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This Guide

Working abroad sounds to many people like an adventure.

However, without thorough preparation, starting with a successful application, it is bound to fail. Therefore, Expertise in Labour Mobility (ELM) has prepared a set of country guides describing the main routes to employment in over 40 countries. Are you interested in working in Australia, France or Japan? Has your partner accepted a job in Hungary, Switzerland, or the United Arab Emirates?

Are you looking for an internship possibility in the UK, Singapore or the United States of America? The Looking for work in... guides from ELM will help you with accurate information and practical tips on working cultures and differences in job hunting in over 40 countries.

As an extra addition to the series – following many requests - ELM introduced a new guide: Looking for work in International Organisations which explains how to successfully look for work in for instance the institutes of the European Commission, UN institutions and NGO's.

This guide contains information on Sweden. It tells you how to apply for a job in Sweden and the cultural differences that you will come across when looking for a job in Sweden. Do not underestimate those national differences. What is common in one country might be very unusual in another country despite globalisation. Despite globalisation, to find a job abroad you need to be aware that national differences manifest themselves not only in

different languages, but also in different recruitment practices. Thus, looking for work in another country involves more than writing your CV/ resume in another language.

No matter the country in which you are looking for work, the key focus of your CV should be to persuade the employer to invite you for a job interview. Accordingly, your CV should be regarded as a marketing tool, adapted to the market in which you intend to use it. The information in this guide, together with the sample CV, will help you to adapt your application for the Swedish job market. However, make sure your application remains a reflection of your personality. Working abroad is one thing, but having a job that does not suit you will definitely cause homesickness!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nannette Ripmeester', with a horizontal line underneath.

Nannette Ripmeester, MA
Managing Director
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Country Profile

Country

Sweden is a constitutional monarchy, situated in the north of Europe with a surface of 450,000 square km (279,617 sq miles). The capital of Sweden is Stockholm (city: 800,000). Other large cities are Göteborg (city: 502,833), Malmö (290,007) and Uppsala (144,839) (2009 figures).

Sweden is bordered by two other Nordic countries; Norway in the West and Finland in the East. Apart from those landborders the country is surrounded by water; the Skagerrak and the Kattegatt in the South-West, and the Baltic Sea and the Botnic Gulf in the East. The islands Gotland and Öland situated South-East of Sweden also belong to the country.

Sweden has a very diverse landscape with mountains in the North-East, hills covered with forests and a relatively flat Southern coastline. Sweden also has many lakes, some of which are the largest in Europe.

Climate

The climate of Stockholm varies extremely with distinct seasons; it is exposed to cold winters and mild summers. The summer is short and intensive, especially in the up-North of Sweden. In general, the winter is dark and relatively cold. The Swedes celebrate this change of seasons with national festivities.

Population

Sweden has 9,336,487 inhabitants (2009 estimate), of which approximately almost 2 percent are Sami (the native inhabitants of North Sweden), 80% are Swedes and 3% are Finns. The largest non-European minority consists of Middle-Eastern citizens like Iraqis.

History

The history of Sweden dates back centuries and early cultural life is still represented in the hällristningar (rock paintings) that survive in many parts of Sweden. The Viking Age started in the 9th century. Vikings travelled mostly to the east, making their mark in Russia, as well as trading with Byzantine territories. In 1397, Denmark,

Sweden and Norway joined in the Union of Kalmar. During the next century Swedish nationalism became more noticeable ending in rebellion under Gustaf Vasa, who was crowned in 1523. The subsequent period of expansion resulted in Sweden's control over much of Finland and the Baltic countries. In 1809, the monarch power was overruled by aristocratic revolt and Finland was lost to Russia. The same year, Sweden introduced a constitution that divided legislative powers between king and Riksdag (parliament). The post of ombudsman was created to be able to verify the powers of the bureaucracy. In 1814, the military enforcement of the union with Norway is until today Sweden's last involvement with war. The industrial revolution arrived late in Sweden. But from the beginning it was based on efficient steel-making and the safety match, a Swedish invention. By 1900, almost one in four Swedes lived in cities and industry (mainly related to timber, precision machinery and hardware) was growing. Sweden declared itself neutral at the outbreak of World War I and was governed bilaterally until 1917. The social democrats dominated politics after 1932, reworking the liberal tendencies of the 1920's to join economic intervention with the introduction of a welfare state. These trends were scarcely interrupted until the 1970's when economic pressures began to cloud Sweden's social goals. It was then that support for social democracy first wavered, looking particularly shaky after the 1986 assassination of Prime Minister Olof Palme and its murky aftermath.

The political breeze shifted to the right in 1991 when a Moderate-led coalition won power. The experiment with rightist economics and the move to EU membership (which followed in 1995) left many Swedes uncertain and disillusioned, allowing the social democrats to get back in power to form a minority government in 1994.

On a modern cultural level Sweden is mainly known for the pop group ABBA, which won the Eurovision song contest in 1974, and actress Ingrid Bergman who made furore in the US.

But Sweden is, more importantly, also known for the Nobel Prize and the Nobel Prize for Economics. The Nobel Prize is awarded every year in five categories: chemistry, physics, medicine, physiology, literature and peace. The Nobel Foundation has chosen December 10 to award this prize, since it is the birthday of Albert Nobel (1833-1896), the inventor of dynamite.

The Swedish referendum on whether to adopt the European currency, led in 2003 to a 'no' – vote. This highlights the EU scepticism in Sweden, which gave rise to a new political grouping, the Junilistan in February 2004. This grouping opposed further integration with the EU, but did not favour complete withdrawal. The government did not hold a national referendum on the ratification of the EU constitutional treaty. It presented the treaty for approval to the Riksdag (the Swedish parliament) instead. However, due to the rejection of the treaty at national referendums

in France and the Netherlands, Sweden decided to delay the ratification process indefinitely.

In May 2005 Sweden was condemned by the UN Committee against Torture, for it had violated the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in 2001 when it send an asylum seeker back to Egypt. In September 2005 the Riksdag rejected a proposal to give amnesty for illegal immigrants living in Sweden, thereby ignoring the public opinion on this. However, in November, the Riksdag adopted a policy to allow failed asylum seekers to re-apply for a residence permit before the end of March 2006. In November 2005 the Swedish Government also ordered the Civil Aviation Authority to investigate media claims that CIA aircrafts had landed at Swedish airports, while transporting suspects of terrorism. However, these claims could not be substantiated.

In 2006 the government announced an intention for Sweden to overcome its dependency on petroleum within 15 years from then, while staying away from the building of nuclear power stations. This way, the government wanted to protect Sweden from the negative economic effects of climate change and from fluctuations in the price of petroleum, making it more expensive year by year. In that same year Laila Freivalds resigned as Minister for Foreign Affairs, because of the criticism of her ministry's involvement in the temporary closure of the website of SD Kuriren, the newspaper of the far-right Swedish Democrats. The publishing of cartoons of the