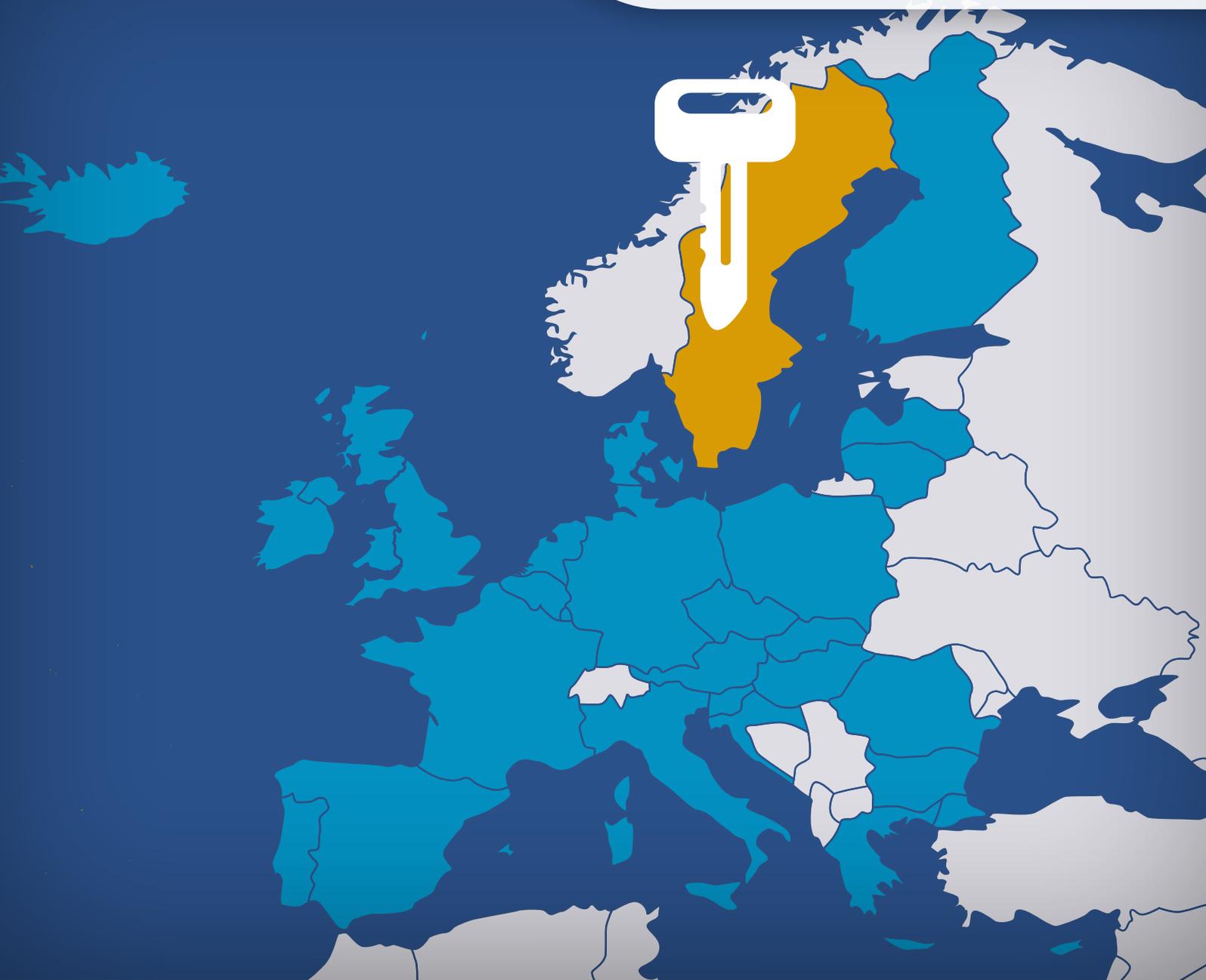


COUNTRY OVERVIEW

SWEDEN 2014



<http://keyconet.eun.org>



SHORT SUMMARY

Providing a national description contextualizing key competence development in your country [rationale, objectives etc.]:

A well-functioning education enhances Sweden's competitiveness and improves individuals' skills and opportunities in life. Education also ensures greater social justice as it increases individuals' chances of getting a job and improves their wage growth. The government has already decided on a number of measures in compulsory and upper secondary school to strengthen students' competences and skills. The years 2011 and 2012 were as two of the most reform-intensive years in the history of Swedish education (see KCD initiatives for details).

