

JOIN OUR MAILING LIST[About Us](#) | [DONATE](#) | [Blog](#) | [Mobile App](#) | [Contact Us](#)[REGIONS](#)[ISSUES](#)[Reports](#)[Programs](#)[Initiatives](#)[News](#)[Experts](#)[Events](#)[Donate](#)

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

[- View another year -](#)

Sweden

[Sweden](#)[Freedom of the Press 2013](#)

Sweden has strong legal protections for press freedom under the constitution, a Freedom of the Press Law dating back to 1766, and the 1991 Fundamental Law of Freedom of Expression. However, the country's laws criminalize expression that is deemed to be hate speech. In September 2012, the editor of Nordfront, a website for the extremist Swedish Resistance Movement, was sentenced to a month in jail for a comment posted by a reader that portrayed Jews as capitalist parasites. A month later, another editor for Nordfront was questioned by the police about hate speech in the site's articles. There is considerable debate in Swedish media on the limits of free speech regarding the issue of immigration and Islam. Right-wing nationalists decry what they see as self-censorship in the Swedish media, but most of the mainstream media view criticism of immigration and Islam as a form of hate speech. In December, the tabloid *Aftonbladet* launched a campaign against nationalist blogs in order to test the limits of the hate speech law. It also directly called for a government intervention to shut down a number of the right-wing blogs. However, the initiative was criticized by other newspapers as an assault on free speech.

Separately, in May, the editor in chief and a news editor of the tabloid *Expressen* were fined up to 30,000 kroners (\$4,400) for inciting a journalist to purchase illegal firearms as part of a story on how easy it is to obtain such weapons in Malmö. Leading journalists saw the case as government harassment and a blow to investigative reporting.

Journalists' sources are protected by law, as is access to information for all citizens. In December 2012, the government finished a revision of a controversial law that will prohibit intrusive photography and video that has been obtained without the subject's knowledge. Critics had complained that the original draft could restrict photojournalism and violate press freedom.

The self-regulatory Swedish Press Council was established in 1916 and has jurisdiction over print and online content. It consists of a judicial board as well as industry and independent members. Complaints are investigated by an appointed ombudsman who can choose to dismiss them for lack of merit or forward them to the council with a recommendation to uphold. The council ultimately rules on complaints and can impose a tiered administrative fee, often referred to as a fine, of up to 30,000 kroners. Although the council does not have authority over broadcast media, it does operate an ethical code across all platforms. The code is applied to broadcast media by the Swedish Radio and Television Authority.

Public broadcasting has a strong presence in Sweden, consisting of Sveriges Television (SVT) and Sveriges Radio (SR), both funded through a license fee. SVT has considerable competition from private stations, led by 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's newspaper market is very diverse, with many local and regional outlets, though it is threatened by dwindling advertising. Access to the internet is not restricted by the government, and the medium was used by about 94 percent of the population in 2012.

2013 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](#)