

# Elections in Sweden

The way it's done!



Photo on cover: Voting in Sofiebergsskolan, Tyresö. Bertil Ericson/Scanpix.

## Innehåll

1	Elections and referendums	3
2	Right to vote and eligibility	4
3	Election authorities	5
4	Electoral districts and polling stations	5
5	Constituencies and seats	6
6	Parties and ballot papers	7
7	Voting	9
8	Party and preference voting	11
9	Counting on election night	11
10	Final count	12
11	Distribution of seats	13
12	Appointment of members	16
13	Appeal	18
14	Turnout	19
	More information	19

## 1 Elections and referendums

The Swedish electoral system includes elections and referendums. The Elections Act, the Referendums Act, the Elections Ordinance and a number of other laws govern the conduct of elections and referendums.

### General elections

There are four types of general elections: to the Riksdag, the municipal council, the county council and the European Parliament.

Voters vote for a party and can at the same time vote for a specific candidate (preference vote) on the ballot paper by marking a cross in front of the candidate's name.

The electoral system is proportional. This means that the number of members that the parties get elected to, for example, the Riksdag, is in proportion to the number of votes that the parties have received.

Regular elections to the Riksdag, the municipal councils and the county councils are held on the third Sunday of September every fourth year.

Regular elections to the European Parliament are held in all the member states of the European Union in June every five years. In Sweden the election is always held on a Sunday.

Extraordinary elections to the Riksdag are held if the Riksdag so decides. Basically the same rules apply as to a regular election to the Riksdag. The Instrument of Government provides that an extraordinary election must be held within three months from the taking of the decision. For this reason the times for advance voting etc. are shorter than for regular elections to the Riksdag.

### Referendums

In Sweden there are two kinds of referendums that apply to the whole country: consultative referendums and constitutional referendums. It is the Riksdag that decides whether a national referendum is to be held. The Riksdag also decides who is entitled to vote and which alternative replies are to be presented.



In 1955 there was a referendum on whether Sweden should continue to drive on the left or whether we should switch to driving on the right. 82.9% of the Swedish population voted to continue driving on the left. Photo: SVT bild.

National referendums are basically subject to the same rules as Riksdag elections with regard to electoral districts and voting in and outside Sweden etc.

A referendum in one municipality or county council is always consultative. It is for the municipalities and the county councils to decide whether such referendums should be held.

## 2 Right to vote and eligibility

### Right to vote

The right to vote in elections to the Riksdag and the European Parliament is possessed by Swedish citizens who attain the age of 18 years not later than on election day and who are or at some time have been registered residents in Sweden.

The right to vote in elections to the European Parliament is also possessed by citizens of other member states of the European Union (citizens of the union) who attain the age of 18 years not later than on election day. It is a precondition that they must be registered residents in Sweden and that they must hand in a notification to be listed on the electoral roll. They may not then vote in any other member state.

The right to vote in elections to county councils and municipal councils is possessed by Swedish citizens who attain the age of 18 years not later than on election day and who are registered for population purposes within the county council area or municipality concerned. Citizens of the Union and citizens of Iceland and Norway also have the right to vote subject to the same conditions. Other foreign citizens have the right to vote if they have been registered residents in Sweden for a continuous period of three years before election day.

It is the particulars in the population registration database of the Swedish Tax Agency 30 days before election day that determine who has the right to vote and where. This means that voters resident in Sweden are entered as entitled to vote in the electoral district where they were registered residents 30 days before election day.

### Electoral roll

To be allowed to vote, a person must be on an electoral roll.

The electoral roll is compiled before each election and contain only those persons who have the right to vote in the election concerned. When more than one election is held at the same time the electoral roll is common for all elections. An electoral roll is drawn

up for each electoral district and used in the polling stations.

Persons who consider that the electoral roll contains incorrect particulars regarding themselves must apply in writing in order to have them rectified. The request must be received by the County Administrative Board not later than 12 days before election day.

Swedish citizens who have emigrated (Swedes living abroad) are included in the electoral roll if they have emigrated within the last ten years or if they have applied to the Swedish Tax Agency not later than 30 days before election day to be included in the electoral roll. Application is made by sending particulars of address to the Swedish Tax Agency. There is a special form for Swedes living abroad who wish to apply to be on the electoral roll.

### Voting card

Before an election the Election Authority sends voting cards to all those with a right to vote. The voting card is sent to the address recorded in the Swedish Tax Agency population registration database. When advance voting begins 18 days before the election, the voting cards should have reached all voters.

Voting card 2006. The voting card contains the address and hours of opening of the voter's polling station, the name of the electoral district and particulars of the elections in which the voter has a right to vote.

### Eligibility

A person who has the right to vote is also eligible for election. Eligibility is determined by the particulars contained in the population register on election day. To be eligible in a municipality or a county the person must be a registered resident there. However there is no residential requirement for election to the Riksdag. A person may be registered anywhere, either in Sweden or abroad.

### 3 Election authorities

**The Election Authority** is responsible for planning and coordinating the conduct of elections and referendums. The Election Authority also develops and maintains IT support for the whole electoral administration.

