



## Researching Marginalized Minorities in Higher Education in Sweden and the Case of Roma: Policies and Practice

This report was prepared in November 2015 as part of the Work Package 5 “Researching marginalized minorities in higher education institutions: policies and practice” of the Higher Education Internationalization and Mobility ([HEIM](#)) project.

HEIM is funded by Horizon 2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions and focused on how principles of equity and inclusion can be applied to internationalization strategies and programs in higher education, as well as on developing research and innovation capacity in this field. The project is implemented by Centre for Higher Education and Equity Research (CHEER) at the University of Sussex (United Kingdom), in partnership with University of Umea (Sweden), University of Seville (Spain), and the Roma Education Fund (Hungary).

The report is compiled of two briefing papers, one on the higher education in Sweden and the access of minorities, prepared by Merziha Idrizi, MA Public Policy, Program Officer at the Roma Education Fund Scholarship Program, and another on the case of the Roma minority in Sweden prepared by Ljubica Tomic, a 3<sup>rd</sup> year PhD candidate at Comparative Law studies at the University of Florence in Italy and who is also a Roma Education Fund scholarship beneficiary. These briefing papers are based on a documentary analysis, and discussions with faculty staff from Umea University and Södertörn University in Stockholm, few students and researcher representatives of the Sami and Roma minority, the Commission against Antiziganism in Sweden, and project leaders of the `bridge builders` initiatives as a part of the National Roma Integration Strategy for Roma in Sweden. The documentary analysis and discussions were conducted in the period from 1<sup>st</sup> till 31<sup>st</sup> of October, 2015 in Umea, during the secondment of Roma Education Fund representatives at the Umea University.

### **Acknowledgments:**

The members of the secondment team (Merziha Idrizi and Ljubica Tomic) are especially grateful to Dr. Nafsika Alexiadou and Dr. Anders Norberg from the Department of Applied Educational Science at the Umea University, for their hospitality, guidance, and support in all the aspects of the research prior and during the secondment. We would also like to express our gratitude to Christina Rodell Oglac, Angelina Demeter-Taikon (Södertörn University in Stockholm), Katarina Hammarberg (Commission against Antiziganism), Dr. Michael Lindbland (researcher and Assistant Professor at the Department of Applied Educational Science at the Umea University), Dr. Inger Erixon Arreman (Senior lecturer-associate professor at Department of Applied Educational Science), Katarina Parfa Koskinen (Project Manager for Roma inclusion `bridge-builder` pilot project Luleå municipality), Regina Lindberg, Kyosti Lindberg (education mediators Luleå municipality) as well as the two Roma students and graduates from Uppsala university and Linnaeus university, for sharing their valuable research insights and practice experience in education, that was of a great value to the secondment team to comprehend the policies and practice in access to higher education of the minorities in Sweden.

## Summary points

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- A **very good established Pre-Higher Education system**, that enables every person interested to pursue HE become a university student (minority language education in comprehending Swedish language available help from the teachers only in the compulsory education (upper secondary not compulsory))
- **Free education**- for Swedish citizens only;
- Student Loans;
- More on the Upper secondary;
- The National Roma Integration Strategy of Sweden
- The Government will for widening participation in HE of disadvantaged groups

## Barriers:

- Though opportunities and the Pre-HE system established well in theory in practice does not functions as many reports from the documentary analysis and interviews confirm the **discrimination** and the fear of the students to use the right on having a teacher helping in their compulsory education on their motherthoung language
- Low self-esteem, as a result of being perceived as the `other` and discrimination, majority not being aware of culture of the Roma minority;
- Not being well informed on the opportunities offered in general;
- Enrolling into not so quality compulsory secondary schools and the upper secondary education, mostly among the students whose **parents educational background is poor**.

## Briefing Paper 1



### *Access to Higher Education and Minorities in Sweden*

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## Introduction

Sweden as a welfare state has a proven historical track of investments in Higher Education (HE) and research at the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), which represents one of the main reasons in being a country with high population ratios on higher education attainment. Based on the Swedish Higher Education Authority Status Report for 2014 (HEA 2014, 8) in 2010 Sweden was ranked among the OECD countries as a fourth in having high total expenditures per student, starting with USA, Canada and Switzerland as a top three countries.

Based on the OECD Education at Glance 2012 indicators and statistics report, on the public spending on tertiary education as a % of the GDP (<https://data.oecd.org/chart/4x14>), confirms the eagerness of Sweden in investing in HE as it is placed among the first four countries with 1.50% of the GDP, after Norway with 1.60% of the GDP, Austria with 1.70% of the GDP and Finland on the top of the list with 1.80% of the GDP public investment in tertiary education.

Beside the investment, Sweden is among the few countries where the population ratio that attained higher education is quite high. Namely, one of the Europe 2020 quantitative educational target is ‘at least 40% of the 30-34 age cohort will have at least two years of tertiary education in 2020’, where Sweden’s target is 40-45% (HEA 2014,11). In 2007, 41% of the Swedish population of the 30-34 years olds already had at least two years of tertiary education, and since this figure continued to rise, the preliminary data from Eurostat confirm 48% for 2013 for this age cohort (Ibid. 2014,11).

Having a continuous rise in the number of its population within the higher education, is followed by a continuous long reforms of the HE in Sweden, resulting from the strive for a constant country development and the firm belief in the value and benefits (for the society and individual) of having more people obtaining higher education degrees which brings eventually better employment perspectives and economic competitive society. Based on the (HEA 2005, 52) status report: “In the year 1945 there were 14.000 students at the universities and specialist institutions of higher education”, whereas “in the autumn semester of 2004 this number was just under 340.000 students” (HEA 2005, 53).

This belief and trends in continuous rise of the population in HE attainment in Sweden, are following the Global trends in the development of the HE in the world during the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century, where the development of the global knowledge society have placed pressure on HE to focus more heavily on particular kinds of activities, approaches and outcomes (Albatch et.all , June 2009, p.26).

The discourse on the knowledge society and the ‘economic order where the service sector is becoming more important’, was addressed in the speech of the Vice-Chancellor Lennart Olausson from Malmo University, delivered at the 19<sup>th</sup> EAN annual conference on : “Widening Participation and the Changing Role of the Higher Education in a Globalized World” at the Södertörn University

June, 2010 where he shared one of the Swedish approach to address the challenge of widening participation to HE, was ‘the 1970’s establishment of the new universities and university colleges in different regions in Sweden’, that later was proved it contributed to the development of those regions within the whole country. (Olausson, L. speech; June 2010, p.3)

Considering the global trends and the willingness of the Swedish government towards further increase of the highly educated population, has lead not only to reforms in the HE, but also reforms in the educational level preceding the HE, i.e. the upper-secondary and vocational education, where certain professions and programs within the reform years were given status of higher education programs (HEA 2005).

Taking into account the willingness for investment and reforms for widening participation at the HE, the continuous rise in the number of its population within the higher education in Sweden, this research paper aims to address the position of the minorities and answer how the minorities (with specific focus on the Roma minority) within the society are addressed (if at all) with such policies? What are the exact policies and practices within the Swedish education system aimed at facilitating the access to HE for the minorities.

Based on the analysis of the secondary source data available, existing reports, academic and policy research reports, as well as the contribution from the discussions with faculty staff from Umea University, Södertörn University, researchers and practitioners in education, HE, minority groups, as well as human rights specialist in Sweden, this briefing paper aims to answer these questions.

Since, the reforms in the Swedish education system, relating to widening participation policy measures, were expanded beyond the HE i.e. targeting the lower levels of education, analyzing of the general HE and the upper secondary and vocational education, is relevant for the context of researching the access of the minority students to HE.

The paper consists of three main parts. The first part provides insights on the HE in Sweden and its policy reforms towards widening participation, and reflects on the reforms in preceding levels of HE reforms and efforts. The paper continues with the descriptive analysis on the minorities in Sweden and the relevant polices. The third part brings analysis on the access of minorities to HE and brings the insights from the interview discussions, mirroring the policy and practice experiences. The concluding part summarizes the findings.

Taking into account the availability of essential legislative documentation, reports and analysis in Swedish language only, and the authors` lack of knowledge of the Swedish language, represents a limitation to this briefing paper. Namely, with not knowing the Swedish language not only did I encounter challenges in regard to the desk-research, analyzing scholarly and practitioners texts in relation to education and HE in Sweden, but it also represented a limitation in regard to outreaching a representative sample number of minority students in HE for the discussions I made.

Another limitation to the research, especially when it comes to the very analysis of the effects the possibility for providing an in-depth analysis of access to HE in regard to minorities, is the

prohibition of recording data based on the ethnicity since the Personal Data Act of Sweden prohibits revealing of race or ethnic origin. Furthermore this represents a limitation in regard to resources of statistical data.

Ethnicity is not recorded in the Swedish census and therefore, authorities neither record the ethnicity nor the nationality of Roma, which means that there are no relevant ethnically differentiated statistical data (FRANET 2012, 7).

## **1. Overview of the Swedish Higher Education, and its preceding levels of Education (Entry routes, financial costs and support schemes)**

With a purpose of understanding the policies and practice that lead to accessing higher education, it is essential first to understand not only the HE system, but also the arrangement of the preceding levels of education, before entering the HE. This section of the briefing paper provides an overview of the holistic approach of Sweden towards educating its population, starting with descriptive analysis of the HE system functions and developments, entry routes and financial implications and support, continuing and concluding with the descriptive analysis of the compulsory schooling and upper-secondary education.

### **1.1. Higher Education in Sweden: Overview**

Sweden's first university was founded in Uppsala in 1477, and as the interest in studying medicine and the natural sciences increased, a second university was founded in Lund in 1668. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the main task of universities was teaching. Stockholm University was founded in 1878 and the University of Gothenburg in 1891 and both focused on the teaching of natural sciences.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, specialised institutions were founded, for example, for teacher training, social work and journalism. Between 1940 and 1975 there was a focus on research, and new research organisations and research posts were established. In the latter part of the twentieth century, there was a major expansion of higher education and the student population grew enormously. Regional higher education institutions were founded throughout Sweden to enable access to higher education for everyone. There are 48 institutions offering higher education in various forms in Sweden.

The majority of universities and university colleges are public authorities, subject to the same legislation and regulations as other public authorities in Sweden, as well as the particular statutes, ordinances and regulations relevant to the higher education sector.

A small number of universities and university colleges are self-governing and independent. They operate on the basis of an agreement with the Government and are obliged to follow the statutes, ordinances and regulations relevant to the higher education sector. In addition, there are a small number of independent organisations with degree awarding powers in Psychotherapy.

HEIs enjoy a great deal of freedom within the framework of the statutes, ordinances and regulations laid down by the Government. HEIs can make decisions about the following:



- Organisation of the HEI into units and decision-making bodies
- Allocation of government funding within the organisation
- Quality assurance procedures
- Content and design of courses and study programmes
- Number of available places on courses and study programmes
- Admission and enrolment procedures
- New professorships
- Research focus
- Contract education

The self-governing and independent higher education institutions have greater freedom with regard to the governance and management of their affairs.

### **Universities and university colleges - what is the difference?**

The majority of universities and university colleges are public authorities. A number of universities and university colleges are self-governing and independent and operate on the basis of an agreement with the Government. The differences between universities and university colleges are not always substantial.

#### **Universities**

Universities have degree awarding powers at:

- First cycle (University diplomas and Bachelors' degrees)
- Second cycle (one-year and two-year Masters' degrees)
- Third cycle (licentiate and doctoral degrees).

