

Living and working in Sweden





Facts about Sweden

Sweden is a very long country. From Kiruna in the north to Malmö in the south, it is some 1500km. Sweden has 9 million inhabitants and is the third largest country in western Europe with an area of 486.700 km². 85% of the population live in the southern parts of Sweden. Of these 1,2 million live in Stockholm, the capital of Sweden.

The Swedish Institute provides information about Sweden in several languages, covering everything from geography, history and politics to the education system and much more www.si.se.

Official information about Sweden in many languages is provided on www.sweden.se. Information on Swedish companies and authorities is available from Gateway to Sweden: www.wwlink.se and statistical information on www.scb.se/eng/

This folder will give you brief information about living and working in Sweden. For more detailed information we refer to the internet sites mentioned.

Citizens of EU/EEA and mobility rights

EU/EEA citizens are free to look for employment without any kind of permit for a period of three months. After this, you must have a residence permit. You are entitled to a residence permit if you find employment. The free mobility of workers applies to EU/EEA citizens. Citizens from countries outside the EU/EEA must be in possession of valid work and residence permits before taking up employment. Information in several languages about work and residence permits is provided by the Swedish Immigration Board www.migrationsverket.se. If you have found employment you should apply as soon as possible to the Swedish Migration Board for a residence permit. If your employment contract is for 1 year or more, your residence permit will be valid for 5 years. If your contract is for a shorter period, you will be issued with a temporary residence permit valid for this period. Please note that it is very common for Swedish employers to offer permanent contracts with a trial period of up to 6 months. In such cases the Swedish Migration Board may issue a temporary

residence permit. When you have been issued with a residence permit, you then register in person at the local tax office. There you will be issued with an identity number. Those with residence permits for 1 year or more will be issued with a personal identity (*personnummer*). This process is called national registration, *folkbokföring*. If the residence permit is for less than a year, you will be issued with a temporary personal identity number (*samordningsnummer*). The *personnummer* is necessary for all kinds of transactions and access to service in society. The *samordningsnummer* often (but not always) serves a similar function. Read more on www.skatteverket.se

If you have brought an E303 form with you from your own country, you will be informed about payment routines and about your contacts with the employment office during the period you look for work in Sweden. You may also have an E119 form from your own country covering you for any medical insurance costs incurred during this period

The labour market in Sweden

In general, the Swedish language is vital at any workplace in Sweden. Most instructions at a workplace are given in Swedish and language skills are necessary for security reasons. The Swedish people are known for their good knowledge in English but you cannot count on finding a job where only English is required, apart from those at a high level of responsibility.

In Sweden you will normally find a low level of hierarchy. Workplaces have horizontal organizations, using teamwork and very few supervisors.

Sweden is a very long country. From Kiruna in the north to Malmö in the

south, it is some 1500km. The Swedish landscape consists largely of forest and agricultural areas. As most people live in the south you will find the biggest automotive-, biotechnical-, IT- and mechanical industries there. The major industries in the north are papermills and other forestry-based industries along the coast. More information on Swedish industries and industrial clusters on www.sweden.se. Recruitment needs vary according to trade conditions and information about surpluses and deficits can be found on <http://europa.eu.int/eures>. The information is both national and regional.



Labour legislation

Employment in Sweden is either on a permanent basis or for a limited term. Limited-term employment is allowed for temporary (stand-in) positions or non-recurring projects. A trial period of employment for a maximum of 6 months is allowed in most collective bargaining sectors.

Sweden has no legislation on minimum levels of pay.

Employment conditions and other terms between employers and employees are regulated in Sweden to a large extent through collective agreements between trade unions and employers' organizations. A very high proportion of people working in Sweden are trade union members.

Verbal employment contracts are valid, although in accordance with EU directives, employers must, within one month and in writing, inform the employee about their terms of employment. You are, however, strongly advised to obtain a written contract of employment before moving.

Working hours: 40 hours per week.
Legislated vacation time: minimum 25 working days.

Normal age of retirement: 65

More information can be found on www.lo.se, www.tco.se, www.saco.se.



