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Multiannual Programme for the European Integration Fund

The central objective of the Swedish Multiannual Programme for the European Integration Fund (the Integration Fund) is to contribute to the introduction, development and application of the European Union's eleven basic principles for integration in Sweden.

These basic principles apply to integration policy in general but also have a specific focus on migration-, culture-, education-, labour market- and social policy.

The government has announced that a cohesive strategy for integration policy will be presented for the remainder of its period of office (up to the end of 2010) in connection with the spring budget in 2008. Ahead of the drawing up of this programme, a reference group made up of representatives of the respective policy areas and ministries has had the opportunity to present current and future strategies and policies nationally and in relation to the EU's eleven basic principles for integration and the orientation of the European Integration Fund. A number of authorities and organisations have also had the opportunity to submit views and proposals in the course of the work on drawing up the Multiannual Programme.

1. The Situation in Sweden

1.1 The national situation and how the migratory flows affecting it

Sweden has, compared with many other Member States, a relatively long history of both labour and refugee immigration, and the country consequently has long and extensive experience of State and municipal immigration and integration policy.

Recently-arrived third-country nationals form the primary target group of the Integration Fund. Asylum seekers, refugees and people who were previously foreign citizens but who have now acquired Swedish citizenship are not among the target groups of the Integration Fund.

Compared with other Member States, Sweden has a relatively high percentage of refugee immigrants, very few labour immigrants and a fairly high percentage of family immigrants (immigrants who are relatives of people already entitled to live in



Sweden). The Swedish regulations governing the acquisition of Swedish citizenship and the immigration of relatives are comparatively generous.

It is commonly the case in Swedish integration policy that most municipal, county council or State (special) measures and programmes are aimed at refugees and those in need of protection as well as at other new arrivals. For example, all new arrivals have the opportunity and right to study Swedish free of charge. In some municipalities, all new arrivals are also covered by the municipality's induction programme despite the fact that the municipalities are not entitled to State grants for those participants who are not refugees or people in need of protection.

Sweden also has, compared with several other Member States, a high level of asylum immigration. The percentage of asylum seekers who are granted resident permits has varied dramatically over the years. In 2007 and 2008 it is expected that there will be a high inflow of asylum seekers, mainly from Iraq and Somalia. Most of these will be granted asylum. This also means that an increase in family immigration can be expected over the next few years.

In the 2007 budget bill, the Government announced that measures will be taken to facilitate labour immigration. At present, it is difficult to assess the extent of labour immigration in the future, but this category of immigration, which is partly new to Sweden, will affect the situation on the labour market, in the municipalities and in society in general and also have an impact on integration policy.

The target groups for the Integration Fund include the following categories of immigrants and third-country nationals:

- Family immigrants (although not relatives of refugees or of those in need of protection within the so-called two-year framework),
- People who have been granted a resident permit on humanitarian grounds (and their relatives),
- Labour immigrants (although not seasonal workers).

Gender and country of origin

When the programme was drawn, there was no access to gender-based statistics on the situation of the target groups for the Integration Fund. There are, however, a large number of studies that address the situation of women and men, and of those born in Sweden and those born abroad, in terms of disease, ill-health, limited empowerment and employment in Sweden. There is no reason to believe that the general data differ significantly between the groups studied and the target groups of the Integration



Fund. There may, however, be differences due to country of origin and other circumstances.

Disease and ill-health

In general it can be said that there is link between the level of education and the percentage of those on the sick list in the Swedish population. Generally, people with a higher education are sick listed to a lesser degree than those with an upper-secondary school education, while individuals with a pre-upper secondary school education are sick listed to the highest degree. The lowest sick rate of all is found among highly-educated males who were born in Sweden. In all of the groups, women have a higher sick rate than men, and it is usually the women who were born abroad who have the highest rate. The fact that women born abroad as a whole have the highest sick rate among those with a low level of education is because the sick rate is high for the older members of this group.

Men born in Sweden have the lowest sick rate in all sectors. Irrespective of the sector, the sick rate is highest among women, and among women born abroad in particular. The difference is highest in manufacturing and recycling, which belong to the industrial sector.

It is not unreasonable to assume that similar differences between women and men exist in the target groups of the Integration Fund.

Limited empowerment

Over 40 per cent of the residents covered by one study stated that they themselves were unable to write a letter to appeal a decision made by an authority. This was more common in the case of women and of those born abroad. It is obvious that a poor knowledge of Swedish and the fact that they have only spent a short time in the country can make it more difficult for those born abroad to write a letter and appeal a decision. The fact that women say that they are unable to do this to a greater extent than men may have other causes. It may be a question of gender patterns that limit the role played by women in the public sphere. The study mentioned above showed that the limited empowerment of women applies irrespective of whether they are born in Sweden or abroad.

The labour market

Since the 1970s, the statistics show that the level of employment is lower among those born abroad than among those born in Sweden. These differences cannot be



explained in terms of individual characteristics such as the gender, age or marital status of those born abroad. On the contrary, factors relating to education, age and marital status do not increase the opportunities on the labour market for those born abroad as much as for those born in Sweden. Since 1995, it appears that the differences in employment follow the economic cycle. A closer examination shows that this strong link to the economic cycle only applies to those who were born abroad and have spent a relatively short time in Sweden, i.e. less than 10 years. These individuals act a kind of buffer on the labour market. People who were born abroad and who have only lived in Sweden for a short time are at a disadvantage here in three ways. When the workforce is cut, it is primarily temporary employees that are most affected and people born abroad are highly over-represented in this group. In the case of those who are permanently employed the labour legislation disfavors those with the shortest period of employment, and this largely applies to people born abroad. Finally, individuals who were born abroad risk losing their jobs to a greater extent than those born in Sweden even when periods of employment are equal.

In a comparison between women and men a familiar pattern emerges: women have a lower level of employment than men. This applies particularly to women born abroad who have lived less than 10 years in Sweden.

Target groups and areas of society relevant to the Integration Fund

Alongside the fact that Sweden has accepted a relatively large number of refugees in recent decades, the immigration of third-country nationals is also significant. This is reflected by the large number of third-country nationals in, for example, the various education systems and other social institutions/areas.