The Election Authority prepares electoral rolls, voting cards, ballot papers and other election material. After elections the Election Authority distributes the seats between the parties and announces which members and which substitutes have been elected in Riksdag elections and elections to the European Parliament.

**The County Administrative Board** is a regional election authority. The County Administrative Board decides on electoral districts, is responsible for the final counting of votes in all elections and confirms the results of county council and municipal council elections.

**The Election Committee** of each municipality is the local election authority. The Election Committee nominates election officers, ensures that there are polling stations in the municipality, and has full responsibility for advance voting there. The Election Committee is also responsible for the preliminary counting of votes, both on election evening and on the Wednesday after election day. The municipality is responsible for the costs of election officers and of polling stations.

**The Election Review Board** decides on decisions against which appeal has been made. The board has seven members. The chair must be or have been a regular judge and may not at the same time be a member of the Riksdag. The Riksdag appoints the members.

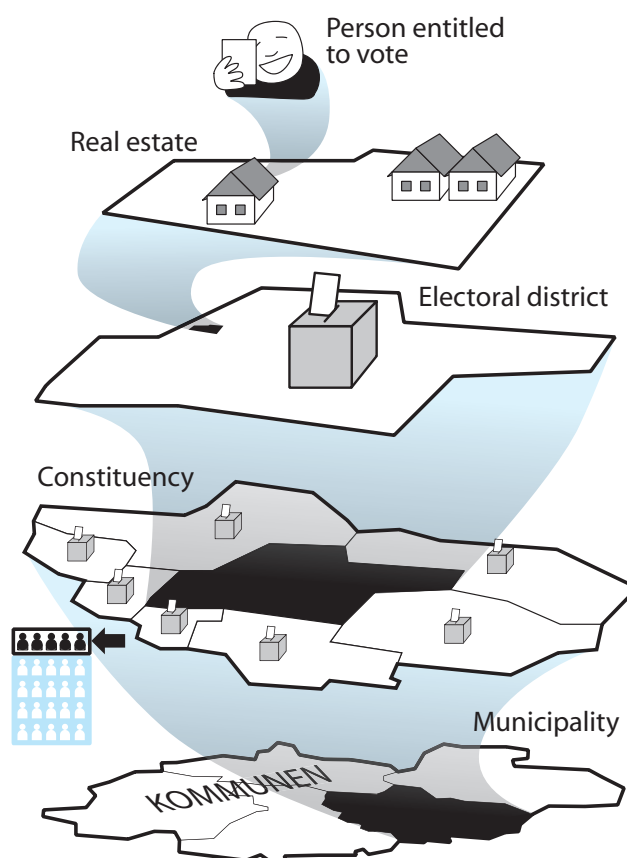


### 4 Electoral districts and polling stations

#### Electoral districts

Every municipality is divided into electoral districts. The electoral districts vary in size, but comprise as a rule 1000-2000 persons entitled to vote. There is no absolute lower or upper limit to the size of the electoral districts. The smallest district contains only a few hundred persons entitled to vote and the largest over 2000 persons.

The County Administrative Board decides on the division into electoral districts, after proposals by the municipal council. The County Administrative Board is required to determine the division into electoral districts not later than 1 December in the year before election year.



Each municipality is divided into electoral districts. Each electoral district contains a polling station where those who live in the district can vote.



## Polling stations

Each electoral district contains a polling station, where those who live in the district can vote on election day.

The Election Committee in each municipality decides which premises are most suitable. In addition the Election Committee appoints at least four persons as election officers in each polling station. There must be at least three election officers present when the voters vote.

## Voting places

Advance voting used to be called postal voting because the Swedish Post Office was responsible for it. As from the election of 2006 the Election Committee in each municipality has overall responsibility for all voting in the municipality, including advance voting. Premises where voters can vote in advance are called voting places. The voting place may be, for example, the municipal office, a library, a school or a post office. The Election Committee is also responsible for recruiting election officers at the voting places.



Look for this symbol if you are going to vote in advance!

All polling stations and voting places must be accessible to everybody. If the election committee wishes to use premises that are not accessible to a physically disabled person the committee must refer the matter to the County Administrative Board for a decision. The Election Committee must then be able to show that there are no other suitable premises.

## 5 Constituencies and seats

A constituency is a geographical area from which seats (places) are distributed between the parties. The number of seats corresponds to the number of members who can be elected.

There are both permanent seats and adjustment seats. The number of permanent seats that a constituency is to have is decided before the election. The adjustment seats are distributed between the constituencies when the seats are distributed between the parties.

