

Why Europeanize: Patterns of EU activities among a sample of Swedish CSOs

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The Sample

- 81 Swedish CSO's active within different areas of welfare.
- The sample was selected based on "Dialogprocessen", a process of cooperation between the Swedish government and CSOs active within social areas of policy. The aim was to discuss an agreement of principles on which the future relationship between the state and CSOs would be based on.
- The CSO's differ in area of interest and activity, for example: health organizations, aid organizations, anti poverty organizations, social economy networks etc.
- The CSO's differ in size, age and organizational form, for example: both large umbrella organizations and small local organizations, both service providing organizations and advocacy organizations.

The CSO's were studied in terms of:

- Information about the EU and potential European cooperation available on their respective websites.
- Membership in or cooperation with EU related networks or organizations.
- Membership in or cooperation with international networks or organizations.
- Participation in EU initiated or funded projects today or in the past.
- How information about the EU is gained within the organization for example through working groups, forums or reports.

Method of Conduct

- In a first phase where possible, information was gathered from the CSO's websites and in the cases where European cooperation was presented, the websites of the European organizations or networks.
- All organizations were personally contacted by email or phone and asked to provide complementary information and given the possibility of elaborating their experiences. The organizations were also informed about the nature of the study.

Results and Findings

- To this date information has been gathered from 72 of the 81 organizations.
- All the information has been gathered in a spreadsheet allowing some observations to be made.

		Q1: Is the organization a member of any EU related network?	Q2: Is the organization a member of any other international organization?	Q3: Is the organization participating in any EU projects?
Anhörigas Riksförbund (AHR)		AHR is part of the European Association Working for Carers (Eurocarers), created through two EU projects: CARMEN and EUROFAMCARE.	AHR is a participating actor in a Baltic-Nordic cooperation, the purpose is to create a Baltic-Nordic umbrella association in order to gain more influence in Eurocarers.	Through the membership in Eurocareers the organization is participating in the European Parliament Interest Group on Carers.
Arbetsgivarföreningen KFO	Questions sent by email. Reply received.	KFO is a member of Cooperatives Europe.	KFO is a member of the international organization Föreningen Labour Market Dialouge (FLMD).	Yes, KFO is currently participating in the EU project SOUL.
Astma- och Allergiförbundet	Questions sent by email.	Astma- och Allergiförbundet is a member of The European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients Associations (EFA), a network of allergy, asthma and COPD patient organizations in EU member countries.	No.	No.

Findings

- With a few exceptions, the websites of the CSO's provide little information about the EU and the European cooperation between CSO's.
- However most of the organizations have some form of cooperation or membership in European organizations, networks or institutions.
- It is less common to for Swedish CSO's to be active in international organizations and cooperation.
- The CSO's European cooperation is often referred as networks or forums whereas the international cooperation appear to tend towards membership organizations.
- The level of commitment and activity at the European level is much varied.

The variation of activity and commitment is partly based on:

- The type of organization or the area of activity.
- The level within the organization.
- The accessibility of European organizations, networks or projects.
- Key actors.

The type of organization and the area of activity

- Within some areas of activity European cooperation is very common and an important part of the pursuit of the organization

For example organizations active within social economy, social cooperatives, anti-poverty and public health organizations etc.

- Within some areas of activity, European cooperation is not common, or limited in scope.

For example: smaller Swedish health care institutions, ethnic associations, anti-bullying organizations etc.

The level within the organization

- The nature of the European cooperation and how it is being carried out within the organizations depends on the level within the organization.

EU funding is often applied for and distributed at the local level, whereas EU projects that are initiated or "owned" by the organization is controlled by the central organization.

Several organizations are active in European cooperation through their association in membership organizations. It is also within the forum of the membership organization that EU related questions or debates are discussed and news relevant to their area of activity is reported.

Accessibility of the European organizations, networks or projects.

- Some organizations describe how they are invited to European cooperation and even participation in EU projects
- Some organizations have actively tried to join organizations, participate in networks and applied for EU funding but have so far been unsuccessful. These organizations speak of lack of information about how to participate at the European level.

Key Actors

- Individuals appear to play an important role in the process of Europeanization.
- Many organizations refer to one specific person who is in charge of the European cooperation.
- Several organizations refer to the same person within a member organization as their source of information and their representative on the European level.

Why Europeanize?

- There are different motivations behind Europeanization, however central arguments are often referring to the following:

Through the membership in European networks new openings for cooperation, learning and political influence can be reached.

Access to the European level may provide a better understanding of the developments in Sweden.

In some areas of activity, the EU has meant new possibilities of financial funding that was almost impossible before.

Being active on the European level signals that the organization is up to date and follows the societal developments.

Questions for further studies

- How are CSO's cooperating in European context?
- What is the nature of the process of Europeanization?
- What drives CSO's to europeanize, or not?
- What happens in the national context when CSO's europeanize?
- What are the results of European cooperation of CSO's?
- How can we learn more about this?