

# The Swedish commission on immigration research (Eifo)

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Since the end of the 1960's discussions have taken place in Sweden about a better coordination of Swedish Immigration research. In 1967 a working-party dealing with Immigration within the Ministry of the Interior recommended that an organization be established to coordinate research in this field. The Commission on Immigration (Invandrarutredningen), which was set up in 1968, to a certain extent functioned as such an organization. In its report in 1974 the Commission proposed the establishment on a permanent basis of an organization to deal with research on immigration. In the Government Bill (1975:26) concerning guidelines for the immigration policy, the Minister moving the Bill stated (p. 26) that "research relating to immigration should be reinforced" and continued:

"So far research efforts in this field have been fairly limited and inchoate in relation to the heavy resources which are allocated every year for measures in the field of immigration policy. As I see it, the essential purpose of research in this field should be

to furnish guidance for the continuing reform of immigration policy. It is therefore of great importance that close contact be maintained between research institutions and administrative bodies, so that research findings can be translated into practical reforms. At the same time one of the important tasks of this research will be to furnish a basis on which to evaluate and reconsider activities already in progress."

## The structure of EIFO

The Commission on Immigration Research (in Swedish: Expertgruppen för invandringens forskning, abbreviated EIFO) was set up by the Swedish Government at the end of 1975 to "define research priorities in matters concerning immigration and emigration, the position of immigrants in society etc., and to follow and initiate research into such matters". EIFO is attached to the Ministry of Labour and reports to the Minister in Charge of Immigration. The members of the Commission represent the national authorities most immediately concerned with immigrant

affairs (the Ministry of Labour, the National Labour Market Board, the National Board of Education, the National Board of Health and Welfare, the National Immigration and Naturalization Board and the Central Bureau of Statistics, SCB) together with the Swedish Employers' Confederation (SAF) and the Swedish Confederation of Trade Unions (LO). The Commission, which meets 4-6 times a year, also includes representatives of the universities. The Secretariat of the Commission with a staff of five persons, is housed in the premises of the Ministry of Labour. The Chairman of the Commission is Professor Gösta Rehn of the Social Research Institute.

### The activities of EIFO

EIFO began its activities in the spring of 1976 by initiating a survey of research which had been completed, was in progress or was planned in Sweden concerning international migration and immigrant and minority questions. Among other things EIFO has procured grants totalling Skr 30,000 <sup>1)</sup> for two bibliographies of immigrant research in Sweden. These bibliographies are being distributed to the relevant authorities and research institutions.

One of EIFO's tasks is to deal with applications for grants from the Ministry of Labour research fund. These applications are sent to the Ministry, which then refers them to EIFO for comment, but they are actually decided by the Minister of Labour in consultations with the Minister in Charge of Immigration. So far, since the spring of 1976, EIFO has dealt with a total of 17 applications for grants totalling Skr 1.6 m. Ten of these applications have been seconded and granted, the total amount thus awarded being upwards of Skr 650,000. The largest grants have been made towards the study of "The First Immigrant Election" conducted by Prof. Tomas Hammar at the University of Stockholm (Skr 200,000)

and to Prof. Sten Johansson at the Social Research Institute for immigrant studies within the Level of Living Survey (Skr 210,000).

In addition to these Skr 650,000 which have been awarded to various research projects under the responsibility of the Universities, EIFO itself has been granted some Skr 770,000 by the Ministry for its own research projects.

EIFO tries to keep in continuous touch with researchers at various institutions in Sweden and abroad who are concerned with migration, immigrant and minority affairs. A meeting of migration researchers was organized by EIFO in the spring of 1976, and EIFO also took part in the planning of the Third Nordic Seminar on Migration Research, which was held in Finland in May 1976 with some 60 migration researchers as participants.

The Secretariat of EIFO follows migration and minority research in other countries through contacts with researchers in the European countries, North America and elsewhere, and through the international organizations concerned (mainly ILO, OECD and the Council of Europe). The Secretariat is responsible for compiling Sweden's annual report to the OECD (SOPEMI) concerning the development of immigration to Sweden.

Many authorities, organizations, institutions and individual researchers turn to EIFO for information concerning statistics and research relating to immigration and for help in connection with statistical analyses. EIFO co-operates closely with the Documentation Service set up at the National Swedish Immigration and Naturalization Board in 1976. This Service, which has a staff of some five persons at its disposal, is in the process of constructing a data bank concerning literature and research on immigration in Sweden, international migration and conditions in various countries

from which immigrants come. The Service is also responsible for the library of the National Immigration and Naturalization Board. The head of the Service is a member of the EIFO Secretariat.

