



## Sweden at a glance

- **Population:** 9 482 855
- **GDP (Per capita):** 127 PPS (available for 2011 only)  
PPS=Purchasing Power Standard, based on the EU 27 average of 100
- **Asylum applications total:** 43 865
- **Total decisions reached in 2012:** 31 520
- **Positive decisions (refugee status, subsidiary protection and humanitarian reasons):** 12 400

*2012 data, published by Eurostat in May 2013*

## The Swedish resettlement programme at a glance

### Resettlement quota and actors

**Start of annual quota:** 1950

**Current quota:** 1,900

**Main national actors:** Swedish Migration Board (SMB), central government authority on Aliens Affairs (under the Ministry of Justice), Ministry of Employment, municipalities and the Swedish Public Employment Service (PES).

### Resettlement numbers

YEAR	ACCEPTED	ARRIVALS	NATIONALITY ⇄ COUNTRY OF ASYLUM OF LARGEST GROUPS
2013 <i>anticipated</i>	1900		Somalis ⇄ Kenya Afghans ⇄ Iran Eritreans ⇄ Sudan
2012	1827	1728	Afghans ⇄ Iran Somalis ⇄ Kenya Eritrean ⇄ Sudan Colombians ⇄ Ecuador / Costa Rica
2011	1885	1900	Somalis ⇄ Kenya Afghans ⇄ Iran Eritreans ⇄ Sudan

YEAR	ACCEPTED	ARRIVALS	NATIONALITY↔COUNTRY OF ASYLUM OF LARGEST GROUPS
2010	1776	1799	Afghans↔Iran, Uzbekistan Eritreans↔Sudan Iraqis↔Syria Somalis↔Kenya
2009	1922	1882	Iraqis↔Syria, Jordan Stateless↔Syria Iranians↔Turkey

### UNHCR Submission categories considered for resettlement

- Legal and physical protection needs
- Survivors of violence and torture
- Medical needs - *approximately 1,000 individuals are considered on dossier basis*
- Women and girls at risk
- Family reunification
- Children and adolescents at risk
- Lack of foreseeable alternative solutions

### UNHCR Priority levels accepted (with sub-quota where applicable)

- Emergency** *max. 7 days between submission and resettlement*
- Urgent** *within 6 weeks between submission and resettlement*  
- *prioritised as emergency or normal - 350 places allocated for emergency submissions (including urgent priority)*
- Normal** *within 12 months between submission and resettlement*

## Sweden's Resettlement Programme

### Legal Basis

Resettlement is regulated by the **Aliens Act (2005)** in which resettlement criteria are specifically mentioned in the text. The Act serves as the legal basis for resettlement selection and procedures. An annual spending authorisation from the Swedish Parliament

and an annual Swedish Migration Board (SMB) Decision regulates the operation of the programme. The current SMB Decision on Resettlement outlines strategic and operational assessments for 2013.

### Resettlement Criteria

#### Basic criteria

- Refugees according to the 1951 Convention on Refugee Status.

- Persons in need of international protection due to armed conflict, natural disaster or threats of violence/abuse and that qualify for subsidiary protection.
- Former tribunal witnesses and their family members. UNHCR is not involved in these cases as such, but they are included in the emergency quota. During 2012 one case was resettled under this category.

### Criteria related to integration

None

## Identification and Selection

Sweden follows UNHCR priorities for resettlement, with a focus on protracted refugee situations, particularly from the **Horn of Africa** and **Iran**.<sup>72</sup>

The SMB considers for resettlement both refugees interviewed during **selection missions** (4-5 each year) and via dossier submissions from UNHCR. The current quota of 1,900 refugees per year is divided more or less equally between those selected during missions and those selected on a dossier basis. All cases are assessed in accordance with the Aliens Act, and SMB case officers make final decisions on all submissions.

Selection mission cases require approximately **20 days** processing time from submission to decision, and Sweden aims to facilitate refugees' arrival within **2 months** of a decision to accept for resettlement. Those selected via **dossier submissions** receive a resettlement decision within **3 weeks** of submission, with the exception of **emergency cases** (1 week) and **urgent cases** (2 weeks). During 2012, Sweden resettled 352 refugees as emergency cases.

