



**Youth**Partnership

# ***QUESTIONNAIRE***

# ***“PARTICIPATION”***

# ***SWEDEN***



**Youth**Partnership  
Council of Europe  
European Commission



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## Table of contents

1. Context of youth participation in your country (legislation, structures) .....	3
2. Structures of participation at the local regional or national level .....	3
3. Participation in representative democracy .....	5
4. Explain the existing support measures, of national, regional or local scope, to promote the participation of young people in local life and follow-up mechanisms .....	6
5. The vote.....	7
6. The elections .....	8
7. List actions, programmes, and financial or social support that promote the participation in the system of representative democracy, in particular to young people under the age of 30?10	
8. Learning to participate .....	11
9 Describe other, informal ways young people choose to participate in your country.....	11

## **1. Context of youth participation in your country (legislation, structures)**

125 of Swedish municipalities have structures for young people's participation and influence as well as dialog between young people and decision makers in the municipalities. There are however only a few permanent representative youth parliaments at local level.

## **2. Structures of participation at the local regional or national level**

### **2.1 Youth councils**

#### **2.1.1 National youth councils**

The National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations - LSU

#### **2.1.2 Regional youth councils**

N/I

#### **2.1.3 Local youth councils**

A number of Swedish municipalities (there are 290 in total) have structures for young people's participation and influence as well as dialog between young people and decision makers in the municipalities. How these structures are organised and which themes they focus on varies from municipality to municipality. The forums might be named e.g. youth councils, youth forums, youth delegations or youth parliaments. Some of them promote their own questions, others have an advisory function to politicians and civil servants, some function as a formal referral body and some might have all or several of these functions. They are important arenas for those that still do not have the right to vote, and they have become a more frequent used platform for youth involvement at local level. They can however not be an alternative to, or compensate the lack of, youth participation in formal decision making processes at local level. In a poll from 2007 54 % of the municipalities of Sweden responded that they had a forum for youth influence and participation (Source: Ung idag 2008, Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs).

Youth Councils of Sweden (*Sveriges Ungdomsråd*) is an umbrella organisation for local youth councils. The organisation is both a network that acts as intermediary between local youth councils that are members of the organisation and it works with strategies to develop the skills of its members. Contact details: Box 510, 351 06 Växjö. Tel +46 (0)73-390 25 51.

E-mail: [kontakt@sverigesungdomsrad.se](mailto:kontakt@sverigesungdomsrad.se).

Website: <http://www.sverigesungdomsrad.se>

For a list of local structures for participation and influence please refer to the list of members of Youth Councils of Sweden at <http://forum.ungdomstorget.se>.

There are two national pupil councils:

The Swedish student council association (*Sveriges elevråd – SVEA*) is an umbrella organisation for about 450 local pupil councils.

Contact details: Ölandsgatan 49 A, 116 63 Stockholm. Tel +46 (0)8 562 788 00.

E-mail: [info@svea.org](mailto:info@svea.org). Website: <http://www.svea.org>.

The Swedish Organisation for Pupils (*Sveriges Elevråds Centralorganisation – SECO*) organises local pupil councils.

Contact details: Malmgårdsvägen 63, 116 38 Stockholm. Tel +46 (0)8 644 45 00.

E-mail: [info@sverigeselevrad.se](mailto:info@sverigeselevrad.se). Website: <http://www.elevorg.se>.

The Swedish Police Service, Stockholm county (Polisen, Stockholms län) has since 2005 established several youth councils in the suburbs of Stockholm. The aim of the councils are to prevent young people to commit crimes, reduce violent crime as well as prevent young people from being recruited in criminal networks.

Website: <http://www.polisen.se/stockholm>

Contact: [polismyndigheten.Stockholm@polisen.se](mailto:polismyndigheten.Stockholm@polisen.se)

## **2.2 Youth parliaments (link to glossary): Please list youth parliaments on national, regional and local level**

The National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations – LSU (*Landsrådet för Sveriges Ungdomsorganisationer*), is a coordinating body for 84 Swedish youth organisations. It aims at constituting a forum for matters of common interest in youth organisations and providing a network for national as well as international organisations dealing with youth cooperation.

Contact details: Gammelgårdsvägen 38-42, 112 64 Stockholm. Tel +46 8 672 6670

E-mail: [info@lsu.se](mailto:info@lsu.se). Website: <http://www.lsu.se>.

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E-mail: [info@sverigeselevrad.se](mailto:info@sverigeselevrad.se). Website: <http://www.elevorg.se>.

The Youth Parliament URIX (*URIX åsiktsfestival*) is an annual national gathering of approximately 1000 young people between 13 and 18. URIX is organised and financed by a foundation based on four major youth organisations.

Contact details: c/o Kvinnoforum, Karlbergsvägen 77, 113 35 Stockholm.

Tel +46 (0)8 522 300 40.

E-mail: [info@urix.se](mailto:info@urix.se). Website: <http://www.urix.se>.