Finding work

On the EURES website you can find vacancies and information about the labour market. In Sweden the public employment service (*Arbetsförmedlingen*) publish vacancies on www.ams.se. A EURES adviser can give advice and help to applicants looking for jobs, and to employers wishing to recruit personnel in another Member State. Contact information on EURES advisers are available on <http://europa.eu.int/eures>.

As a jobseeker in Sweden, it is assumed that you yourself will actively seek work and use the self-help facilities on www.ams.se.

Most jobs listed in the Jobs Bank include the employer's name and contact details so that you can contact employers yourself.

Private recruitment agencies are permitted in Sweden. The major international recruitment organizations also operate in Sweden.

National newspapers advertising job vacancies: www.dn.se, www.svd.se, www.di.se. For local newspapers, see www.gulasidorna.se, (yellow pages). Search for "newspapers" under the British flag.

Most companies have their own home pages on the Internet. Use the common search engines or the yellow pages.

Writing your job application

Advice on how to write job applications in Swedish is available on www.ams.se. If you cannot write your application in Swedish, you can use the standard European format for CVs, which you can find on europass.cedefop.eu.int

Recognition of qualifications

Sweden and the other EU/EEA countries comply with directives regarding the recognition of professional qualifications and authorization to practice certain professions (Those which are subject to law or regulations and require authorization or the equivalent). The basic principle is that anyone who is qualified to practise a certain profession in their home country will be allowed to do the same in another member country -but there are exceptions and an application must always be made.

These regulations are presented in sectoral directives and two general directives. Read more on the Internet-site of The National Agency for Higher Education (*Högskoleverket*) www.hsv.se or <http://citizens.eu.int/youreurope>

Taxes and social security

Taxes vary in Sweden, for example depending on the length of your contract. If you stay for less than 6 months, your tax liability is limited. This means that you only have to pay tax on certain income arising from sources in Sweden. More information about the tax system in Sweden can be found on www.skatteverket.se

After registering at the tax office, new residents should register in person at the local social insurance office (*Försäkringskassan*). EU/EEA citizens with a *samordningsnummer* should in particular ask for full details when registering at the social insurance office. All foreign workers in Sweden should make sure that they fully understand their situation with regard to social insurance. More information will be found on www.forsakringskassan.se. Please note that unemployment benefits are not covered by the Swedish social insurance scheme.

The Swedish unemployment insurance scheme consists of two parts:

A basic insurance which can give you a maximum of SEK 320 per day, 5 days per week.

A complementary income-related insurance which is voluntary and can give you a maximum of SEK 680 per day. (SEK 730 per day during the first 100 days of



the benefit period, excluding any benefit days received at the basic insurance level). In order to receive the income-related benefit you must be a member of an Unemployment Insurance Fund.

To become a member of an Unemployment Insurance Fund you must have been employed for a minimum of 17 hours per week for at least four weeks within an uninterrupted period of five weeks, and you must still be employed to the same extent. You must apply for membership yourself.

Unemployment benefits are taxable income.

If you have any questions concerning your rights to receive unemployment benefits – please contact an Unemployment Insurance Fund or visit www.iaf.se in order to find more information and a list of contacts.

Important links

The official page about Sweden. Links to every conceivable source of information:

[*www.sweden.se*](http://www.sweden.se)

The Swedish Labour Market Board including general labour market information. Here you will find the most visited vacancy data base in Sweden (Platsbanken):

[*www.ams.se*](http://www.ams.se)

The web site for EU mobility information, labour market information and vacancy data base

[*europa.eu.int/eures*](http://europa.eu.int/eures)

Finding accomodation:

[*www.hemnet.se*](http://www.hemnet.se)

Starting a business in Sweden

[*www.euroinfo.se*](http://www.euroinfo.se)

Taxes and national registration

[*www.skatteverket.se*](http://www.skatteverket.se)

Social security

[*www.forsakringskassan.se*](http://www.forsakringskassan.se)

Unemployment insurance

[*www.iaf.se*](http://www.iaf.se)



Arbetsförmedlingen