The immigration of third-country nationals in 2007 totalled 25 258 individuals, of which 14 675 were women and 10 583 men. The number of foreign citizens resident in Sweden (excluding EU citizens) in 2007 totalled 287 781, of which 172 709 were women and 115 082 men.

Below, we present some examples of the number of third-country nationals (approximate figures in those cases where the category is not included in the statistics available) in several social areas/institutions that are relevant in terms of the work of the European Integration Fund.

Swedish for Immigrants (SFI)

All recently-arrived immigrants are entitled to Swedish language training under the SFI programme. In the academic year 2005/06, 251 of 290 municipalities had



students in the SFI programme. Of the total number of students, 23 per cent were refugees, 2 per cent were permit applicants and 75 per cent were other immigrants, i.e. usually people belonging to the target groups of the Integration Fund¹. Of the total of 52 500 students that participated in the SFI programme in 2005/06, over 25 400 were beginners, which is the highest number for more than 10 years. 135 languages were represented, of which 109 languages were spoken by fewer than 10 students.

Arabic was the most common mother tongue among the students, followed by Thai, Spanish, Somali, and Kurdish/Northern Kurdish. The number of years of education that the students had in their native countries varied widely. 61 per cent of the students had at least 10 years of education, while 23 per cent had six years or less. Gender distribution among students in the SFI programme has remained unchanged over the last five years: 60 per cent women and 40 per cent men. Here, however, there are differences between the language groups.

Primary, secondary and upper-secondary schooling

Of the total of 319 000 pupils in Swedish upper-secondary schools in 2007, some 58 000 had a foreign background, of which 27 000 were women and 29 000 men. Of the 962 000 pupils in primary and secondary schools, some 148 000 were entitled to training in their mother tongue and 66 600 studied Swedish as a second language (there is no data on the number of third-country nationals).

In the individual programmes at the upper-secondary school – a common programme choice for the introduction of young recent arrivals – 37 per cent of the pupils had a foreign background (compared to 15 per cent for all national programmes).

Religions, religious communities

Religious affiliation is not registered in Sweden. Estimates of the religious affiliation of third-country nationals have, however, been made. In the case of Islam, which is the largest religion outside the Lutheran Church in Sweden, the Department of Theology at Uppsala University has, for example, estimated the number of so-called “ethnic Muslims” in Sweden to be over 300 000 (people who have immigrated or

¹ The term refugee refers to a person who, after being granted a resident permit, has been accepted by a municipality which is entitled to receive a State grant in accordance with the regulations governing the municipal reception of refugees. The term permit applicant refers to a foreign citizen who has applied for a permit to reside in Sweden but whose case has not been decided on. The term other immigrants refers to students in the SFI programme who are not refugees or permit applicants.



fled from Muslim countries). It is, however, uncertain how many of these regard themselves as Muslims today.

According to statistics from the Muslim Council of Sweden, there are approximately 370 000 Muslims in Sweden. Of these, some 130 000 are members of a Muslim community, of which 110 000 belong to one of the 130 groups linked to the Council. Public statistics on the number of people who are members of, or served by, various religious communities are kept in Sweden. According to statistics from a board that awarded State grants to religious communities, approximately 100 000 individuals were, for example, active in Islamic communities, over 38 000 in the Syriac Orthodox Church and over 25 600 in the Serbian Orthodox Church in 1997.

Third-country nationals in working life

In the case of the labour market and working life, there are statistics on people born abroad, although there is often a lack of more specific data on citizenship. Workplaces in some areas are of particular interest, including healthcare, eldercare and the schools. At such workplaces, immigrants meet and communicate with the majority population, and these meetings may be of special significance from the point of view of integration. In the entire healthcare system, for example, 11 per cent of the employees were born abroad, and in eldercare the corresponding figure is 15 per cent. The percentage of patients with a foreign background is also relevant; how do (ethnic) Swedish healthcare personnel and people with a different ethnic and cultural background treat and communicate with each other?

Third-country nationals in the penal system

The percentage of third-country nationals in the penal system is relatively high. The percentage of foreign citizens among new admissions to Swedish prisons in recent years has been between 25 and 28 per cent. A quarter of these were also sentenced to expulsion and it is assumed that the majority of these were not resident in Sweden. Foreign citizens are thus highly over-represented in the penal system.

1.2 The Measures undertaken by Sweden so far

Current State integration policy is based on a parliamentary decision taken in 1997.

The overriding objectives of Swedish integration policy are:

- Equal rights, obligations and opportunities for all, irrespective of ethnic and cultural background.
- A community based on social diversity.



- A development of society that is characterised by a mutual respect for differences within the boundaries set by society's fundamental democratic values and that everyone, irrespective of their background, should participate in and be jointly responsible for.

Integration policy should remove obstacles and open up opportunities for all. It should liberate the inherent energies, skills and abilities of everyone living in Sweden today and combat the exclusion that exists. Apart from during the initial period in Sweden, there should not be any special policies for immigrants. The most important element of the effort to promote integration is to create better opportunities for employment and empowerment by pursuing policies that facilitate work and enterprise.²

A central principle of integration policy is that special measures for immigrants should only apply to recent arrivals. Apart from this, steps should be taken in the respective policy areas to ensure that all of the inhabitants of Sweden have the same rights and obligations and do not suffer ethnic discrimination.

Over the last ten years, Swedish integration policy has been the subject of a great number of enquiries, critical reviews, research studies and a lively political debate.³ While previously, during the last three decades of the 1990s, there was political agreement on how to pursue immigration and integration policy, there is now another form of political agreement that the integration policy pursued to date has not been successful and has not achieved the targets set by parliament.

Reviews conducted by international organisations such as the OECD have also indicated significant problems relating to the integration of third-country nationals, including refugees.⁴ At the same time, other observers have claimed that Sweden's formal integration policy system – regulations, legislation, induction programmes, language training etc. – is high class.⁵

The so-called incentive structure – incentives to work instead of living on benefits, to take action and initiatives oneself instead of relying on the authorities etc. – is portrayed in some studies as being disadvantageous to the integration of recent arrivals.