**The distribution of permanent seats before the 2006 Riksdag election.  
(change compared with the 2002 election)**

Constituency	Electorate	Seats	+/-
Municipality of Stockholm	588 147	27	
Stockholm County	795 597	36	+1
Uppsala County	240 236	11	+1
Södermanland County	197 152	9	
Östergötland County	319 589	14	-1
Jönköping County	249 337	11	
Kronoberg County	136 644	6	
Kalmar County	182 201	8	
Gotland County	44 972	2	
Blekinge County	117 195	5	
Municipality of Malmö	202 283	9	
Skåne County W	204 129	9	
Skåne County S	252 207	11	
Skåne County N and E	226 071	10	
Halland County	217 038	10	
Municipality of Göteborg	371 497	17	
Västra Götaland County W	251 159	11	
Västra Götaland County N	198 538	9	
Västra Götaland County S	139 577	6	
Västra Götaland County E	195 907	9	
Värmland County	210 643	10	
Örebro County	210 059	10	
Västmanland County	186 584	8	-1
Dalarna County	214 014	10	
Gävleborg County	215 075	10	
Västernorrland County	190 515	9	
Jämtland County	99 768	5	
Västerbotten County	199 196	9	
Norrbottn County	193 003	9	
<b>Total</b>	<b>6 848 333</b>	<b>310</b>	

### ***Riksdag elections***

For Riksdag elections, Sweden is divided into 29 constituencies. As a rule, each county constitutes one constituency.

Of the 349 seats in the Riksdag, 310 are permanent constituency seats and 39 adjustment seats. Not later than 30 April in the election year, the Election Authority is required to have determined the number of permanent constituency seats for each constituency. The distribution is based upon the number of persons entitled to vote in the constituencies. The adjustment seats are distributed on the basis of the election results.

### ***County council elections***

For county council elections, a constituency generally consists of one or more municipalities. The county council decides how many seats the council should have. The County Administrative Board decides not later than 30 April in election year the number of permanent seats for each constituency. In county council elections, 9/10 of the seats are permanent constituency seats and 1/10 adjustment seats.

### ***Municipal council elections***

At municipal council elections, large municipalities have to be divided into constituencies. The municipal council decides how many seats the council should have. There are permanent seats only. The County Administrative Board decides on the distribution of these seats not later than 30 April in election year.

### ***Elections to the European Parliament***

For elections to the European Parliament Sweden constitutes a single constituency. The European Parliament has 732 permanent seats. The number of seats that each member country receives depends on the size of the country's population. Sweden had 19 seats at the election of 2004 and will have 18 in 2009.

## **6 Parties and ballot papers**

There are no rules prescribing how to form a political party. A party is a group of voters who takes part in an election under a common party name. A party is treated as a non-profit-making association.

### **Registration of a party name**

A party may register its party denomination (the party name on the ballot paper) with the Election Authority and notify candidates prior to an election. In this way the party protects its name and its ballot papers. If a voter writes on the ballot paper the names of candidates who are not notified, the names will be regarded as non-existent when the votes are counted. These rules have been introduced to make it impossible to mislead the voters by presenting candidates under an established party name who have no connection with the party.

A political party does not need to have its name registered in order to take part in an election.

For the Election Authority to be able to register a party name the application must be seconded by a specific number of voters and the name may not resemble another registered party name to such an extent that confusion may be expected. In addition, it is required that the party can show that statutes have been adopted and a board has been elected.

An application for registration of a party name must be received by the Election Authority not later than on the last day of February in election year, for the registration to be valid in that election.

The image shows two overlapping forms. The top form is titled 'PARTY REGISTRATION' and contains fields for 'Party name', 'Party address', 'Party telephone', 'Party fax', 'Party e-mail', 'Party website', 'Party statutes', 'Party board', and 'Party members'. The bottom form is titled 'SIGNATURES' and contains a table with columns for 'Name', 'Address', 'Telephone', 'Fax', 'E-mail', and 'Signature'. The forms are for the registration of a political party and for collecting signatures from voters.

Form for registration and form for signatures.

If a party name has been registered for a Riksdag election, the registration is also valid for county council and municipal council elections throughout Sweden and for election to the European Parliament. If a party name is registered for county council elections, the registration is valid for elections to the county council concerned and for elections to municipal councils in the municipalities within the county. Registration for an election to the European Parliament is valid only for election to the European Parliament.

### Notification of candidates

The parties must notify their candidates by a particular date. The date is decided by the Election Authority. Candidates may only be notified by an authorized representative of the party. The candidates must also declare in writing that they have given the party consent to use their names.

Persons wishing to be candidates for election to the European Parliament for a party in Sweden but who are citizens of another EU country must submit a declaration to the Election Authority that they are not candidates in any other country.

### Ballot papers

Ballot papers are yellow for Riksdag elections, blue for county council elections and white for municipal elections and elections to the European Parliament. The ballot papers are required to be identical in size and material.

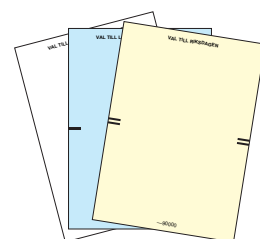
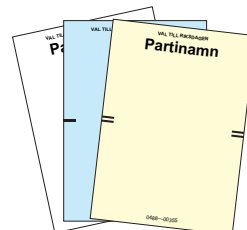
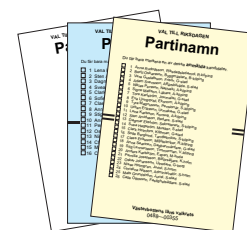
### Ordering of ballot papers

The parties must order ballot papers before a certain date in order to ensure that they can be delivered not later than 45 days before election day. Ballot papers may also be ordered after the set date, but no guarantee is then given concerning delivery time.