In addition, they have:

- Entitlement to direct government funding for research.

#### **University colleges**

- University colleges have degree awarding powers at:
- First cycle (University diplomas and Bachelors' degrees)
- Second cycle (one-year Masters' degrees)
- Entitlement to apply to Universitetskanslersämbetet (The Swedish Higher Education Authority) for the entitlement to award two-year Masters' degrees and third cycle qualifications in specific domain/s.

#### **Two new education authorities**

From January 1, 2013, the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education (*Högskoleverket*) ceased to exist as did The Swedish Agency for Higher Education Services (*Verket för högskoleservice*) and the International Programme Office for Education and Training (*Internationella programkontoret*). Their operations have been transferred to two new public authorities: the Swedish Higher Education Authority (*Universitetskanslersämbetet*) and the Swedish Council for Higher Education (*Universitets- och högskolerådet*). This is the distribution of responsibilities across the new authorities:

##### [The Swedish Higher Education Authority](#) (*Universitetskanslersämbetet*)

- Reviewing the quality of higher education
- Granting degree awarding powers
- Ensuring higher education institutions (HEIs) comply with relevant legislation and regulations
- Monitoring how efficiently the higher education institutions operate

- Responsibility for official statistics on higher education in Sweden
- Monitoring trends and developments in higher education
- Encouraging the professional development of administrators in higher education

The Swedish council for higher education (*Universitets- och högskolerådet*)

- Providing information about higher education
- Administering admission to study programmes on behalf of HEIs
- Recognising qualifications from abroad
- Promoting participation in international collaboration (e.g., national agency for Erasmus+)

## **SHEA 2013, 20**

### **TUITION FEES**

For a long time Sweden was one of the few countries in Europe in which higher education was completely free of charge for both Swedish students and those from other countries. In June 2010 the Riksdag enacted a provision in the Higher Education Act that means that higher education is free for Swedish citizens and for citizens of the EU/EEA countries and Switzerland. Citizens of other countries, “third country students”, have to pay an application fee and tuition fees for first and second-cycle higher education courses and programmes starting from the autumn semester of 2011. The HEIs are required to charge tuition fees that cover their costs in full for these students. **SHEA 2013, 20**

### **STUDENT FINANCE**

It is possible for students to obtain financial support from the state if they meet the stipulated requirements. Student finance consists of a combination of study grants and study loans. In 2013 the grant portion of student finance for an academic year of 40 weeks amounts to SEK 28,280 and the loan ceiling to SEK 61,960. The maximum total available government-sponsored student finance for an individual student pursuing fulltime studies thus amounts to SEK 90,240 per annum. Student finance can be paid for a maximum of 12 semesters or 6 academic years.

Repayment of the loan element is based on an annuity system and in normal cases the total debt should have been repaid in 25 years or before the borrower reaches the age of 60.

### **Parents’ education**

In the academic year of 2011/12 36 per cent of HE entrants under 35 had parents with advanced educational qualifications, i.e. at least one parent who had completed three years of tertiary education. Among the population aged 19–34 the corresponding figure was 24 per cent. This difference can be viewed as an overall measure of bias in recruitment to higher education. In addition to the influence of parental educational qualifications on the decision to begin studies in higher education or not, they also influence the kinds of programmes chosen, as the proportions of students whose parents have advanced educational qualifications varies among them. The proportion of HE entrants whose parents have advanced educational qualifications is largest in programmes that demand high grades for admission. **SHEA 2013, PAGE 27**

National Student fee and support system in European higher education 2015/16 EURYDICE facts and figures

### **KEY POINTS**

#### **Fees (2015/16)**

- No fees for Swedish/EU/EFTA/EEA full time and part time students.

- Other students pay fees since autumn 2011. Higher education institutions determine the size of the fees, based on the principle of full cost coverage.
- As of 1 February 2015, Swedish/EU/EFTA/EEA full time and part time students can be subject to tuition fees when taking part in international collaborations if the fees do not go to the Swedish institution and do not relate to the part of the education organised by the Swedish institution.

#### **Support (2015/16)**

- **Grants** of SEK 707/week for 40 weeks per year are universally available for full time students during six years. The maximum per year is SEK 28 280. Part-time students, studying at least 50 percent, are able to receive grants proportional to their pace of study. 71 percent of students received grants in the second half of the calendar year 2013. The number includes those who are entitled to as well as those who are not entitled to grants due to pace of study, age or because they have already received grants during six years.
- **Loans** of SEK 1 780/week for 40 weeks per year are universally available for full time students during six years. The maximum per year is SEK 71 200. Part-time students, studying at least 50 percent, are able to receive loans proportional to their pace of study. 50 percent of students received loans in the second half of the calendar year 2013, the number includes those who are entitled to as well as those who are not entitled to loans due to pace of study, age or because they have already received loans during six years.
- Students with children can receive an extra grant. It is also possible for some students to receive further supplementary loans and loans for additional costs in connection to their studies. This concerns, for example, students with necessary additional costs for double housing, travel, musical instruments, etc.
- No **tax benefits** for parents and no **family allowances**.

Six countries – Denmark, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta, Finland and Sweden – have a system of universal grants for full-time students provided that basic requirements of residency and study performance are met. A universal entitlement may in some cases be combined with other need and/or merit based criteria to determine amounts that students receive.

#### Under- represented groups

Almost all countries claim to be working towards a policy goal of increasing and widening participation in higher education. Only five countries (Latvia, Slovakia, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Turkey) currently do not explicitly reflect this goal in higher education policy. Two main approaches can be distinguished. The first approach involves adopting certain measures targeted at the participation of underrepresented groups, while the second strives for increasing and widening overall participation, thus hopefully also increasing the number of higher education participants from socially disadvantaged groups.

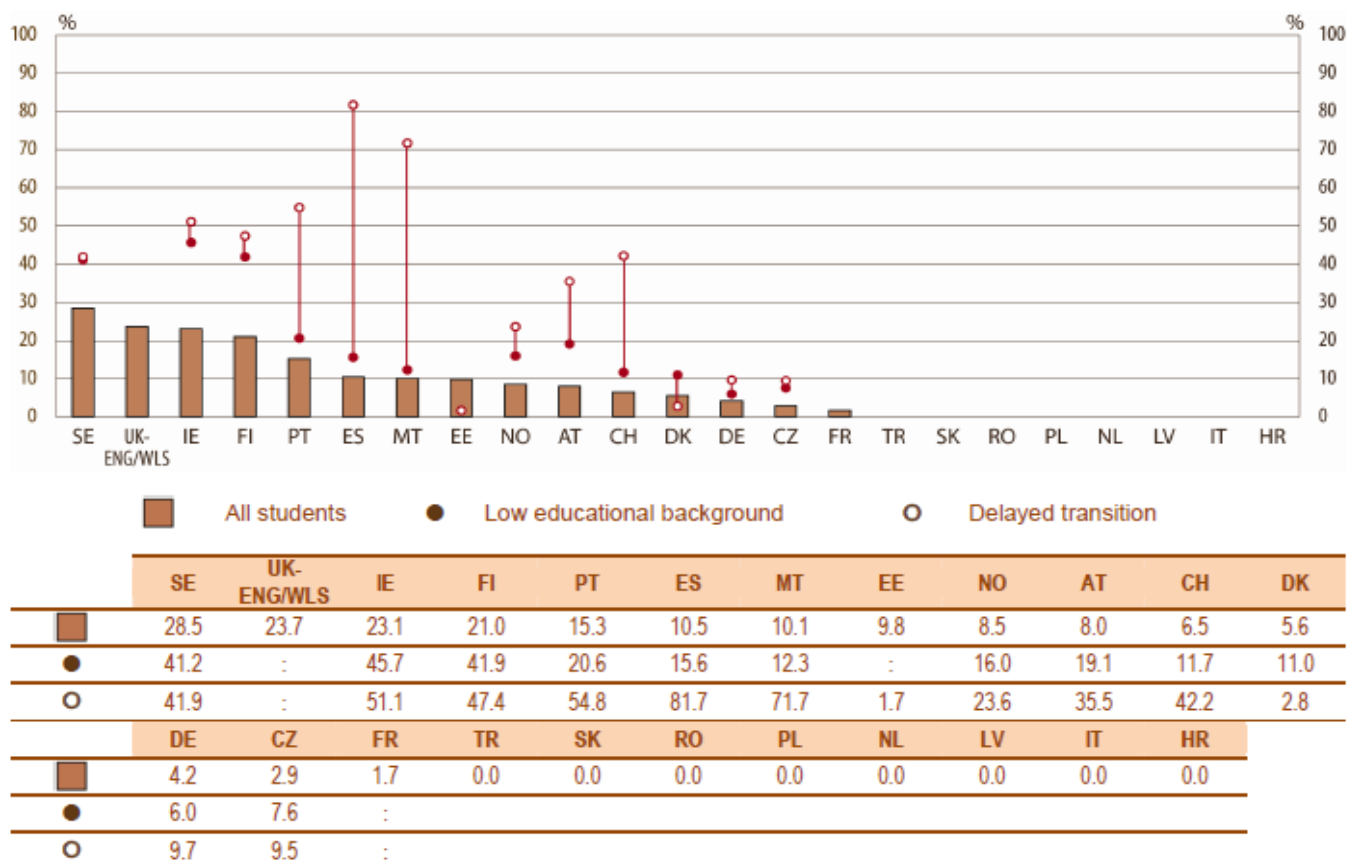
A few countries – including the Nordic countries and Belgium (Flemish Community) – stress that their systems are designed in such a way as to be accessible to the widest range of citizen participation without recourse to special measures. This is thus the reason for the lack of measures targeted at specific groups. The majority highlight a general policy approach to increase and widen participation and to overcome obstacles to access higher education. A number of these countries do not define the under-represented groups but rather specify general legal provisions of equal treatment regardless of gender, ethnic origin, religion or other beliefs, disability, sexual orientation and age. This is in line with overarching anti-discrimination legislation at European level, and also corresponds to the conception of "formal equality" that guides many (higher) education systems and is outlined in the Introduction. Here the focus is on equality of conditions, whereby all are treated equally, irrespective of their personal background. The underlying assumption is that removing obstacles and discriminatory practices is the best way to increase access, participation and completion. Yet in their official documents, the majority of countries also define or describe specific groups that may merit particular attention. Socio-economic status, gender, disability and ethnicity are the most commonly used terms to identify such groups.

**EURYDICE-Modernisation of the HE in EU funding and the social dimension 2011, p.17.**

### 1.1.1. Entry routes to Higher Education

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**Figure 4.12: Students entering higher education through alternative routes by education background and transition route in %, 2009/10**



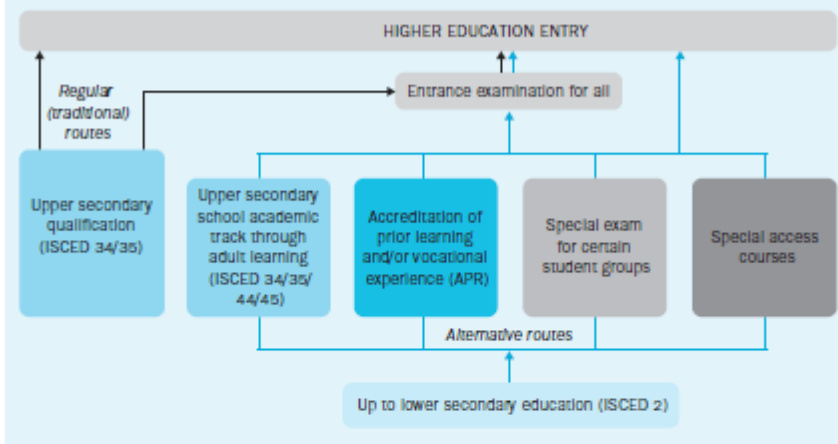
Source: Eurostudent.