An important but often overlooked aspect of Swedish integration policy is the attitude to rights and obligations. In Sweden, new arrivals and third-country nationals

² The Government's website <http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/2279>

³ See for example Brekke & Borchgrevink: *Talking about integration. Discourses, alliances and theories about labour market integration in Sweden*. Oslo 2007

⁴ See for example *The Integration of Immigrants into the Labour Market in Sweden*, OECD 2007

⁵ *The Migrant Integration Policy Index*, Migration Policy Group. Brussels, 2007



are awarded practically the same rights as Swedish citizens. The obligations and demands that these new inhabitants are subject to are emphasised to a lesser degree, in particular in comparison to the situation in other Member States. Sweden has also been affected to only a limited extent by the experience gained and the debate conducted in Europe on common basic values, intercultural dialogue and civics/social studies training for immigrants.

Follow-ups and evaluations of the policy pursued have been conducted to a varying degree. Follow-ups have primarily related to recently-arrived refugees and the authorities and the government have focused less on the target group we are concerned with here, third-country nationals. An interesting exception is formed by the longitudinal studies of the economic career and integration of immigrants and third-country nationals conducted by, among others, Jan Ekberg at Växjö University. This work has revealed considerable differences in terms of economic and labour market trends between different groups of immigrants relating to factors such as country of origin, domicile and length of stay. Housing careers and patterns have also been investigated; the studies indicate that segregation and exclusion are increasing for certain extremely marginalised groups of third-country nationals.

The Government's budget bill for 2008 contains data on the situation of people with a foreign background in a number of social areas, for example the percentage of employees with a foreign background employed in State administration, forms of housing and accommodation and the percentage living in overcrowded conditions in relation to ethnic background and gender, and the self-assessed state of health of ethnic Swedes and people with a foreign background respectively.

1.3 The total national resources allocated

For 2008, SEK 5 945 million has been specifically allocated to integration policy, which includes:

- issues concerning equal rights, obligations and opportunities for all irrespective of ethnic or religious background,
- the establishment of immigrants in Swedish society,
- Swedish citizenship,
- grants to municipalities for the reception of refugees,
- measures to combat and prevent discrimination on the grounds of ethnic and religious affiliation, gender, sexual orientation and disability,
- measures to combat xenophobia, racism and homophobia,
- Authority responsible for winding up the Swedish Integration Board
- Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination,
- The Equal Opportunities Ombudsman



- The Ombudsman against Discrimination on the Grounds of Sexual Orientation
- The Swedish Disability Ombudsman, and
- The Anti-Discrimination Board.

The budget is distributed as follows:

Activities	SEK million
Authority responsible for winding up the Swedish Integration Board	12.0
Integration measures	60.1
Municipal grants for reception of refugees	5 743.1
Loans for household equipment	14.5
Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination	41.9
Equal Opportunities Ombudsman	29.0
Ombudsman against Discrimination on the Grounds of Sexual Orientation	8.4
Swedish Disability Ombudsman	12.1

2. Analysis of the requirements in Sweden

2.1 Need for actions in relation to the current situation

The selection of priorities for the Integration Fund in Sweden is based on those development areas in integration policy where the need for measures in a national perspective is greatest and where it is believed that projects within the Integration Fund will have the greatest effect – taking into account the limited resources of the Fund in Sweden and its specifically European character. These areas should be seen as critical in relation to the shortcomings in Swedish integration policy (and other relevant policy areas) identified in enquiries and research studies over the last ten years (and that have also emerged in the course of the EU projects/programmes conducted). They have also been selected with regard to how Sweden, as a result of the opportunities that the programme provides for international exchanges, can reap the most benefit from the experience of other Member States.

The development areas presented here should also serve as a guide for project applicants and generate project ideas. Individual projects within the Integration Fund may normally comprise several of these areas; a combination of measures and perspectives is usually necessary. In several areas, for example, a review and



development of the knowledge available may initially be required as a basis for development projects.

Unconventional forms of project work and approaches and methods adopted from outside the traditional repertoire of social reform are often necessary to widen the circle of those involved in the development work so that it includes more than primarily State and municipal players. Ensuring the initiative and participation of the target groups in the project work is therefore a matter of priority. This must not, on the other hand, lead to a situation in which the mutuality highlighted in the first of the 11 basic principles for the integration of third-country nationals is set aside: *“Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States... It requires the participation not only of immigrants and their descendants but of all inhabitants.”*

Integration issues have had a high priority in the European Social Fund in Sweden, Objective 3 and Equal. Issues relating to integration policy also play an important role in the educational programmes (Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates, Comenius, Grundtvig) and in the European Refugee Fund. A cohesive picture of the results and experience gained in the course of these development efforts in Sweden is unfortunately not available, let alone conclusions and recommendations at the system level.⁶ There are, on the other hand, good examples from development projects in these programmes that should be noted and taken into account in projects within the Integration Fund.

Target groups

Efforts under the umbrella of Swedish integration policy are in most cases aimed at refugees and those in need of protection, but also at other immigrants. It is therefore often difficult to separate those target groups that are of specific interest to the Integration Fund from the other groups involved when implementing projects. However, it should be emphasised that the efforts made are primarily for the benefit of these target groups, at the same time as the development and improvement of the integration system as a whole is promoted.

The circumstances relating to integration may differ for women and men. In the calls for applications and in the selection of the applications that will receive funding, these circumstances must be reported and taken into account.

⁶ See for example Sohlman, *Arbetsmarknadspolitiska åtgärder för integration – slutrapport*. Swedish Integration Board, Norrköping, 2006 and Ramböll Management AB, *Slututvärdering av Växtkraft Mål 3*. Swedish ESF Council, 2005



Development areas

Intercultural and inter-religious dialogue

Swedish integration policy has to date taken only limited account of religious and cultural aspects in the meeting between immigrants and the majority population. The ability to discuss and handle central value, social, cultural and existential issues in religious terms is often lacking in secular society. Religious communities, both new and old, can play an important role here in establishing fruitful meetings between the majority and minority population, between different religious faiths and between these and secular society.

Civic education and information about society – basic values

Information about Swedish society has to date been offered by the municipalities, for example in connection with Swedish language training for immigrants. A review of this area is currently underway. Civic education emphasises the knowledge and skills required to be able to live on equal terms in society as an active and participating citizen with responsibilities and the power to shape one's life.

