

📖 Topic Page: [Sweden](#)

Definition: **Sweden** from *Collins English Dictionary*

n

1 a kingdom in NW Europe, occupying the E part of the Scandinavian Peninsula, on the Gulf of Bothnia and the Baltic: first united during the Viking period (8th–11th centuries); a member of the European Union. About 50 per cent of the total area is forest and 9 per cent lakes. Exports include timber, pulp, paper, iron ore, and steel. Official language: Swedish. Official religion: Church of Sweden (Lutheran). Currency: krona. Capital: Stockholm. Pop: 9 119 423 (2013 est). Area: 449 793 sq km (173 665 sq miles) Swedish name: **Sverige**



Image from: [SWEDEN](#) in *Encyclopedia of Law Enforcement*

Summary Article: **Sweden**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Country in northern Europe, bounded west by Norway, northeast by Finland and the Gulf of Bothnia, southeast by the Baltic Sea, and southwest by the Kattegat strait.

Government Sweden is a constitutional monarchy, with a multiparty parliamentary executive. Its formal head of state is the hereditary monarch. The constitution is based on four fundamental laws – the Instrument of Government Act 1809, the Act of Succession 1810, the Freedom of the Press Act 1949, and the Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression 1991 – and the Riksdag Act 1974. The constitution provides for a single-chamber parliament, the Riksdag, comprising 349 members, elected by universal suffrage, through a system of proportional representation, for a fixed four-year term. The members are elected through a system of proportional representation, with 310 elected in 29 multimember constituencies and the remaining 39 from a national ‘top up’ pool which is designed to give absolute proportionality to parties that secure 4% or more of the vote.

The prime minister is nominated by the speaker of the Riksdag and confirmed by a vote of the whole house. The prime minister chooses a cabinet, and all are then responsible to the Riksdag. The monarch now has a purely formal role; the normal duties of a constitutional monarch, such as dissolving parliament and deciding who should be asked to form an administration, are undertaken by the speaker. To amend the constitution, there needs to be two majority votes by the Riksdag, with a general election in between.

History The earliest traces of human presence, dating from around 10,000 BC, have been found at Segebro near Malmö, and a small population of hunters probably inhabited the southern part of Sweden at this time. During the Mesolithic period, the Maglemosian culture (around 6000 BC) found all over Scandinavia is represented at sites such as Lilla Loshult Mosse and round Ringsjö. Pottery appears first on sites of the Ertebolle culture (around 4000 BC).

Evidence of Neolithic agriculture has been found in settlements in Skåne, Blekinge, and elsewhere. Remains of the Via culture, in the form of houses as well as pottery and stone tools, have been found at Östia Viå and Mogetorp in Södermanland. In the later Neolithic period a megalithic culture emerged.

The Bronze and Iron Ages In the middle of the 2nd millennium bronze weapons and tools were imported and also made locally in the Lake Mälaren area. Burial mounds and cairns of the Bronze Age are common in southern Sweden. Few remains have been found from the period of transition from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age (600–400 BC), and it is possible that the harsher climate at this time caused widespread emigration.

In the Middle or Roman Iron Age the return of a better climate brought about an expansion of culture, and the many Roman imports suggest a higher standard of living. The Migration period (around AD 400–550) shows a marked increase in prosperity and is one of the great periods of Swedish art. Important gold hoards have been found at Timboholm and near Tureholm. The goldsmiths' work is of fine quality, as can be seen in the collars from Ålleberg and Möne.

The Middle Ages The early history of Sweden is contained in legend and saga. The country appears to have been inhabited by two separate but closely related peoples, the Swedes in the north and the Goths in the south. In the Viking era, the Swedish Vikings penetrated many parts of the Baltic, and sailed down the great rivers of Russia. In Russia they founded the principality of Novgorod and traded as far south as the Black Sea.

Although Christianity was first introduced at a much earlier period, it was not until the mid-12th century that the Swedes were united with the Goths and accepted Christianity. A series of crusades from the 12th to the 14th centuries brought Finland under Swedish rule. The later Middle Ages in Sweden are marked by a centralization of power in the country, but also by clashes between rival claimants to the throne and between the king and the nobility.

The union with Denmark By the Union of Kalmar in 1397 the kingdoms of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden came under the common regency of Margaret of Denmark (see Denmark). Margaret's successors were not, however, always able to assert their authority in Sweden. There was a popular revolt in 1434 led by Engelbrekt Engelbrektsson, and during several periods Swedish noblemen were in effective control of Sweden, even taking the title of king (see, for example, Charles VIII).