The Swedish government commissioned the Swedish National Agency of Education to perform a general assessment of the situation and development in preschool, school and adult education every other year. An assessment was published in May 2013. The Swedish National Agency of Education highlighted three major development areas for its 2013 assessment: All school must be developed into good schools, Ensure supply of competent teachers and Schools and education providers need long-term conditions. The Assessment and the severe deterioration in performance for Sweden in the Pisa report in 2013 shows both great challenges in Swedish schools and school issues will be a priority in Sweden. It will require a lot of resources and focus within schools, municipalities, and the government to break this trend. The School will be one of the biggest election issues in the Swedish election 2014.

KCD INITIATIVES:

What relevant key competence related initiatives (e.g. curricular reform/national strategy/pilot project/public consultation etc. in relation to students' curricula and assessment, teacher training, school organisation, and learning resources) have taken place in your country over the past five years, and which are planned in the future? You may also refer here to the 2012 case notes produced for your country, and any other initiatives which will be the focus of the 2013 case notes.

The Government has taken a number of initiatives to make changes in compulsory schooling in order to strengthen and follow-up pupils' knowledge in mathematics, natural sciences and technology. National tests have been introduced in the 3rd school year, and a special state subsidy is given to strengthen support during early school years for basic skills in reading, writing and counting. Schools in the compulsory education system wishing to develop their teaching in mathematics, natural sciences and technology are also eligible for stimulus grants. The government also aims to clarify the objectives in the curricula without restricting the freedom of teachers to choose their own working methods or pedagogical approaches. A comprehensive, on-going initiative gives teachers the opportunity of broadening and deepening their knowledge, particularly in educational theory and practice.



The government wishes to create better conditions for more young people to complete their upper secondary education with satisfactory results and has proposed a comprehensive reform of upper secondary schools to better match the needs of all young people, both those aiming to proceed to higher education, and those who wish to start working or choose to proceed to advanced vocational education after upper secondary school. The new upper secondary schools provides not only programmes to prepare students for higher education, but also vocational programmes leading to a vocational degree. Preparatory programmes for higher education provide basic eligibility for higher education at the first cycle level. Students attending a vocational programme also have the right to continue their studies to gain eligibility for higher education. The government wishes to see closer links between education and working life in the vocational programmes, and after a pilot project with upper secondary apprenticeship training where at least half of the programme is carried out in the workplace, it is now a permanent offer. The pilot project with cutting-edge programmes covering areas such as mathematics has also become a permanent part of Swedish upper secondary schooling.

As of 1 July 2011, there are four new teacher education programmes: pre-school teacher (*Förskollärarexamen*), primary education teacher (*Grundlärarexamen*), subject-specialist teacher (*Ämneslärarexamen*; for lower secondary or upper secondary education), and vocational education and training teacher (*Yrkeslärarexamen*). The new teacher education programmes will gradually replace the existing integrated teaching degree, in which all teachers have common basic competences combined with specialisation for particular subjects/subject areas and/or age groups.

Other reforms include:

- A new education act for compulsory and upper-secondary education. The act lays out clearer basic values for all types of schools and clarifies the responsibility of education to communicate and gain acceptance for respect for human rights and fundamental democratic values. By establishing clear links to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, it is emphasised that the best interests of the child are the basis for all education.
- A new grading scale for compulsory schooling and for upper secondary school.
- New admission requirements for upper secondary school. As of autumn 2011, admission requirements are stricter. To be eligible for a general national programme, students must have a passing grade in Swedish, English, mathematics, as well as a passing grade in at least nine other subjects.
- A new structure for upper secondary school was introduced on 1 July 2011. The former 17 national programmes were replaced by 18 national programmes: 6 higher education preparatory programmes and 12 vocational programmes. The former individual programme was replaced by five introductory programmes, individually adapted to the pupils.