Family – upbringing – socialisation – alternative arenas and networks

A significant part of the introduction to society of recently-arrived immigrants takes place in practice through the immediate family, other relatives and ethnic networks. Members of the target groups of interest to the Integration Fund – both younger and older – are in particular introduced and socialised outside the formal system, partly in what can be called parallel societies, characterised by patriarchal patterns and traditional values and cultures. Research on these so-called alternative arenas and networks for socialisation and introduction is relatively limited and their relation to, and affect on, the formal systems is unknown.

Informal integration and earning systems – incentive structures

It is often the case that there are well-developed, informal earning and integration systems in the so-called parallel societies. Incentives to move into formal and regular systems may often be weak. Little research has been conducted on this area, but it has a significant affect on value patterns, social cohesion and, ultimately, the impact of integration policy. On the other hand, ethnic networks, family ties and economies offer a potential for self-organisation and empowerment that should be utilised.



Young people with a foreign background

Young immigrants in segregated areas and schools can in some cases both create and fall into subcultures, sometimes in a conflict-ridden position between traditional cultural and value patterns and western modernity. A measure of the situation of young people on the labour market is the percentage of individuals in the 20–24 age group who do not work or study. In the case of young people born in Sweden this figure is 10 per cent. In the case of young people born in countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe outside the EU 15, the percentage of those that neither work nor study is up to three times higher. The highest percentage is among young people from countries in Africa. In absolute figures this concerns 50 000 young people who were born in Sweden and just over 10 000 who were born abroad. Between 2001 and 2004, the percentage of young men who neither work nor study increased, in particular in the case of young men from countries in Africa. Despite the fact that they neither worked nor studied, between 30 and 50 per cent of the young people had never registered with an Employment Office.⁷

Criminality, class, culture and ethnicity

Extremely segregated areas may be marked by exclusion, subcultures and, in some cases, criminality. Research reports and enquiries have often claimed that these problems are in large part due to so-called structural discrimination.⁸ The causes are probably more complex however, and a more multi-faceted analysis is required as a starting point for future efforts in the relevant policy areas. Here too, there are links to the development of parallel societies and earning systems mentioned above.

Health

Previous project experience from, for example, Equal and the European Refugee Fund has demonstrated the importance of good health for the successful integration of individuals in working life and society as a whole. The state of health of new arrivals is often poor and the Swedish healthcare system finds it difficult to respond to the complex needs for care and health information that exist. Health communication, that is the meeting and communication that takes place between patients and care providers, is an important development area; preventive healthcare is another.

⁷ *Integrationspolitikens resultat (Results of Integration Policy)*, series of reports from the Swedish Integration Board, 2007:05.

⁸ See for example SOU 2006:79



2.2 The Operational objectives for meeting current needs

In the course of 2008, the Government will present *a cohesive strategy for integration policy* for the remainder of its period of office (until the end of 2010). (At the time of writing it is not presented.) This integration policy will address general measures to combat exclusion, various measures that further underline the general focus on promoting and encouraging work in the Government's policies ("the work line") and measures that strengthen the competitiveness on the labour market of individuals who were, for example, born abroad.

The focus of policy during the period of office is on measures that can combat exclusion. Integration policy should be seen in such a wider context. In the budget bill for 2008, the Government has presented the following objectives and measures:

Ongoing forceful efforts to combat discrimination

Ongoing forceful efforts to combat discrimination should be of the highest priority. This includes formulating a new anti-discrimination act that covers all forms of discrimination, addressing the issue of higher levels of compensation in the event of discrimination and implementing the merger of the various ombudsmen to form one authority. The Government's ambition is to submit draft legislation for approval by parliament in the spring of 2008, at the same time as the establishment of the new ombudsman authority is prepared. Alongside this work, an enquiry on discrimination tests that can be used as evidence is also planned.

More effective and expeditious establishment of new arrivals

Adult new arrivals should learn Swedish as quickly as possible and enter the labour market during their first year in Sweden. The work line will apply. Incentive structures at all levels – for example for encouraging individuals to quickly get a job and learn Swedish, for encouraging employers to employ immigrants and for achieving a better spread in terms of where immigrants live and settle – will be strengthened. The induction period should be as short as possible and no special measures should be aimed at immigrants thereafter. Any need for support should thereafter be met within general policy frameworks.

SFI bonus – an incentive for those who learn Swedish quickly

The government also intends to introduce individual incentives in the refugee reception process in order to increase the motivation of those who participate in SFI training or quickly find a foothold on the labour market. Work is now underway to develop a proposal comprising an SFI bonus for refugees, people in need of



protection and relatives who, within a certain period of time of receiving their residence permits, achieve an SFI level considered adequate to enable them to work.

National strategy for the education of newly-arrived pupils

The Government continues to work with measures designed to improve the educational situation of newly-arrived pupils. The authority responsible for the development of the schools has, during the year, presented proposals on a national strategy for the education of newly-arrived children and young people. As part of the work on this strategy, the National Agency for Education presented draft proposals on objectives and guidelines for the education of newly-arrived children and young people in 2007.

Review of third-country national reception – the work line will be reinforced

A Government enquiry is reviewing responsibilities, structures and funding in the third-country national and refugee reception system and other programmes that can together accelerate the process of, and increase the opportunities for, establishment on the labour market. The economic consequences of the present system and the costs that the municipalities incur for the reception of refugees will also be reviewed. An important task of the enquiry is to examine how the work line can be strengthened and how the Labour Market Board, together with other organisations that help people find work, can play a more prominent role in the reception of new arrivals. The assignment also includes submitting proposals on how to strengthen the economic incentive to become rapidly established on the labour market. The enquiry will report its findings by 2 June 2008 at the latest.

Initiatives taken by immigrant organisations themselves should be strengthened – new support will be introduced to strengthen the efforts of these organisations to combat racism and other forms of intolerance

The focus of the support provided to national organisations for immigrants (organisations founded on an ethnic basis) will be changed. The previous government required national immigrant organisations to run operations in accordance with specific integration policy objectives, but this requirement will no longer apply. Integration is a mutual process in which it is important that all organisations contribute on the basis of their own circumstances and activities. The government will therefore increase support for the initiatives and operations of the immigrant organisations themselves concerning culture, language, identity and participation in society.



At the same time, the Government will set up a new support system for organisations that work to combat racism and similar forms of intolerance. A total of SEK 30 million can be allocated in 2008 to national immigrant organisations and to organisations that combat xenophobia and other forms of intolerance.