The union finally came to an end in the reign of Christian II, after his massacre of the leaders of a Swedish rebellion (the Stockholm Bloodbath, 1520). Gustavus Vasa, a Swedish noble, started a revolt in Dalarna in 1521 and, with help from Lübeck (one of the most powerful cities of the Hanseatic League), made Sweden independent of Denmark–Norway. He was elected king as Gustavus I by the Riksdag (parliament) in 1523 and survived a series of revolts to leave Sweden a financially and politically stable country on his death in 1560. He exploited the arrival of Lutheranism in Sweden to destroy the power of the Roman Catholic Church and to appropriate its possessions in 1527, but Lutheran services only gradually replaced Catholic ceremonies in Sweden. The Vasa dynasty continued to rule Sweden until 1818.

Towards Baltic domination Gustavus's son Eric XIV (ruled 1560–68) embarked on a campaign of expansion in the southern Baltic and took Estonia under Swedish protection in 1561, but otherwise had little success in a debilitating seven-year war with Denmark. His half-brother, John III (ruled 1568–92), continued the Baltic campaign. Married to a Polish princess, his son Sigismund was brought up as a Roman Catholic and elected king of Poland in 1587.

Sigismund's religion, however, proved a serious handicap on his accession to the Swedish throne in 1592, and he was opposed by his ruthless and ambitious uncle Charles, who finally had Sigismund

deposed and himself declared king by the Riksdag in 1600. As Charles IX he too fought in the Baltic states with little success, and on his death in 1611 he left to his 16-year-old son, Gustavus II (Gustavus Adolphus), a country that was at war with Denmark, Poland, and Russia.

Gustavus Adolphus Sweden in 1611 was lacking in population, internal communications, and material resources, and its geographical position was unfavourable for the expansion of its trade, since its way to the North Sea and the Atlantic was controlled by Denmark. Gustavus Adolphus, 'the Lion of the North', continued the policy of turning the Baltic into a 'Swedish lake'. He ended the war with Denmark, recovering territory lost by his father. War with Russia gave Sweden control of what is now the Baltic coast of Russia, while war with Poland ended in a truce in 1629, which confirmed Sweden in possession of Livonia (most of present-day Latvia and Estonia) and gave it a grip on the mainland of Germany.

In 1630 Gustavus Adolphus intervened in the Thirty Years' War to champion the Protestant cause in Europe. Following his landing in Germany, he won a series of spectacular triumphs in 1631 and 1632: the Catholic League was defeated; the Catholic general, Tilly, was out-manoeuvred and finally killed; and Gustavus Adolphus was able to penetrate to the south. He was obliged to turn north again by the attacks of the Habsburg general Wallenstein in Saxony, and defeated Wallenstein at Lützen, although he himself was killed in the battle (see Lützen, Battle of), in 1632.

Gustavus Adolphus established Sweden as a great power. He strengthened the country internally by his domestic and financial reforms; the government was centralized and strong and the army was reformed. Its resources were always strained to maintain its position of influence, and its Baltic possessions were to embroil it in a series of costly wars – but without which it could not hope to keep them.

The later 17th century Gustavus Adolphus was succeeded by his daughter, six-year-old Christina. The regent and chancellor, Axel Oxenstjerna, pursued her father's foreign policy and maintained Swedish interests during and after the Thirty Years' War. The success of Sweden was seen in the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) that ended the war and marked the zenith of Swedish power. Sweden became an important power in Germany, and was recognized as the leader of Protestant Europe, and the greatest power of the north. In 1645 Denmark was forced to give up its right to tolls in the Sound, and ceded Gotland, Jämtland, Härjedalen, and, temporarily, Halland to Sweden.

In 1654 Christina became a Catholic and abdicated in favour of her cousin, Charles X. He continued the work of Gustavus Adolphus. He attacked Denmark and incorporated the provinces of Skåne, Blekinge, Halland, and Bohuslän into Sweden, thus establishing Sweden's natural frontiers along the western and southern coasts. Charles X died in 1660 and was succeeded by his son, Charles XI, who was only four years old.

Charles XI, after assuming the crown in 1672, showed great military prowess in a series of wars by which he preserved intact the territories of Sweden. He then turned his attention to domestic reform. He curbed the power of the nobility, and left Sweden reformed and restored at his death in 1697.