Those parties which have received at least one per cent of the votes in Sweden at one of the two most recent Riksdag elections have a right to free printing of ballot papers with candidates' names. The allowance of free ballot papers is three times the number of persons entitled to vote. For elections to county councils and municipal councils a party is entitled to free ballot papers if the party is represented.

### Three types of ballot papers are in use in the different elections:

- Name ballot papers (ballot papers with party name and candidate names) with a box (☐) in front of each name, in which the voter may enter a specific mark (a cross). By doing this the voter has cast a special personal vote.
- Party ballot papers (ballot papers with party name). With such a ballot paper the voter votes for the party but does not cast a personal vote.
- Blank ballot papers on which a party name may be written in.



After an election has been held, the parties which have obtained more than 1 % of the votes in the Riksdag election or been represented in the county or municipal council have their costs for ballot papers refunded.

The rules concerning free ballot papers also apply to elections to the European Parliament.

Ballot papers are ordered from the County Administrative Board, except in the case of elections to the European Parliament, when they are ordered from the Election Authority.

The Election Authority presents all the ballot papers that have been printed on its website [www.val.se](http://www.val.se). The ballot paper shows whether the party has notified candidates.



## Putting out ballot papers

For those parties that have obtained more than one per cent of the votes in the Riksdag election the election officers are responsible for putting out party ballot papers in the polling stations and voting places. This applies to Riksdag, municipal and county council elections. The parties must themselves request that the ballot papers be put out a certain time before the election.

For elections to municipal and county councils parties who are represented have the right to have party ballot papers put out in the polling stations and voting places in the municipality or the county. The election officers also put out blank ballot papers for all elections at all places where it is possible to vote.

However name ballot papers are put out by the parties themselves.

For elections to the European Parliament the election officers are responsible for putting out name ballot papers at all places where it is possible to vote if the party has only one name ballot paper.



The parties themselves put out their name ballot papers where voters can vote. With a name ballot paper the voter can cast a preference vote by placing a cross in front of a candidate. Photo: Leif Engberg/Scanpix.

## 7 Voting

### Identity checks

For all voting a voter who is not known to the election officers must show identification or otherwise confirm her/his identity. The election officers must also make a note of how they have checked the voters' identities.

### Voting screens

All premises where voting is possible must have screens behind which the voters can put a ballot paper for each election in a voting envelope in privacy. This is to ensure that nobody sees the vote cast by the individual person. The voter then gives her/his voting envelopes to the election officers.

### Voting at polling stations

On election day, the voter votes at the polling station in the district where he/she is included in the electoral roll. Polling stations must normally also be accessible to persons with physical disabilities. If due to physical disability the voter still cannot enter the polling station the election officers may collect the vote outside the polling station.

After the chair of the electoral district has checked that the voter is included in the electoral roll for that district and that one ballot paper has been placed in each voting envelope he/she places the voting envelopes in the respective ballot boxes. At that time it is marked on the electoral roll that the voter has voted.

Polling stations are normally open between 8 am and 8 pm (9 pm for elections to the European Parliament). The Election Committee may decide on shorter hours of opening after consultation with the county administrative board.



In each polling station there is a ballot box for each election. Two-thirds of the voters vote in their polling station. Photo: Fredrik Persson/Scanpix.

### **Advance voting in Sweden**

A voter who for any reason cannot vote at her/his polling station on election day may vote in advance at a voting place anywhere in Sweden. A voting place may be, for example, the municipal office, a library, a school or a post office. Advance voting begins 18 days before election day. As an additional service to the voters each municipality also has at least one voting place which is also open on election day.

At some hospitals and other nursing institutions the election committee arranges the receiving of votes for those voters wishing to vote there, e.g. patients, staff and visitors.

Where there is advance voting the election officers receive the votes and send them in special window envelopes to the Election Committee. A person voting in a voting place must produce her/his voting card and be able to identify herself/himself or otherwise confirm her/his identity.

### **Voting by messenger**

Any person who because of illness, physical disability, or age cannot personally go to a polling station or voting place may vote by messenger. Relatives or carers may act as messenger, as may rural postmen. In addition the Election Committee may appoint special persons to act as messenger. Persons detained on remand or in correctional institutions may also vote by messenger.

### **Voting at diplomatic missions abroad**

All persons who are abroad at the time of voting may vote at a mission abroad.

The Election Authority decides, after receiving proposals from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, at which Swedish diplomatic missions abroad votes may be received. Voting begins 24 days before election day, and in some places may take place only for a short period of time. Voting must cease long enough before the election to enable votes cast to reach the Swedish Election Authority not later than the day before election day. All votes received at diplomatic missions abroad are sent to the Election Authority, where they are sorted and forwarded to the Election Committee concerned.