Credit guarantees will be introduced to make it easier for people to buy homes

Credit guarantees will be introduced by the State in 2008 for credit institutes that loan money to people who buy a house or flat (so-called acquisition guarantees). The aim of these guarantees is to make it easier for first-time buyers to buy a home. The acquisition guarantees will cover interest payments up to SEK 100 000 for a maximum period of 10 years.⁹

The work of the European Integration Fund should support the implementation of these objectives, as regarding the target group of third country nationals. The parties that make up the Government have also, in various contexts, announced new objectives and strategies for integration policy, and it is expected that these will be summarised in the cohesive strategy for integration policy presented in the spring budget in May 2008. (At the time of writing it is not presented.) In many respects, the Multiannual Programme refers to and anticipates this new strategy, for example by focusing on issues relating to schooling, religion, fundamental values and training for citizenship. The Government's new strategy and objectives in various policy areas with the aim of improving the integration of third-country nationals will be presented and incorporated in more detail in future annual programmes.

3 Strategy to achieve the objectives

The development of a common European framework for integration is part of the process that began as a result of the summit meeting held in Tampere in 1999 (and which was confirmed by the Member States during the meeting of the European Council in The Hague in 2004) in which the Member States now report annually on their successes and activities in the integration field to the Commission. The Reform Treaty will also establish the legal basis for a common integration policy.¹⁰ The basic principles mentioned above form an important component of this work; other ingredients are the setting up of the national contact points for integration, the

⁹ Government's website <http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/2279/a/70943>

¹⁰ Chapter 2 of the reform Treaty, article III-267.4 in the earlier Constitution.



publication of a “Handbook on Integration” and the launch of the European Integration Fund.

The choice of strategy for the utilisation of the Integration Fund is based on the following:

- The funds available in Sweden are limited and should be reserved for projects within a number of restricted, and to date neglected, development areas.
- A relatively large number of enquiries, research studies and reviews of Swedish integration policy have been conducted over the last 10 years. The integration policy pursued to date has not achieved the objectives set by parliament.
- Swedish integration policy has to a lesser extent been affected by the developments and the debate taking place on this issue in the rest of Europe. The European framework for integration is a central feature of the Integration Fund’s strategy for handling the problems that exist. It is also a starting point for the development of future instruments for benchmarking between Member States.

Priorities, specific priorities and actions

Specific priorities

Sweden has a well developed *general* system for the introduction and integration of third-country nationals. There are, however, severe flaws in the system when it comes to *specific categories* of TCNs and certain components of the system are lagging behind. Optimising the use of the scarce resources in the European Integration Fund in Sweden implies therefore to concentrate the interventions to these *specific areas/critical points*. The *specific priorities* in the EIF coincide with most of these critical points:

- The Swedish introduction and integration systems have been created from above in the frame of a long tradition of public interventions and *social engineering*. The target groups involved has only to a limited scope been able to influence the systems.
- Taking into account the general characteristics of the systems, there has been limited room for tailor-made, adapted measures for specific target groups.
- The emphasis on the so called structural discrimination as the main reason for the exclusion of TCNs (from the labour market and the society as a whole) has precluded a serious discussion in Sweden on the cultural and religious dimensions of the integration process as well as on common values, i.e. central issues in an intercultural dialogue.



3.1 Priority 1

PRIORITY 1: Implementation of actions designed to put the 'Common Basic Principles for immigrant integration policy in the European Union' into practice

Of special priority are projects under Priority 1 that entail:

Specific priority 1: Participation as a means of promoting the integration of third-country nationals in society

Actions involving the participation of third-country nationals in the formulation and implementation of integration policies and measures

Specific priority 2: Particular target groups

Actions, including introduction programmes and activities, whose main and targeted objective is to address specific needs of particular groups, such as women, youth and children illiterate persons and disabilities.

Specific priority 4: Intercultural dialogue

Actions aimed at encouraging mutual interaction and exchange, such as developing intercultural dialogue, in an effort in particular, to resolve any potential conflict caused by differences in cultural or religious practices, and thus to ensure the better integration of third-country nationals in the societies, values and ways of life of member states

Actions under priority 1 that has a focus on participation or encourage interaction and intercultural exchange or are targeted to address specific needs of particular groups can be funded according to the rules of the specific priorities.

A) The objectives of the strategy and examples of actions

The strategy aims to ensure the impact and application of the 11 basic principles in integration work in the public and voluntary sectors at the local, regional and central levels, in particular in the areas that have been presented as development areas.

Examples of actions:

Collaboration at different levels

One example of an action at the central level may be the setting up of an inter-departmental reference group in the Government Offices in order to enforce the



implementation of the common basic principles. At the regional level, the equivalent collaboration can take place in reference groups and also in projects involving the County Administrative Board, municipalities and voluntary organisations. At the local level, collaboration between the public sector, business and industry and voluntary organisations should be promoted with support from the Integration Fund. This action is specifically targeted to implement principles 6,7,9 and 10 of the common basic principles of integration.

The representation of third-country nationals in the different activities and levels will be ensured through the participation of persons from migrant organisations, being already involved in projects on the ground, thus implementing the specific priority 1.

Civic education and information about society

The strategy in this area is based on the notion that training for citizenship is primarily a question of a value perspective rather than of the passive transfer of information. Projects in this area should develop and implement new methods. One point of departure may, for example, be the results of finalized projects funded by the European Social Fund and the European Refugee Fund whose results can be adapted and then be disseminated nationally.

In connection with language training and induction programmes for young people and adults, priority should be given to civics and information about society, and development areas should be taken into account. The development and testing of tailor-made civics courses in connection with SFI programmes, information about society in the primary and secondary schools and various forms of adult education should be prioritised.

All the actions will implement the specific priority 2 through targeted and adapted measures – in civic education and information about society – for the selected groups of newly arrived (and other) third-country nationals; this groups is composed of women, single parents and persons with poor educational background/illiterates.

The key players in these projects may be the municipalities, adult educational associations and training providers.

This action is specifically targeted to implement principles 4, 5 and 6 of the common basic principles of integration.