Charles XII and the end of the Swedish empire Charles XI was succeeded by his son, Charles XII, 'the wonder of Europe'. He spent the 20 years of his reign in almost constant warfare, and it was at this stage that the strain of maintaining a scattered empire, harassed by ambitious states with large populations and resources, began to tell on a country that had only a small population.

Charles astonished Europe with his boldness and enterprise, and won many brilliant victories, penetrating, on one occasion, deep into Russia. However, ranged against him was a formidable coalition

of powers and in the end he was clearly defeated, and his death in 1718 saved Sweden from utter disaster. The Swedish empire was dismembered in a series of treaties, 1719–21. Most of the German provinces were ceded to Britain, Hanover, and Prussia, while Russia was confirmed in its possession of Livonia, Estonia, and Ingermanland (or Ingria, an area around the head of the Gulf of Finland, northeast of Estonia).

On Charles XII's death the Swedish monarchy lost its absolute power, and under Frederick I (king 1720–51) and Adolphus Frederick (king 1751–71) a form of parliamentary government prevailed. This system, with its bitter party quarrels between the factions known as the 'Hats' and the 'Caps', was brought to an end after a coup d'état by the young Gustavus III in 1772, under whom science and culture flourished. However, Gustavus proved less successful in his political ventures, and he was assassinated at a masked ball in 1792.

The Napoleonic era and the advent of the Bernadottes Gustavus III was succeeded by his son, Gustavus IV, an implacable opponent of Napoleon. After entering into alliance with France, Russia invaded and occupied Finland, and in 1809 this part of the Swedish kingdom had to be ceded to the tsar. Shortly before this Gustavus IV was deposed.

Gustavus's uncle, who succeeded as Charles XIII in 1809, was infirm, and to secure the goodwill of Napoleon the Riksdag accepted Napoleon's marshal, Bernadotte, as Crown Prince Charles John in 1810. He took over the government, but did not further Napoleon's ambitions against Britain and Russia. He became a truly national Swedish leader, and brought Sweden into the alliance against Napoleon in 1813. He made war on Denmark to secure Norway as recompense for the loss of Finland, and then later invaded Norway, whose union with Sweden was confirmed by the great powers in 1814.

In 1818 Charles XIII died and Bernadotte succeeded as Charles XIV, initiating the dynasty that still reigns in Sweden. His son, Oscar I, who reigned from 1844 to 1859, introduced many democratic reforms. In the reign of Oscar II (1872–1907) Norway seceded from Sweden in 1905, a peaceful settlement being made at Karlstad.

Sweden enters the 20th century During the 20th century Sweden maintained its long tradition of neutrality and political stability, and introduced a highly developed system of social welfare. The office of ombudsman is a Swedish invention, and Sweden was one of the first countries to adopt a system of open government.

Oscar II was succeeded by his son Gustavus V (1907–50), during whose reign democracy was further extended, social services introduced or expanded, and a universal franchise introduced. The acknowledgement of the growth of party politics dates from the dissolution of the union with Norway. Industrialization encouraged the growth of socialism, but in Sweden, it took on a moderate, social democratic form.

Sweden remained neutral during World War 1, and in 1920 it entered the League of Nations. In the 1920s the issue of prohibition split the Liberals and divided the left and there was political instability. Total prohibition was rejected in 1922, but a liquor-control system was enforced, which had some success in the rural districts, but was finally abolished in 1955. Increasing unemployment led to increased support for the Social Democrats.

Sweden in World War II Sweden was neutral during World War II, although, when the USSR invaded Finland, Sweden showed its sympathy by opening its frontiers to Finnish refugees and enrolling

volunteers to fight for the Finns. When the Germans made a demand in 1940 for transit facilities for troops and supplies through Sweden to Norway (which the Germans had recently occupied), the Riksdag complied, but Sweden really had no choice in the matter. The Swedish prime minister, however, rejected Germany's invitation to Sweden to join its 'New Order'.

During 1943 Sweden remained on friendly terms with all the belligerents, though public opinion had been largely pro-British since the occupation of Norway and Denmark by Germany in 1940. In 1943 the government obtained Germany's consent to the cancellation of the transit agreement, and transport of German material and military personnel through Sweden ceased.