EIFO publishes a series of research reports. The following reports have been issued so far:

1. Proceedings of the 1974 Nordic Seminar on Long-Term Effects of Migration (Published in May 1976, 389 pp, in *English*).
2. Pertti Toukoma, The linguistic development and achievement of Finnish immigrant pupils in Swedish elementary schools (Published in January 1977, 61 pp. in *Swedish*).
3. Tomas Hammar, The First Immigrant Election (Published in February 1977, 124 pp. in *Swedish*).
4. Tomas Hammar, The First Immigrant Election (Published in February 1977, 48 pp, in *English*).
5. Report to OECD (SOPEMI) on immigration to Sweden in 1976 and the first half of 1977 (Published in September 1977, 39 pp, in *English*).

The most time-consuming of EIFO's activities, however, are the research projects for which EIFO itself is directly responsible. Projects of this kind are now in progress in the following six fields.

#### 1. Immigrants and the local franchise

EIFO has financed and published the study of immigrants and the local franchise conducted at the Department of Political Science in the University of Stockholm (see above). EIFO has also been involved in the planning of a number of other studies on the role of immigrants in the 1976 election and is continuously analyzing research and statistics concerning this electoral reform.

#### 2. Statistics concerning minority languages

In September 1976 the Government commissioned EIFO to propose a plan for statistics concerning the occurrence and use in Sweden, as native languages, of languages other than Swedish. A special working-party has been set up by EIFO for this project. A major sample survey of the currency of minority languages in Sweden is being planned by the EIFO Secretariat in association with the SCB.

#### 3. Assyrian immigration

In connection with the decision by the Government in 1976 to let some 6,000 "Assyrians" (mainly from Eastern Turkey) stay in Sweden, EIFO initiated a research project concerning Assyrian immigration to Sweden. The purpose of the project is to study the preparedness of the authorities to cope with the influx of such a group as the Assyrians, and also to study the Assyrians in Sweden from an ethnic point of view. The project began in the spring of 1977 and is being conducted by four researchers at the Departments of Political Science and Social Anthropology in the University of Stockholm.

#### 4. Unemployment among young immigrants

In May 1977 EIFO was commissioned by the Government to make a closer inquiry as soon as possible with regard to the new particulars received from the SCB indicating that unemployment was higher among young immigrants than among young Swedes. This assignment is being carried out by the EIFO Secretariat in consultation with the SCB.

**5. The structure of immigration from outside the Nordic area**

EIFO has initiated a sample survey on the structure of immigration from outside the Nordic countries. The purpose of this survey is to obtain a clearer picture of the characteristics of present immigration from outside the Nordic area, which is very heavy but now only incorporates a small proportion of genuine labour immigration. The survey is to be conducted in collaboration with the National Immigration and Naturalization Board and the SCB. A report will be issued in 1978.

**6. The long-term effects of immigration**

Early in 1977 EIFO initiated the compilation of an integral plan for surveys concerning the long-term effects of immigration, i.e. broad-based studies of the position of immigrants in Sweden and of possible future developments in this respect and as regards the general fabric of immigration policy. The purpose of this wideranging project will be to supply a basis for future discussions concerning the focus of Swedish immigration policy. The project will comprise a major, nationwide interview survey (possibly combined with a language survey of the kind mentioned in point 2) and a number of subsidiary studies of important topics. The interview survey will be conducted by the SCB and will take a long time to plan and carry out. To a great extent it will cover questions concerning the second generation of immigrants. The subsidiary studies will be carried out by a research group in collaboration with the EIFO Secretariat, and will centre mainly round the following points of inquiry.

- a. Does Sweden have anything to learn from the immigration policies of "the big immigration countries" (the USA, Canada etc.)?
- b. Immigration policy and population development.

- c. The future of immigrant children.
- d. The effects of immigration on Sweden's economic and cultural relations with other countries.

These studies should be completed by 1979.

In the long-term perspective EIFO plans to publish a book with the preliminary title "To Evaluate Immigration Policy". The book is intended to be a synthesis of studies carried out or supported by EIFO, and is scheduled to appear in 1980.

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1) One Skr was in January 1978 approximately the equivalent of one Ffr (0.20 US \$).