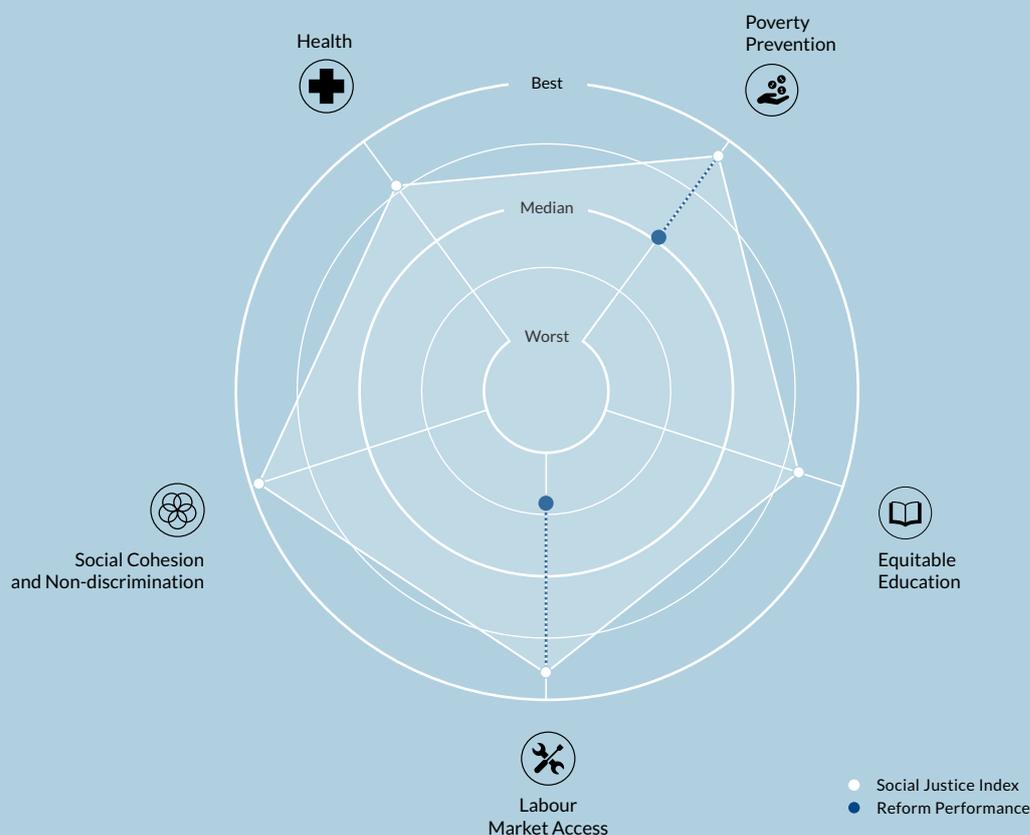


## Findings by Country



# Sweden

How does the country rank in the EU?



## Overall Findings

**Need** As Sweden is the best-performing country in the 2015 Social Justice Index (SJI), it comes as no surprise that the experts see a much lower overall need for social reforms there than in most other EU countries (1.84, rank 5/23). Looking at the different categories of social inclusion, the highest reform need is seen in the dimension of Labour Market Access (2.14, rank 7/19), followed by the dimension related to Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination (2.08, rank 8/18). With regard to Equitable Education, the need for reforms is estimated to be the lowest in the EU (1.31, rank 1). Over all dimensions, the most pressing challenges for the Swedish government are to:

- increase employment for young people (2.6), the long-term unemployed (2.6), the low-skilled (2.7), refugees (2.7) and the foreign-born population in general (2.8)
- improve the integration of refugees and of the foreign-born population in general (2.33)
- reduce poverty among single parents (2.2), refugees (2.1) and the foreign-born population (2.2)

## Overview of Reform Barometer Scores



**Activity** The experts say that 43 percent of the overall reform need to improve social inclusion in Sweden has been addressed (15/23). This is far behind the leaders in this respect, Luxembourg (65%) and Bulgaria (60%), and also slightly behind the average activity rate in the EU (46%). The highest activity rate in Sweden can be seen in the dimension Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination (71%, rank 1/20). In the other dimensions, the extent to what the reform need has been addressed is much lower, at 39 percent (Labour Market Access), 34 percent (Poverty Prevention) and 26 percent (Education).

Looking at the pressing challenges mentioned above, the number of experts who see relevant reform activities varies greatly. Between 77 and 87 percent identified relevant government action to increase employment for the specific 'problem groups'. With regard to integration policies, 100 percent of the experts report government measures to improve the integration of refugees, whereas only one in every two experts sees initiatives to improve integration policies for the foreign-born population in general or to reduce poverty within these groups.

## Dimension Findings

### Poverty Prevention

**Need** The experts report a low need to reduce poverty among the total population (1.1) but a high one with regard to specific subgroups that are more likely to become poor, such as refugees (2.2), the foreign-born population (2.0) and single parents (2.2). With regard to the latter group, one expert explains: “During the last few years, the at-risk-of-poverty rate has skyrocketed among single parents despite the fairly generous family policy schemes. This indicates a need for policy reforms directed at the needs of this particular group. Probably the old-age pensions need reformation, as well, since we have witnessed a worrying increase in the poverty rate among old people, too. Due to long-term inequalities in the labour market, retired women fare poorly, with a majority of female pensioners living in poverty in Sweden.”

**Activity** Looking at these specific subgroups, all activity rates are below 50 percent, with the highest identified rate relating to poverty among refugees (43%). The respective activity rates for the other groups are even lower, at 32 percent (foreign-born population) and 29 percent (single parents).

**Quality** The experts expect the reforms concerning poverty among refugees and the foreign-born population to have slightly positive effects (0.65/0.31). Some experts recommend raising benefit levels of the universal child allowance.

### Equitable Education

**Need** Not only for the Education dimension in general, but also for nearly all of the included (sub-)policy objectives is the need for reforms rated low or mediocre, with scores ranging between 0.3 and 1.7. The only exception can be seen with regard to ‘quality of teaching in secondary education’, where the need is quite high (2.3).

**Activity** All activity rates in this dimension are below 50 percent, with two exceptions: According to the experts, 67 percent of the reform need to improve the quality of teaching in secondary education and 75 percent of the need to improve the structural conditions in primary education have been addressed.

### Labour Market Access

**Need** As in most other EU countries, the need to improve access to the labour market for the total population (2.2) in Sweden is assessed as being significantly lower than for some specific subgroups, such as refugees (2.7), young people (2.6), the long-term unemployed (2.6), the low-skilled (2.7) and the foreign-born population (2.8).

**Activity** According to the experts, between 77 and 85 percent of the reform need to increase employment for the above-mentioned subgroups have been addressed. One expert notes that there have been “several efforts to make

the transition to the labour market smoother for refugees. These include subsidized jobs and efforts to speed up the process of certifying exams achieved in another country.”

 Social Cohesion and Non-discrimination

**Need** The highest needs for reform in this dimension are seen as improving integration policies for refugees and the foreign-born population in general (2.3 each). But the experts also see quite high reform needs (2.0 each) for the other policy objectives: ‘reducing gender inequality’, ‘reducing income inequality’ and ‘reducing the number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)’.

**Activity** According to the experts’ assessments, the activity rates in this dimension differ greatly. While the experts think that 100 percent of reform need to tackle income inequality and improve the integration of refugees has been met, the activity rates to reduce the number of NEETs or to improve integration policies for the foreign-born population in general are assessed as being much lower (about 40% each).