Sweden may consider cases rejected by other countries. In these cases, UNHCR informs Sweden of the reason for rejection, and Sweden will then determine the grounds for a refugee claim based on information presented by UNHCR.

In addition to submissions from UNHCR, Swedish **diplomatic missions** may on occasion refer cases for resettlement. In accordance with the principle of family unity, resettlement is generally offered to all members of a particular family where one or more family members meet the criteria for resettlement.

### Responding to emergencies - Sweden's mixed quota model

The Swedish quota is known for its capacity to respond to emergency needs. In 2011, the emergency situation in North Africa led UNHCR to

<sup>72</sup> Sweden chairs the Contact Group on Iran which monitors the strategic use of resettlement in Iran, in dialogue with other resettlement countries, the Iranian authorities and UNHCR.



appeal to governments to make available a pool of places to meet emergency resettlement needs in these types of situations. In response to UNHCR's request, Sweden offered 250 places as a non-targeted 'pool', while also maintaining 350 emergency places within the quota. The 250 'pool' places remain formally unallocated during the first half of each year, ready to be used in the event of an unforeseen crisis or emergency such as that in North Africa. If no such emergency occurs, Sweden works with UNHCR to decide upon an alternative use for the places, generally agreed in July each year around the time of the ATCR. In 2012, places that were reserved for the emergency pool were used to resettle refugees of various nationalities from China/Hong Kong (20), Indonesia (20), Gulf and North Africa (20), all MENA (20), Syria (20), Horn of Africa (20), Costa Rica (20) and Iran (20). In 2013, 200 pool places will be used for Syrian refugees.

## Refugee Status, Permanent Residency & Citizenship

SMB issues refugees accepted for resettlement with a **permanent residence** permit (PUT) prior to departure from the country of asylum. For refugees selected during selection missions, SMB makes use of a portable photo station that can obtain biometric information (photo, fingerprints, and signature)

from the applicant to issue both travel documents and permanent residence cards in the country of asylum.

To facilitate travel, refugees who do not possess a national passport are issued a temporary aliens passport valid for one entry to Sweden. Refugees can formally apply for a travel document upon arrival in Sweden.

Resettled refugees may apply for Swedish **citizenship** after four years of legal residency, one year less than those granted subsidiary protection and other migrants. Citizenship applicants must prove their identity, and those who do not have identity documents from their country of origin must reside in Sweden for eight years before being eligible to apply for Swedish citizenship. Children under 18 years are subject to special rules - they can become Swedish citizens after five years, even where they cannot prove their identity and their parents are foreign citizens. All applicants must demonstrate good conduct, but there is no civic knowledge or language exam required for citizenship.

## Family reunification

Besides married partners, children under 18 and parents of children under 18, other family members who are eligible for family reunification include:

- cohabiting partners (including same-sex partners);

- persons who have lived close together may be eligible, where a special relationship of dependence that already existed in the country of origin, that makes it difficult for them to live apart can be proved. Relationships must be proven either with identity documents or DNA tests. There is no requirement to demonstrate income or access to housing sufficient to meet the needs of incoming family members.

## Resettlement in Practice

### Linking Phases

#### How is information transferred between selection and reception of refugees in order to prepare for their arrival?

- ☑ Forwarding pertinent information from Refugee Referral Form (RRF) to integration actors
- ☑ Sharing of information gathered during Cultural Orientation (CO) Municipality representatives attending CO missions transfer information gathered there on their return to Sweden.

#### How is information transferred for specific needs (medical or other)?

Information on special needs is included in RRFs forwarded to integration actors.

