

SWEDEN

Date of Elections: 19 September 1982

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the seats in Parliament on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Swedish Parliament, the *Riksdag*, comprises 349 members elected for 3 years.

Electoral System

All Swedish citizens who have reached the age of 18 and are not under tutelage are entitled to vote. This applies also to citizens living abroad provided that they have been residents of Sweden at some time and apply for entry in a special electoral register.

Electoral registers are drawn up for each election district and are revised annually. Voting is not compulsory. Postal voting is permitted.

Anyone who is entitled to vote may be elected as a member of the *Riksdag*. The parliamentary mandate is generally not incompatible with other public or private offices. Although Ministers (as well as the Speaker) may not serve as members of Parliament while in office, they may retain their seats which, in the meantime, are held by substitute members, and may take up their parliamentary duties if and when they leave the Government. Substitute members also serve for ordinary members who have obtained a leave of absence for at least one month.

Of the 349 members of the *Riksdag*, 310 are elected in 28 constituencies, under the party-list system, with proportional distribution of seats according to the St. Lague method (divisors: 1, 4, 3, 5, 7, etc.). To obtain a seat, a party must either obtain at least 4% of the votes cast throughout the country or 12% of the votes cast in a constituency.

The 39 remaining (or "compensatory") seats are allotted on the basis of total votes throughout the country, though distributed by constituencies; for this process, parties which have obtained seats only by means of the 12% rule are excluded.

If a seat in the *Riksdag* should become vacant between general elections, it is filled by a substitute member chosen at the same time as the elected member.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

Following the general elections of September 1979, the Moderate (Conservative) Party Ministers resigned in May 1981, thus compelling the coalition Government - consisting also

of the Centre and Liberal parties - to break up before these two latter parties regrouped under the leadership of incumbent Prime Minister Thorbjorn Falldin (Centre Party), who then headed a minority administration.

The election campaign was dominated by economic issues. The Social Democrats criticized the Government for reducing the social programmes that constituted Sweden's welfare state system, and promised to launch a Government investment scheme (to be financed by an increase in sales tax) that would create thousands of new jobs, as well as a "wage-earner fund" designed to increase worker investment in industry, and thus capital formation, by taxing employers; this last proposal proved to be particularly controversial.

On polling day, the Social Democrats, led by former Prime Minister Olof Palme, won a commanding 166 seats, enabling his party to return to power after six years of non-socialist rule. The former coalition partners together lost 12 seats, thus totalling 163. The Swedish Communist Party, holding the balance, undertook to support a minority Social Democratic Government. On 8 October, Prime Minister Palme's 19-member Cabinet took office.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the Riksdag

Number of registered electors.	6,130,136
Voters	5,606,603 (91.4%)
Blank or void ballot papers.	52,209
Valid votes.	5,554,394

Political Group	Votes obtained		Number of Seats
Social Democratic Party	2,533,250	45.6	166 (+12)
Moderate Party (Conservatives)	1,313,337	23.6	86 (+13)
Centre Party.	859,618	15.4	56 (-8)
Liberal Party.	327,770	5.9	21 (-17)
Communist Party.	308,899	5.5	20(=)
Christian Democratic Union.	103,820	1.8	—
Others.	107,900	1.9	

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2. *Distribution of Deputies according to Sex*

Men	253
Women.	96
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3. *Distribution of Deputies according to Age Group*

Under 30 years.	3
30-39.	31
40-49.	111
50-59.	142
60-69.	59
70 and over.	3
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