Arbetsförmedlingen

EUROPEISKA UNIONEN
Europeiska socialfonden

EURES

# Living and Working in Sweden

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# About Sweden

Sweden is the third largest country in the European Union by area. Sweden is, with its about 9.4 million inhabitants, far less densely populated than many other European countries. The capital, Stockholm, is the largest city with a population of 2 million. Gothenburg and Malmö are two other major cities.

As a small country, Sweden is very proud of the Swedish entertainers, athletes and even the companies that have gained international fame. For many people abroad, Sweden is synonymous with names like IKEA, ABBA, Volvo, Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Ingmar Bergman.

As one of the Nordic countries in the EU, Sweden enjoys big variations in both temperature and daylight from season to season. The summers are temperate with sunsets after 10 pm in the South and no sunset at all in the very North. Winter brings lots of snow in the middle and North of the country.

To read more about Sweden and the Swedish culture, please visit www.sweden.se

# Learning the Language

For those wishing to live and work in Sweden, learning the language is very important. You will find it difficult to get a job without at least basic knowledge of Swedish and most jobs require fluency. For more information about Swedish language courses both in other countries and in Sweden visit www.si.se. The site also provides information about Swedish courses online.

Once you have become a resident in Sweden and have been issued a personal identity number (personnummer) you can contact your local municipality for information about Swedish lessons for immigrants.

# Registration, Residence and Work Permits

Nordic citizens do not need any permit or registration to live and work in Sweden. As an EU/EEA citizen you have the right to work in Sweden without a work and residence permit.

If you want to work in Sweden and come from a country that is not a part of the EU/EEA or Switzerland, you must have work and residence permits. You also need a residence permit to start or run your own business or become a part owner of a company.

If you have had a residence permit for at least five years in an EU member state but are not an EU citizen, you may be able to obtain the status of long-term resident in that country. Long-term residents have certain rights which are similar to those of EU citizens.

If you intend to reside in Sweden, you shall register at the local Tax Office. This process is called *folkbokföring*.

# Finding a Job

You can start your job search by visiting the Swedish Public Employment Service´s website www.arbetsformedlingen.se. Apart from vacancy ads it also has a variety of useful advice and tools to help you find work. This is Sweden´s largest and most visited employment website. It is also available through www.eures.se

Most of the jobs advertised in Sweden will assume that the applicant speaks good Swedish. However, within some highly qualified professions, there is a possibility to find work for applicants who are fluent in English-for example within large international companies where the corporate language is English.

Temp agencies and recruiting companies can be a good way to find employment.

The EURES website www.eures.europa.eu is also a good source of information when looking for work in Sweden. Apart from job vacancies in Sweden, the site also has extensive information on many topics of interest for jobseekers from abroad interested in working to Sweden.

If you are already living in Sweden, you can register as a jobseeker at your local Public Employment Service office, Arbetsförmedlingen. Consult the website or contact them directly for more information on the help and services they can offer you. Addresses and phone numbers for all of their offices can be found at www.arbetsformedlingen.se

Mambo Jambo
Earl Grey
Rooibos Wimbledon
Rooibos Österlen
Rooibos syrliga ginger

# Job Applications

In Sweden, job applications usually consist of a CV and a covering letter. The covering letter should not be longer than one page while the CV can be somewhat longer, depending on how much education and experience you have. Both of these should be in Swedish unless otherwise specified. In general, you do not need to send your diplomas or other documents with your application. If an employer wants to see them, he or she will ask you to bring them to an interview.

Many job ads in Sweden include telephone numbers you can call if you have any questions about the position. Visiting a workplace in person to apply for a job is not as common in Sweden as in many other countries. However, it can be a good method within service professions such as retail, hotel and restaurants. It is common for jobseekers within all professions to send their CV and covering letter to companies they are interested in working for, even if they do not currently have any vacancies advertised. This kind of spontaneous application should also be written in Swedish.

# Regulated Professions

A regulated profession is one that requires some kind of license or registration in order to work in that field. If a profession is not regulated, you are allowed to work within it without formal recognition from any authority. Some of the regulated professions in Sweden are physicians, dentists, electricians, veterinarians, lawyers, psychologists and security guards. For a complete list of Sweden's regulated professions and information about which authorities are responsible for issuing licenses to practice, please visit www.uhr.se

Even if your profession is not regulated, you may want to have your foreign university studies formally recognized by the Swedish higher education authorities in order to simplify your job search or to continue your studies in Sweden (particularly if your studies were at a University outside of the EU). For more information on the recognition of foreign study programmes in Sweden, please visit www.uhr.se

# Salaries and Employment Contracts

Unlike many other countries, Sweden has no minimum wage law. Instead, wages are set by collective bargaining agreements between employers and unions. Therefore, labour unions can be a good source of information on salary levels in Sweden. Statistics on average salaries in Sweden by profession are available on Statistics Sweden's website, www.scb.se

A job in Sweden can be either a permanent or a temporary position. Most permanent positions are preceded by a trial period of three to six months during which the employer can fire an employee at will. Once a position is permanent, certain conditions must be met before an employer is allowed to fire an employee.