- Registered teachers and new qualifying rules. In December 2013, a system of teacher and preschool teacher registration will come into force. To qualify to teach at a school, a teacher should be qualified and registered for certain subjects and grades.

Nevertheless, further measures may be needed to remedy the shortcomings in the education system. It is the government's opinion that early measures and improved follow-up and evaluation continue to be important

OVERALL KCD APPROACH:

How would you characterise the overall approach to key competence development in your country? Is it a holistic approach characterised by an overarching strategy, or rather a targeted approach focusing on one or more specific dimension of the education system (student curriculum, assessment, teacher training, school organisation, learning resources etc.)? Does it cover formal and non-formal learning, both primary and secondary school levels?

Sweden has a targeted approach focusing on specific competences, with the priority on mathematics, modern languages and entrepreneurship. The approach covers primarily formal learning in both primary and secondary school and the focus is more on in-service teacher training than on learning resources.

KEY COMPETENCES ADDRESSED:

Is there a focus on any particular EU key competence/s or a combination of them, or perhaps there is more of a focus on alternative/complementary competences defined at national level?

All key competences are included in the recent national curricula for compulsory and secondary schools in Sweden, although some are more clearly defined. There has been a specific focus on mathematical competence as well as on reading and writing. The digital competence is also clearly defined to be central as a key competence area in the national curriculum. Cultural awareness, mother tongue and entrepreneurship are now all highlighted through projects on a national level.

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

Who are the main stakeholders involved in key competence development in your country?

The most important stakeholders are the Swedish government, the Ministry of Education and the Swedish National Agency of Education together with the municipalities.



KCD IMPLEMENTATION PROCESSES:

How does the implementation of key competence development/reform in school education function in your country? (e.g. process followed, political commitment, consultation with stakeholders and their respective roles, incentives for stakeholders, dedicated funding, teaching material, definition of goals and standards, assessment and evaluation mechanisms, impact on teacher training/professional development and school practices/leadership, scaling-up approach, based on research/evidence? etc.)

There has not yet been any specific process for implementing key competences except for entrepreneurship. The process is the same as for other issues (see paragraph below). As regards entrepreneurship, the National Agency for Education has been given a mandate and some money has been earmarked to encourage schools to work more with entrepreneurial issues.

The ordinary reform process requires the government and occasionally the Parliament to decide what to do, but usually it is up to the National Agency for Education to decide how to implement the changes. Most often this is done by issuing new regulations or advice to the municipalities (which run the schools). In some cases, but rarely, the National Agency offer courses or competence development for schools to help with the implementation of new regulations. Later it is the task of the School Inspectorate to see to it that schools follow these regulations and advice.



OBSTACLES AND FACILITATORS:

What would you identify as obstacles and/or facilitators to developing and implementing a key competence approach in your country's education system, or to more generally introducing any type of educational reform related to the definition of key competences and revision of the curriculum, and to joint collaboration on such issues relying on the input from those working on different dimensions (e.g. teacher training, learning resources etc.)?

No specific obstacles. However, as mentioned previously, comprehensive reforms have been implemented during the last few years. This has meant that there has not been much specific focus on key competences as the majority of stakeholders have been busy implementing all of the mentioned reforms.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/USEFUL URLs:

 Link to websites set up by the National Agency for Education: Entrepreneurship:
<http://www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/larande/entreprenorskap>

 Mathematics:
<http://www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/larande/matematik>

 Modern languages:
<http://www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/larande/sprak>

ABOUT EUROPEAN SCHOOLNET

European Schoolnet is the coordinator of the KeyCoNet project.

European Schoolnet is a network of 31 Ministries of Education from across the European member states, leading educational innovation at European level. As a major international think tank, European Schoolnet operates key European services in education on behalf of the European Commission, member Ministries of Education and industry partners.

European Schoolnet's activities are divided among three areas of work:

- Policy, research and innovation: information sharing and evidence building.
- Schools services: enhancing cooperation between schools across Europe.
- Advocacy: how ICT and digital media contribute to transforming teaching and learning processes.

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