



**MINISTERIO  
DE TRABAJO  
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**SECRETARÍA DE ESTADO  
DE INMIGRACIÓN Y  
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**DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE  
INTEGRACIÓN DE LOS  
INMIGRANTES**

**CENTRO DE ACOGIDA A  
REFUGIADOS DE SEVILLA**

## Report of an exchange programme in Sweden

**enaro**  
EUROPEAN NETWORK OF ASYLUM RECEPTION  
ORGANISATIONS

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## GENERAL DATA OF THE EXCHANGE

- Activity: Technical staff exchange in the ENARO Network.
- Receiving country and organisation: **Sweden, Migrationsverket.**
- Places and dates: **Karlskrona, Ronneby, Karlshamn and Malmo (Sweden), April 18th-29th 2005.**

## SUMMARY

Information about the Swedish procedures of application, reception and answer for asylum seekers.

## SCHEDULE

Monday April 18th	9:00 h. Welcome meeting at Karlskrona Migrationsverket Unit 12:00 h. Lunch 13:00 h. Reception Officer (Gustav Lindström)
Tuesday April 19th	9:00 h. Reception Officer (Martin Eneroth) 12:00 h. Lunch 13:00 h. Visits to apartments where asylum seekers live
Wednesday April 20th	8:00 h. Accommodation personnel in Ronneby (Maths Andersson)
Thursday April 21th	9:00 h. Organised activities in Ronneby (Marita Claesson)
Friday April 22th	8:15 h. Staff meeting and short presentation of the Spanish asylum procedure



	10:30 h. Returning work (Petra Göransson) 13:00 h. On-call Duty Reception Officer (Gun Wallin)
Saturday & Sunday April 23 & 24	Visit to the surroundings and lunch with the Head of the Unit (Gunnel Segerfeldt) on Sunday
Monday April 25th	8: 00 h. Swedish classes for asylum seekers in Ronneby 9:00 h. Children's activities in Karlshamn (Gunilla Svensson)
Tuesday April 26th	7:30 h. Transition Unit in Malmö (Jesper Cederlöf)
Wednesday April 27th	9:30 h. Police Department in Karlskrona (Steffan Torstensson, Hakan Jufors y Claes-Ake Alfsson) 13:00 h. Decision takers in Karlskrona (Gert Hultkvist, Ulrika Lidfors, Johan Jonson y Helena Svensson)
Thursday April 28th	9:00 h. Head of th Karlskrona Unit (Gunnel Segerfeldt) 12:00 h. Lunch 13:00 h. On-call Duty Reception Officer (Gustav Lindström)
Friday April 29th	9:00 h. Conclusions

### **EVALUATION: CONCLUSIONS AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE FUTURE**

The experience of learning something about the reception system for asylum seekers of another country has been very interesting, because it broadens my view on this collective, gives new tools to solve the same problems, allows to find solutions to improve our system and everyday work, and gives a more



holistic view of the work we do with asylum seekers in Spain and in other countries, like Sweden in this case.

The greatest difference I found was the mentality. This is logical: since the Swedish, in general, have a long history dealing with asylum seekers and foreigners, not only specifically the workers but the population at large, as they have been in contact with people coming from other countries over the last decades. In comparison: in Spain this only has been happening since the 1980s and with less social incidence (the percentage of foreigners in Spain was and is still low, compared to Sweden), except the last years. And it's remarkable remembering that during most of the 20th century Spain has been a country that have sent migrants to other european countries and now we're receiving them.

Swedish people are already used to the idea of living with foreigners, of being neighbours, of playing with their children or attending classes where there are children of different nationalities, of marrying with or having friends among people from other cultures. In Spain that is not a fact yet, although it is starting to happen.

It is really difficult to compare the spanish and the Swedish reception systems.

According to the differences between the systems, the following is significant:

- In Sweden there is just one organization (Migrationsverket) that is responsible for asylum (admission, reception, decision takers and return). In Spain there are some Ministries. This means, a priori, that there is a better coordination in Sweden, especially since having a better communication between the different departments.
- Asylum applications can only be done in five cities, thus the asylum seekers have to go to those places. In Spain you can apply for asylum in every police station.
- In Sweden, every application is admitted and studied, in Spain not every application is admitted (i.e., EU citizens applications).
- The maximum stay in Transfer Centres is five days.



