

# ***NATIONAL REPORT***



COUNTRY:  
***Sweden***

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# **1. SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE NATIONAL SPORT SYSTEM/ARCHITECTURE**

The Swedish Sports Confederation (Riksidrottsförbundet-RF) and Swedish Sports Education (SISU Idrottsutbildarna) are the main structures for sport in Sweden. As the names indicate, they consist of a traditional federation structure and an education structure called SISU Idrottsutbildarna. There are two legal bodies but one office.

The organisational structure is based on 71 federations, 19 districts and includes around 18,000 clubs. The Swedish Sports Confederation and Swedish Sports Education distribute financial resources to both the federations and the districts (around SEK 720 million/€67 million in 2021). The resources of the Swedish Sports Confederation and Swedish Sports Education are primarily state support from the Swedish fiscal budget.

The Swedish Olympic Committee is a separate organisation. The committee consists of 41 member federations, the national sports federations for the Olympic sports and 15 recognized federations (recognized by the International Olympic Committee, but not currently on the Olympic programme). It is the Swedish Sports Confederation that distributes the financial resources to the Swedish Olympic Committee.

# **2. TO WHAT EXTENT IS THERE A SPORT DIPLOMACY STRATEGY?**

Sweden does not have a specific sport diplomacy strategy. Themes in line with such topics are included in the 'International Strategy 2018-2025 of the Swedish Sports Confederation' and in the good governance work of the sports federations.

Due to the governance structure with considerable delegation of tasks to the Swedish Sport Confederation, the Swedish Sports Confederation can be said to 'own' the topic: it is leading in its development. The Swedish Sports Confederation has close relations with the Government built on delegation and trust.

Considering the Swedish Sports Confederation's "International Guidelines for Swedish Sport", decided at the General Assembly in 2015, Swedish sport should work according to the principles of good governance, which includes democratic processes, transparency and anti-corruption.

The document "RF's code for democratic governance of sports federations and clubs" is modelled on the "Swedish Code of Corporate Governance" and uses the governance principle "Follow or Explain".

In the International Strategy 2018-2025 of the Swedish Sports Confederation the goal is described as the following:

- 35% of the federations with international operations must complete training, a workshop or project on Good Governance nationally or internationally.
- The need for work with Good Governance has become increasingly clear and is of great importance. It is important for the Swedish sports movement to be aware of what is happening at the international level and for sports federations to follow best practice. In the international guidelines, Good Governance is described as work with democratic processes, transparency and anti-corruption.

- **Responsibility of federations:** Sports in Sweden must always stand for Good Governance and international representatives at international level must work for and support the development of a transparent and democratically structured sports movement without corruption.
- **Responsibility of the federations and Swedish Sports Education SISU:** Based on the needs of the federations, they should offer training and meeting places for both new knowledge acquisition and exchanges. The federations must also contribute to disseminating good examples and support federations to achieve the goals.

### ***3. WHAT IS THE LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT OF SPORT DIPLOMACY GOVERNANCE AND WHO ARE THE MAIN ACTORS?***

The model of governance is a combination of what is written in the international strategy and the international guidelines, the implementation of the code and the ambition to have more international representatives. The Swedish Sports Confederation has very good cooperation with the Ministry for Sport but is working to get the Ministry of Foreign affairs more involved in sport. It is said that the international representatives of the Sport Federations have a broad network beyond the Government network, in the field of public entities, and that this could be put to greater use.

Generally, there are good relations between the Swedish Sports Confederation and the Ministry responsible for Sport. Sport has been under various ministries over time: currently it is part of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs.

In general, Sweden sees sport as a national competence, and not a competence that should be delegated to international inter-governmental institutions such as the European Union or Council of Europe. Sweden holds the Presidency of the European Council in the first half of 2023. According to the Council on the European Union Work Plan for Sport (1 January 2021-30 June 2024), the topics to be addressed during the Swedish Presidency could include: Good Governance development and promotion within sport.

Regarding the level of engagement of official diplomats in sport diplomacy, it is suggested that the Swedish Sports Confederation aims to enhance relations and cooperation between the international representatives in the Sport Federations and Swedish ambassadors around the world. However, the code for democratic governance is relevant and useful for all stakeholders operating in the field of sport.

Only a few sports federations are active in this field, but all federations are obliged to follow the international guidelines.

Regarding the media, they could raise questions and increase the volume of sport diplomacy actions and the private sector would indirectly influence by following and placing emphasis on the code for democratic governance in its collaboration with the sports sector.

Moreover, athletes and their federations are independent. Many athletes and federations have refused to compete with Russian athletes – and are free to do so.

## **4. TOOLS OF SPORT DIPLOMACY**

The work on good governance has been increased and made more precise and concrete in recent years. A timeline is set for entities to follow the code for democratic governance:

- 1 January 2023: the Sports Confederation should follow the Code.
- 1 January 2023: the 19 districts of the Sports Confederation should follow the code
- 1 January 2024: all 71 federations should follow the code.

It is not mandatory for clubs, but bigger clubs will be encouraged to adapt the code.

As the organisational structure is based on a single organisation, the Swedish Sports Confederation is in practice the organisation handling the governmental financial support for sport. The strategy to implement the code for democratic governance is incorporated into the budget, including education and guidance for entities and leaders.

The main activities are education and training towards implementation of the code for democratic governance. Federations must comply with statutes and work according to the principles of democracy and transparency and can apply for both financial and personal support for this work.

No sport diplomacy activities are coordinated at a national level, but some districts work on the international level on the topic of democracy.

It is worth noting that sport diplomacy activities could be linked to education and training in implementation of the code for democratic governance and transparency.

## **5. SPORT DIPLOMACY'S FUTURE**

The field is not very broad. However, concerning the code for democratic governance, there is good support and competences. The ambition is to disseminate knowledge of sport diplomacy internationally through the international representatives in the sports federations, but these federations have a lot of topics to advocate for, so this is naturally not always the highest priority.

The greatest challenges and opportunities are getting the federations to fulfil all the obligations of the code at a good pace. But awareness is definitely raised and their interest is growing.

Concerning a European policy the national experts have identified the following possible disadvantages considering that sport is mainly a national competence: Countries are very different and there are also different perceptions in different countries of how sport should be governed. A European policy would need to be very general to be accepted by all the countries.

As for the possible advantages, it is considered that a European policy could help countries and organisations facing the biggest challenges. But it is estimated that such a policy would be less than the requirements set out in the Swedish code for democratic governance (and therefore, less relevant for Sweden).

## **6. INTERVIEWS**

- Marie Denitton, International coordinator, Riksidrottsförbundet/Swedish Sports Confederation | SISU Idrottsutbildarna/Swedish Sports Education.
- Two researchers from Idrottsforum.org were contacted, but they referred the matter to the Swedish Sports Confederation.
- A senior advisor at the Ministry responsible for Sport was contacted by email – but no response was received.

## **7. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Strategy for the international engagement of the Sports Confederation 2018-2025
- Sports Confederation's code for democratic governance of sports federations and clubs
- International guidelines for Swedish sport
- Business Orientation 2022-2023



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