before coming to Sweden.

The first municipal immigrant service opens in Stockholm

A news weekly magazine run by a governmental foundation starts publication.

The last number was published in 1998. There have been editions in English, French, Polish, Spanish, Czech, Turkish, Arabic and German.

1968 A new immigration policy is approved in the parliament. The decision of the Government that immigrants from outside the Nordic countries will need work permit before coming to Sweden is confirmed.

New principles for the education of immigrant children at school are approved.

The children get the right to learn their home language at least two hours per week. The municipalities get paid from the National School Board.

A new immigrant investigation starts aimed to investigate the situation of immigrants and present proposal on the cultural and social adaptation of immigrants in the Swedish society.

1969 Reforms in the immigration law start to take place. The new Immigration Board is established.

1971 Socially handicapped Roma people from outside the Nordic countries are accepted to Sweden for the first time.

1972 Swedish for immigrants is improved and municipalities and organisations can get support for activities to engage immigrants in courses.

1973 Immigrant workers get the right to courses in Swedish for foreigners during working time paid by the employers, for a maximum of 240 hours.

The Swedish public libraries get support to buy books in immigrant languages.

The first Finnish People's University is established in Haparanda.

Religious organisations with many immigrants get support in the same way as other churches outside the official Swedish church.

1975 The parliament decides on the new direction of the immigration policy after years of investigation. "Jämlikhet, valfrihet och samverkan" (Equality, freedom of choice and cooperation) are the three honour words for the new policy.

During this and coming years the parliament decides about a long list of reforms:

The Swedish Immigration Board gives support to immigrant organisations.

Journals and magazines in other languages than Swedish can now get economic support either by the Swedish Immigration Board or the Swedish Cultural Board, depending of the journals orientation.

1976 Foreign citizens living in Sweden for more than three years get the right to vote in the local and regional elections, as well as in the elections to the Swedish Church (this last election depending of if they are or not members of the Swedish Church – for instance many Finnish citizens, for whom the Swedish Church does not differ from the official Finnish one.

The parliament decides that immigrant children should have the right to follow courses in their mother tongue both in the pre-school and in the primary education from class 1 to class 9.

The Swedish Radio and the Television Company start programs in immigrant languages, besides the Finnish, which was established some years before.

1984 The responsibility for refugees is transferred from the Employment Office to the Swedish Immigration Board. The parliament decides that the refugees should move to different cities around Sweden, instead of being concentrated in a few places. This was called the whole-country-strategy

1986 The 1st of July starts the new ethnic discrimination ombudsman. His/her work is to help immigrants in personal cases of discrimination due to their ethnic background.

1997 A new integration policy is approved in the parliament.

The Swedish Immigration Board is divided in two different organisations, the Swedish Integration Board and the Swedish Immigration Board.

2000 The Swedish Immigration Board changes its name to Swedish Migration Board.

2001 The 1st of July is implemented the new law on Swedish citizenship, which allows double citizenship. It gives also children to stateless persons to become

Swedish from birth.

2003 A new law on discrimination, which comprises all kinds of discrimination by ethnicity, religion, sexual preference or handicap.

2008 A new law for work migration at the end of the year. This law ends a 40-year ban of labor migration.

2010 The Employment office is in charge of the introduction to refugees instead of the Migration Board. The municipalities are not longer responsible for the welfare of refugees. Men and women are treated equally regarding introduction to the society.

Some more changes are going to happen in a near future, as the government has decided to make agreements with the civil society for some parts of the welfare, as the receiving of refugees in the local communities, which until now was a task for the municipalities with economic support given by the Migration Board. During a long period of time, between 1985 and 2010, the Migration Board had agreements with each municipality, in order to receive a certain amount of asylum seekers and refugees. For every person the municipality received a certain amount of money, which should be sufficient to create a receiving organisation as well as give the refugees the possibility of learning Swedish, Swedish society and prepare for the integration into society.⁴ These programs have varied a lot from place to place. For some municipalities the agreement has been a good business as they had many empty apartments which could be used by refugees during their introduction into society.

*The new law 1st of December 2010 made possible for newcomers to establish earlier in the labor market.*⁵

Until recently the Migration Board and the local communities together were responsible for the welfare of asylum seekers and those who got residence permit through asylum or closed reasons. Newcomers in this context means people asking for asylum. Those who come from the EU/EES-countries or as labor workers from third country have no direct access to the facilities offered to refugees or persons treated as such.

The new reform by which the Employment Office is responsible for the introduction of newcomers is an intent to accelerate the integration and inclusion of refugees and their families to the labor market. It has also equality as its main approach. In the old reception system women started their courses in Swedish much more later than men, they had less learning hours per week, as well as their contacts with the labor market were few.

The reform involves:

- Giving the Swedish Public Employment Service coordination responsibilities for introduction activities instead of the municipalities.
- A new benefit that is the same for everyone regardless of where in the country one lives is paid to new arrivals when they actively participate in introduction activities.
- A new actor – an ‘introduction guide’ – that will be introduced to support the new arrival during the introduction period.