In September 1944 the Swedish government announced that all Swedish Baltic ports and waters would be closed to foreign shipping, owing to the new situation in the Baltic brought about by the Soviet–Finnish armistice of that year. This resulted in the virtual stoppage of Swedish–German trade for the duration of the war.

Sweden's international role After World War II Sweden took part in the relief work and reconstruction of the war-ravaged countries. It joined the United Nations in 1946 and has played an important part in the work of the organization. The Swedish diplomat Dag Hammarskjöld was secretary general of the UN 1953–61, and Sweden regularly contributed troops to UN peace-keeping forces in areas such as the Middle East, the Congo, and Cyprus. Sweden promoted the UN conference on environmental protection in Stockholm in 1972.

Sweden maintained its neutrality throughout the Cold War, refusing to follow Norway and Denmark in joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In 1952 it became a founder-member of the Nordic Council, an organization established to further the mutual interests of the Scandinavian countries. It also became a founder member of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) in 1959, but because of its neutrality it did not seek membership of the European Economic Community (EEC) – although eventually joined the European Union (EU) in 1995, following the end of the Cold War.

The Social Democrats and the welfare state At home the Social Democrats (the Social Democratic Labour Party, or SAP) remained in power after the war continuously until 1976, under prime ministers Tage Erlander (PM 1946–69) and Olof Palme (PM 1969–76, and again in 1982–86). However, as a minority party for most of this period, they either were in coalition with, or relied on, the support of other parties. A national health service was introduced in 1955 and a generous state pension scheme in 1959. Overall, Sweden developed one of the world's most comprehensive welfare systems, and achieved one of the highest standards of living in Europe.

During Palme's first premiership there were two major reforms of the constitution. In 1971 the chambers in parliament were reduced from two to one, and in 1975, following the death of Gustavus VI (ruled 1950–73), the last of the monarch's constitutional powers were removed. Gustavus was succeeded by his grandson Carl XVI Gustaf, who only has a symbolic function. In the general election of 1976 Palme was defeated over the issue of the level of taxation needed to fund the welfare system as economic growth stalled as a result of the oil embargoes of 1973–74.

The end of Social Democratic hegemony A coalition of the Centre (C), Conservative, and Liberal (Fp) parties, with Thorbjörn Fälldin, the leader of the Centre Party, as prime minister, took office in 1976, ending 44 years of Social Democratic rule. The government operated a mixed economy in close cooperation with private industry, and central wage negotiations between employers and trade unions

produced almost unbroken industrial peace.

The Fälldin administration fell in 1978 over its wish to follow a non-nuclear energy policy, and was replaced by a minority Liberal Party government. Fälldin returned in 1979, heading another coalition, and in a referendum the following year there was a narrow majority in favour of continuing with a limited nuclear-energy programme.

Palme's second premiership and his assassination Fälldin remained in power until 1982, when the Social Democrats (SAP) under Olof Palme returned as a minority government. Palme was soon faced with deteriorating relations with the USSR, arising from suspected violations of Swedish territorial waters by Soviet submarines. However, the situation had improved substantially by 1985. In February 1986 Palme was shot dead in Stockholm by an unknown assailant. His deputy, Ingvar Carlsson, took over as prime minister and leader of the SAP.

In the September 1988 general election Carlsson and the SAP were re-elected with a reduced majority. In February 1990, with mounting opposition to its economic policies, the government resigned, leaving Carlsson as caretaker prime minister. In December 1990 the Riksdag supported the government's decision to apply for European Community (EC) membership, but in the September 1991 elections Carlsson's government was defeated.

Economic recession in early 1990s leads to a swing to the centre-right Sweden's economy entered recession in the early 1990s, as part of a world recession. Carl Bildt became prime minister, heading a centre-right minority coalition government, comprising the Moderate Party, the Fp, the C, and the Christian Democratic Community Party (KdS). This new government moved away from the post-war Swedish social democratic model of high welfare spending towards a freer-market approach, involving some privatization of state-owned industries, pensions reform, and austerity cuts in spending. In September 1992 an unprecedented agreement between Bildt's coalition and the right-wing populist party, New Democracy, pledged cooperation in solving the country's economic problems.

The Social Democrats return to power and Sweden joins the EU In the September 1994 general election the SAP won most seats, although not an overall majority, and Ingvar Carlsson returned to power at the head of a minority government. In August 1995 it was announced that Carlsson would step down as prime minister in March 1996, once his party had chosen a replacement.