Source Eurostudent data p 87

Data reveals that students belonging to the category of delayed transition students (see Glossary and Methodological Notes; for further analysis of this category of students see also Chapter 6, Figure 6.14) and students characterised by a low education/social background (see Glossary and Methodological Notes) frequently use non-traditional access routes. In Finland, Ireland and Sweden more than one in three students characterised by a low education/social background or delayed transition have taken an alternative access route to enter higher education. This confirms that the theme of alternative access to higher education ought to be seen as a key component of debates relating to the social dimension in higher education.

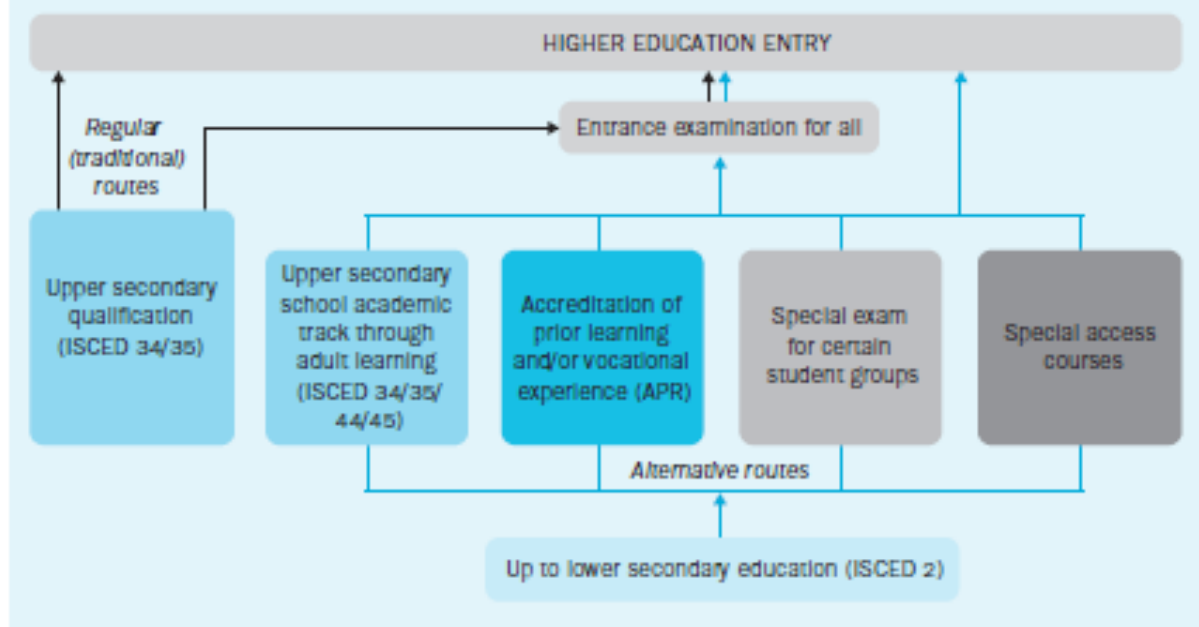
EHEA 2012 Bologna Implementation Report 2012, 87

## Routes into higher education



- **Upper secondary school academic track through adult learning – ISCED 2011 34/35/44/45:** This type of alternative access route involves obtaining the normal upper secondary leaving qualification after leaving the school system, often through courses for adult learners.
- **Special entry exams for certain student groups:** This involves taking special examinations which are used to assess the capabilities of candidates for higher education entry, who do not have the regular entry qualifications.
- **Special access course:** Graduating from a special access course, usually offered by the higher education institutions for specific subject areas, e.g. mathematics, may lead to candidates' acceptance to higher education, usually in combination with other prior learning or experiences.
- **Accreditation/recognition of prior learning and/or vocational experience:** This alternative entry route takes into account any former formal or informal training of the prospective students in determining access to higher education.

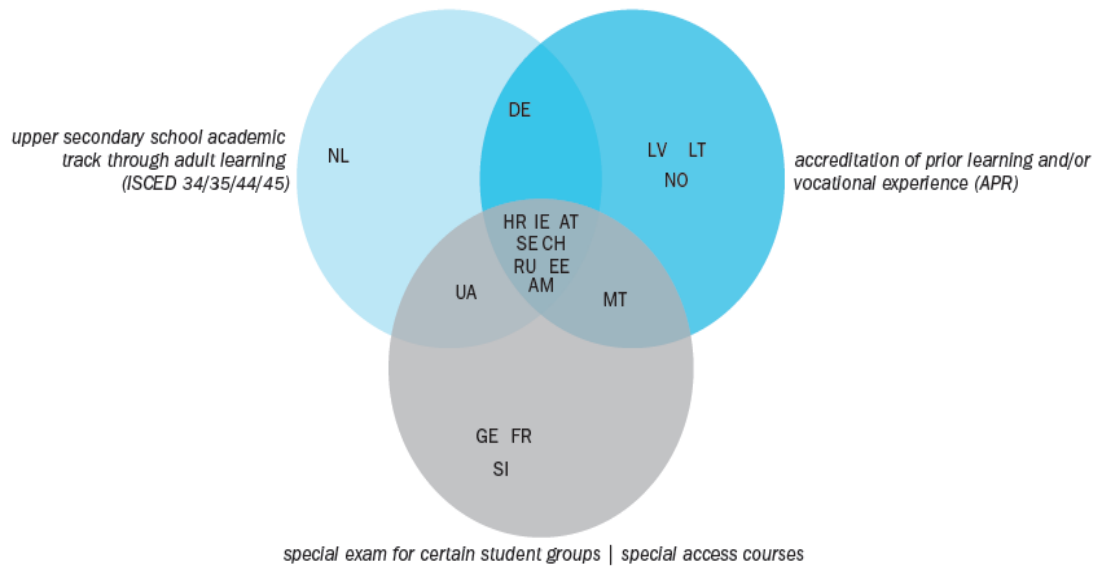
## Routes into higher education



Many national higher education systems offer more than one alternative access route to higher education (Figure 2.2). The three circles in Figure 2.2. illustrate the three main types of alternative access routes: upper secondary school academic track through adult learning, special exam for certain student groups and/or special access courses, and recognition of prior learning. In eight higher education systems, at least three different types of alternative higher education access routes were used by students (Armenia, Austria, Croatia, Estonia, Ireland, Sweden, Switzerland, and Russia).

Figure 2.2

Mix of alternative routes by country



Data source: EUROSTUDENT V, B.4. No data: FI, HU, IT, RO.

EUROSTUDENT question(s): 2.4. What qualifications, examinations or measures qualified you for entry into higher education?

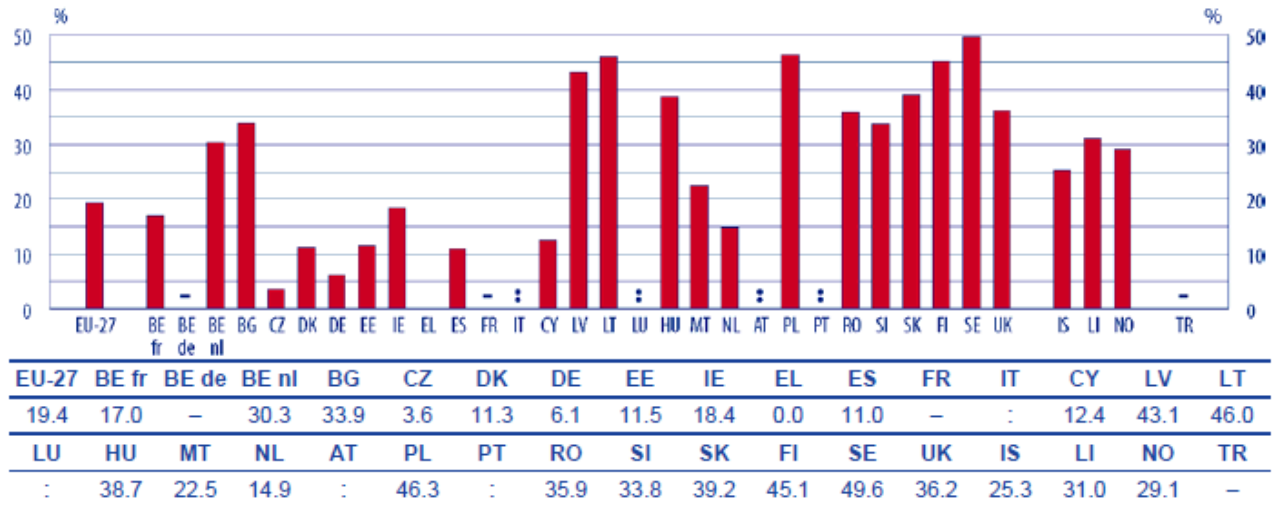
Notes: Special access courses and special examinations for certain student groups are grouped together.

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: AT, CH, DE, FR, NL.

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: DE, GE, IT.

Part-time studies

◆◆◆ Figure 1.7: Participation rate of part-time students, ISCED 5-6, 2008



Source: Eurostat.

**Explanatory note**

The definition of a full-time and part-time student depends on which measure is being used for study load. Ideally, the study load should be measured in terms of the academic value or progress, but it can also be measured in terms of the time/resource commitment or time in classroom. The availability of national data dictates which of these methods countries use to categorise students as full-time or part-time (UNESCO/OECD/Eurostat, 2010).



After closer look at the participation rates of part-time students across countries (see Figure 1.7), it can be observed that despite the EU-27 average of 19.44 %, eleven educational systems of the EU together with Liechtenstein noted more than 30 % rate including five countries that are even above 40 % mark (Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Finland and Sweden). These countries however have a diverse legal framework regarding part-time studies, as some have a definition and some only a certain concept or common understanding of the studies based mainly on reduced number of credits over certain period of time. An interesting fact worth mentioning is that although Italy, Luxembourg and Austria indicate common understanding of part-time studies, no data on participation rate of part-time students are recorded by Eurostat. In contrast, other countries reporting common understanding of part-time studies do provide data and these can be found in Figure 1.7. In nearly all countries, higher education institutions have autonomy to decide whether or not to offer opportunities of part-time study. In most of them, however, such possibilities for part-time studies are offered.

Midernasation 2011, 28



## 1.2. Widening participation in Higher Education

Widening access to higher education is thus a first step towards guaranteeing equal opportunities for all, reinforcing the social, cultural and economic development of European societies and finally improving the quality and attractiveness of European higher education. Eurostat 2009 the Bologna process in HE p47

Widening access is possible through the creation of new routes to enter higher education (Figure A2a, b and Figure A3a) in the context of lifelong learning. Additionally, studying parttime (Figure A4a and b) is also a means for workers to improve their educational attainment and for students to gain working experience. The proportion of de facto part-time students based on their study intensity (Figure A4c) may also be affected by a lack of public financial support made available to students, who as a result need to work to fund their studies. Lastly, “widening the constituency that higher education serves by including those groups who have traditionally been excluded”(1) is a key issue in the social dimension of higher education. The extent to which disadvantages are transmitted through generations is a central point and the analysis compares across countries whether success in higher education is affected by the educational level of students’ parents (Figures A5a and b). p48

### A.2. Routes to higher education

The doors of higher education institutions must be opened to students from various backgrounds in order to widen access and provide lifelong learning opportunities. In most European countries, the upper-secondary education certificate or its equivalent constitute the “traditional” route to higher education (Figure A.2a), but students may also take nontraditional routes (Figure A.2.b).