A parallel to URIX is the Youth Parliament of the Environment (*Ungdomens miljöricksdag*). The parliament is founded and mainly financed by one of the large environmental movements in Sweden. The aim is to be a resource for schools in issues concerning environmental and sustainable development.

Contact details: Garvargatan 9c, 112 21 Stockholm. Tel +46 (0)8 789 29 02.

E-mail: [info@umr.se](mailto:info@umr.se). Website: <http://www.umar.se>.

### **3. Participation in representative democracy**

#### **3.1 Number and percentage of young people who are members of a political party or political youth organisations, if possible by gender**

4% of all young people aged 16 to 25 are members of a political party (statistics from 2004/2005).

(Source: Ung idag 2008. The National Board for Youth Affairs (*Ungdomsstyrelsen*),

<http://www.ungdomsstyrelsen.se>)

### **3.2 Number and percentage of young people who are members of a trade union**

N/I

### **3.3 Percentage of young people (in total and by gender) who are members of a youth non-governmental organisation, which are not trade unions, political parties or political youth organisations.**

64% of all young people aged 16-25 are members of an organisation (not only youth organisation).

28% of all young people aged 16-25 are active members of an organisation (not only youth organisation) (statistics from 2004/2005).

The figures concern young people who report they are members and active members of an organisation, not only youth organisations. It is however probable that most of these young people are members in an organisation by young people or offering activities for young people. 80 % of all young people aged 15-29 are members of a sports organisation.

(Source: Ung idag 2008. The National Board for Youth Affairs (*Ungdomsstyrelsen*),

<http://www.ungdomsstyrelsen.se>)

## **4. Explain the existing support measures, of national, regional or local scope, to promote the participation of young people in local life and follow-up mechanisms**

To ensure that young people have real access to influence is one of the two goals of the national youth policy. It is however in the municipalities that decisions are made on many of the factors of most importance for the situation of young people. An important part of the Government's efforts to strengthen young peoples influence over their own lives and over society is therefore focused on supporting municipalities and youth organizations /local youth associations in developing methods for local youth involvement.

The National Board for Youth Affairs (*Ungdomsstyrelsen*) is responsible for producing and disseminating knowledge in the field of local youth participation. It supports municipalities in developing local youth policies, setting up local youth councils, carrying out surveys, etc. Every year the Board appoints "the Youth Municipality of the Year" (*Årets ungdomskommun*), highlighting municipalities that work actively with local youth policy, including youth participation. Furthermore, the Board supports the work of the Youth Councils of Sweden (*Sveriges Ungdomsråd*).

The National Board for Youth Affairs administer funds for supporting youth organisations and other youth structures, such as the governmental fund for youth organisations, where youth organisations receive grants enabling them to work actively with youth participation in local democracy.

The National Board for Youth Affairs is responsible for producing an annual report to the Government on the situation of young people in Sweden. The report is built on contributions from governmental agencies in a broad specter of policy areas (education, employment, culture, health, etc), and covers even the situation in the field of youth participation. Here, indicators such as membership in political parties, membership in organizations, participation in political actions, etc., are presented and analysed. The National Board for Youth Affairs delivers a report to the Government on the development within the Board's areas of responsibility each year, in which even the status regarding young people's participation in society is included.

#### **4.1 Financial actions to support the various structures for youth political and NGO participation**

It is possible for Swedish youth NGOs to receive financial support from the Swedish Government. The funding is distributed by the National Board for Youth Affairs (Ungdomsstyrelsen) according to open criteria defined by the Parliament (the Riksdag) and the Government. The criteria ruling the financial support are general, mainly focusing on matters of democracy. In 2007 The National Board for Youth Affairs (Ungdomsstyrelsen) distributed 24 million Euros the youth organisations.

A majority of the Swedish municipalities distribute funds to local youth NGOs. Some municipalities has also reserved funds for local youth initiatives.

The National Board for Youth Affairs even provided grants for the youth policy development work of municipalities.

#### **4.2 Which financial actions on national level aimed at certain specific groups of young people exist?**

Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds have a high priority in the Government's efforts to stimulate local youth participation.

### **5. The vote**

#### **5.1 Is voting obligatory?**

No

## **5.2 Age of the right to vote**

Those who are 18 years of age before or on Election Day have the right to vote (see 4.3).

## **5.3 Please describe, who is entitled to vote in national, regional and local elections.**

Voting rights to Parliament (*Riksdagen*) elections are reserved for all Swedish citizens who are 18 years of age before or on Election Day and who are, or have at some time been, registered residents of Sweden.

Voting rights in county council and municipal assembly elections are reserved for Swedish citizens who are 18 years of age before or on Election Day and who are registered residents of Sweden within the county or municipality. Citizens of any Member State of the European Union (Union citizens) and citizens of Iceland and Norway are also entitled to vote in county council and municipal assembly elections under the same conditions. Citizens of other states are entitled to vote if they have been registered residents of Sweden for three consecutive years on Election Day.