The health of new arrivals/third-country nationals

The state of health of third-country nationals has been addressed in previous EU programmes and has also been the subject of various projects. A starting point in this context should therefore be to utilise and further develop the experience gained and the concepts and methods developed to improve the health of immigrants and new arrivals. Special attention should be paid to certain vulnerable groups among third-country nationals: the elderly, people on a disability pension, women and those with a limited education. Central issues include the communication between healthcare personnel and (newly-arrived) third-country nationals and the attitudes of the personnel to such patients, the excessive or incorrect consumption of healthcare due to a lack of information or knowledge on the part of providers and/or patients, the lack of information about how people can themselves preserve and promote their own health and the clarification of cultural components in healthcare.

Against this background, measures to improve the health of third-country nationals/new arrivals and their opportunities to use the healthcare system should be prioritised. Projects in this area should utilise the experience gained in, and the products of, previous activities and programmes that were funded by the EU.

All the actions will implement the specific priority 2 through targeted and adapted measures in the health care sector for the selected groups of newly arrived (and other) third-country nationals; this groups include women, lone parents and persons with poor educational background/illiterates.

Key players in these projects may include municipalities and county councils, private and public healthcare institutions and homes for the elderly.

This action is specifically targeted to implement principles 5 and 10 of the common basic principles of integration.

Joint knowledge development through dialogue

We are all sources of knowledge, both as individuals and as collaborators in social networks. The joint development of knowledge requires the creation of arenas and fora for this purpose. In such arenas, knowledge and understanding can be developed through dialogue marked by mutual respect for each other and for each others' culture, ethnicity and potential exclusion.

The experience and knowledge developed in the course of the work of the Integration Fund should be compiled and validated in order to enable knowledge development



and the wider use of the knowledge gained beyond the projects, so-called mainstreaming. The Integration Fund can support such projects.

Initial activities in this field include gathering data and developing knowledge by conducting reviews of the research and knowledge available (including new research) and arranging dialogue seminars and focus groups. Newly-arrived third-country nationals, representatives of immigrant organisations, voluntary organisations and religious communities should participate in these seminars and focus groups. These should subsequently identify the development measures required on the basis of a further development of existing methods from previous EU projects that are then disseminated nationally. The projects should be permeated by a dialogue between representatives of the majority and minority groups in society.

All the activities in this field includes the involvement of TCNs (both newly arrived and former migrants already living in the Sweden/migrant organisations) in the design and implementation of introduction programmes, policy making and project/development work.

Key players: Third-country nationals, immigrant organisations, voluntary organisations, research institutes, municipalities.

This action is specifically targeted to implement principles 1 and 9 of the common basic principles of integration.

Empowerment

One of the major successes of previous projects supported by the EU has been the creation of situations in which the participants were able to see and realise their own potential. Such projects have led to self-employment or to employment in social companies. Projects like this, i.e. those that develop systems and methods, could be supported by the Integration Fund and could focus, for example, on the broadening of ethnic enterprise and the renewal of housing areas and urban districts.

Actions consisting of the development and strengthening of the capacity of the target group in taking control of their own lives, through using different kind of empowerment methods and strategies, will implement the specific priority 1. The methods and strategies imply the active participation of the TCNs.

Key players include third-country nationals, immigrant organisations, voluntary organisations, co-operative development bodies and municipalities.

This action is specifically targeted to implement principles 1, 3 and 9 of the common basic principles of integration.



Intercultural and inter-religious dialogue

Projects in this area should, as above, be based on questions raised within the remit of national integration policy, for example about the role of religion in minority and majority groups in society and about values, life choices and living patterns among new arrivals from other cultures and how greater mutual understanding can be achieved by means of an intercultural/inter-religious dialogue. Arenas and fora for dialogue must be established by, for example, voluntary and target-group organisations and municipalities (within the framework of Swedish language tuition programmes, primary and secondary schools, adult education, folk high schools etc.). These activities can be linked to the Government's initiative on a dialogue designed to promote and strengthen the development of common basic values. Fora can, for example, be created within the framework of religious communities, immigrant organisations and study associations or at workplaces, healthcare institutions, homes for the elderly or prisons, or in connection with leisure or sports activities.

The target groups consist of third-country nationals, immigrants and members of the majority population, including pupils, teachers, employees, patients and personnel etc.

This action is specifically targeted to implement principles 1, 2, 7 and 8 of the common basic principles of integration.

B) Objectives and indicators

The objective is to develop and apply the basic principles within the framework of the Government's national strategy for integration policy and as starting points for measures, programmes, policy documents and targets for, for example, municipal operations, linked to indicators for assessing to what extent targets have been achieved. Examples of indicators within this priority:

- The civic education as a subject in the introduction training programme for new arrivals will be tested in 10 municipalities.
- Three target-group adapted models/course packages for civic education will be produced.
- A method for measuring the economic benefits of better-adapted healthcare will be developed.
- Five activities in which the target groups are involved will be conducted.
- A method for intercultural and inter-religious dialogue will be developed and tested in five sectors of society.



C) Specific priorities

The following specific priorities have been selected under Main Priority 1:

Specific priority 1: Participation as a means of promoting the integration of third-country nationals in society
 Actions involving the participation of third-country nationals in the formulation and implementation of integration policies and measures

As mentioned above, Sweden has an extensive integration policy and an integration system that is publicly funded and within which municipal and State authorities are primarily responsible for implementation. Involving the target groups and target-group organisations to a greater extent will stimulate the empowerment and initiative of these groups and will enable a break to be made with the mentoring/parental mentality that has partly characterised Swedish social and integration policy.

Measures in this area may, for example, entail a number of voluntary organisations in a municipality (with the municipality as a co-ordinator and co-funder) developing projects and activities within the selected main priorities. The work of the Integration Fund should in this context take special account of the development areas presented previously.

Specific priority 2: Particular target groups
 Actions, including introduction programmes and activities, whose main and targeted objective is to address specific needs of particular groups, such as women, youth and children, illiterate persons and disabilities.

Carefully implemented needs analysis has to be made for identifying the special needs of different categories of third-country nationals. The Swedish system for introduction of newly arrived third-country nationals has not sufficiently taken into account these special needs, especially among women, youth and children and among low educated persons.