### **Postal voting from abroad**

Persons entitled to vote who are abroad may vote by post from all countries in the world. Seafarers on ships in international traffic may also vote by post. Postal votes may not be sent earlier than 45 days before election day nor later than election day.

Special material is required for postal voting. The material may be ordered from the Election Authority or from a mission abroad.

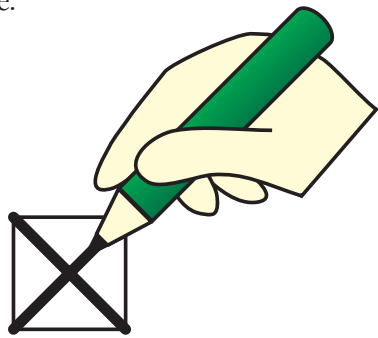


### **Change of vote**

A person who has voted in advance (in Sweden or from abroad) may change her/his vote. In that case he/she must vote in the polling station on election day. The vote in the polling station will then be accepted and the advance vote declared invalid.

## 8 Party and preference voting

Voters vote for a political party and may at the same time mark on their ballot paper the candidate that they would prefer to be elected. This is called preference voting. The voter casts the preference vote by marking one of the candidates on the ballot paper with a cross. Only one candidate may be marked. The mark must be made in the box preceding the name of the candidate.



26 per cent of the voters chose to cast a preference vote in the election to the Riksdag in 2002. The corresponding figure for the election to the European Parliament in 2004 was 59 per cent.

If the voter has deleted one or more names listed on the ballot paper, this has no bearing on the count. Nor if a party has registered its party name and announced its candidates can the voter add names to the ballot paper. Any names added to such ballot papers will be disregarded in the count. It is stated at the top of the ballot paper, above the names of candidates, whether the candidates have been notified.



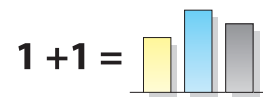
When the voter has made her/his choice the ballot paper must be put in the voting envelope and the envelope must be sealed before being handed to the election officers. Photo: Mark Earthy/Scanpix.

## 9 Counting on election night

After the receiving of votes has ended on election day, the election officers in the respective electoral districts count the votes received. But the approved advance votes (from voting places in Sweden, from abroad and as postal votes) are first put into their respective ballot boxes.

The ballot boxes are then emptied and the votes in each ballot box are counted. The ballot papers for the Riksdag election are counted first, followed by those for the municipal election and finally by those for the county council election.

When an election district has counted the votes on election night the results are phoned in to a reporting officer who records them in the Election Authority Election Database System. In this way the Election Authority can calculate a provisional election result on election night, followed later during the night by a provisional distribution of seats. As the results for the electoral districts are recorded, they are made directly available to the media and the public via the Election Authority website.



It may appear simple – but counting votes and distributing seats is complicated!

When counting is complete, the ballot papers are placed in special security bags, which are sealed and handed to the Election Committee. The Election Committee is responsible for ensuring that the votes from the polling stations are delivered to the County Administrative Board as soon as possible.

### Wednesday count

On the Wednesday after election day the Election Committees count the advance votes that had not reached the polling stations on election day. These are primarily votes from abroad and advance votes cast in other municipalities on election day. Once the count by the Election Committees is complete, these votes, too, are delivered to the County Administrative Board.



## 10 Final count

The final count begins at the County Administrative Board on the Monday after election day. There all the votes are counted again. The County Administrative Board examines the ballot papers and counts the number votes for each party. It also counts the number of of preference votes for each candidate in the parties.

The Riksdag election is counted first, followed by the municipal council and finally the county council elections. The Riksdag election is expected to be finally counted and finished on the Wednesday after election day. About ten days after election day it is usually possible to publish the last result of the county council election.

### The examination of ballot papers

Only valid votes may be included and play their part in the competition of parties for seats. The County Administrative Board therefore has to decide which votes are valid and which are not. The same scrutiny has to be carried out with regard to the candidates, i.e. only valid preference votes are counted, and only eligible candidates may be elected.

### Invalid ballot papers

A ballot paper is invalid if it is not marked with a party name (blank ballot paper). The same applies



Counting of votes at Stockholm County Administrative Board.  
Photo: Stockholm County Administrative Board.

if it is marked with more than one party name or is marked with a sign that is clearly intended to identify the voter. The great majority of invalid ballot papers are blank. If there are two (or more) ballot papers in one envelope and they have different party names, these ballot papers will also become invalid.

### – all names of candidates are disregarded

In some cases the County Administrative Board will disregard all the names of candidates on the ballot paper. The ballot paper is still valid but is counted only as a vote for the party in the same way as a party ballot paper in, for example, the following cases:

- if the voter has marked two or more candidates,
- if the personal vote cross may have been made mechanically,
- if the order of the names is not evident,
- if there are two or more ballot papers in the same envelope with the same party name but with differing lists of candidates or crosses for different candidates,
- if in the case of a party with candidates notified for the Riksdag election one of the party's ballot papers with candidates notified for a different constituency has been used.