A national referendum in November 1994 narrowly supported the country's application for European Union (EU) membership, and in January 1995 Sweden became a full EU member.

In March 1996, Carlsson stepped down as prime minister and was replaced by Göran Persson, the finance minister, who told voters that Sweden faced several more years of austerity and welfare cutbacks. He also pledged to close nuclear power plants within two years.

Persson's Social Democrats finished ahead in the September 1998 general election, but its share of the vote was down by 8% to its lowest level, at 37%, for 40 years. The ex-communist Left Party, which had doubled its vote to 12%, agreed to support the government on condition that welfare spending was increased and a referendum held on joining Europe's single currency, the Euro. Persson's government cut military spending, but supported the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. After its main exporting firm, Ericsson, was hit badly by the global technology crash in 2001, the Swedish economy grew strongly again, enabling tax cuts ahead of the September 2002 general election. This provided the basis for SAP success, increasing its number of seats at the expense of the Left Party.

Voters reject joining the Euro Persson's government protested in 2003 against the US-led invasion of Iraq, as it did not have UN authorization.

In September 2003 Sweden held a referendum on joining the Euro. Several days before this vote, the country was shocked by the murder, in Stockholm of the SAP foreign minister, Anna Lindh, a pro-Euro campaigner, who was knifed to death by a person suffering from mental illness. However, voters rejected, by a margin of 56% to 42%, joining Europe's single currency.

Centre-right Alliance for Sweden win power under Reinfeldt Despite a period of strong (3% p.a.) economic growth from 2003, Persson's ruling three-party centre-left coalition (comprising the SAP, the Left Party, and the Green Party) narrowly lost the September 2006 general election to the centre-right Alliance for Sweden, a four-party coalition of the Moderate Party, the Centre Party, the Liberal Party, and the Christian Democrats. Persson retired from politics and the leader of the Moderate Party, Frederik Reinfeldt, became prime minister.

Reinfeldt's government pledged to reform the welfare state through reducing dependency on benefits, increasing incentives to work through reducing taxes for low-income families, and privatizing state assets. In February 2009 the government also reversed the country's 30-year-old policy of phasing out nuclear reactors when it stated that nuclear power was needed to fight climate change and for energy security. The global financial crisis in 2008–09 led to an economic recession, which resumed in late 2009 after a brief recovery earlier that year following a government stimulus package.

Anti-immigrant Swedish Democrats enter parliament In the September 2010 general election, the Social Democrats, led by Mona Sahlin, suffered its worst ever result, attracting only 31% of the vote. The Alliance for Change, with 49% of the vote, finished with 173 seats but fell two short of a majority. However, Reinfeldt remained as prime minister, heading a new minority coalition government.

The 2010 election saw the anti-immigration Swedish Democrats win 6% of the vote to become the first far-right party to secure representation in Sweden's parliament, winning 20 seats. The rise of the Swedish Democrats reflected an increase in tensions in Sweden, with riots erupting in a mainly immigrant suburb of Stockholm in May 2013 after police shot dead an elderly man. Earlier, in December 2010, Sweden suffered its first suicide bombing, carried out by an Iraqi-born Islamist extremist.

Social Democrats back in power The September 2014 general election produced another indecisive result. Support for the Alliance for Change fell sharply to 39% and it won only 141 of the Riksdag's 349 seats, while the extremist Swedish Democrats advanced to 49 seats, with 13% of the vote.

The Social Democrats, led from 2012 by Stefan Löfven, a former trade union leader, had a disappointing result. However, with 31% of the vote and 113 seats, SAP was the largest single party and in October 2014 Löfven became prime minister, heading a centre-left minority government which included the Greens.

The new government caused controversy in late October 2014 by announcing that Sweden would be the first EU country to recognize Palestine as a state. It also announced that it would freeze nuclear energy development.

In December 2014, Löfven's government nearly fell after it lost a vote on its budget. However, the opposition Alliance for Change, fearing that an early election would favour the far-right Swedish

Democrats, reached an agreement to keep the Löfven government in power and support its budget.

In 2015, Sweden faced the challenge of the European migration crisis. It allowed 150,000 refugees to enter the country, but, in autumn 2015, as refugee flows accelerated, a revised approach was agreed with the opposition Alliance for Change. This comprised temporary residency permits and, in late 2015, temporary border controls and identity checks on routes to and from Denmark.

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