



Sweden

General Information



Population

10 569 709 ([World Bank 2024](#))
10 587 276 ([STAT SE 2024](#))



Immigration

94 514 ([STAT SE 2023](#))



Emigration

327 581 ([UN Emigration Stock 2020](#))
73 434 ([STAT SE 2023](#))



Working-age population

6 581 488 ([World Bank 2024](#))
6 445 000 ([STAT SE 2024](#))



Unemployment rate

8.3 % ([World Bank 2024](#))
7.4 % ([STAT SE 2024](#))



GDP

603 715 224 265.8 current prices USD ([World Bank 2024](#))
6 208 117 000 000 current prices SEK ([STAT SE 2023](#))



Refugees, Asylum seekers, IDPs

Refugees

155 223 ([UNHCR 2025](#))
6 401 ([SE Migration Agency 2021](#))

Asylum Seekers

4 971 ([UNHCR 2025](#))
12 644 ([STAT SE 2023](#))

IDPs

0 ([UNHCR 2025](#))



Citizenship

By Birth
No ([GLOBALCIT 2024](#))

By Descent

Yes ([GLOBALCIT 2024](#))

Years of Residency

5 years of residence required
([GLOBALCIT 2024](#))



Territory

450 295 km² ([CIA World Factbook](#))

Data from international sources is updated automatically as it becomes available.

Migration Authorities Responsible Body

Ministry for Justice

Line Ministries

Ministry of Employment

Agencies

Statistics Sweden (SCB)

Swedish Migration Service

Swedish Public Employment Service

Centre for Social Orientation

Key Policy Documents

Temporary Act (2016: 752) on temporary restrictions on the possibility of obtaining a residence permit in Sweden

Aliens Ordinance (2006:97)

Aliens Act (2005: 716)

Aliens Act (2021 amendments)

New rules for Work Permits (June 2022)

Expulsion on account of criminal offences (August 2022)

Delegation for the Employment of Young People and Newly Arrived Migrants, and promotion funds (2022)

Relevant Publications

UN Migration Profile

International Migration Outlook 2021: Sweden

Swedish Integration Policy: Government Factsheet

Migration and Asylum Policy in Sweden

Sweden became a [country of immigration](#) from 1945 onwards. In 2022, the [population of Sweden is 10.475.204](#) up from [8.882.792 in 2000](#). This population growth is heavily impacted by immigration in response to economic growth and employment opportunities, as well as a traditionally open policy to asylum seekers.

The flow of immigrants has increased from 49.391 in 1998 to 90.631 in 2021. Moreover, there [were peaks in 2016](#) (163.005 immigrants), 2015 (134.240) and 2017 (144.489). In 2021, [the largest immigrant group was Swedes returning home](#) - 10.480, followed by Indians (6.017), Syrians (3.538), Germans (3.501), Pakistanis (3.240), Poles (3.181), Iranians (2.443), Iraqis (2.122), Turks (2.077) and Afghanis (2.025). Over the past ten years, nationals of Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, India and Poland make up the majority of immigrants.

In terms of emigration flow, [48.284 persons left Sweden in 2021](#). This figure has remained relatively constant over the past decade. Denmark was the most popular destination country, followed by the UK and [Norway](#).

So far in 2022, [74.935 residence permits have been issued in Sweden](#), of which only 4.5% were issued to EU and EEA citizens. Most permits were issued to nationals of Over 50% (38.374) of these permits are linked to asylum and 27% to work, followed by family reunification grounds and study reasons with 13% and 3.5% respectively. Compared to [2021](#)

Relating to the academic year 2020-21, Sweden welcomed 33.278 international students. Statistics Sweden data shows that this figure has remained between [32.000 and 40.000 over the past decade](#), while [Sweden introduced tuition fees for non-EEA students in 2011](#). International and exchange students from outside the EU/EEA who are admitted for studies lasting longer than three months must apply for a residence permit in Sweden. Unlike many countries, however, Sweden allows international students to work in the country during their studies. Of the 451.445 higher education students registered in Sweden for the academic year 2020-21, 320.373 had at least one parent born in Sweden, while 61.047 [were born outside of Sweden](#).

Integrating migrants remains an issue in Sweden. While the unemployment rate for Sweden as a whole stands at 8.3%, the unemployment rate for foreign born individuals [stands much higher at 21.2%](#). The situation is worse when youth unemployment is taken into consideration. In January 2022, there were 131.000 unemployed young people aged 15-24 years. This equates to an unemployment rate of 22.5%.

Sweden has a long history of receiving refugees and asylum seekers from active war zones, and the largest share come from [Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq](#) over the last ten years. In the 1990s, the wars in the Balkans caused substantial immigration from former Yugoslavia to Sweden. [Over 100.000 Bosnians and 3.600 Kosovo Albanians were granted asylum](#). In 2021, Sweden hosted over [240.000](#) recognised refugees, almost half of whom were Syrians. [In 2020 10.000 in 2010](#)

The large drop in asylum applications after 2016 is partly due to changes to Sweden's migration policy. The Swedish government introduced border controls, followed in mid-2016 by [a highly restrictive asylum and reunification law](#). This represented a significant shift in policy away from an open stance on asylum in response to public concerns and the rise of anti-immigrant feeling.

Swedish asylum and immigration policy is based on the [Aliens Act of 2005](#) [2021](#), [Aliens Ordinance Act of 2006](#), and the [Temporary Act of 2016 on temporary restrictions on the possibility of obtaining a residence permit in Sweden](#). The new legal framework came into force in 2016 and covered only the minimum level of the EU asylum standard. The new rules also introduced changes such as fewer protection grounds, temporary residence permits as a rule, more limited opportunities for family reunification and strengthened supply requirements for family reunification. The new law has three types of protection status: refugee status declaration; subsidiary protection; and person otherwise in need of protection. The focus here is on temporariness, rather than a permanent stay for refugees. At the same time, the Swedish Migration Agency have become more restrictive in their assessment of protection needs. For example, in 2014, [92% of Afghan applicants were granted protection](#), but in 2017 the share of positive asylum decisions had dropped to 38%.

In recent years, Sweden has also increased its focus on the return of rejected asylum seekers. In 2018, Sweden and Austria (leading the working group on harmonisation) became partners in the [European Return and Reintegration Network](#). The programme aims to strengthen, facilitate and streamline the return process in the EU through common initiatives. The aim is also to promote durable and efficient reintegration to countries outside the EU. [parallel societies leaving under their own steam in 2018](#) [50.000 irregular migrants](#)

In 2022, Sweden has implemented the EU Temporary Protection Directive to cover people fleeing the conflict in Ukraine that broke out on 24th February and has also enlarged the scope of the provisions. [An amendment](#) means that those who travelled to and stayed in Sweden between 30th October 2021 and 23rd February 2022 are also included in the group who are entitled to residence permits with temporary protection. Since the outbreak of the war in [Ukraine](#), Sweden has taken in 37.230 persons fleeing the conflict.

[On 1st June 2022, Sweden began applying new rules for labour migration](#). These include the introduction of a requirement for an employment contract to be signed before moving to Sweden and the obligation of employers to report any change in employment terms. Furthermore, changes have also been made to prevent foreign workers from being expelled due to minor errors, while a new residency permit - which remains valid for up to nine months - is being introduced by the Swedish authorities for highly qualified workers who wish to stay in the country. The objective of these changes is to protect foreign workers as well as attract and retain foreign talent.

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