### – specific candidate names are disregarded

The ballot paper is valid, but one or more names of candidates are disregarded in the count:

- if a candidate is not eligible (this is checked against the particulars in the population registration database on election day),
- if a name has been added to a ballot paper for a party that has registered its party name and notified its candidates,
- if the name of a candidate who is not registered has been printed on a ballot paper for a party which has registered its party name and notified its candidates.

### Deleted names of candidates

Even if the name of a candidate has been deleted on a ballot paper, the name is not disregarded, i.e. the deletion does not affect the order of the candidates on a ballot paper.

## 11 Distribution of seats

When the County Administrative Board has finished counting all the votes, distribution of seats between the parties can begin.

### Thresholds

The Swedish electoral system includes thresholds to exclude small parties. To take part in the distribution of seats in Riksdag elections and elections to the European Parliament, a political party must gain at least 4 per cent of all votes cast in the whole of Sweden. A party gaining fewer votes in total in a Riksdag election may still, however, take part in the distribution of permanent constituency seats in any constituency where it has gained at least 12 per cent of the votes cast.

In county council elections, a political party must gain at least 3 per cent of all votes cast in the whole county in order to take part in the distribution of seats. No threshold exists in the electoral system for municipal elections.

### Distribution of seats between parties

The permanent seats are distributed first, followed by the adjustment seats.

The method of calculation used to distribute the permanent seats is called the “adjusted odd-number method”, see facts box 1 (page 14).

### *Riksdag elections*

When the permanent seats have been distributed between the parties within each constituency, the permanent seats for each party in all constituencies (a total of 310 seats) are totalled. A new distribution of seats is then carried out using the same method but based on the parties’ grand total of votes in the country. This time, 349 seats are distributed, taking the whole of Sweden as one single constituency.

A comparison is then made between the outcomes of the two distributions. A party which has obtained more seats in the second distribution, using the whole of Sweden as one constituency, is entitled to adjustment seats. The party is allotted adjustment

seats in the constituency where the party has the largest comparative figure following the distribution of the permanent seats. If a party has not obtained permanent constituency seats in every constituency, the party’s total number of votes is used as the comparative figure in those constituencies where the party has not yet gained a seat, when distributing the adjustment seats.



Members at their places in the Riksdag. Photo: Holger Staffansson

### *County council elections*

In county council elections, 9/10 of the seats are permanent seats and 1/10 adjustment seats. The seats are distributed using the same method as for the Riksdag election. First the permanent seats in each constituency are distributed. A distribution of the total number of seats for the whole county is then made, based on the total number of votes for each party in the whole county. This makes it possible to determine which parties are entitled to adjustment seats. The adjustment seats are distributed using the same rules as for Riksdag elections.

### *Municipal council elections*

In municipal council elections, all seats are permanent, and the number of seats in each constituency has previously been decided by the County Administrative Board.

### *Elections to the European Parliament*

In elections to the European Parliament all seats are permanent and the whole of Sweden forms one constituency.



### Facts box 1: The adjusted odd-number method

The permanent seats are distributed on the basis of the number of votes that the parties have obtained in each constituency. Comparative figures are calculated for the parties that have qualified to take part in the distribution of seats.

The first comparative figure is obtained by dividing each party's total vote by 1.4. The party with the highest comparative figure obtains the first seat in the constituency. The party then obtains a new comparative figure by dividing the party's total vote by 3. Other parties retain and compete with their original comparative figure until they obtain a seat. When a party obtains its second seat the total vote is divided by 5, which gives the next comparative figure. At the third seat the total vote is divided by 7 etc. This calculation continues until all the seats have been distributed.

### EXAMPLE: Distribution of the permanent seats in Kronoberg County at the Riksdag election for 2002

1. The total vote of all parties is divided by 1.4.

Total vote = the total number of votes obtained by the party in the constituency

3. The total vote for the party with the highest comparative figure (i.e. S) is now divided by the next divisor, i.e. 3.

6. The total vote for the party obtaining the highest comparative figure (i.e. M) is now divided by the next divisor, i.e. 3. Other parties still compete with the same original comparative figure, except for S which has of course already been divided by 3 and 5.

Party	Total vote	Seat 1	Seat 2	Seat 3	Seat 4
M	15 200	10 857.14	10 857.14	10 857.14	5 066.66
S	43 696	31 211.42	14 565.33	8 739.20	8 739.20
Fp	10 538	7 527.14	7 527.14	7 527.14	7 527.14
C	11 746	8 390.00	8 390.00	8 390.00	8 390.00
V	7 864	5 617.14	5 617.14	5 617.14	5 617.14
Mp	4 354	3 110.00	3 110.00	3 110.00	3 110.00
Kd	11 695	8 353.57	8 353.57	8 353.57	8 353.57

7. The party that then has the highest comparative figure is S and S thus obtains seat no. 4.

5. The party that then has the highest comparative figure is M and M thus obtains seat no. 3.

2. The party that then has the highest comparative figure is S and S thus obtains the first seat.

4. The party that then has the highest comparative figure is still S and S thus obtains seat no. 2. The party's total vote is divided by 5 to obtain the next comparative figure.