In accordance with EU law, Swedish employers must provide the employee with a written contract within 30 days if he or she requests one. The Eures network encourages all employees to request a written contract from their employer.

Sweden is well-known for prioritizing quality of life in its labour laws. For example, parents of children up to a certain age have the right to work part-time, a right of which many Swedes take advantage of. Parents who miss work in order to take care of a sick child (up to a certain age) can also receive compensation for lost income.

All workers in Sweden receive at least five weeks of paid vacation per year. Sweden also has generous laws for parental leave for new parents.

# Taxes

If you work for more than six months in Sweden, normal Swedish income tax regulations apply. You will pay municipal tax, which varies depending on which municipality you live in. Whether you are required to also pay state tax depends on your income.

This is in addition to the municipal tax for people with a high income.

Your employer will deduct your income tax from your salary.

If you live abroad and work in Sweden for less than six months you can choose to pay a special income tax (SINK) which can be profitable in that case, however, you cannot obtain tax relief for any expenses.

You can find out more about the Swedish tax system on the tax authorities website www.skatteverket.se

# Social Insurance

Swedish social insurance is financed mainly through employers' contributions, with only a small proportion being covered by individual contributions. The social insurance is administered by Försäkringskassan and you will find more detailed information about it at www.forsakringskassan.se

The social insurance covers various benefits related to sickness, disability, having children and retirement. It is possible to take out extra insurance through insurance companies – this is sometimes offered by your trade union. Some employers also provide extra insurance coverage as a staff benefit.

If you have to stay home from work because of illness, you receive no wages or sick pay the first day.

As part of the publicly funded social insurance, you only have to pay a moderate set fee when visiting a doctor or physiotherapist within the national health scheme.

Dental care is free for children up to a certain age. After that you have to pay part or the entire cost yourself.

The rules for parental leave in Sweden and the financial benefits paid during parental leave are very generous in comparison with most countries. For more information about parental leave and the amount of benefits paid, please visit The Swedish Social Insurance Agency's website at www.forsakringskassan.se

# Unemployment Insurance

Unemployment insurance in Sweden is not part of the social insurance administered by Försäkringskassan. Unemployment insurance is publicly funded to a great extent.

There is a basic unemployment insurance providing low level benefit to those who meet the criteria.

In order to receive an income-based benefit if you become unemployed, you need to join a voluntary unemployment insurance fund. Which fund you choose often depends on your profession, although there is one fund where membership is open to all professions and another which is open to anyone in a graduate profession. In order to receive benefits you must meet certain criteria.

For both the basic unemployment benefit and the income-based benefit, work in another EU/EEA-country can be taken into account under certain circumstances to help qualify for benefits.

# Child Care and Education

The norm in Sweden is that both parents work. Therefore, publicly subsidised affordable childcare is very important to Swedes. Most childcare centres are run by the municipality, but there are also private day care centres and parent co-operatives, though most of these also receive government subsidies.

In Sweden, all children are required to start school in August of the year that they turn seven years (first grade). However, the majority of children choose to start school a year earlier and go a voluntary kindergarten programme.

School attendance is compulsory up to the end of the ninth grade. After that the pupils go on to upper secondary school, ”gymnasium”, where they can choose different programmes with an academic or vocational profile.

There are several international schools in Sweden which teach in English. Most of these are found in large cities such as Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö.

University studies are free for residents of Sweden and EU/EEA citizens.

# Housing

In Sweden, you can either buy or rent a house or an apartment. Buying can be in the form of ordinary ownership, typical for houses or by becoming a member of a housing cooperative, which is standard for apartments and common with semi-detached houses.

In the rental market, you will find both private and municipal landlords. Rental apartments are more common than houses though those can also be found. Most rentals are unfurnished.

Whether you buy or rent accommodation, you will find a cooker, fridge and freezer in place.

Heating and hot water are generally included in the rent, other services such as electricity, broadband etcetera may or may not be included.

# The EURES Network

EURES, the EURopean Employment Services, is an international network made up of the Public Employment Services in all EU member states as well as those in Norway, Liechtenstein, Iceland and Switzerland. EURES' mission is to provide information, advice and recruitment services to workers and employers.

On the EURES website www.eures.europa.eu you can access vacancies, post your cv and find information about living and working conditions in Sweden. You can also search for a EURES Adviser in your country or in Sweden. Feel free to contact them if you need more advice or information to help you in your job search.

## Some useful swedish phrases

| | |
|---|---|
| Hello! | Hej! |
| My name is Zlatan. | Jag heter Zlatan. |
| What's your name? | Vad heter du? |
| I'm looking for work. | Jag söker arbete. |
| I love Sweden. | Jag älskar Sverige. |
| Thank you very much! | Tack så mycket! |
| Goodbye! | Hej då! |

## More information

www.eures.se
www. arbetsformedlingen.se
www.eures.europa.eu
www.facebook.com/EuresSweden

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