The aim that “the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education should reflect the diversity of our population”(3) suggests that all students who complete uppersecondary education should have the skills and the opportunity to enter higher education if they wish (propaedeutic function). Moreover, this also entails that those who decided not to begin higher education immediately after upper-secondary education (because they graduated in upper-secondary vocational programmes, had work experiences, etc.) and those who failed during upper-secondary education but acquired additional knowledge and qualifications through non-formal learning, can be given a second chance to access higher education. Although increasing participation is a policy objective shared by all Bologna countries, this may not be at the micro level: depending on national economic perspectives, upper-secondary graduates may prefer to stop studying and start their professional career for instance to avoid foregoing a regular salary in the labour market (‘opportunity costs’). Moreover, many other reasons may discourage people who successfully completed upper-secondary education from entering higher education: low intrinsic interest in pursuing further studies, lack of sufficient financial resources to ensure satisfactory study conditions (Chapter B) and low expectations in terms of career development prospects and future earnings (Chapter D). p.56

Widening participation Eurostat:

This request was the result of a feasibility study carried out between 2005 and 2007 by a Bologna working group including Eurostat and Eurostudent(1).

The social dimension was then defined as processes leading to the objective that the student population entering, participating in and completing higher education reflects the diversity of European, national and regional populations.

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Fact sheet: Higher Education in Sweden

[https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Sweden:National\\_Reforms\\_in\\_Higher\\_Education](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Sweden:National_Reforms_in_Higher_Education)

2015

## **Proposed investments in higher education**

In the Spring Fiscal Policy Bill the government proposes 14 300 new places in higher education until 2018. The government also proposes to invest SEK 125 million to increase quality in higher education in 2015 and SEK 250 million per year 2016-2018. The investment in quality is intended for the educational fields of humanities and social sciences as well as for teacher and preschool teacher education. The parliament is expected to adopt a decision on the Spring Fiscal Policy Bill in June. For more information in English, see the summary of the [Spring Fiscal Policy Bill for 2015](#).

## **Widening participation in Higher Education**

The government has commissioned The Swedish Council for Higher Education to survey and analyse the work of widening admission to higher education institutions. A survey will be carried out, followed by regional in-depth meetings with higher education institutions to identify and spread best practice examples. The aim is to increase the proportion of students from under-represented groups, including those whose parents have not studied at a higher education institution. The initiative shall be evaluated and reported to the government by 1 April 2016. For more information, in Swedish only, see [The Swedish Council for Higher Education](#).

## **The Higher Education Act amended to allow tuition fees to foreign institutions in international collaborations**

The Higher Education Act has been amended to allow tuition fees in international collaborations as of 1 February 2015. Students at Higher Education institutions in Sweden can be subject to tuition fees when taking part in international collaborations if the fees do not go to the Swedish institutions and do not relate to the part of the education organised by the Swedish institution. For more information see [The Higher Education Act](#), in Swedish only.

## **2013**

### **Work experience in technology (*Tekniksprånget*)**

To attract pupils in upper secondary natural science programmes to enter higher education studies and ultimately a career in the area of technology, they are to be offered work experience placements at companies involved in the technology industry. The government has allocated SEK 30 million per year in 2013 and 2014, SEK 20 million for 2015 and SEK 17,2 million for 2016 in the 2012 Budget Bill to meet those needs. The Swedish National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) will produce a final evaluation of the programme by April 1, 2018. More information, in Swedish only, is available on [teknikspranget.se](http://teknikspranget.se).

### **Study grants available up to 56 year**

The upper age limit for study grants has been increased from 54 to 56 years. This gives about 230 000 more people the opportunity to receive financial support to study.

### **4 200 new places in higher education per year**

The government has presented temporary funding to provide 4 200 new places in higher education per year 2013-2015 at a cost of SEK 300 million per year. The overall result of this is that the number of students beginning in higher education is higher than ever before.

### **Expansion of important medical training programmes**

The Swedish healthcare sector is in great need of trained, competent staff. Several agencies are warning for serious shortages of doctors, nurses and dentists in the future unless more staff are trained. On several previous occasions, the government has increased the number of places on various medical training programmes to meet the needs of the labour market. The demand for staff having completed a degree in health and medical care or dental care is nevertheless expected to increase faster than supply, due to a rise in care needs and the age structure among those currently working in the sector. The government has proposed a focus on healthcare education in the Stockholm region, especially nursing and midwife programmes. The initiative will start in 2015.

### **Research and innovation investment**

SEK 11.5 billion will be invested in research and innovation between 2013-2016 to create new products and methods that will contribute to economic growth.

### **Increased funding for research**

The funding for research and research education at universities and university colleges will increase by SEK 600 million in 2014 and further SEK 300 million in 2016.

### **Quality based resource allocation in higher education**

In June 2010 the parliament decided that resources for first and second cycle education will be allocated partly on the basis of evaluations of the quality of educational outcomes. Quality based resource allocation began in 2013 and will be fully developed in 2015. When fully implemented quality based resource allocation will have a budget of SEK 295 million. The total budget for higher education will be SEK 40 702 million in 2015 according to the 2013 Budget Bill.

### **Increased support to incoming students from third countries**

From the autumn term 2011, foreign students from countries outside the EU/EES and Switzerland who are not taking part in exchange programmes have to pay for their education in Sweden. In connection with this reform, a new programme of scholarships was established for students who are required to pay fees. The scholarships are intended for particularly well qualified students from countries outside the EU/EEA and Switzerland. The scholarships particularly target students from Sweden's partner countries in international development as well as developing countries (as defined by OECD/DAC). The scholarships are intended to pay all or part of the fees for studying at the Swedish HEL.

In the 2014 budget bill, the government proposed that SEK 50 million should be allocated to scholarships for tuition fees in 2014. The government estimates that another SEK 50 million will be allocated to scholarships for tuition fees in 2015. Previously a total of SEK 160 million has been designated for scholarships for fee paying students. SEK 100 million of those relates to aid and is targeted at specific countries. SEK 60 million is targeted at all fee paying students except those from Sweden's twelve long-term partners. The government intends to open these latter grants for students from Sweden's long-term partners in aid. A specific recruitment programme aimed at students in strategic countries, mainly China, India and the U.S.A., is being implemented 2012-2014 with an annual budget of SEK 3 million.

### **Partnerships with business, research and civil society**

Research results from higher education institutions must benefit society, for example, by being commercialised. The holding companies of higher education institutions are one important type of tool for commercialisation. According to a government proposal these holding companies will receive SEK 12 million in 2014.

### **Mergers of higher education institutions**

Several higher education institutions risk becoming susceptible to global changes. For example, this applies to higher education institutions with a large number of third country students, a large number of distance learning students, or a large proportion of the courses they offer concentrated on a few large programmes that have been criticised in evaluations carried out by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education,

such as teacher training and nursing programmes. One way of reducing vulnerability and increasing quality in both higher education and research is for more higher education institutions to merge. Changes in organisation should be based on higher education institutions' own assessments and be done on a voluntary basis. To increase incentives for voluntary mergers, the government has proposed that incentive funds should be allocated by SEK 55 million in 2014.

<http://www.uka.se/news/socialbiasinrecruitmenttohighereducation.5.56851a3814fe052223e27fa.html>

2015-09-24

### **Social bias in recruitment to higher education**

Daughters of parents with research qualification are most likely to begin higher education while the sons of parents who have only completed lower-secondary education are least likely to.

The social bias in recruitment to higher education concerns the effect of social background on the likelihood of starting higher education. One way to reveal this is to account for the proportion of those who have begun to study in higher education by a certain age among individuals born in the same year but who have different social backgrounds (measured here in terms of their parents' educational attainment).

A total of 44 per cent of those born in 1988 had begun to study in higher education by the age of 25. But for those with at least one parent with a research qualification (licentiate or doctoral degree) the initial participation rate was considerably higher – 84 per cent. In comparison, a mere 22 per cent of those whose parents had only completed lower-secondary education had begun higher education studies. The figures for students with other backgrounds lie between these two extremes and the social bias in recruitment is obvious: the more highly qualified parents are, the more likely it is for their children to start studying in higher education.

The same pattern can be seen in the social bias in recruitment for both women and men – in other words the more advanced their parents' education, the more likely they are to begin higher education themselves. But as more women begin higher education than men, they form a larger proportion of those from each social category (measured in terms of parents' educational attainment) beginning higher education. Among those born in 1988 and who had one or two parents with research qualifications 86 per cent of the women and 81 per cent of the men had begun higher education by the age of 25. In the group whose parents had only completed lower-secondary education this applied to 28 per cent of the women and 15 per cent of the men. Combining gender and social background reveals therefore that the daughters of parents with research qualification are most likely to begin higher education while the sons of parents who have only completed lower-secondary education are least likely to.

Not only is it more common for individuals from homes with highly qualified parents to study in higher education, but students with different social origins also opt for different higher education courses and programmes to some extent. Some of the longer degree programmes that require good grades from upper-secondary education for admission and which at the same time prepare students for professions where career possibilities are good have relatively high proportions of students whose parents have advanced qualifications.

SHEA, 2013 p.30

### **National minorities**

In its budget bill for 2013 the Government has allocated specific funding to guarantee the provision of teachers for the national minority languages. A number of the national minority languages, Finnish, Sami, Meänkeli (Tornedal Finnish), Romany Chib and Yiddish, are currently subjects in which higher education is offered but they have few students.

The Government views this as a disturbing development as teachers are needed in the education system who can teach these languages as well as in them, if the national minority languages are to be able to survive and develop and so that children and young people can be offered teaching in their minority languages.

To guarantee a supply of teachers for the national minority languages the Government has therefore decided that certain HEIs should be given specific assignments – national responsibility – for establishing and developing programmes to train teachers for secondary education in the national minority languages. Currently no HEI is entitled to award teaching qualifications for upper-secondary education in Sami, Meänkeli, Romay Chib or Yiddish. In April 2013 Stockholm University was awarded entitlement to issue teaching qualifications for teachers in secondary education in Finnish as a first language.

The Government has also decided to link specific funds for work with the different national responsibilities.

### **State Scholarship Fund established SHEA, 2013 p.40**

In connection with the introduction of application fees and tuition fees for international first and second-cycle students from countries outside the EU/EEA and Switzerland who were not participating in exchange programmes a state scholarship fund was established. The HEIs are also increasingly finding their own scholarship funding from companies or from private donations. In the autumn of 2012 just under 40 per cent of the newly registered fee-paying students were receiving Swedish scholarships. About one-third of those offered scholarships refused them. The reason was often that the scholarship was not considered adequate and/or that it was felt that it would be too expensive to live in Sweden.

## **1. 3. Overview of the Upper secondary and Vocational school**

### **Upper secondary school**

All youth in Sweden who have completed compulsory school are entitled to a three-year upper secondary school education. Upper secondary education provides a good foundation for vocational activities and further studies, and for personal development and active participation in the life of society.