⁴ Pocket facts 2010. Statistics on integration. <http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/17/07/93/1e1d64ad.pdf>

⁵ Nyanlända invandrades arbetsmarknadsetablering - egenansvar med professionellt stöd. Regeringens proposition 2009/10:60. <http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/13/59/98/31141681.pdf>

- New arrivals who have an introduction plan are to take part in civic orientation. The aim is that, on the basis of their own circumstances, each new arrival will be given professional support to, as quickly as possible, learn Swedish, find a job and support him or herself.

The Swedish Public Employment Service has a central role. The Public Employment Service will take over responsibility for coordinating introduction activities for adults from the municipalities. The municipalities will still have important tasks regarding refugee reception and the introduction of new arrivals. These include matters such as Swedish for Immigrants and other adult education, housing provision and initiatives for children and young people. The municipalities will also be responsible for offering civic orientation to new arrivals.

The first change is that the establishment support is made individually. Earlier the support was based on the family as a whole. Now the support is given individually, which means that the woman in the family is also encouraged to search a job and learn Swedish. Women get also a salary by themselves. Then both men and women have the same possibility to participate in courses in Swedish, in society and in preparing for the working market with the same conditions as their husbands.

For the second it is compulsory to participate in courses about society. In these courses they get information on their rights and duties as well as the values of the Swedish society, important to get contact with the host society. As the principle is to participate equally the women don't need to depend on their husbands.

For the third, every participant gets a guider to the society. Often the men come first to Sweden and when the rest of the family comes they depend on him. With this new reform also the women get a direct link to the society and don't need to depend on their husbands for information on their possibilities in the society and can get their own network. This is very new and it will take some time to implement.

An establishment of the process that provides a guidance into the Swedish society is a new initiative that has proven quite successful in introducing migrants into the life in their new hosting society. It is facilitated via courses during which the migrants get informed about their rights and duties, and values in the Swedish society. With this opportunity women do not have to necessarily depend on their husbands for information and conceptual means of existence.

The Swedish government has understood that there are big differences for the labor market between immigrants and those born in Sweden and for the first time try to focus on the labor market instead of as until now social receiving.

Another important reforms:

In March 2006 the immigration law was changed and the Foreigners Office where appeals of permits could be done was exchanged by administrative migration courts. The idea was to create a more secure system for the refugee. This has not been the case. When the decision taken by the Migration Board is negative the asylum seekers can appeal to the Migration Court. There are three such courts, in Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö. The cases in which the migration courts change the decision taken by the Migration Board is only about 10%, a

very low figure and it means that it is almost impossible to get asylum through the decision of the courts. There is also a higher instance, but very few cases are accepted.

The government is very active in a program for returning. Those who don't get permission to stay have to leave Sweden. Many of them are deported with the support of the police to their home countries. During the last four years the government has even paid a sum to those who return freely.

A special group is children coming alone and asking for refugee status. Partly a new phenomenon in Sweden the number of children coming alone has been increasing from year to year. These children it is believed they are sent by specialised groups. They come from conflict areas, some of them to avoid to be engaged in the local army. The countries sending more children are Irak, Afghanistan and Somalia. Mostly of them are between 12 and 17 years old. The Migration Board counts about 2400 children last year. It has been a yearly increase from 300 persons year 2000. Most of them don't get asylum and they are repatriated to their home country, even in cases where the Migration Board is not sure about who their parents are.

Some new changes which are not in favor of migrants are for instance that from this year 2011 family reunion is going to be made more difficult. The person who got residence or work permit has now to prove that he/she can afford the maintenance of the rest of the family before he/she is allowed to take the family to Sweden. Since early in the Swedish migration policy it was a sort of honor to give permission to the whole family, until now.

The changes in the family reunion law have proven not so succesful either, even if we have to wait for some time before we know better. Especially the social workers in Sweden believe that the new system is not going to work by practical reasons. The new legislation requires for the person with the residence or work permit to prove that he or she has got enough funds and can afford the maintenance of the rest of the family before moving them to Sweden. But, if they are here, the authorities can not expel them.

Another important change for their country nationals is that from the autumn this year they have to pay their studies if they want to be guest students in Sweden. This is not the case for citizens from EU/EES-countries, for whom the courses are going to be free as it has been until now.

On the other side, a new way of staying in Sweden, which it was not possible for some years ago, is that students can remain in Sweden if they get a job. Until the end of 2008 guest students had to leave Sweden after their studies.

Summary:

Some of the new rules in the migration law are very positive, as the right to ask for labor permit for third country nationals, while other rules as restrictions in family reunion or special conditions for studies in Sweden are negative.

As the positive ones can be considered the right to vote in the municipal and regional elections, a right from 1974 and practiced for the first time in the 1976 elections. The right to the mother language in school for children of immigrants, the right to study Swedish and get

familiar with the Swedish society for free has been in practice since the 1970s. For refugees it has been possible to learn Swedish and get a kind of salary.

An important right is the possibility to become Swedish citizens in a relatively short period of time, which is four years if the immigrant is a refugee and five years if they are labor immigrants. Citizens from the Nordic countries have had the opportunity to register for the Swedish citizenship after two years living in Sweden. Thus there are still some differences between groups depending of their country of origin.

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