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Fast tracks in Sweden – a multi-stakeholder approach to labour market integration

SALAR and the contribution to Lab-INT

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SALAR as an employers' organisation

SALAR is a long standing and active member of CEEP, participating in the European Social Dialogue.

SALAR is both an employers' organisation and an organisation that represents and advocates for local government in Sweden. All of Sweden's municipalities, county councils and regions are our members, on a voluntary basis. Our members are employers of more than one million people, which makes us one of the largest employer organisations in Sweden. SALAR negotiate and sign central collective agreements, to make our members stronger in their role as employers and create conditions for local solutions. SALAR is a politically run organisation. Our supreme decision-making body is the Congress. Between congresses the SALAR Board leads the political work of the Association, supported by the Executive Committee of the Board and by delegations and committees.

SALAR's objectives as an employer organisation are, among others:

- to secure industrial peace by reaching centrally negotiated agreements
- to ensure that centrally negotiated agreements are in line with social and local government economic parameters
- to contribute to improvements in the efficiency and productivity of its members' activities

These objectives will enable us to help our members become stronger in their role as employers and to provide them with even more opportunities to identify solutions across the entire spectrum of employer policy. Our aim with this approach is to increase our target fulfilment in all activities.

The primary target groups of the Employment policy division are elected representatives and employees with overall responsibility for matters of employer policy, i.e. local government boards, administrative committees, municipal and county council directors, personnel managers, negotiating managers, finance and administrative managers.

The target group in certain matters may also be statisticians, labour law specialists, or managers with responsibility for the labour market, equality, integration or personnel.

We speak for our members in dialogue with the Government, Riksdagen (Swedish Parliament), government agencies, the EU and other key organisations.



Employment in municipalities and county councils

Overall, municipalities and county councils employ more than one million people, corresponding roughly to 25 per cent of total employment in Sweden. Municipalities employ approximately 760,000 people and county councils employ around 250,000. Women represent just over 80 per cent of the total employment figure for municipalities and county councils.

Competency needs in the welfare sector

One challenge for SALAR's members is skills provision, especially in the school and healthcare sectors. The population is growing, and with it the need for personnel to provide welfare services, for both children and the elderly. Meanwhile, many employees will reach retirement age in the next few years.

More about SALAR and its members

The Association strives to promote and strengthen local self-government and the development of regional and local democracy. The Association's operations are financed by the fees paid annually by members in relation to their population and tax capacity. Other revenue sources are courses, conferences, consultancy assignments and external financing.

Municipalities, county councils and regions in Sweden

Sweden is divided into 290 municipalities and 20 county councils/regions.

There is no hierarchical relation between municipalities, county councils and regions, since all have their own self-governing local authorities with responsibility for different activities. The only exception is Gotland, an island in the Baltic Sea, where the municipality also has the responsibilities and tasks normally associated with a county council.

The Parliament, Riksdagen, is the supreme political decision-making body in Sweden.

The municipalities', county councils' and regions' main tasks are to deliver school education, child care, care of the elderly, technical services, water and sewerage systems, planning and infrastructure, health and medical services, hospitals, public transport, secondary education and training, culture, environment, tourism and business and industry support.

Local government in Sweden

Local government has a long tradition in Sweden. The country's municipalities, county councils and regions are responsible for providing a significant proportion of all public services. They have a considerable degree of autonomy and have independent powers of taxation. Local self-government and the right to levy taxes are



stipulated in the Instrument of Government, one of the four pillars of the Swedish Constitution.

The Constitution

- Art. 1. Swedish democracy is founded on the free formation of opinion and on universal and equal suffrage. It shall be realised through a representative and parliamentary policy and through local self-government.
- Art. 7. Sweden has municipalities and county councils. The decision-making power in these local authorities is exercised by elected assemblies.

Elected representatives in municipalities and county councils

There are approximately 46,000 political assignments in the 290 municipalities and 3,500 political assignments in the 20 county councils and regions. This means that 1 per cent of the adult population in Sweden holds a political assignment in a municipality or county council.

In local government councils, 42 per cent of the councillors are women and 58 per cent are men. In the county council assemblies, 47 per cent are women and 53 per cent are men. Approximately half the councillors in local government councils and county council assemblies are between 50 and 65 years old. Only 5 per cent are between 18 and 29 years old and close to 10 per cent are older than 65.