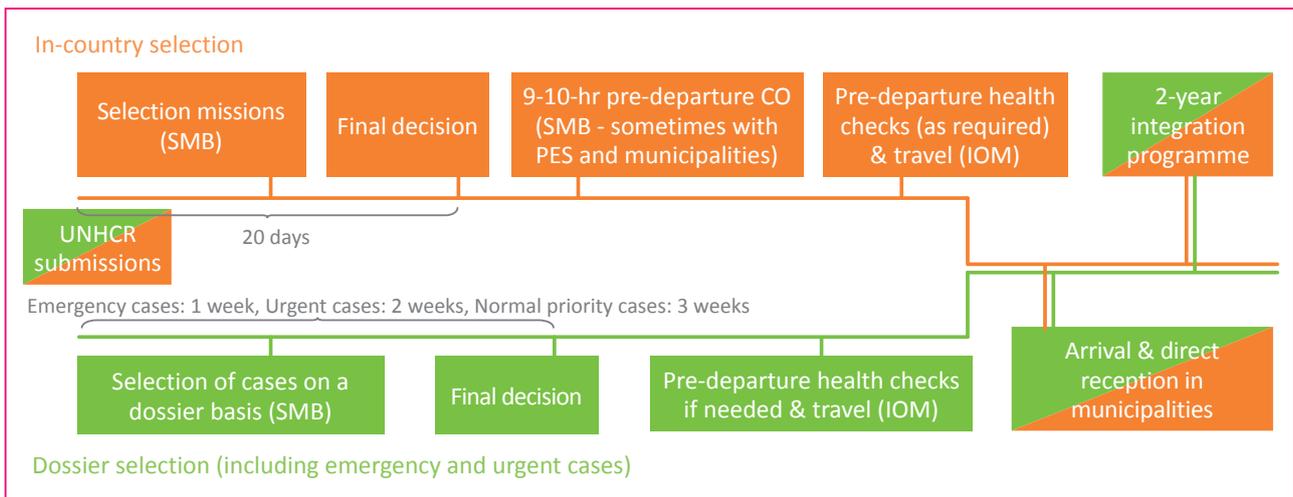
### Pre-departure

- ☑ **Cultural Orientation:** SMB is instructed by the government to prepare refugees for their resettlement to Sweden ahead of their departure. To implement this instruction, SMB runs CO programmes, distributes written materials and shares information online. CO programmes are delivered by SMB representatives, with representatives from selected municipalities and PES, both of whom must independently meet the costs of their participation. The CO programme provides groups of both adult and child refugees with approximately 9-10 hours of information, discussions and film viewings. CO programmes are offered to approximately 50% of the selected refugees depending on location, needs and costs. SMB also provides each refugee selected for resettlement with explanatory letters and additional information at the same time as sharing the formal decision of resettlement or communicating travel arrangements. The SMB also makes CO information available on their website.<sup>73</sup>

- ☑ **Medical Exam:** not standard practice. Examinations are carried out by IOM as needed, and basic fit-to-fly examinations are carried out for all refugees.

- ☑ **Travel arrangements:** IOM

<sup>73</sup> Available at [www.migrationsverket.se/resettlement](http://www.migrationsverket.se/resettlement)



## Integration in Practice

### Reception

Refugees are met by municipality representatives upon their arrival into Sweden and accompanied directly to their housing in municipalities.

### Placement policies

150 of the 290 municipalities in Sweden receive refugees, including resettled refugees. The number of refugees to be received by each municipality is based on a **county level distribution quota** established by SMB, PES and the County Administrative Boards (CABs).<sup>74</sup> SMB is responsible for negotiating placement of resettled refugees and PES for negotiating placement for other refugees. CABs agree with municipalities the number of refugees they will receive, and SMB tries to place refugees close to relatives that may already be residing

in Sweden. Refugees may move to a different municipality at any point, but must find their own housing.

Municipality participation in receiving refugees is **voluntary**. Participating municipalities receive a standard grant of € 9,100 (82,200 SEK) per adult or children received, and € 5700 (51,400 SEK) for individuals aged 65 or over. The standard grant is distributed monthly over a two-year period. In addition, municipalities receive a one-off grant of € 830 (7,500 SEK) for adults and € 332 (3,000 SEK) for children. No one-off grant is paid for receiving refugees aged 65 or over.

In recent years Sweden has seen a substantial increase in the number of asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors arriving into the country, at the same time as an overall decrease in available social or affordable private housing. Municipalities are subsequently less able to offer housing for resettled refugees. This has led both

<sup>74</sup> Sweden is divided into 21 counties, each with a County Administrative Board.

to an under-utilisation of the Swedish resettlement quota in recent years, and an increase in the numbers of resettled refugees placed in more remote areas in the north of the country where housing is more readily available.