Specific priority 4: Intercultural dialogue
 Actions aimed at encouraging mutual interaction and exchange, such as developing intercultural dialogue, in an effort in particular, to resolve any potential conflict caused by differences in cultural or religious practices, and thus to ensure the better integration of third-country nationals in the societies, values and ways of life of



member states.

Over the last 10 years, Sweden's integration policy has had a knowledge base and an explanatory model that has to a limited extent taken account of cultural and religious factors as potential causes of conflicts. Projects within the Integration Fund should therefore support the development of knowledge and activities that aim to analyse, process and counteract such conflicts in religious and cultural terms, while also combating the marginalisation and exclusion of minority groups.¹¹

Integration Fund projects may also make a major contribution to the Government's new efforts to promote dialogue and co-operation between a broad spectrum of players in society in order to strengthen respect for democracy and human rights with the aim of creating a stronger common set of basic values in Sweden. This also offers a link to principle 2, *Integration implies respect for the basic values of the European Union*, where the history and traditions of other Member States can also provide important contributions to a Swedish dialogue.

3.2 Priority 2

PRIORITY 2: Development of indicators and evaluation methods to assess progress, adapt policy and measures and promote the co-ordination of comparative learning.

The objectives of the strategy and examples of measures

The aim is to develop methods and instruments that complement existing indicators in the integration field. The various efforts need to be co-ordinated and there is also a need to process the results from the Integration Fund, but also from the Social Fund and the Refugee Fund. This work should then form the basis for validation, evaluation, dissemination and impact activities. The analysis will provide comparative learning and also enable assessments of the economic benefits of the integration measures taken as a basis for determining which measures should be applied in the course of regular operations.

Examples of activities:

- Establishment of learning and knowledge platforms for the utilisation and refinement of projects results and system impact.

¹¹ For a current reference see for example "The Economist", November 1, 2007
http://www.economist.com/specialreports/PrinterFriendly.cfm?story_id=10015255



- The platforms will also enable the co-ordination of follow-up, evaluation, and validation, as well as the development of indicators and evaluation methods that, for example, relate to economic aspects.
- Development of models for socioeconomic accounts.

Possible players may be: research institutes, municipalities and consultancies.

Objectives and indicators

Sweden has already developed a system of indicators for following up the situation of people with a foreign background, which includes foreign citizens/third-country nationals, refugees and people who have acquired Swedish citizenship.

There is, however, a lack of evaluation methods that address the economic effects of, for example, integration measures. Methods for conducting and compiling cost-benefit analyses and socioeconomic accounts for such measures in various social fields should therefore be developed and used. Co-ordinating mechanisms for follow-up, evaluation, dissemination and impact activities with regard to project results in various EU programmes, so called learning platforms, have existed to only a limited extent in Sweden.

Indicators:

- That the results are made available to new users by means of new methods and instruments for follow-up and evaluation with the help of cohesive learning and knowledge platforms.
- That integration measures are subjected to cost-benefit analyses.
- That socioeconomic accounts are drawn up for integration measures.

3.3. Priority 3

PRIORITY 3: The development of capacity and the co-ordination and development of intercultural skills in the Member States at all levels of public administration.

This priority will not be addressed in Sweden.



3.4 Priority 4

PRIORITY 4: The exchange of experience, good practice and information on integration between the Member States

Of special priority are projects under Priority 4 that entail:

Specific priority 1: Participation as a means of promoting the integration of third-country nationals in society

Actions involving the participation of third-country nationals in the formulation and implementation of integration policies and measures

The objectives of the strategy and examples of measures

Sweden's exchange with other member states has been relatively limited to date. The dynamic development and intensive debate that has taken place regarding integration issues in other member states and organisations at the EU level has elicited only a limited response in Sweden. Priority 4 is therefore of particular relevance to future development in Sweden.

The aim is to involve and engage players at the local, regional and central levels in an exchange of experience and mutual learning with other member states in order, at a strategic level, to gain an increased understanding of, and receptivity to, new, alternative ideas and concepts. Close co-operation with the transnational activities within the European Social Fund and its projects should be aimed at and can add further value to the respective programmes.

Examples of activities:

- Exchange of information and experience.
- Joint training courses, analyses and surveys and methods testing.
- Transfer (or adaptation) of successful models between countries or regions.
- Projects with joint work plans and joint implementation on equal terms.
- More extensive exchanges between projects.

Possible players in this area may be: ministries, county administrative boards, municipalities and voluntary organisations.

Actions mentioned above should implement the specific priority 1 by involving third-country nationals in exchange events, training courses and joint projects, especially through the participation of transnational/pan-European immigrant

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organizations in different Member States; for many immigrant groups there already exists strong networks in Europe which could be used and developed for this purpose.



Objectives and indicators

The objective is to develop quality and learning in Swedish integration work by comparing with, and learning from, players in other member states. Such learning can take place in joint projects and by exchanging personnel.

- At least half of the projects supported by the Integration Fund under priorities 1 and 2 should have a transnational element for learning between projects and players in different member states.
- All of the projects with a transnational element should present their experience and results in Swedish and English.

C) Specific priorities

The following horizontal priorities have been selected under Main Priority 4:

Specific priority 1: Participation as a means of promoting the integration of third-country nationals in society. Actions involving the participation of third-country nationals in the formulation and implementation of integration policies and measures

All projects under priority 4 that has a focus on participation can be funded according to the rules of the specific priorities.

As mentioned earlier, Sweden has an extensive integration policy and integration system that is publicly funded and within which municipal and State authorities are primarily responsible for implementation. Involving the target groups and target-group organisations to a greater extent will stimulate the initiative and empowerment of these groups and counteract the mentoring/parental mentality that has partly characterised Swedish social and integration policy. This is, not least, important in transnational projects where there is much to learn at the European level.

Over the last 10 years, Sweden's integration policy has had a knowledge base and an explanatory model that has to a limited extent taken account of cultural and religious factors as potential causes of conflicts. Projects within the Integration Fund should therefore support the development of knowledge and activities that aim to analyse, process and counteract such conflicts in religious and cultural terms, while also



combating the marginalisation and exclusion of minority groups. It is important to take this into account in the transnational projects where the history and traditions of other Member States can make important contributions to a Swedish dialogue.

