

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

Sweden

Sweden | [Freedom of the Press 2012](#) |

Sweden has strong legal protections for press freedom under the Freedom of the Press Law dating back to 1766, as well as the 1991 Fundamental Law of Freedom of Expression. However, these laws criminalize expression considered to be hate speech and prohibit threats or expressions of contempt directed against a group or member of a group. In July, charges were filed against the web version of the publication *National Resistance*, a neo-Nazi magazine, for comments a reader left portraying Jews as parasites. The charges came as many media outlets are changing their comments policies to allow for greater transparency and to discourage users from leaving racially negative comments.

Journalists' sources are protected by law, as is access to information for all citizens. However, there is considerable self-censorship among journalists, especially on issues relating to immigration. In 2011, Sweden did not see the same alarming physical attacks on journalists as in 2010; however, journalists faced some legal harassment. In December, Thomas Mattsson, editor of *Expressen*, was charged for instigating a weapons offense because he allowed an undercover journalist for his publication to purchase a firearm in order to investigate a story on how easy it is to purchase illegal firearms in Malmö. Mattsson and the offending journalist were both charged in the case, which was ongoing at the end of 2011.

Public broadcasting has a strong presence in Sweden, consisting of SVT and Sveriges Radio. Public television and radio are funded through a license fee, but television has considerable competition from private stations, and the main competitor is TV4. Private broadcasting ownership is highly concentrated under the media companies Bonnier and the Modern Times Group. The government offers subsidies to newspapers in order to encourage competition, and media content in immigrant languages is supported by the state. Sweden is among the top consumers of newspapers in the world, with about 75 percent of the population reading a newspaper every day. Even though it is threatened by dwindling advertising, the newspaper market is very diverse, with many local and regional papers.

Access to the internet is unrestricted by the government, and the medium was used by about 91 percent of the population in 2011. In March, two police officers were cleared of assault charges after forcing blogger Jesper Nilsson to delete a video. Nilsson had used his mobile phone to film the officers assaulting two youths in a metro station, before they confiscated his device. Nilsson later recovered the images and uploaded the video, which was used to prosecute the officers for harassment and unlawful misconduct. The officers reported Nilsson for aggravated defamation, harassment, and assaulting a police officer, though no formal charges had been brought against the blogger by the end of 2011. In October, the stolen login information of up to 180,000 internet users, including prominent journalists, was posted via the hacked Twitter account of legislator William Petzäll.

2012 SCORES

PRESS STATUS

Free

PRESS FREEDOM SCORE

10

LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

2

POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

4

ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

4

[About us](#)
[Careers](#)
[Contact Us](#)
[Privacy Policy](#)
[Credits](#)
[Subscribe](#)

Related websites:
[Democracy Web](#) | [Derecho a Voz](#) | [Family Law - Khaleej](#) |
[Peace in the Caucasus](#) | [Undermining Democracy](#) |
[Voice of Freedom](#)