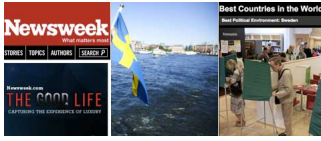


Sweden the world's best country – politically

Written by Johan Nylander

Tuesday, 17 August 2010 10:28 - Last Updated Tuesday, 17 August 2010 14:25

Only two countries in the world are in total better than Sweden.



- [WikiLeaks seeks protection in Sweden](#)
- [Safe to do business with Swedes](#)
- [Sweden the most competitive EU nation](#)

“Despite the long winter, Finland is a pretty great place to be--the best actually”, American magazine Newsweek wrote in its annual ranking of the world’s best countries, based on health, economic dynamism, education, political environment and quality of life.

Sweden came in at number three, after Switzerland. The magazine hailed the Scandinavian country’s high level of political participation and its long-lasting neutrality - ranking Sweden as having the best political environment in the world.

“In a competition for most neutral country Sweden could give Switzerland a run for its money: Swedes haven't fought a war in nearly two centuries, and even though they joined the EU in 1995, they have not adopted the euro”, Newsweek wrote.

The magazine was also impressed by the country’s commitment to freedom of speech and freedom of religion.

“The cartoonist Lars Vilks--who was attacked for drawing the prophet Muhammad as a dog--embodies Sweden's commitment to freedom of speech as well as freedom of religion. All religious places of worship in Sweden receive some funding from the government, for example”, it wrote, adding:

“Perhaps it's the open environment that inspires about 80 percent of Swedes to vote”.

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Julian Assange, founder of whistleblower website WikiLeaks, has also acclaimed the country's [protection for journalistic sources](#) and freedom of speech.

"There's actually a small industry in Sweden; a new sort of refugee exists in the world, which is publishers. It is I think something for Swedes to be quite proud of: that they are facilitating a strong and free press," he told reporters Sunday.

In the category "Political environment" Sweden scored 98.53 point, out of maximum 100, compared to the US with 86 points and China with 32 points.

Denmark has been overtaken by all of its Nordic neighbours and is now the tenth best country in the world. Norway was ranked as number six with its "laid-back atmosphere" and high socially and economically equality.

Finland, the list's top dog, also comes in as the best small country, the best high-income country and the best country for education.

"Finland's schoolkids enjoy a laid-back and inclusive learning environment where shoes are optional, all teachers have master's degrees, and extra help is the norm: every year about one in three students gets individual time with a tutor", Newsweek said.

Japan was ranked the best large country, with the magazine stating "The innovative country that brought the world sushi, Nintendo, and the Kyoto Protocol is also in the country with the most healthy citizens".

Poland was named the best upper-middle-income nation: "Its political environment is the best in its category and it's in the top 10 for economic dynamism, education, health, and quality of life".

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Though the United States beats out China for most economically dynamic large country, China ranks the highest in that category among low-income nations, the magazine wrote. And though Malaysia's export-driven economy has recently become sluggish, it's still the best out of all middle-income countries in this category. Among medium-size countries, South Korea has the strong corporate sector and open markets needed to claim the top spot.