## **5.4 Requirements for being entitled as a candidate in national, regional or local elections (age, nationality , etc.)**

If you have the right to vote in an election you are also allowed to be a candidate at all levels. Please refer to 5.3 for more information.

## **6. The elections**

### **6.1 Indicators of participation related to the election of the European Parliament**

#### **6.1.1 In the election of the European Parliament, the number and percentage of young voters in relation to the number of young people who have the right to vote (in total and by gender)**

In the 2004 European parliament election 28.7% of young people aged 18-29 voted.

(Source: Statistics Sweden, [www.scb.se](http://www.scb.se))

#### **6.1.2 In European elections, the percentage of young voters in relation to the total population voting**

In the 2004 European parliament election

- 28.7% of young people aged 18-29 voted
- 38.4% of the total population voted

(Source: Statistics Sweden, [www.scb.se](http://www.scb.se))



## **6.2 National indicators of participation in the polls**

### **6.2.1 In national elections, the percentage of young voters in relation to the number of young people who have the right to vote (in total, by gender and by age groups)**

In the 2006 parliament (*Riksdag*) election 76.6% of young people in the age group 18-29 voted.

(Source: Statistics Sweden, [www.scb.se](http://www.scb.se))

### **6.2.2 In national elections, the percentage of young voters in relation to the total population who has voted.**

In the 2006 parliament (*Riksdag*) election

- 76.6% of young people aged 18-29 voted
- 82.9% of the total population voted

(Source: Statistics Sweden, [www.scb.se](http://www.scb.se))

## **6.3 Regional and local indicators of participation in the polls**

### **6.3.1 In regional and local elections, the percentage of young voters in relation to the number of young people who have the right to vote**

In 2006

- 69.9% of young people aged 18-29 voted in the regional election, the county council elections
- 70.4% of young people aged 18-29 voted in the local election, the municipal assembly elections

(Source: Statistics Sweden, [www.scb.se](http://www.scb.se))

## **6.4 Number of young people elected at the national, regional and local level: overall and by gender (please specify the age range)**

In the 2006 parliament (*Riksdag*) election 16 young people aged 18-29 at the time of the election were elected: 8 women and 8 men. These 16 were 5% of the members of the Riksdag.

(Source: Statistics Sweden, [www.scb.se](http://www.scb.se))

## **7. List actions, programmes, and financial or social support that promote the participation in the system of representative democracy, in particular to young people under the age of 30?**

During 2006 the national campaign School elections 2006 (*Skolval 2006*) was carried out in 1 400 schools all over the country. 405 000 pupils participated in a national election a few days before the ordinary national, regional and local parliament elections. The activity often included studies, discussions, plenary meetings with political parties, personal meeting with politicians, etc. as preparation before the election. The campaign gave young people all over Sweden a possibility to learn more about representative democracy in our country, a platform for introducing their questions and priorities to local politicians and a channel for indicating the political currents among young people.

The National Board for Youth Affairs (*Ungdomsstyrelsen*) were commissioned by the Ministry of Justice to organise the campaign in cooperation with The Youth Councils of Sweden (*Sveriges Ungdomsråd*) and the Swedish student council association (*Sveriges elevråd – SVEA*) and The Swedish National Agency for School Improvement . The partners provided a web site with suggestions on how the campaign could be organised locally, ideas and good examples on how the campaign could stimulate local youth participation, pedagogical material to be used by teachers and pupils, etc. The partners even gathered and presented the results from the school elections.

The National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations (LSU) will during the spring of 2009 run a campaign called "Vote 7 June" with the aim to get more young people to vote for the next European parliament election. The campaign's Swedish webportal: <http://www.rosta7juni.se/>

For further information, contact:

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## **8. Learning to participate**

**8.1 Please list existing actions and mechanisms within the systems of formal education aiming at developing and deepening learning to participate (citizens' education). Please also list related guidelines and teacher training programmes aiming at integrating citizens' education into the curriculum.**

By law Swedish schools are obliged to support students' councils as well as school parliaments.

**8.2 In which fields, other than formal education, do actions and/or support - of national or regional scope- exist, which aim at promoting learning to participate amongst young people? What is the nature of these actions/this support? Give examples of good practice.**

Non-formal learning to participate does to a large extent take place in Swedish youth organisations. In the youth organisations, young people will learn how to participate in the development and management of the organisation's own activities, as well as how to use the organisation as a base for the democratic dialogue with the rest of society. Government grants to Swedish youth organisations are therefore an important element of Swedish youth policy, allowing youth organisations to play an active role in the democratic upbringing of young people.

But municipalities also play an important role in this field for example at Värmdö municipality; they have developed what they call Bank of ideas. The aim is to support young people's own initiative, creativity and use them as a resource through small amount grants. The motivation behind is also to create a dialogue between young people and adults as well as young people and authorities.

**8.3 Do some of the existing or planned actions aim at certain specific groups of young people?**

No

**9 Describe other, informal ways young people choose to participate in your country.**

Citizen offices where young people (as well as others) can leave suggestions to local decision makers or ask questions concerning the municipality.