Local and regional self-government and the right to levy taxes

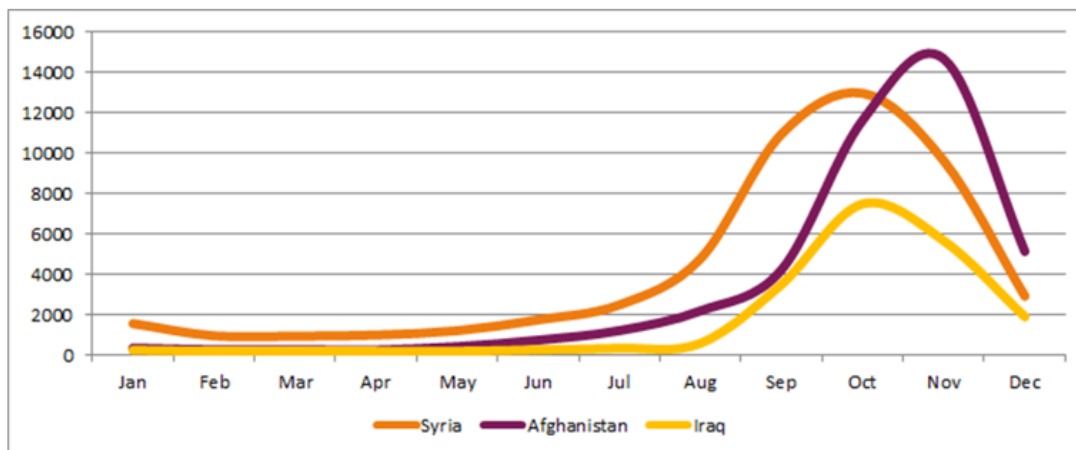
Local and regional self-government is an important element in the democratic system of Sweden. Local and regional self-government is written into the Swedish Constitution (the Instrument of Government). The right of municipalities and county councils to levy their own taxes among their citizens was established as long ago as in the local government ordinances of 1862. Municipalities and county councils are also responsible for supplying welfare services to their citizens. Most of the tasks of municipalities and county councils are regulated in special legislation (e.g. the Social Services Act and the Health and Medical Services Act).

Some brief facts about Sweden, refugees and migrants

Sweden has a population of around 10 million people. In 2015 around 163 000 refugees and migrants came to Sweden and sought asylum.

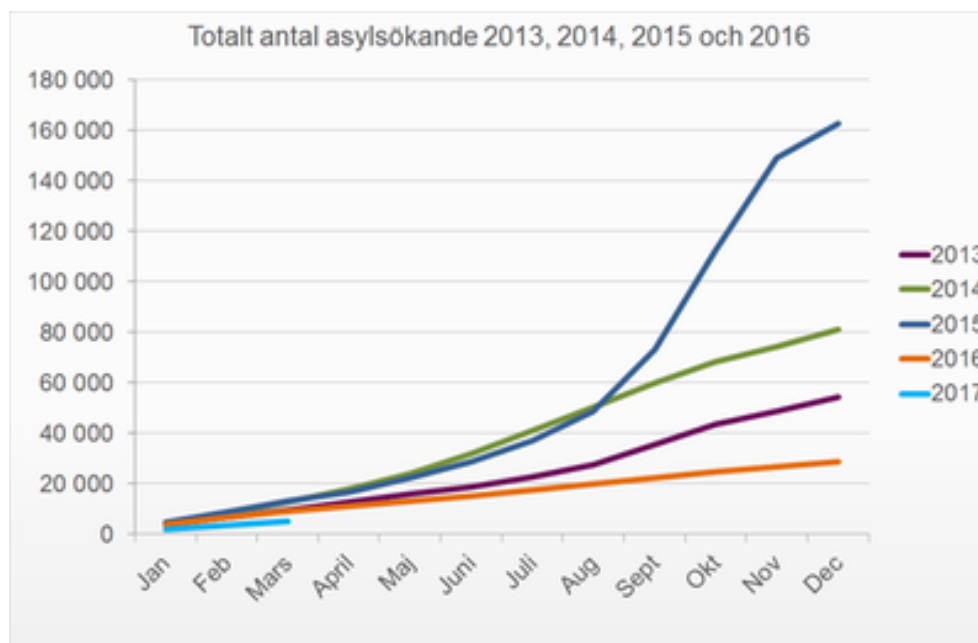
Many different professionals/ profession and areas of which SALAR's members are responsible for are affected, mainly education, social services and different parts of

health care. Taking into account the tasks that SALAR's members - Swedish municipalities, county councils and regions – have the responsibility to deliver, it is a huge challenge and opportunity to integrate these migrants into the Swedish labour market and society. This can only be done with a multi stakeholder approach.



Afghans, Iraqis and Syrians were the three most common nationalities among asylum seekers in 2015. The table above shows many people that sought asylum each month up until 28 December.

The total number of asylum applications in 2013-2017



Applications for asylum received in 2015

Total number of applications	Of which male	Of which female	Of which children (unaccompanied minors* included)	Of which unaccompanied children
162 877	114 728	48 149	70 384	35 369

* an unaccompanied minor is a person under the age of 18 who has come to Sweden without his or her parents or other custodial parent.

Fast tracks from arrival to work – a quicker introduction of newly arrived refugees and migrants

Fast tracks – objectives

- To shorten time from arrival to work for newly arrived migrants with skills and competence needed in the labour market
- To use skills in the right way – newly arrived migrants must not only find jobs, they should find the right jobs.
- Employers/branches/sectors where there is a shortage of labour will get help with the provision of skills. Matching of the supply and demand sides.