- While the case is studied, the asylum seekers are sent to Reception Units which are all over the country. In Spain we don't have such distribution over the whole Spanish territory.
- In the Reception Units there are no residential centres but flats and apartments, rented by Migrationsverket, in which the asylum seekers live.
- The asylum seekers are given a card which indicates their situation and with that they can use the Swedish social services. This card is valid as identification as well, because they are under investigation of their true identity.
- The asylum seekers can start working in Sweden from the moment that their application is admitted. In Spain they have to wait six months before being authorised to work.
- The estimated time for Migrationsverket to decide a case is usually six months, although the average time now is eight months.
- Social integration is more effective in Sweden because the asylum seekers are neighbours of Swedish citizens, as they live in flats and apartments as opposed to centres. In Spain the asylum seekers live in reception centres and they have less contact with the native population.
- Labour integration in Sweden is more difficult than in Spain because there are less resources in quality as well as in quantity. About trainings: Sweden only provides language courses, but not for every asylum seeker (there is a selection between the adult members of the family) as this resource is quite expensive, and vocational training almost doesn't exist as there is only little collaboration with non-paid practices in companies. We have to remark that in Spain we have more resources and a better labour integration system than in Sweden.
- Sweden provides lodging and maintenance for the asylum seekers until they have a positive answer or, in case they have a negative, until they leave the country.
- Migrationsverket has a computer system that integrates all information about the asylum seekers. Every worker, according to his/her position,



can access the information about the asylum seekers. In Spain there is no computer network of this kind.

- In case of a negative answer and/or a rejected appeal, return is carried out, voluntary or obligatory.
- Sweden has many more applications a year than has Spain.
- Migrationsverket has a great flexibility in that it can contract or fire workers when circumstances call for this. In this way it can adjust to every possible circumstance.

Whether the differences are positive or negative, all depends on the way we look at the reception situation.

It is possible to emphasize some strong points of the Swedish system, incorporating the fact that the Swedish reception system has a much longer history than the Spanish reception system has, as well as the fact that the number of applicants in Sweden is considerably higher:

- For me, the strongest point of the Swedish system is the fact that they have only one organization that deals with asylum seekers. This makes them more flexible and faster in every procedure as they all work with the same goals.

Also:

- Migrationsverket has a computer system (an intranet). Every worker can obtain the information needed to work with the asylum seekers.
- Migrationsverket has the possibility to contract workers needed at that specific moment.
- The workers and the population, in general, are quite open-minded.
- The uniform distribution of the asylum seekers all over the country.
- The chance asylum seekers are given to integrate into society as they live in flats where they have native people as neighbours.
- The asylum seekers can manage their own home (food, cooking, furniture).



- Lodging and maintenance until having a positive answer or, in case of having a negative: until they receive a definitive negative answer, after having appealed, and have to return to their home countries.
- The chance to work from the day they apply for asylum.
- Asylum seekers know approximately how long it will take to receive an answer.
- In case of a negative answer and/or rejected appeal the return is made.

At the same time, the Swedish system has some weak points:

- The applications can only be done in the Migrationsverket offices in five cities.
- The contact between Migrationsverket technical staff and the asylum seekers is not very close.
- The resources for trainings are not enough, because these are very expensive in Sweden and are not subsidized by the European Social Fund. Only language training is provided, but not for every member of the family.
- The resources for employment promotion are also not sufficient, because there are only agreements with some companies to do non-paid practical training. This makes that many asylum seekers work in the black market without contract or labour rights.

It has been very valuable, useful and enriching to meet our colleagues in Sweden and to learn how they solve the same difficulties and problems that we face.

Some of the members of the Karlskrona Reception Unit told me about the convenience of having the same legislation for asylum seekers in every European Union country. In the same way they proposed that these exchanges could then be longer in time (one or two years) because they thought it would be very good to temporarily work in other countries of the EU, which would have the same procedures.

Of course this is an idea that could only be carried out if every country in the EU would have the same legislation.



The activities for the future are the next ones:

- “ENARO closing conference” will be at the end of 2005.
- 7º ENARO exchange programme, autumn 2005.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

These are my recommendations and they are based on my experience as guest and host.

My proposals are:

- The information (schedule, meeting point, lodging, contacts, etc.) about the exchange should be provided by the host country at least one month before.
- The focuses of the exchange should be agreed upon by both the host country and the guest worker, if that is possible at all.
- Two weeks is enough to have a global idea of the asylum seeker reception system. If what's intended is to have an immersion in the visited country system is not enough time, it should be one month or even longer.
- Create a form to write the reports after the exchanges.
- Create a website of the ENARO network with:
  - Information about the network.
  - The reports of the past exchanges.
  - General information about the organisations which deal with asylum seekers in every country of ENARO (COA, Fedasil, Mº Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales, Kent County Council, Migrationsverket, Danish Red Cross, Hero, etc.).
  - General recommendations for the exchanges.
  - Whatever the ENARO network thinks is good to be known by the workers who are going to be or have been in a exchange.



## **BEST PRACTICES**

These best practices are based on the experiences I have had as guest and host during and after the exchanges.

- Sharing experiences about asylum seekers reception.
- Creation of contacts in other countries (an informal network).
- Learning about solutions that a country (the staff) gives to the same day-by-day problems or difficulties.
- If there are Dublin cases, contact with the staff directly involved in the cases to have more information.
- Understanding new ways of facing the same difficulties when you deal with asylum seekers, it makes you more open-minded.
- Helps to foresee situations not happened yet in other countries with asylum seekers.