

Sweden

COST ACTION:
**CONSTITUTION-MAKING
AND DELIBERATIVE
DEMOCRACY**



Type: Parliamentary democracy

Democratic participation: Sweden has near top scores on all of V-Dem's democracy indices (electoral, deliberative, egalitarian and liberal democracy), except for the participatory. Sweden scores low in terms of the direct popular vote (i.e. referendums, initiatives, and plebiscites), which suggests that there are few institutionalized processes by which the citizens can express their opinions on specific issues.¹ As to the author's knowledge, Sweden has not organised any public deliberations aiming at changing the Constitution in recent times.

Referendums

- Binding decisions by direct democracy are limited to referendums
- Binding referendums:
 - Regard pending changes in the Constitution, or approval of international agreements affecting rights/obligations protected by the Constitution
 - None has yet been held

¹ Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) data as of 2014. Source: https://www.v-dem.net/media/filer_public/5f/37/5f3729f2-d1f0-4ee8-934a-798af08d4583/country_brief_sweden.pdf

- Consultative referendums at the national level:
 - Six held, the latest one in 2003, on the introduction of the euro ²
- Referendums at the municipal level:
 - Always consultative
 - The municipal council can decide to hold a referendum
 - Alternatively, if requested by 10% of those entitled to vote, the municipal council must examine whether a referendum is to be held ³

Legal initiatives & consultations

- Bills may be based on the suggestions put forward by the Parliament, or by citizens, interest groups and public authorities
- "Remisser" is a referral process whereby the Government can ask relevant stakeholders to submit comments on a proposal
- The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) support the effort of members to create new forms for civic participation, e.g. citizen dialogue, e-petitions and participatory budgeting

² The euro referendum became binding in practice, as the parliamentary parties had committed to acting in accordance with its outcome

³ But the referendum does not take place if 2/3 of the members of the municipal council vote "no" to the initiative.