Tripartite talks

The idea of national fast tracks for immigrants was initiated by the Swedish government. Through tripartite talks between the Public Employment Agency and the social partners (the employers and the trade unions) the fast tracks are agreed upon and carried out through a joint responsibility. SALAR entered into agreements on the following fast tracks in 2015, with different unions according to the professions:

- Fast track for teachers and pre-school teachers.
- Fast track for the 21 authorized professions within the health care sector.
- Fast track for immigrants with a degree in social work.

Tripartite talks have also been held in the following sectors: pharmacies, tourism, health and medical care, local government, industry, health and social care, transport, painting, timber and graphics companies, real estate, energy and electronics, building, forestry and agriculture.

Fast tracks components

The Swedish Public Employment Agency (PEA) is responsible for the introduction of newly arrived immigrants in the labour market. Fast track is a new way of working where different support actions within the commission of the PEA are combined to



make the introduction more efficient. Depending on the needs of the specific fast track, the PEA and the social partners tailor the components and put together a chain of actions that make up the fast tracks. Although the individuals in a certain fast track follow almost the same path, the number of actions needed and the time it takes to finally be able to enter into the labour market depends of course on the individual immigrant, for example his or her level of skill, experience and aptitude.

Possible components within a fast track:

- Swedish language training - start as early as at the asylum centers.
- Early assessment of the experience, skills and motivation of newly arrived migrants.
- Validation and assessment of education and professional skills according to industry/sector-specific requirements.
- Vocational and study guidance.
- Fast track and employment matching.
- Swedish language training relevant for the professional area.
- Supplementary necessary educational initiatives.
- Language training/ supplementary courses combined with a work placement or job.
- Language support, supervisors and mentors at the workplaces.

SALAR's contribution to the LAB INT project

Fast tracks is a strategy for SALAR to meet the competency needs of our members and, at the same time, contribute to a successful integration of newly arrived immigrants and refugees. The fast tracks have a multilevel approach – with both national, regional and local initiatives and projects.

As part of our contribution to Lab-INT, we want to focus on one or more fast tracks, that SALAR, our members and other stakeholders, such as Public Employment Agencies, Trade Unions and Universities, are working on together. We would like to focus on the fast tracks for teachers and possibly also say something about fast tracks for doctors, nurses and dentists.

Fast track for teachers and pre-schoolteachers

The fast track for teachers and pre-school-teachers is built on an agreement between SALAR, The Swedish Public Employment Agency (PEA), the two main trade unions for teachers (Lärarförbundet and Lärarnas riksförbund) and an employers'

organisation within the private sector (Almega tjänsteföretagen). The goal is for the participants to reach a Swedish teaching certification.

We have many newly arrived children in Sweden, which increases the need to have more teachers, with different skills, including language skills (quantity and quality). The idea of the fast track is a win-win situation: the municipalities as responsible for the schools can quicker recruit the teachers that they need with the right skills, the teachers get a job and are integrated faster in the society, and the pupils get teachers with the right skills.

The process

The PEA is responsible for identifying skills and competencies. When the PEA finds individuals with a degree in teaching (either teachers or pre-school teachers) the PEA examine the diplomas and inform the individuals about the possibility of entering a fast track. The fast track is currently aimed at an Arabic speaking target group. The participants all hold a residence permit and are enrolled at the PEA, which entails an allowance during an integration program of two years. The participants start with taking language courses in Swedish. Step two in the process is to enroll in a 26 week long vocational education where the participants learn about being a teacher in Sweden. The course has different components and is held in both Swedish and Arabic. The participants also get guidance and counselling at the university so that they know what they need in order to reach a Swedish teaching certification. An internship at a school is included in the course. The course is held by six different universities throughout Sweden, which are the same universities that are also responsible for offering complementary education to individuals with a foreign degree in teaching. Stockholm University has the responsibility for the co-ordination, given to it by the PEA.

Fast tracks for doctors, nurses and dentists

Some of SALAR's members - regions and county councils - identifies/interview refugees, to find out their professional background, already upon their arrival to Sweden, sometimes already at the "health interview" when they arrive. Doctors (foremost), nurses and dentists are offered language courses with a professional orientation (vocabulary) for example through e-learning platforms and teacher led lessons, and try to contribute with other measures, such as traineeships and study visits. In this way, the doctors' language level and contacts with a potential employer are more quickly attained, then through the ordinary processes. This has shown to create strong motivation amongst the refugees/migrants with medical professions. Thus it creates a win-win situation for employers that are looking for competent



workforce and for the refugees/migrants that are integrated into work and the society much faster than normal.

- At the *Turin conference in April*, we will give a presentation and a short introduction on what fast tracks are and how we are working with them and give a concrete example on a specific fast track (the teacher and pre-school teacher fast track). We will participate actively in the discussions and work of the rest of the Turin event, share our experience with the fast tracks, learn from others and establish contacts.
- At the *dissemination seminar in Stockholm in November 2018*, our idea is to present more of our work with the fast tracks and to disseminate together with all participants the work done so far, both within the fast tracks in Sweden and the three pilot cases in Italy, Belgium and Germany.
- We will continue our work in the extended steering group.

Contact persons from SALAR:

We will be four people at SALAR working with this project to varying extent.

Our contact persons are:

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