Upper secondary education covers the upper secondary school, and the upper secondary school for learning disabilities. The latter is intended for young people with learning disabilities.

The upper secondary school consists of different types of programmes:

- 18 national programmes each lasting three years. They are divided into upper secondary foundation subjects, subjects common to a programme, orientations, programme specialisations and a diploma project.
- Five introductory programmes for pupils who are not eligible for a national programme.

- Education that deviates from the national programme structures; special variants, programmes based on national recruitment and nationally approved sports programmes (NIU).

## **2. Minorities in Sweden and their rights pertaining to education**

According to the Personal Data Act and the country context in general, Sweden prohibits data records based on race or ethnicity. Therefore, there are no statistical data determining and tracking the percentage of the country population belonging to the minority groups. The belonging to the minority or ethnic group is based on the self-identification of the individual. Hence, majority of the research data in particular for the Roma minority are gathered based on a qualitative data research methods and approximations.

The historical national minorities in Sweden were also defined as immigrants in state policy documents during the 1970s, with the exception of the Samis – recognized as the indigenous population of the country in 1977 (Borevi 2002). The concepts of ‘minorities’ and ‘immigrants’ have been used interchangeably since that

time. Ethnic mobilization and revitalization among minority groups, especially in the 1990s, finally led to the ratification of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in 2000. These minorities included the Samis, Tornedalers, Swedish Finns, Roma and Jews.<sup>3</sup> The Framework Convention states in Article 12:1 that ‘parties shall, where appropriate, take measures in the fields of education and research to foster knowledge of the culture, history, language and religion of their national minorities and of the majority’ (Regeringens proposition 1998/99:143, 126). The second ratification of the status of minorities is The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages which recognizes the Sami, Finnish, Meän kieli,

Romani chib and Jiddish languages. The charter explicitly supports and protects these languages ‘as an important element of Sweden’s cultural heritage and modern society’ (SOU 1997:192, 21). (Bromssen and Olgac 2012,p.121-122)

In 2000, 14.5% of the population was categorized as having a 'foreign background'<sup>1</sup> and in 2006 the figure was 16.7%. About 16% of all Swedish children were either born or have parents born outside Sweden. Education and issues related to diversity, equality, human rights and citizenship are therefore central concerns in contemporary Sweden, as they are elsewhere (see Adams and Kirova 2007). In 1975, Sweden was declared to be a 'multicultural society' by the sitting government, upholding principles of *equality* between Swedish citizens and immigrants, *freedom of choice* for immigrants and members of minority groups, and *partnership* between immigrants and Swedish citizens (SOU 1975:26; cf. Ålund and Schierup 1991, 2–5).

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(Bromssen and Olgac 2012, p.121-122)

### **The current situation of the national minorities**

The above-mentioned ratifications of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (SOU 1997:193) and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (SOU 1997:192) have led to a cultural and linguistic revitalization within minority communities. Changes can also be noted on a more official level.

National minorities are, for example, more visible and audible in the media, and there are more publications in their respective languages. Another aspect is that, in certain regions in the north of Sweden, with large populations of Samis, Swedish Finnish and Tornedalers, the minorities have the formal right to address the local authorities in their respective mother tongues, although this is still relatively limited in practice (KU 2005). This right has recently been extended to more municipalities in a government proposal (Lagrådsremiss 2009). In addition, the Delegation for Roma Issues was established in 2007. Government offices are to investigate the situation of Roma in Sweden by collecting and analysing the experience and knowledge available in the area, and by presenting proposals on how to improve the living conditions of Roma in society.<sup>9</sup>

The right to mother-tongue education for national minorities is more extensive than for migrants (NAE 2008). Mother-tongue education outside the regular school timetable is limited to seven years for migrant children. This limitation does not apply to children who speak the languages of the national minorities or other Nordic languages. Furthermore, all bilingual pupils in the compulsory school system have, when necessary, the right to tutoring in their mother tongue (NAE 2008). These rights, however, are not always applied in practice (DO 2008).



Today, Sami children can also receive education in a Sami school which covers grades 1–6. This schooling corresponds to the first six years of compulsory school. Education is bilingual in the six Sami schools situated in northern Sweden. There are also currently eight Swedish Finnish schools in the country (KU 2005). Furthermore, since the beginning of the 1990s, one of the public schools in southern Stockholm has a class for Romani pupils.<sup>10</sup> This is a joint initiative between the Romani community and the local school. Also, a pre-school for Romani children initiated by Roma was recently started in the city of Malmö in southern Sweden.

Despite efforts concerning mother-tongue education for minorities, participation has been minimal. Statistics from the NAE indicate that only 41% of pupils with the right to mother-tongue education in the languages of the national minorities actually participate in this education. The variations between the minorities are also substantial, with about 63% of the Sami children participating, while the figure among the Romani children is only 25% (NAE 2005).

## **2.1. Roma minority and brief overview on the country policies pertaining to Roma**

The Delegation for Roma Issues appointed in 2006 reported in 2010 that: Roma today are almost completely excluded from mainstream society. There is a strong, almost unbreakable pattern of social, economic and political exclusion and marginalization. 80 percent out of adult Roma are estimated to be unemployed. Functional illiteracy is not uncommon among adult Roma. Children do not have full access to education in their mother tongue as stipulated in the law. Attitudes towards Roma are more negative than towards any other group. They remain the most discriminated group on the labour market. Finally in order to follow up the 2020 goals in relation to national minorities, Sweden needs to register ethnic minorities. (Halleröd 2011, 2). Discrimination is rampant they remain the most clearly discriminated group on the labour market at all stages: when they seek job, during the interviews, and in the case they did get a job they risk losing it if their ethnicity becomes known. Since, Roma in general hesitate to file complaints, or are unaware of their rights. (Halleröd 2011, 5).

The Romani and Jewish minorities are probably more recent in Sweden than the Swedish Finns and the Tornedalers. A written reference to the Roma in Sweden first appeared at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The first Romani migrants comprised two groups: the Travellers (resande) and the Kaale (Finnish Roma) who are thought to be the earliest groups to have settled in the Nordic countries. The second migrant group, the Kelderash, migrated to Sweden in the second half of the nineteenth century. The third and final migrant groups came in the 1970s, when different groups of Roma from various countries in Europe, especially Eastern European countries, settled in the country (DO 2004). Today, approximately 50,000 Roma live in Sweden (Bijvoet and Fraurud 2007). There are a large variety of religions represented within

this minority. Many are Catholics, others Orthodox Russians or Muslims and, during recent years, many Roma have also come to attend the Pentecostal Church. According to the Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination, many Roma still continue to be a target of racism and 'antiziganism' in Sweden (DO 2004). (Bromssen and Olgac 2012,p.125)

Concerning education, the Roma were historically prohibited from attending school until the middle of the last century. One of the reasons was forced nomadism, which signified that, generally, the Roma were not allowed to stay in one place for more than three weeks. It was not until the end of the 1960s that the Roma were able to attend school on a regular basis. The acceptance of the Roma into schools coincided with their settling into permanent housing. The schools often took a deficit perspective in relation to Romani families and, rather than taking responsibility for the education of Romani children, they blamed failure on the Romani group and its culture. Since the recognition of the Roma as a national minority, there has been a cultural and linguistic revitalization of the minority and a demand for more inclusion in education (Rodell Olgac 2006).

Promoting the Social Inclusion of Roma A Study of National Policies Bjorn Hallerod University of Gothenburg July 2011

<http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/stockholm/En/manniska-och-samhalle/nationella-minoriteter/Pages/default.aspx>



**Since 1 January 2010, the County Administrative Board in Stockholm County and the Sami Parliament are primarily responsible for coordination and follow-up of how Sweden's minority policy is implemented throughout the country.**

In December 1999, the Swedish Parliament decided that Sweden should join the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the protection of national minorities and the European Charter for regional or minority languages. The Parliament also took the decision for a Minority Policy and the recognition of five national minorities and their languages (all varieties).

### **Sweden's national minorities and minority languages**

The five recognized national minorities in Sweden are Jews, Roma, the Sami people (which is also an indigenous people), Swedish Finns, and the Torne Valley Descendants (Tornedalians). The historical minority languages are Yiddish, Romani chib, Sami, Finnish and Meänkieli. What is common for the minority groups is that they have populated Sweden over a long period of time and that they constitute groups with a distinct affinity. They also have their own religious, linguistic or cultural affinity and a desire to retain their identity.

### **The Government's policy on minorities**

The Minority Policy covers issues of protection and support for the national minorities and the historical minority languages. Strengthening the protection of national minorities forms a part of Sweden's efforts to protect human rights.

### **A minority political strategy**

In 2009, the Government announced a new minority political strategy with measures for the further strengthening of the rights of national minorities. From 1 January 2010 a law on national minorities and minority languages also applies as part of the Government's strategy. The strategy includes a number of proposals to strengthen the rights of national minorities in practice, including measures to:

- ensure a better enforcement of the Council of Europe's minority conventions and a follow-up of the measures taken
- counteract discrimination and disadvantages faced by national minorities
- strength the national minorities empowerment and influence
- promote conservation of the national minorities' languages.

Romska strategija link

## **3. Findings analysis: Policies and Practice for Minorities and their access to Higher Education**

### **Entry requirements**

Everyone studying at higher education institutions (HEIs) in Sweden must fulfill the general entry requirements. In effect, this means successful completion of upper secondary education in Sweden or abroad. For some courses and study programmes there are specific entry requirements. In effect, applicants must have achieved specific grades in specific subjects at upper secondary level.

### **Selection**

If the number of applicants exceeds the number of places available, there is a selection process. Applicants are grouped into categories and then ranked on the basis of their qualifications. The highest-ranking candidates are admitted.