4. Compatibility with other instruments

Projects that aim to develop integration work in Sweden can also be supported by the European Refugee Fund and the European Social Fund. Projects supported by the Integration Fund can collaborate in terms of content with these, but not financially. The experience and knowledge developed in the course of the work of the Integration Fund will be compiled and validated in order to promote joint knowledge development and enable a wider use outside the projects themselves, so-called “mainstreaming”. Projects with this aim can also take place under the auspices of the European Social Fund, where they are called theme groups and process-supporting projects. Integration Fund projects can collaborate with these in terms of content, but not financially.

4.1 Priority 1

Applying the 11 common basic principles in practice and ensuring that they have an impact at the national, regional and local levels affects a number of programmes and measures in a variety of policy areas. Sweden’s policy for the so-called “mainstreaming” of integration policy means that the various ministries and State and municipal authorities are responsible for ensuring that measures are carried out in the respective social sectors. At the national level, this is the responsibility of the Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality; similar commitments can be found at the regional and local levels (county administrative boards, municipalities).

Where appropriate, Integration Fund projects can collaborate with European Social Fund projects that focus on work and self-support. Applications should make it clear how such projects will complement each other both in terms of content and with regard to the practical co-operation between the projects.

In many of the activities/projects within the Integration Fund there is an interface with induction and integration measures within the European Refugee Fund. Special account should be taken of this in applications and collaboration should be established in the projects where appropriate.

Education and civics training in the case of the primary and secondary schools as well as the adult education system are issues that are also dealt with in the Leonardo



da Vinci, Socrates, Comenius and Grundtvig programmes. Applications should present collaboration with these programmes where appropriate.

In order to ensure that the programme is firmly grounded at the political level (the Government Offices) a reference group with representatives of the Ministries for Integration, Education, Labour, Social Affairs, Culture and Justice could be set up.

The national contact point for integration and the equivalent function in the Government Offices can, in the long term, also play a more important role with regard to information and co-ordination at the EU level.

4.2 Priority 2

Developing methods for follow-up that complement existing indicators will make a more comprehensive follow-up and assessment of integration policy measures possible.

This applies in particular to the assessment of the socioeconomic costs and benefits of integration measures and programmes, as well as to bringing integration processes to life using unconventional methods.

Earmarked project resources for process support and dissemination/impact will be set aside in the Social Fund and these can also be used by the Integration Fund. This will ensure complementarity and optimal results in all phases of the programme and in the project process. This is also extremely important for Priority 2, evaluation and comparative learning.

4.3 Priority 3

Not used in Sweden.

4.4 Priority 4

Integration Fund measures and projects should comprise transnational collaboration with corresponding projects and activities in other Member States.

5 Framework for the implementation of the strategy/programme

5.1 The publication of the programme

The aim of the advertising of the programme is to attract good applications that can make a significant contribution to achieving the objectives of the programme.(art.33:1)



Target groups for the advertising of the programme are:

- The public
- Decision makers and opinion makers
- Prospective project owners
- The equivalents of prospective project owners
- Project participants

The primary target groups for achieving the aim of attracting good applications are potential recipients of grants, i.e. State bodies, municipalities, companies, authorities, immigrant- and voluntary organisations.

The programme will be advertised using these channels:

- Publicity in the media
- Information meetings
- The website of the Swedish ESF Council (www.esf.se)
- Printed circular to aprox. 700 stakeholders
- From 2008 organize a yearly dissemination event of the MAP or the result of the annual programme(s). (act. 33:2a)
- Make public a list of final beneficiaries, the name of the projects, and the amount of community and national contribution, on the website of the Swedish ESF-council. (art. 33:2b)

Each call for applications will be publicised in the regional media thanks to the active work of the regional offices with press releases and contacts with journalists. A newsletter containing information on the calls and other important information will be circulated to relevant stakeholders.

The Swedish ESF Council will arrange or participate in information meetings tailored to the needs and interests of various target groups in order to reach authorities, municipalities and organisations.

Information about the Integration Fund and about application procedures will be published on the website of the Swedish ESF Council (www.esf.se). This will include information on how to apply and an application form with support information. Applications should normally be submitted by applicants as electronic documents.

All the information- and publicity measures will be in compliance with chapter 5 articles 32 – 35 of the Commission Decision of 5 March 2008 laying down the rules for implementation of the Council Decision 2007/435/EC

5.2 Partnership

A partnership has been set up with the aim of making the programme work transparent to relevant organisations, target groups and authorities. The partnership is made up of representatives of authorities, voluntary organisations and research



institutes and is a joint partnership for the European Integration Fund, the European Refugee Fund and the European Return Fund in Sweden. The partnership will have two levels, a consultative committee, and a group of experts, relevant to the European Integration Fund.

The task of the consultative committee is to comment on overall issues relating to the implementation of the programme. The group of experts will ensure the transparency of the programme activities and assist in the selection of projects. The group of experts will consist of experts from the bodies represented on the consultative committee and from the Swedish Migration Board and the Swedish ESF Council as well as other experts within the integration field. The experts will participate in the selection and drafting process, i.e. comment on the relevance of the project applications on the basis of the Integration Fund's annual and multiannual programmes. An additional role of the group will be to ensure that the results are utilised by participating in the strategic dissemination and impact work.



6. Indicative financing plan

6.1. Draft financial plan

Multiannual Programme - Draft Financial Plan								
Community Contribution								
Member state: Sweden								
Fund: European Fund for the Integration of the third-country nationals								
in 000s euros	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL
Priority 1	787	960	780	856	1077	1438	1594	7491
Priority 2	0	0	455	471	553	479	532	2490
Priority 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Priority 4	263	320	260	270	360	479	532	2484
TA	111	129	145	152	114	131	142	924
TOTAL	1161	1408	1640	1749	2104	2527	2800	13389
Multiannual Programme - Draft Financial Plan								
Overall Financial Plan								
Member state: Sweden								
Fund: European Fund for the Integration of the third-country nationals								
in 000s euros	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL
Community contribution	1161	1408	1640	1749	2104	2527	2800	13389
Public cofinancing	351	429	804	873	1030	1120	1197	5804
TOTAL	1512	1837	2444	2622	3134	3647	3997	19193
% Community contribution, (*)	76,79%	76,65%	67,10%	66,70	67,13%	69,29%	70,05%	69,84%

(*) including Technical Assistance