## Integration services & support

**Length:** approximately 2 years.

**Components:** Integration programmes apply to all newcomers, including resettled refugees. In 2010, responsibility for coordinating integration programmes was transferred from individual municipalities to the PES, reflecting the importance of rapid labour market integration in current Swedish integration policy. Municipalities remain responsible for supporting refugees during the period directly following their arrival and for arranging appropriate housing, and CABs monitor and support the integration activities of municipalities within a given county.

This change remains a subject of some debate in Sweden. Some stakeholders favour the increased standardisation of integration practice that a national system can provide, while others query the loss of expertise in working with refugees developed by municipalities over a number of years and if the specific needs of refugees can be adequately met within a mainstream

integration programme for all newcomers to Sweden.

PES provides an **introduction programme for each newcomer**, the length and content of which will vary depending on individual needs identified with PES caseworkers. Introduction programme activities are carried out for up to 40 hours per week, and include **language tuition**, **social orientation** courses and **employment** support. Language tuition and some professional training is arranged by municipalities in the framework of the national Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) programme, which offers 4 levels of Swedish education and 3 teaching methodologies (or 'tracks') allocated according to individuals' educational backgrounds and abilities.

PES is responsible for facilitating professional training and supporting refugees' jobsearch activities. Refugees may also request an individual 'guide' to support their employment, education and/or training activities. Guides are provided by a number of organisations contracted by PES.

Newcomers following an introduction plan receive an introduction benefit of around € 27 (231 SEK) a day payable for five days of each week, and loans are made available to refugees to furnish their homes. Ongoing access to the introduction benefit is conditional on



refugees following activities set out in the introduction programme.

PES remains responsible for coordinating integration activities for refugees who move to a municipality other than that in which they were initially placed, and responsibility for arranging language tuition via SFI transfers to the receiving municipality.

NGOs are not widely involved in resettlement in Sweden, although do offer additional activities to complement local integration programmes in some municipalities.

### **INTEGRATION IN FOCUS: Agreement between PES and the Swedish Trotting Association**

To provide opportunities for newcomers to Sweden to gain employment experience, the Swedish Public Employment Service (PES) offers subsidies to employers to create 'Step In' jobs. Agreements between PES and employers are tailored to the needs of the specific employer, offering various measures such as subsidies for 'on-the-job' language learning, additional skills training and skills validation during a three-week paid work placement. Refugees receive a document validating their skills and experience. PES partners have included businesses such as IKEA, Coca Cola, Vattenfall and H&M.

The programme operated by PES and the Swedish Trotting Association is one example of successful practice with regard to refugees. The Swedish horse industry employs approximately 30,000 people, 3,000 of whom are employed by the Swedish Trotting industry. Jobs in the sector are largely manual, and thus suitable for persons with limited Swedish language ability, and the Swedish Trotting Association therefore implemented a project for refugees with PES.

The first group of participants were eight refugees, aged between 19 and 40 years of age from five different countries, living in Sweden from five months to two years and with little or no experience in the Swedish labour market. The programme consisted of two weeks of occupational skills assessments, followed by four weeks of classroom-based education, an additional week of occupational skills assessments and a final, ten-week internship at a stable. The programme also offered the possibility to obtain a driving licence. Four of the participants were employed by the Swedish Trotting Association after finishing their internship, while the remainder undertook further Swedish language training.

## Use of the European Refugee Fund (ERF)

### Persons resettled using 2012 ERF funding:

*1770 refugees were anticipated*

- Persons resettled under a Regional Protection Programme
- Unaccompanied minors
- Women and children at risk; particularly from psychological physical or sexual violence or exploitation
- Persons with serious medical needs that can only be addressed through resettlement

### Pledges made to resettle under ERF specific categories for 2013

- Persons resettled from a country or region designated for the implementation of a Regional Protection Programme
- Women and children at risk
- Unaccompanied minors
- Survivors of torture and violence
- Persons with serious medical needs that can only be addressed through resettlement
- Persons in need of emergency resettlement or urgent resettlement for legal or physical protection needs

### Pledges made to resettle under ERF resettlement common EU priorities for 2013

- Congolese refugees in the Great Lakes Region
- Refugees from Iraq in Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan

- Afghan refugees in Turkey, Pakistan, Iran
- Somali refugees in Ethiopia
- Burmese refugees in Bangladesh, Malaysia and Thailand
- Eritrean refugees in Eastern Sudan

### HIGHLIGHT: Children's Introduction in Jämtland

The ERF-funded '*Barnintroduktion i Jämtlands län*' ('Children's Introduction in Jämtland') project, which ran from 2010-12, aimed to improve introduction activities for resettled refugees aged up to 19 years in the county of Jämtland.

