



SWEDEN

– a sporting nation





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Sweden forms part of the Scandinavian peninsular. It is the fifth largest country in Europe in area yet ranks as one of the smallest European countries in terms of population. There are almost ten million people over an area of 450,000 km² – a population density of about 22 people per square kilometre.

Sweden is one of the world's most sporting nations in relation to its geography and population. More than three million of its inhabitants between the ages 6 and 80 are members of a sports club – as active competitors, to keep fit or as leaders, trainers or supporters. Some 2.4 million of these are active in sports (2015).

Sport in Sweden focuses particularly on youth sports and sport-for-all. Our many voluntary leaders are crucial for our day-to-day activities. There are about half a million leaders in the sports movement, the majority of whom the majority are volunteers. The financial value of the annual contribution provided by voluntary leaders is estimated to be EUR 2 billion.

The idea of sport

"We are involved in non-profit sports clubs to have fun, feel good and develop throughout life"

Sport throughout life

Sport is physical activity in which we participate to perform better, have fun or feel good. Sport for children enables them to play and learn different sports and is based on all-round sporting development. It is essential for sport to be fun. Competition is one aspect of the game and must always be conducted on the children's own terms.

Sport enjoys a very prominent position in the lives of young people. We want young people to be involved in sport over the long term, whether for exercise or to compete at elite level. In youth and adult sports we distinguish between competitive performance sports and sport-for-all and fitness sports.

- 73% of sports clubs organise sport-for-all for adults
- 86% of sports clubs have activities for children and young people
- less than one in four sports clubs have activities for elite sports



The values of sport are our strength

We are a united sports movement working towards the same vision based on the same values, a vision rooted in all our associations and clubs, both those involved in sport-for-all and elite clubs: *Swedish sport – world best*. Our value system primarily requires:

- Sport to be fun
- The right of everyone to participate
- Fair play
- Democracy and participation

Sport in a sports club

Voluntary societies play a major role in Swedish life. In fact, Sweden has the highest ratio of societies and clubs to population in the world. The Swedish constitution guarantees the right to participate in clubs and societies, giving everyone the right to found a club or society with a particular aim without outside interference.

Clubs represent the foundation of the sports movement in Sweden. Clubs have been established by people who needed to work together and become organised in order to practice their chosen sport. Thus sport in Sweden was developed at grassroots level by the participants themselves. This is fundamental to what we term a 'popular movement'.

It is the commitment of members that creates activities and develops future sports.

- there are around 20,000 sports clubs in Sweden
- almost two in three boys and one in two girls between the ages of 6 and 18 are members of a sports club

Sport makes Sweden stronger

Being involved in sport in clubs helps people to feel good, both physically and mentally. It is not just the physical activity that is positive, but also all of the meeting places in sport where participants experience fellowship and participate socially. The effects of sport are many, such as:

- reduced healthcare costs
- reduced crime rate
- increased integration
- improved school results

It is important to welcome more people into sports, regardless of situation, background and living conditions. This strengthens the role of sport as a social actor, and thereby the ability to influence. One important role for sport in Sweden is to benefit to society.

Many sports organisations assume responsibility for activities besides sport. Although the majority of leaders are volunteers, the sports movement is a significant employer. Major sporting events also create temporary work in the area of sport and tourism. Sports clubs not only organise a large number of sports activities, they often become a meeting place for local residents. They arrange family activities, increase integration and cooperate with both schools and other local voluntary organisations. All to the benefit of society.



Gender equality in sport

In 2011 the General Assembly of the Swedish Sports Confederation approved objectives for gender equality in Swedish sports. The overall objective of equality work in sport is that women and men should enjoy the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities at all levels and in all areas.

Approximately 40 per cent of people active in sports in Sweden are women. However, although much has been done to promote equality between the sexes, women only constitute 35 per cent of the executives of special sports federations. Eight out of ten chairs are still men. The strategy of our gender equality work is gender mainstreaming.

Our gender equality work will be intensified to achieve our objectives, which are;

- Women and men in all decision making and advisory bodies are represented by at least 40 per cent each
- Women and men in senior positions, including Secretary General, are represented by at least 40 per cent each
- Women and men are represented by at least 40 per cent each in child and youth sports on the sports club level, in the upper secondary sports schools and among leaders of the national teams of Special Sports Confederations
- Nominating committees at all levels, in addition to the chair, are composed of an equal number of women and men

Social inclusion in sport

Swedish Sport wants to further strengthen the work to promote diversity in sports clubs and thereby contribute to both social inclusion and the development of Swedish sport. Swedish sport should be an inclusive and positive force against segregation and exclusion, making winners of us all.

The proportion of young people with an immigrant background who are involved in sport is around the same as for young people overall. Boys with foreign background train and compete almost as much as boys with a Swedish background. However, girls with a foreign background are much less involved, and we must improve our ways of attracting the interest of these girls. Above all, everyone should be welcomed into sport and we must actively work to encourage more people to get involved in sport.

- Sport offers integration activities in 224 of Sweden's 290 municipalities (2016)
- Around 5,400 coaches are committed to around 1,000 projects and initiatives
- We reach out to new areas and target groups. We are lowering the first step into sport, not only for new immigrants but also for those who have been in Sweden for some time.
- People coming to Sweden can get together, train and meet new people, while learning a new language





Sport is global

Sport is an international phenomenon leading to numerous sporting exchanges between nations. It brings together people from different cultures and opens borders. The position of the sports movement is that it should be possible for athletes to have whatever nationality, religion or political views they wish yet still participate on equal terms. It is then that sport's potential as a meeting place is greatest.

The Swedish sports movement will exercise powerful international influence through coordination. Therefore the Swedish Sports Confederation has produced international guidelines based on a belief in the sports movement as an international meeting place and bridge-builder between people. These International Guidelines set out fundamental standpoints for the international action of the Swedish sports movement.

Much of sports policy will be decided in the international arena, where it is important for Sweden to be strongly represented. The main purpose of Swedish sports international involvement is to:

- work on important issues for Swedish sports at an international level
- participate in the exchange of international knowledge and experience
- increase Swedish representation in international sports bodies
- work to bring more international sports events and congresses to Sweden

International legal agreements

The Swedish sports movement observes the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



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