### EXAMPLE: Distribution of adjustment seats in Uppsala County Council election, 1998

The County of Uppsala has three constituencies. At the 1998 election the county council had 71 seats. There were 63 permanent seats and 8 adjustment seats. Of the 63 permanent seats, 11 were allotted to the South Constituency, 41 to the Central Constituency and 11 to the North Constituency. Parties that received less than 3 percent of the votes may not participate in the distribution of seats.

The permanent seats were distributed between the parties within the three wards as follows:

Party	South	Central	North	Total
M	3	10	2	15
S	5	13	6	24
Fp	-	4	-	4
C	1	2	1	4
V	1	5	1	7
Mp	-	3	-	3
Kd	1	4	1	6
Total	11	41	11	63

The constituency distribution was then compared with a total distribution of the 71 seats in the county.

Party	Total distribution of 71 seats	Total number of ward seats	Difference Adjustment seats
M	17	15	2
S	25	24	1
Fp	6	4	2
C	5	4	1
V	7	7	0
Mp	4	3	1
Kd	7	6	1
	71	63	8

For the Moderate Party, two adjustment seats were to be distributed. After distribution of the permanent seats, the party had the following comparative figures in the three constituencies:

Comperative figure	South	Central	North
M	1213.85	1265.71	810

The two adjustment seats went to the party in the Central and South Constituencies.

Using the same method, the adjustment seats for the other parties were placed to give the following final distribution of seats for the three constituencies:

Party	South*	Central*	North*
M	4 (1)	11 (1)	2
S	5	14 (1)	6
Fp	1 (1)	4	1 (1)
C	1	2	2 (1)
V	1	5	1
Mp		3	1 (1)
Kd	1	5 (1)	1
Total	13 (2)	44 (3)	14 (3)

\* The number of adjustment seats for each party in the respective constituency is shown in brackets.

## 12 Appointment of members and substitutes

When the distribution of seats among the political parties is complete, it is decided which candidates are to be members and substitutes.

The first step is to check whether the rules on preference voting can be applied. The total number of preference votes is the number of preference votes cast for a specific candidate in a constituency under one party name. If the name of a candidate is listed on several types of lists, the number of preference votes from all these lists will be totalled.

### Threshold rules for preference votes

To be elected on a total number of preference votes the candidate must have received a number of preference votes equivalent to at least:

- 8 percent of the votes cast for the party in the constituency in the Riksdag election,
- 5 per cent of votes cast for the party in the whole country in the election to the European Parliament, and
- 5 per cent of the votes cast for the party in the county council and municipal council election. In county council elections however the candidate must have obtained at least 100 votes and in municipal council elections at least 50 votes.

If more than one candidate clears the preference vote threshold, the seats are awarded to them according to the number of preference votes for each. If two or more candidates gain the same number of votes, lots are drawn to decide which of them will be awarded the seat. If it is not possible to allocate the seats on the basis of preference votes, the final count continues using the “whole number method”. See facts box 2 below.

### Facts box 2: The whole number method

The whole number method involves sorting the ballot papers in groups with the name of the same candidate as first name. Candidates who have already been awarded a seat on the basis of preference votes are disregarded.

The number of ballot papers with the name of a particular candidate as the first name is the comparative figure of the candidate. The candidate with the largest comparative figure, i.e. the total vote, receives the party's first seat. The name of that candidate is then disregarded and the ballot papers are resorted into new groups according to who is now the first name on the ballot papers. The comparative figure for the candidates is now obtained by dividing the total vote for the group by 2.

If the party has only one list, i.e. if the same candidate is included as number one, two, three etc on all the ballot papers the seats are in practice distributed in the order on the list. However the calculation is still made using the whole-number method. See the example on next page.

### EXAMPLE: How the members are appointed

In Valstad municipality, the Local Party has obtained 621 votes and been awarded four seats on the municipal council. The party's ballot paper appears as shown below, and the candidates have received the following percentage votes:

1	Anna	70	11.27 %
2	Niklas	49	7.89 %
3	Signe	113	18.19 %
4	Adam	18	2.89 %
5	Urban	10	1.61 %
6	Claes	22	3.54 %

Signe and Anna are elected on the basis of their preference votes. They have exceeded the threshold of 5 % of the votes and a minimum of 50 preference votes. Niklas, who has received 7.89 per cent of the votes, cannot gain a seat with the aid of preference votes as he has only received 49 personal votes.

The party's two remaining seats must be awarded with the aid of the whole-number method. The candidates who have already obtained seats are now disregarded. Niklas is the first name on the ballot paper. His comparative figure equals the total number of votes for the party  $621/1=621$ . When Niklas has been awarded a seat, Adam will head all the 621 ballot papers. The comparative figure for Adam will be  $621/2=310.50$ . The candidates of the party will thus be awarded seats in the following order:

Signe	113	preference vote
Anna	70	preference vote
Niklas	621.00	comparative figure
Adam	310.50	comparative figure

### If a candidate is elected in more than one constituency or for more than one political party

If a candidate gains a seat in more than one constituency, he/she will be awarded the seat in the constituency where he/she

- first, has the largest number of preference votes in proportion to the party's total number of votes in the constituency (if the seat has been awarded in accordance with the rules on preference voting), or
- second, has the highest comparative figure (if the seat has been awarded using the whole-number method).

