# Sweden

Situated in northern Europe, Sweden lies west of the Baltic sea and gulf of bothnia, providing a long coastline, and forms the eastern part of the Scandinavian peninsula. To the west is the Scandinavian mountain chain (Skanderna), a range that separates sweden from norway, finland is located to its north-east. It has maritime borders with Denmark, Germany, Poland, Russia, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, and it is also linked to Denmark(south-west) by the Oresund bridge. Its border with Norway is the longest uninterrupted border within Europe.

Sweden lies between latitudes 55o and 70o N, and mostly between longitudes 11o and 25o E (part of stora drammen island is just west of 110).

At 449,964 km2 sweden is the 55th largest country in the world, the fifth – largest country in europe, and the largest country in northern Europe. The lowest elevation in Sweden is in the ba of lake hammarsjon, near Kristianstad, at -2.41 m (-7.91 ft) below sea level. The highest point is Kebnekaise at 2,111 m(6,926 ft) above sear level.

Sweden is the sixteenth richest country in the world in terms of GDP (gross domestic product) per capita and a high standard of living is experienced by its citizens. Sweden is an export – oriented mixed economy. Timber, hydropower and iron ore constitute the resourse base of an economy with a heavy emphasis on foreign trade. Sweden’s engineering sector accounts for 50% of output and exports, while telecommunications, the automotive industry and the pharamaceutical industries are also of great importance, Sweden is the ninth – largest arms exporter in the world. Agriculture accounts for 2% GDP and employment. The country ranks among the highest for tephone and internet access penetration.

The total resident population of Sweden was 10,377 in October 2020. The population exceeded to 10 million for the first time on Friday 20 january 2017.

In Sweden,

## Poverty is measured on the basis of:

### "Serious material poverty"

Serious material poverty is the reality for almost 2% of Sweden's population.

This means that 184,000 people live in such circumstances that they may

not be able to put food on the table every day or that they cannot meet other

necessary costs.

### "Material and social poverty"

Material and social poverty is a new indicator developed by the EU to replace the measure of serious material poverty. The aim is to be able to capture the social dimension that poverty entails, by also including the opportunities for social interaction. This includes, for example, not being able to pay unforeseen expenses, not being able to afford sufficient heating of the home or not being able to pay debts within the set time. It is also about not being able to participate in social activities that cost money, such as sharing a meal with relatives and friends at least once a month or being able to spend money on entertainment activities. For Sweden, it affects about 400,000 people, ie 4% of the population. In Sweden, material and social poverty is most common among those who are unemployed, the proportion is 21 percent of the unemployed, compared with 2 percent of those who work. It is also more common for foreign-born people. To live under these conditions compared with domestic-born people, 11 per cent compared with just under 2 per cent.

### "Absolute poverty"

Absolute poverty can also be described with the terms "Low income standard" and "absolute poverty line". The limit for absolute poverty is usually equated with an income corresponding to the level of income support. Just over half a million people, 570,000 or 6% of the population live in absolute poverty in Sweden.

### "Risk of poverty" / "relative poverty"

Risk of poverty is also called relative poverty or "low economic standard". This means having less than 60% of the country's median income, which in 2019 corresponded to a monthly income of SEK 12,248 after tax, including any housing supplement. About 1.7 million people, 17.1% in Sweden, live at risk of poverty.

### Poverty over time

Over a ten-year period, poverty in Sweden has increased. It is the consequence of conscious political changes in the welfare systems that have been implemented during the period. That 1.8 million, ie close to a fifth of the population, live in or at risk of poverty is not decent in a welfare state like Sweden. Unfortunately, we can state that this problem is not paid enough attention. The causes of rising poverty must be combated. Everyone, not just a few, must benefit from welfare. The groups of people who, in relation to the general population, are often poor

### Poor who are not visible at all

A group of the poor who are increasingly taking up space in the public sphere are undocumented refugees and EU migrants. They reside in Sweden without having a population registration address and are therefore not included in the official statistics published by Statistics Sweden. The people who do not have a permanent home, work illegally or for some other reason "stay away", are also not visible in the official statistics. This means that the number of people who are poor in Sweden is higher than official statistics show.

### How many are poor

Sweden's total population in September 2020 was 10.4 million. Depending on how you count, between half a million and almost 2 million or more are poor in Sweden. However you choose to count, the conclusion is that there are unacceptable numbers. We must work together to ensure that the number of people in poverty does not increase but decreases

## 3.2 The Swedish labor market and minimum wage

### What is the problem?

In Europe, there are many countries where employee safety is severely curtailed. Many are exploited with employment conditions and wages that are far below the poverty line. Employment security is also weak. In Sweden, there are also problems in the labor market. Although most workplaces are covered by collective agreements between employers and the trade unions, there are workplaces that do not have this. Not even the "law" always reaches these workplaces. Within the EU, a proposal from the European Commission for a directive on minimum wages in EU member states is currently being considered. This as part of the fight against poverty and unworthy living conditions. EAPN Sweden has, to the best of its ability, followed the discussion and acted on the issue because it is important for EAPN, both at European level and in Sweden.

**References:**

Poverty Watch Sweden | Poverty Watches Overview 2020 & 2021. (2021, October 8). EAPN. Retrieved January 15, 2022, from <https://www.eapn.eu/poverty-watch-sweden-poverty-watches-overview-2020/>