### **Selection criteria**

At least one third of all places are allocated on the basis of final school grades and at least one third on the basis of the scores from the Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test. HEIs are allowed to

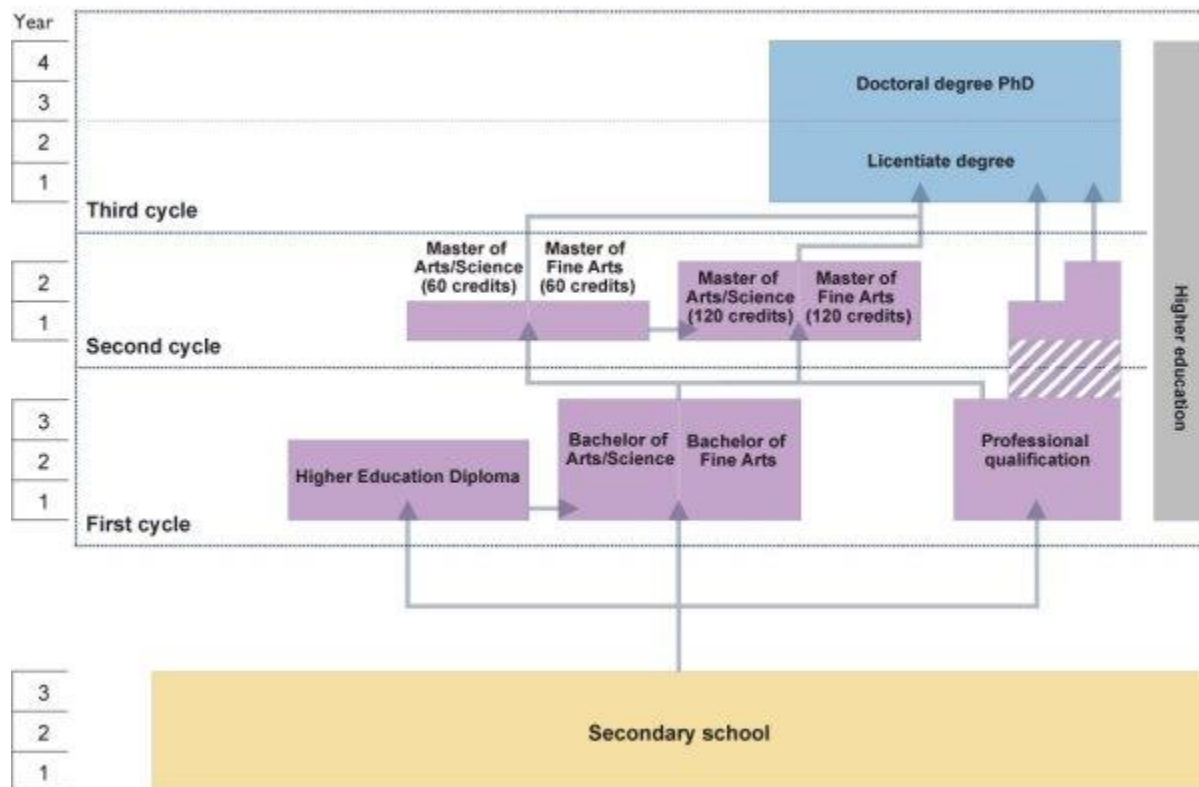
allocate a maximum of one third of places based on, for example, prior learning and experience, proficiency in specific areas and interviews.

### Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test

The Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test measures knowledge and skills and provides an indication of the ability to succeed in higher education. Universitets- och högskolerådet (The Swedish Council for Higher Education) is responsible for the implementation and development of the test. The test is held twice per year, is arranged by HEIs and is offered at various locations in Sweden. The test is only available in Swedish.

[Would you like to study in Sweden? Follow this link for more information »](#)

### Structure of Swedish higher education qualifications



Click image to enlarge

## Expenditure on higher education compared to other OECD countries

Sweden makes a relatively large investment in tertiary education and research in higher education. This according to a new report from the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) based on data from the OECD annual publication *Education at a Glance*.

In 2011 there were only seven OECD countries that invested more than Sweden in terms of proportion of the GDP. There are, however, major differences between countries in the forms that funding takes. Sweden and the other Nordic countries are among those where, on the whole, all funding comes from the public purse, while in countries like Canada, South Korea, the USA and Australia funding comes largely from private sources, mainly through tuition fees.

Sweden, together with Switzerland, is characterised, however, by the fact that more than half of the total expenditure on tertiary education consists of expenditure for research in higher education. In most other countries expenditure on education accounts for the bulk of the expenditure. If expenditure for education alone is taken into account, Sweden does not do as well in comparison with other countries.

The report *Educational attainment and economic investment in the OECD* further shows that in terms of the population's educational attainment, Sweden is slightly above the OECD average. As in most of the OECD countries, women have higher educational attainment than men. If we consider higher education, 34 per cent of Sweden's younger population had qualifications of this kind in 2012, but there has been no change in this proportion since 2009. In most other countries the proportion has continued to grow.

The OECD's annual publication *Education at a Glance (EAG)* is very comprehensive and can be considered impenetrable for a reader who is not used to it. For this reason the Swedish Higher Education Authority aims to make the data from EAG more accessible and also to focus on Sweden in the international comparisons. The report *Educational attainment and economic investment in the OECD* is the first of a series of analyses in which the Swedish Higher Education Authority probes different dimensions and effects of investments in education in the OECD countries.

In this first report we are focusing on economic investments but our starting point is how educational attainment has developed over the years. The next two analyses will deal with issues relating to social factors and to establishment in the labour market.

Read the report [Educational attainment and economic investment in the OECD](#) »

## **Statistics, analysis and follow-up**

UKÄ (the Swedish Higher Education Authority) is responsible for monitoring efficiency and analysing issues in the higher education sector, follow-up and horizon scanning. We are also the authority responsible for official statistics on higher education.

Our statistical database about higher education includes information on the operations of the Swedish higher education institutions. Other statistics it contains deal with students and doctoral students, teaching staff and financial data. There is no English translation of the statistical database.

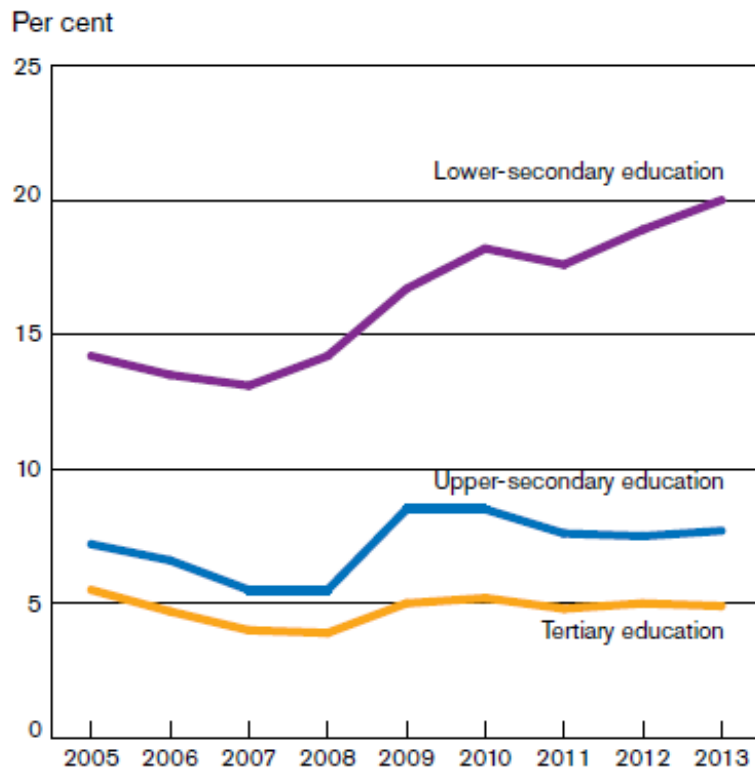
[To the statistical database](#) »

Every year we publish a report containing the statistics that have been collected on higher education in Sweden in which we deal with what has happened during the preceding year as well as long-term trends. We also make international comparisons.

[To the annual statistics »](#)

UKÄ (the Swedish Higher Education Authority) also has the task of monitoring the efficiency of the operations of the higher education institutions.

[Read more about monitoring efficiency »](#)



**Figure 24. Unemployment (per cent) 2007–2012 according to educational qualifications, age group 15–74.**

## 4. Conclusion

Unlike some European countries, Sweden does not have explicit affirmative action policies set in the HE, instead there are cross-cutting policies that serve as enablers toward the minorities education. These cross cutting policies arrive into practice as an outcome from the [Q](#) Therefore instead this paper concentrates on HE namely through the lenses of widening participation aspects with the aim at elaborating on enablers and barriers in access to HE, for minorities. To that end, the paper at hand represents a qualitative research briefing report that analyzes three key aspects in regard to HE, in the context of Sweden. Namely, the first part constitutes insights on the HE in Sweden with a narrowed focus on the policy reforms aimed at widening participation, while also providing for a reflection on the reforms in the preceding levels of HE

reforms and efforts. The second part constitutes a descriptive analysis on the minorities in Sweden and relevant policies in regard to their access into HE. Lastly, the third part of this paper sets forth a analysis on minorities in HE, while bringing in insights from interview discussion analysis, and mirroring the policy and practice experiences. The paper then follows a conclusion summarizing the main arguments set forth throughout the paper.

In turn, also argued by both scholars and policy practitioners is that lack of ethnic data presents a limitation to both creation of policies aimed at minorities and evaluation of general policies and their effects toward minorities. Having under consideration the misuses of ethnic data throughout Europe in the distant and recent past, the argument for the prohibition of producing such data might be a well-established one, nevertheless the creation of effective policies toward minorities is indeed a challenging task, and to that end represents a critical limitation to this paper. Especially when it comes to the very analysis of the effects the possibility for providing an in-depth analysis of access to HE in regard to minorities, moreover this represents a limitation in regard to resources of statistical data.

<http://www.ibtimes.com/swedish-police-keep-secret-files-roma-gypsy-people-fighting-crime-or-ethnic-profiling-1495498>

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## Briefing Paper 2



*Barriers and Enablers for Marginalized Minorities in Higher Education  
in Sweden: Policies and Practices: the Case of Roma*

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## **The scope of the report**

During our month stay in Umeå University we reviewed policy documents around Higher Education access in Sweden, academic analyses, as well as institutional policies and practices that regulate entry and academic success in Universities. We also had the opportunity to conduct interviews with relevant people who work on issues around education policies, youth transitions research, and, policies for minorities, particularly about the Roma minority in Sweden. The current report provides a review of the policy context relevant to issues of education access to HE, particularly for Roma youth. We discuss what kind of opportunities minority young people and adults have to access higher education. We also attempt a critical engagement with the educational system and draw on research studies that indicate factors that may contribute to the low completion rates of upper secondary education for a (significant) minority of students in Sweden – a necessary step for accessing university education as well as the labour market.

Our review was carried out in three phases: First, we reviewed professional materials, and conducted semi-structured and un-structured interviews with Roma students, university professors and professionals who specialise on education policy and transitions from school to university. Second, we had a chance to visit the municipality of Luleå, one of the 5 pilot municipalities for the period 2012-2015, within the context of the “Swedish Strategy for Roma Inclusion”. Finally, we also conducted interviews, with two lecturers from the University of Södertörn (Rodell Olgaç, Christina & Dimiter Taikon, Angelina) who have developed a two year course, for Romani mediators working in schools. The course is funded by the National Agency for Education (2012-2015). On behalf of the National Agency for Education they also ran a course for 30 mother tongue teachers in Romani from all over Sweden that will run between 2015-2017 at the university. We explored with them questions around young Roma’s difficulties in accessing higher education, and in particular the reasons why disadvantaged Roma perform poorly in school.

In this research paper, we provide descriptions around the Roma minority and their life in Sweden. Our purpose is to provide a better understanding of the conditions and context of their life, through the lenses of our belonging to the same community and sharing over experience in contacts of Roma as National Minorities.

# Introduction

## 1. Overview of the country Sweden regarding national Minorities

Sweden is a Nordic country officially the **Kingdom of Sweden** which shares borders with Norway, Finland and the Baltic Sea. The official language of Sweden is Swedish, there are 9.7 million people in Sweden, of whom about 2 million are under the age of 18. Eighty-five percent of them live in cities. Sweden is a very multicultural country, 15 percent of Swedes were born in another country, while about one in five children in Sweden has a family with roots in another country, around one third lives in the 3 major cities Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmo. Sweden has been a member of the European Union since 1 January 1995.<sup>1</sup>

In Sweden are recognised five national minorities. These are the Sami (an indigenous people), the Swedish Finns, the Tornedalers, the Roma and the Jews. All of these groups have existed in Sweden for a very long time and are therefore part of Sweden's cultural heritage.