The project was delivered by a partnership of the CAB and 6 municipalities, who together produced and distributed 'The Best Thing for Kids', a handbook for local practitioners working with resettled refugee children and young people, and compiled a brochure collating good practices in the participating municipalities ('Kids in Focus'). The partners also engaged in a programme of activities to raise awareness of refugees, resettlement and the particular needs of young refugees amongst local practitioners and stakeholders. The follow-up '*Begripligt hela vagen*' ('Understanding all the way') project will run until mid-2014.

The manual and brochure produced as part of the first project can be



downloaded from the project website at [www.barnintro.se](http://www.barnintro.se).

## Evaluations

As in many European countries, **no comprehensive evaluation** of the national Swedish resettlement programme has been completed.

In 2009, Malmö University issued the final publication of an ERF-funded research project. '**Resettled and Included? - The employment integration of resettled refugees in Sweden**'<sup>75</sup> collected together research on the employment experiences, outcomes and strategies of different groups of refugees resettled to Sweden, including those from Vietnam, Bosnia, Sierra Leone and Liberia, including the impact of the health status of refugees on employment and integration. The publication also contrasted the experiences of resettled refugees in Sweden with groups resettled to Canada.

## Strengths and Challenges

### Strengths

- The Swedish quota is **among the largest in Europe**, and **strong**

**coordination** between partners both pre-departure and post-arrival facilitates the speedy departure and resettlement of a large number of emergency cases. The 2011 creation of a '**pool**' of **250 emergency places**, kept free for 6 months of the year in case of unforeseen emergency, has further enhanced the Swedish quota's responsiveness in this regard.

- Sweden grants **permanent status** to resettled refugees ahead of their departure from the country of asylum, producing residence documents in field situations through the use of portable equipment.
- **Access to citizenship** for refugees in Sweden, including those who are resettled, is available within a relatively short period (4 years) - and is made more accessible by the lack of civic knowledge or language exam requirement.

### Challenges

- A lack of available **housing** for resettlement in Swedish municipalities has led to the under-utilisation of the Swedish quota in recent years.
- In recent years the political climate has become less tolerant toward newcomers, including refugees, with a growth in support for the political **far right** evident both nationally and in specific counties and municipalities. Together with the decrease

<sup>75</sup> Bevelander, Pieter; Hagström, Mirjam Rönnqvist, Sofia 'Resettled and Included? - The employment integration of resettled refugees in Sweden', 2009

in available housing, this political context further complicates ongoing commitment of municipalities to receive resettled refugees. There have also been some reports of racism directed toward refugees in particular localities.

- Both **language-learning** and **employment** remain the main challenges for refugee integration in Sweden. The 2010 transfer of responsibility for integration to PES directly attempted to address these issues, although the outcomes of the new system are not yet clear.

SMB have implemented several changes to improve how pre-departure information is provided to refugees selected for resettlement to Sweden. Written and video information is available on the SMB website and via email, and explanatory letters are provided to refugees together with resettlement decisions and travel information. On arrival in Sweden, refugees are provided with a 'Welcome Card' that describes how their onward domestic journey will continue, and the name of their final destination.

## New Developments

In January 2011, following the transfer of responsibility for implementing integration programmes to PES, responsibility for oversight and coordination of the integration programme nationwide was transferred from the Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality (now defunct) to the Ministry of Employment.

In an extension of its role with regard to the integration of resettled refugees, PES recently began to participate in pre-departure CO programmes, so as familiarise refugees with the Swedish labour market and capture information on individual skills and experience as early as possible in the resettlement process.