That candidate will then be substituted in the other constituency. The person substituting for such a candidate will be

- first, the candidate having the highest proportion of preference votes who has not yet obtained a seat, and
- second, the first available candidate on the list that has received the highest number of votes of the lists that applied for the member originally chosen.

If seats become vacant in more than one constituency, they are to be filled one by one, depending on, first, the size of the proportion of preference votes and second, the comparative figures in the constituencies.

If a candidate is elected as a member for more than one party, he/she shall be awarded one of the seats. The other seats will be allocated in the same manner to another person as member. It is, however, possible to be a substitute for more than one political party.

### Appointment of substitutes

Substitutes are appointed in order according to the number of preference votes they have received. This assumes that all the party's members have been appointed on the basis of their preference votes and that there are still candidates who have received preference votes in excess of the threshold.

For each member, a calculation is made to appoint substitutes. First, the candidate who has not yet been awarded a seat but has exceeded the threshold for preference votes will be appointed.

When there are no more candidates with preference votes who might be appointed substitutes, the calculation continues using only the ballot papers valid for the ordinary member when he/she was awarded the seat. The calculation is always made on the basis of the original order of names.

No comparative figures need be calculated since the total number of votes is used. If the total number of votes for two candidates is the same, lots are drawn to determine which candidate will be appointed substitute.

The same substitute can be appointed in more than one constituency.

### ***Elections to the Riksdag, county councils and the European Parliament***

For each member a number of substitutes equal to the number of seats gained by the party, but never fewer than three, will be appointed.

### ***Municipal council elections***

The proportion of substitutes may not be more than half of the number of seats gained by each party in the municipality. The municipal council will decide before the election how large the proportion should be. The most usual case is that the council decides that the proportion of substitutes should be half. A party which has four seats then normally has two substitutes. For parties which have gained only one or two seats, however, two substitutes will nevertheless be appointed. When members from a party have been elected from more than one list, the number of substitutes may exceed the proportion decided by the municipal council.

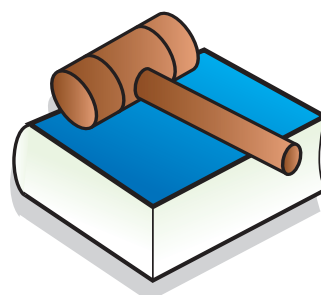
### **ELECTION OVER!**

When all members and substitutes have been appointed, the election is over. The Election Authority takes the official decision to confirm the outcome of the Riksdag election and the election to the European Parliament. The appropriate County Administrative Board does the same with regard to the elections to the municipal council and the county council.

## **13 Appeal**

Certain electoral decisions may be contested by appeal to the Election Review Board. These are:

- decisions on distribution of permanent constituency seats;
- decisions on constituency and electoral district boundaries;
- decisions on registration of party names and of candidates, etc.
- decisions in which the Election Authority or the County Administrative Board has confirmed the outcome of an election.



Both individuals and parties may appeal against the election result if they consider that the Election Authority or any other authority has acted incorrectly. The appeal must be received by the authority responsible for the decision not later than ten days after the announcement of the election result. The Election Authority announces the result of the Riksdag election by means of a notice in the Swedish Official Gazette. The results of municipal and county council elections are considered announced when the County Administrative Board's record of the final count is complete.

The Election Review Board may declare an election void and order a new election, either nationally or in a specific constituency, if an irregularity may be presumed to have affected the outcome of the election. If the errors can be rectified by means of a new count or some other minor measure, the Election Review Board may instead instruct the decision-making authority to take the appropriate corrective action.



## 14 Turnout

Statistics Sweden (SCB) publishes official statistics after each election. The results of the latest elections are also available on the Election Authority website.

The tables below show how many voters (as a percentage) have taken part in the most recent elections and referendums:

Election to:	1994	1998	2002
Riksdag	86.8%	81.4%	80.1%
County council	84.4%	78.6%	77.9%
Municipality	84.3%	78.1%	77.5%

Election to:	1995	1999	2004
European Parliament	41.6%	38.8%	37.9%

Referendums:	
EU 1994	83.3%
EURO 2003	82.6%

### More information

More information about elections and referendums may be found on the Election Authority website [www.val.se](http://www.val.se), including:

- instructions on how a party registers a party name
- examples of calculation of distribution of seats between parties and how members and substitutes are appointed.

The material may also be ordered from the Election Authority.



# Valmyndigheten

Postadress/Postal address: **Box 4210, 171 04 Solna** Besöksadress/Visiting address: **Solna Strandväg 78**

Telefon/Phone: **+46 8 635 69 00** Fax/Telefax: **+46 8 635 69 20**

E-postadress/E-mail: **valet@val.se** Webbplats/Web site: **www.val.se**