The Swedish minority policy is shaped by the *1998 National Minorities in Sweden Government Act*, by the Council of Europe *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* and the *European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages*. Sweden ratified both treaties in 2000. Officially recognised minority languages in Sweden are Sami, Finnish, Meänkieli (Tornedal Finnish) Romany Chib and Yiddish. Special laws have been adopted which entitle individuals to use Sami, Finnish and Meänkieli in dealings with administrative authorities and courts of law in the geographical areas (administrative areas) in which these languages have traditionally been used and are still widely used today. Children of minority groups in Sweden have a right to teaching in their mother tongue; Finns of Tornedalen, Sami and Roma/Gypsies have special rights in this respect.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup><https://sweden.se/society/education-in-sweden/> (official site of Sweden. Discover the facts and stories of our country)

<sup>2</sup> Government communication 2011/12:56 A coordinated long-term strategy for Roma inclusion 2012–2032

<sup>3</sup> Sweden's report on the Council of Europe Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (p3)

## Sweden's constitutional and administrative structure

Sweden has three democratically elected levels of government: the Riksdag (Swedish parliament) at the national level; the county councils at the regional level; and the municipalities at the local level. They each have different tasks and spheres of responsibility. Elections to the Riksdag, county council and municipality assemblies are held every fourth year on the same day. The division of responsibility between the state, the county councils and the municipalities is determined by the Riksdag by law. The Sameting (the Sami parliament) is the Sami populations own democratically elected body as well as a Swedish central agency<sup>3</sup>. Elections to the Sami parliament are held every fourth year and Sami people who are registered on the Sami electoral register are eligible to vote.

## Chronological overview of the government Minority policies

During our stay in Sweden we were able to observe that majority and minority populations have a long, common history. Sámi, for example, lived in Sweden a long time before the country became a nation state and the first Roma and Jews came to Sweden in the 16th and 17th century respectively. The government is fully aware that in the history of Sweden there has been high degrees of discrimination against Roma people and other national minorities, and they fully recognise that, unfortunately, this discrimination is still in present. After many recommendations that the government received about the treatment of national minorities<sup>4</sup>, it has begun being active<sup>5</sup> in relation to Roma minority issues but also, in relation to other national minorities such as the Sámi people who also have suffered a lot of discrimination in the past.

The Advisory Committee on the Application of the Council of Europe Framework Convention presented the findings of its review of the extent to which Sweden had implemented the Framework Convention in a report in August 2002. The Council of Europe Committee of Ministers thereafter adopted a resolution containing certain conclusions and recommendations in December of the same year<sup>6</sup>.

In 2006, the Office of the Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination received a further SEK 6.5 million to enable it to implement more powerful and far-reaching initiatives. At the same time, the

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<sup>4</sup> Committee on the Elimination of racial discrimination Seventy-third session 28 July - 15 August 2008

<sup>5</sup> According to Swedish members of the European network against racism, individuals originally coming from Middle East and Africa are subject to greater levels of racism and discrimination. Roma also face widespread discrimination. According to a 2005 report submitted to the OSCE by the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, Sweden has the largest number of Roma in the Nordic countries with about 50 000 Roma living in Sweden.

<sup>6</sup> The report and resolution are available in their original language on the Swedish Government human rights website, [www.manskligarattigheter.se/](http://www.manskligarattigheter.se/) [www.humanrights.gov.se](http://www.humanrights.gov.se)

Swedish government established new anti-discrimination bureaus in several municipalities<sup>7</sup>. These bureaus work to prevent and counteract discrimination on grounds of ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, sex and disability. Also there has been a two-year employment package that was implemented in 2006–7, which will give around 55,000 people the opportunity of a job, work experience, education or training. Most of these measures take place within the framework of labour market policy. Priority is given to long-term unemployed women and men of foreign background.

On 4 June 2008 a new Discrimination Act was adopted by the Swedish Parliament, which entered into force on 1 January 2009. The Act outlaws discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, transgender and age. It also established a new watchdog, the Equality Ombudsman. Katri Linna, the former Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination took up this post. This is short overview of the government measures regarding national minorities.

In June 2009 the Riksdag (Swedish Parliament) adopted the bill *From Recognition to Empowerment – the Government’s Strategy for the National Minorities* (Government Bill 2008/09:158, Committee Report 2008/09:KU23, Government Communication 2008/09:272)<sup>8</sup>. The new strategy was implemented in January 2010. The strategy contains measures for: • ensuring stricter adherence to the Council of Europe’s charter on minorities, • improved follow-up of the implementation of minority policy, combating discrimination against and the vulnerability of the national minorities, strengthening the empowerment and influence of national minorities, as well as supporting the preservation of the national minority languages.

## Overview of the Roma minority in Europe

Europe is the oldest continent where we have different national languages and cultures, unfortunately, at the same time it is the place where people are not so open when it comes to minorities, as well as to newcomers. Europe also can be a place of discrimination, intolerance, stereotypes and other forms of not being open to understand the others. In the new era of Europe a new way to approach Human Rights and Minority Rights was launched, with the establishing of a court for Human Rights.

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<sup>7</sup> Sweden’s report to the Council of Europe on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. [https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/minorities/3\\_FCNMdocs/PDF\\_2nd\\_SR\\_Sweden\\_en.pdf](https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/minorities/3_FCNMdocs/PDF_2nd_SR_Sweden_en.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> The recognition of the national minorities, which was determined by the Riksdag in December 1999 has not been accompanied by sufficient resolute measures in order to allow the national minorities to derive maximum benefit of their rights. Several areas warrant improvement. According to the Government, the goals of the Swedish minority policy must be increased considerably. It involves, inter alia, creating a structure which allows the minority policy to be realised in a more efficient manner. An important premise concerning the reformation efforts has been the strengthening of the empowerment of the national minorities and the prerequisites which are necessary to preserve and revitalise their language and culture. Sweden’s fourth report to the Council of Europe on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, submitted in accordance with Article 15

Roma people are the biggest ethnic minority that lives in Europe.

Roma people live almost in every country in Europe and they are numbered at about 10 to 12 million people. However, this is merely an estimate – the real number may well be higher (because of anti Gypsyism, a lot of the Roma are hiding their ethnic identities and this means that these Roma people don't need a special treatment, because they are already integrated in the societies and they are not visible to the mainstream). Roma people practise different religions. They usually have similar culture, the language is Romanes but many dialects depending on their countries of origin and residence. So there are difficulties in applying this 'umbrella' ethnic label on a very diverse and often heterogenous group, and this is something that has been recognised by many researchers as well as policy makers (Marushiakova & Popov 2013). One of the most important things for the Roma minority is the country and the society that they live in. In different countries they have different rights beyond their generic rights as citizens (in many cases, these are the only rights they have, and these are not necessarily respected).

Other different thing is that they can be recognised or not as national minority<sup>9</sup> in the country that they live. Usually the majority of the country is not familiar with their existence. Roma people mostly suffer of lack of education, housing and poverty. Mostly they have the same treatment, (not being accepted or excluded) and that depends on the country. If the country is economically well developed (mostly western countries where Roma<sup>10</sup> have migrated from Eastern European countries in search of better life conditions, and finding jobs that are not low paid. Roma people In almost every country report you can find that Roma need that human rights respected and that

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<sup>9</sup> For example Macedonian and Sweden: these 2 countries belong to Europe but one is a member of the European Union and the other is a candidate to be a member of the Union. In these 2 countries Roma are recognized as national minorities. In Macedonia they are recognized in 1991 and in Sweden in 1998 because of the better economic conditions in Sweden, Roma people have migrated from Macedonia to Sweden not because of the human rights but because they have better economy standard compared to Macedonia. Compared to Swedish society they live in poverty, mostly living in poor areas or socially disadvantaged places. And they don't have integration in Sweden society. They are facing discrimination regarding finding apartment where to live and finding jobs. (see, Montesino & Ohlsson Alfakir, 2015)

<sup>10</sup> Roma are no less than 80% in some EU states; and inadequate infrastructure, poor accommodation and poor services are often reported, but seldom challenged by the EU states 'ghettoisation' policies, statelessness that leads to lack of personal documents and widespread prejudice. Numerous other sources have confirmed beyond any doubt that their situation needs immediate attention: The Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities has stated that the Roma situation varies from unsatisfactory to worrying; 2 Recommendation 1557 (2002) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe referred to widespread discrimination in every field of personal and public life, marginalisation and segregation of Roma; 3 whereas the 2000 Central and Eastern European preparatory meeting for the World Conference against Racism

noted that the Roma 'remained the least integrated and most persecuted people in Europe

Dr Alexandra Xantaki Hope dies last an EU Directive on Roma Integration



more things need to be improved. It is written that they mostly live in poor areas suffering from lack of education, and coping with everyday discrimination on all grounds.

## Government's special treatment for Roma

In 2005, eight governments declared 2005–15 as the Decade of Roma Inclusion<sup>11</sup>, and were soon joined by others committed to eliminating discrimination and closing the unacceptable gaps between Roma and the rest of society. Under the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies, many more states and the EU have voiced the same commitment. While some progress has been made, we recognize that much more needs to be done in four fields (education, employment, housing health).

## EU efforts for Roma inclusion

Following a request from the European Commission, all EU Member States have adopted national strategies for Roma inclusion<sup>12</sup>. The Commission follows up the work of the Member States annually. At the end of 2013, the Member States adopted a Council recommendation on how the Member States can more effectively implement their strategies

## Roma people in Sweden

Sweden doesn't register the population by ethnicity, and ethnic belonging is based on estimates of self-identification in other forms. Thus, it is not possible to give a statistical overview of the number of Roma or about the conditions under which Roma people live. Estimations of the size of Roma minority and investigations of living conditions among Roma are therefore based on qualitative data and rather small and localised case studies.

In 1999 the Roma people were recognised as one of Sweden's official national minorities and their language Romani Chib was acknowledged as a national minority language. Today there are five

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<sup>11</sup> The Decade is an international initiative, which brings together Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as Romani civil society to (i) launch initiatives to strengthen Roma inclusion as a high priority on the regional and European political agendas; (ii) learn and exchange experiences; (iii) involve Roma meaningfully in all policy making on matters concerning them; (iv) bring in international experience and expertise to help make progress on challenging issues; and (v) raise public awareness of the situation of Roma through active The Decade for Roma Inclusion has been a strong inspiration for the EU Framework. It has been playing a very positive role in mobilising civil society and ensuring the smooth transition of enlargement countries into the EU Framework. The work of civil coalitions coordinated and supported by the Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat has also showed a strong added value. (European Commission, 2014:12) Terms of reference (p1) Decade of Roma Inclusion

<sup>12</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/eu-framework/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/eu-framework/index_en.htm) Roma integration by EU country

major Romani groups in Sweden. They are the Travellers, the Finnish Roma, the Swedish Roma, the non –Nordic Kalderari and the Arlii, the Slavic Roma. Approximately 50,000 Roma live in Sweden, about 20,000 of which are Travellers (Resande). The majority of the Roma people live in the metropolitan areas, in its socio-economically disadvantaged parts (Selling, 2013).

The Roma have been living in Sweden for centuries. The first known Roma came to Sweden in the 16 century from Finland. Since then Roma have immigrated<sup>13</sup> to Sweden at different periods and from various countries in Europe or Russia.

Roma have often lived a life of travelling not least because of the difficulties for them to get a resident permit or permanent base somewhere. From the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>, a second wave of immigration of Roma took place, this time via Russia from Valakia. In the 1960s and 1970s approximately 10000 non Nordic Roma came from Poland and Eastern Europe. Most recently, people from the Balkans countries come because of the instability and the war in former Yugoslavia.

Roma were generally economically independent living at that time on traditional occupations as coppersmiths, ground horse trading, fortune tellers, musicians and theatre performers. Several families or groups travelled around the country and regularly returned to the same place. In the summer time many travelled to the northern part of the country, in wintertime to southern Sweden, where they usually stayed until spring. Roma families were facing discrimination in terms that they couldn't not stay more than a few weeks at time in one location, resulting in the children not attending school on a regular basis, adults were denied child allowances and didn't had the right to vote (you need references here). This meant that they could not influence any political decisions to better their socioeconomic and educational situation. Between 1914-1954, Swedish borders were closed for Roma. That meant that no Roma could seek refuge from Hitler persecution during the Nazi period (Taikon 1963; Hazell 2000). During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries Roma were forcibly assimilated which implied forced sedentarisation. A written communication from 1897 emphasizes that children should be separate from the parents and placed in institutions or individuals living at places where the parents normally did not visit. This would make the children decent and domiciled as citizens.

There is also a case of sterilization on Roma women in Sweden such as the case of the mother of the Roma Member of the European Parliament from Sweden, Soraya Post. (you need a reference here)

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<sup>13</sup> Die Bildungssituation von Roma in Europa

The first person who raised the school issue was Johan Dimitri Taikon (1879-1950), a Roma person from the Kelderash group, who already in the 1930 submitted several proposals to the King of Sweden, pointing to the lack of education offers to the Romani children. One of his proposals was to appoint a Romani supervisor to oversee the school situation of the Roman children (Sjögren 2010). The other alternative was to let them attend regular school wherever they were, often living in temporary conditions.

The Swedes Roma rights movement has been initiated in the 1963 by the first Romany author, Katarina Taikon (1932-1995)<sup>14</sup>, who published the book on the life of Gypsy Women (Zigenerska). This book was a revolution and led to authorities rapidly taking initiatives to improve the situation regarding human rights such as housing and education. Johan Dimitri Taikon, Katarina and her sister Rosa Taikon are considered to be the first Romani activists in Sweden, who together with a group of actors and intellectuals championed the Romani cause. One of these activists was Tomas Hammarberg the previous Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe and current commissioner for Anti Gypsism.

## **Sweden today in terms of Roma Rights**

Roma living conditions today are often much worse than those of the general population in Sweden, or compared to Roma minorities in certain parts of Europe<sup>15</sup>. The problems described in the final report of the Delegation for Roma Issues are considerable with regard to education, employment, housing, health and social care and security. The abuses and discriminatory measures affecting Roma during the 20th century have also contributed to a mutual trust gap between Roma

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<sup>14</sup> Katerina Taikon was illiterate. She learned the alphabet at the age of 33 .Katerina Taikon also wrote the widely read and appreciated children books about the Romani girl Katitzi comprising 13 volumes with autobiographical traces documenting Katizis life .These book has been read in schools. During our stay in Sweden there was the premier of the documentary movie about Katarina Taikon (2 October 2015). This movie is raising awareness among of lot of people especially for Swedish people and they are more aware what was going on in terms of Roma and their rights, in terms of education and right to be on one place. But in the other hand lot of young Roma start to have a role model.

<sup>15</sup> Comparing Sweden to Macedonia in (1963 Macedonia was part of Yugoslavia) Roma people had full rights to study and go to schools. Also they could be employed, however, unfortunately, the Swede Roma (the domestic Roma) didn't have this opportunity. Because of this gap you cannot find so many educated Roma in Sweden (domestic one) from the Balkan who are educated, and they are more aware about their human rights or minority issues.

and the majority society. Roma people also have a bad history in Sweden, what the Roma Rights report describes as “a dark history”. The positive thing is that the Governments of the last few years have publicly acknowledged this as a problem and are active in trying to find political solutions.

Unfortunately, the written documents and strategies are not enough to improve the situation for Roma. The Roma population in Sweden have a mistrust towards the institutions because they suffered a long period of exclusion and discrimination. Living for many years in the margins of society and the labour market, they have become alien to the state institutions of welfare (Montesino, Ohlsson Alfakir 2015). The impact of that long and dark history has been very serious and still affects the life chances of Roma people in Sweden today.

## **The effort of the Swedish Government**

The Swedish Government has adopted long – term strategy for Roma inclusion 2012-2032<sup>16</sup>, a twenty-year strategy. On 16 February 2012, the former Government adopted a coordinated, long-term strategy for Roma inclusion between 2012 and 2032 (Government communication 2011/12:56). The 20-year strategy should be seen as a strengthening of the minorities policy that applies to the five national minorities: Jews, Roma, Sami, Swedish Finns and Tornedalers. The former Government has dedicated 60 million krona for the period 2012–2015 for measures for Roma in addition to the regular funds available to the national minorities. The overall goal of the 20-year strategy is that a Roma person who turns 20 years of age in 2032 is to have the same opportunities in life as a non-Roma. The primary target group of the strategy is Roma in situations of social and economic exclusion. Special priority is given to women and children. The strategy draws on a human rights perspective, with special emphasis on the principle of non-discrimination. The strategy is based on the proposals in the final report of the Delegation for Roma Issues, and a number of meetings with Roma representatives were held during the preparation of and consultation on the proposals.

### **Social Areas - Measures within the framework of the strategy**

The strategy contains goals and measures in several areas of activity

The pilot project is based on the Swedish government's 20 year strategy for Roma inclusion. The strategy has determined that six social areas need incentives as a starting point for Romani

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<sup>16</sup> Roma Sweden strategy <http://www.government.se/information-material/2012/03/a-strategy-for-roma-inclusion-2012-2032/>

inclusion. Education Employment Housing Health, Social Care and Security Culture and Language Civil society's organization.

### **Pilot scheme at municipal level 2012–2015**

Municipalities have a key role in the work to improve the situation of the Roma as they are responsible for activities that are crucial for Roma opportunities for inclusion in society. To speed up developments, the former Government was conducting a special initiative in the form of a pilot scheme in five municipalities (Luleå, Malmö, Helsingborg, Linköping and Gothenburg). Several government agencies, including the National Agency for Education, the Swedish Public Employment Service and the Equality Ombudsman, are involved in the work. Stockholm County Administrative Board has responsibility for monitoring and coordinating the pilot scheme. The methods and procedures that the municipalities develop will then be disseminated to other municipalities. To promote the dissemination of knowledge and experience right now, the former Government has allocated funds to a national network of municipalities working on Roma inclusion.

During our stay in Sweden we had a chance to visit one of the municipalities that is involved in this Pilot scheme, the Municipality of Luleå. Luleå town has about 47,000 inhabitants and is the seat of Luleå Municipality (with a total population of 75,921). In this pilot project are employed three Roma people and two of them are from the Kale or Finnish Roma<sup>17</sup>. They work as bridge builders between the Roma communities and the public sector trying to mediate and bridge the gap of trust that prevents Roma from participating fully in society.

While we were in Luleå, we attended a meeting on the pilot Roma Inclusion Project, where the Roma bridge builders, and members of the local council were present (from the areas of Education, Housing, Employment, Culture, and Womens' issues). We had the opportunity to discuss with them after the meeting, and then to talk more at length with the Municipality officer responsible for the Project, as well as with two of the three Roma mediators. At the very beginning of the pilot project in Luleå only one Roma person was employed, and it was difficult to find others willing to participate in this pilot project, but eventually two young people were identified and willing to be involved (one man and one woman). All three bridge builders from Luleå Municipality are also taking the mediators' course offered by Södertörn University in the south of Sweden. The mediators have the role and responsibility to make connections between the Roma and the welfare institutions in the municipality, to facilitate access to such institutions, and to help the Roma people overcome their reluctance to engage with and be involved in them. In relation to the Municipality, the role of the mediators is to raise awareness of the problems that the community and individual Roma may be facing in their interactions with public institutions, and to try to identify ways to overcome those. Building trust between the 'two sides' is paramount to overcoming the difficulties

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<sup>17</sup> The specific for them is the outfit. The women are wearing black skirts and white shirts, whereas men wear black trousers and shirts that resemble the 16<sup>th</sup> century shirts in Finland

(real and perceived) that both local Roma and Municipality employees face in their interactions with each other.

In addition, and in the words of the responsible officer and one of the Roma bridge builders, the mediators act as “role models” to the Roma community, something that it is hoped will further help in the building of trust.

## **Measures against Anti Gypsyism**

One of the positive measures that the Government is doing is establishing a Commission to deal with issues of anti-gypsyism. In March 2014, the former Government<sup>18</sup> decided to appoint a commission against anti-gypsyism. The Commission is to complement and reinforce society’s efforts against anti-gypsyism<sup>19</sup> and contribute to efforts to bridge the trust gap between Roma and the rest of society. The Equality Ombudsman, the Living History Forum and Data Inspection Board conduct special programmes or assignments that also help to counter discrimination and antigypsyism.

## **The White Paper on abuses and rights violations**

In March 2014, work was completed on a White Paper on abuses and violations against Roma during the 20th century. The White Paper was intended to give recognition to the victims and their relatives, help raise awareness of anti-gypsyism, and increase understanding of the situation of the Roma minority. It is an important part of efforts to improve Roma living conditions and to counteract the discrimination faced by Roma today.

During our stay in Sweden we had a chance to have an interview (via Skype) with one of the Commission participants. They shared their own experience. When we ask if the Commission is really needed they answered us affirmatively because Roma people do really suffer discrimination on the daily basis. The discrimination is widespread and as we were told, “this is a well known fact”. They personally consider that the Commission is a significant measure towards influencing politics on higher national level. There are also reactions to the negative articles about the Roma

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<sup>18</sup> <http://motantiziganism.se/antiziganism>

<sup>19</sup> Antiziganism or anti-Gypsyism, is the particular racist structure, ideology and hostile prejudice targeted at Roma. It seeks to dehumanise, alienate and drive away Roma precisely because they are Roma. Antiziganism infringes the principle of equal value and equal rights. It is based on seeing people as being of unequal value and contributes towards an unequal distribution of power and resources.

in the press. In the Commission there are nine employed people of whom five are Roma (one is Soraya Viola Heléna Post, Swedish member of the European Parliament). One product of the Commissions work is a book, to be published 29.10.2015 which will be distributed in all schools in Sweden to students in eight and ninth grade. It is a history of Roma and human rights in Sweden. But the problem that worries us is that the book shows the stereotypes about Roma such as poverty, travelling. Therefore we asked whether this representation of Roma may have negative effects. The answer for them was that they will train the teachers how to handle the children and that a positive example will be given by Roma activists so that the children can create a clear image. According to the Law, children should learn about minorities in order to have a comprehensive overview and knowledge of the life and conditions for the various minorities in the country. The commission is hoping that with this book a big progress will be achieved in order to close the wide gap between Roma and non-Roma in terms of public perceptions and the challenge of stereotypes.

## **Conclusions:**

It is tremendous facts that Roma people are facing discrimination in 21<sup>st</sup> century in an economically well developed country.

We hope that the Swedish Government, will give the same opportunities to the Roma community how lives there with century. So they can first feel as human beings, not facing discrimination on a daily basis

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**This is wrong:**

*Dr Alexandra Xantaki Hope dies last an EU Directive on Roma Integration*

**It should be:**

Xanthaki, A. (2005) Hope dies last: An EU directive on Roma integration. *European Public Law*, 11(4), 515-526.