



# The Dynamo

*Shedding some light on Lund*

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## LU talks tuition fees

*Changes in 2011*

Ninety-five percent of students who study abroad pay to do so. As of next autumn, non-EU foreign students at Lund University will fall into this percentage. The newly set tuition fees at universities across Sweden are founded in a decade old discussion of numbers and quality, and are here to stay.

“The number of foreign students has been on the rise for a long time,” relates Richard

Stenelo, Lund University’s Director of Commissioned Education. At its current rate, international applications are doubling each year – with 40,000 applicants this fall.

Such a rapid increase can be traced back to the Bologna Accords introduced in 2007. This implementation led to a skyrocketing numbers of Master’s programs available in English at Lund University.

Easier access to education granted through English instruction, alongside international events such as the financial crisis, has led to problems within the application process itself.

Some students, undeterred by fees, are turning in unfinished applications for programs they are unqualified for in hopes of a free education. According to

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Lesser-known Lund

*Making life in Lund better*

Lund might be a small city, but there are still many beautiful hidden spots. Here are a few to enjoy while the sun is still with us.



Varied terrain is perfect for some tougher walking and even biking, and there are various open areas to toss a Frisbee or lay down with a book.

**When:** Preferably when it’s sunny and dry, although a rainy adventure here could also be fun.

**Where:** St. Hans Hills (*Sankt Hans backar*)

**Why:** Featuring some of the higher points of elevation in Lund, this is a great place to walk around and see some green spaces.

*(Continued on page 6)*

[dynamolund.wordpress.com](http://dynamolund.wordpress.com)

*The Dynamo* is an independent initiative by students for students. Our goal is to help non-Swedish speaking students in Lund have a better idea of what goes on around town.

[lund.dynamo@gmail.com](mailto:lund.dynamo@gmail.com)

# Taking the middle road?

Swedish elections 2010

With the dust starting to settle over last month's general election, *The Dynamo* talks to a few experts to try and make sense of it all.

## Summing up

The general election for the Swedish parliament was held on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September. Incumbent Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt declared victory. His four-party center-right coalition – the Alliance, which includes the Moderates, Folk Party, Christian Democrats, and Center Party – held on to the largest number of seats, winning 173 seats out of the 349 in Parliament. However, they failed to secure the majority by two seats.

The once mighty Social Democrats, the largest left-of-centre party and the head of the Swedish government for most of the last century, did not manage to gain enough votes as part of the Red-Green coalition they have formed with the Green Party and Left Party. Their leader, Mona Sahlin, admitted defeat. She said it would now be up to Fredrik Reinfeldt to try and rule Sweden without the Sweden Democrats' political influence.

Indeed, the anti-immigration SD (*Sverige Demokraterna*) gained more than 4% of the vote, enabling them to enter Parliament for the first time – an issue much discussed during this political campaign. Reinfeldt repeated again and again that he would not form a coalition with the far-right party.

## Experts' assessment

Jan Teorell, Associate Professor of Political Science at Lund University, points out: "It's the first time a non-social democratic PM retained his place after an election. This is to some extent a sign of the great popularity of Fredrik Reinfeldt as a person, but it more importantly reflects the profound policy shift made by his party, completing their move from the right toward the middle of the ideological spectrum, where they again were able to attract more middle class voters than the Social Democrats."

Mi Lennhag, Doctoral candidate at the

Department of Political Science, draws attention to critiques of the Swedish system that say it is increasingly becoming like the American 2-party system, with coalitions replacing the multiple parties: "When coalitions form, they go more and more to the middle."

"It is surprising so many went to vote when there are so few questions for



PM Reinfeldt (Moderates/Alliance)

which the parties have different answers," she muses, indicating that the participation rate was a bit higher than last election, which is very high in relation to the rest of Europe.

In her opinion, "voters were not necessarily voting for one particular party, but to avoid the Sweden Democrats entering parliament."

But of course, the SD did enter parliament. According to Lennhag, the reason this party mobilized so many votes is that in spite of Sweden's growing immigrant population, "mostly one party was discussing the problems that come with integration before the election -

other parties don't admit there are problems in the same way."

In Teorell's opinion, this could change now: "The Sweden Democrats will not gain much direct policy influence, but indirectly their mere existence in parliament will influence the agenda, since the

government now has to address the issue of immigration and integration more profoundly to be able to attract Sweden democratic voters in the next election (in 2014)," reasons the Associate Professor.

Mi Lennhag points out that issues surrounding immigration are indeed being discussed more openly since the election, and that there has also been positive discussion about how immigration is important to Sweden.

Ironically, it might be the Greens that stand to profit most from the SD's entry into parliament: "They will probably gain most influence over the government since they are the party in opposition that is closest on economic issues such as taxes," explains Jan Teorell.

In any case, "the Alliance definitely doesn't want to negotiate with the SD on laws, especially on migration policy," Mi Lennhag affirms.

According to Jan Teorell, taxes, rather than social issues, will be the focus of the new government, "as always in Sweden," he testifies. "They will probably implement another tax cut targeted toward the low-/middle-income groups, sustain labor market reforms to increase employment, and reform the welfare system to make it more cost-efficient," he predicts.

## At the local level

Susanna Hansson, Student Coordinator for the Lund Municipality and Lund University, explains that "the composition of the *Lunds Kommun* has not gone through important changes. The people on top will be the same." According to her, "the national, local and regional governments will mostly be focused on employment, as that is the most important issue right now. It is particularly problematic for young people, such as students."

While the SD were more popular in Skåne than in some other regions of Sweden, they were relatively limited in their success in Lund: "The anti-immigration party gained 3 seats in Lund this year, and I don't think they will be able to bring any dramatic changes in Lund specifically," claims Hansson.

As for the future, "I don't think that the decision regarding tuition fees introduced for international students will be reversed, and certainly this will negatively affect Lund University and education in Lund and Sweden as a whole, because fewer international students will come to Sweden to get educated," the Student Coordinator deplors.

**Zhou Li, Ariane Senécal, and Viktor Sulakvelidze**



## Tuition fees: Following Europe's trend

(Continued from page 1)

Swedish law, even these applications must be fully reviewed - extending the period of time it takes to accept a student. Both tuition and application fees will help eliminate this excess of applicants, claims Steleno.

Based on a full coverage policy, fees at Lund are set at a not for profit level. Tuition means to reflect the new need for scholarship funds, as well as increased lecture hours, resources, and international student services, including health care practitioners trained in English and Master's student orientations. As profit is not involved, it is not predicted that tuition fees will radically change in the future.



Though initially universities were expected to set much lower fees, currently they act as a supplement to a decreasing education budget as well as a marker of quality.

While the 100,000 SEK annual fees may deter some, work is quickly being done to avoid the initial setbacks seen in Denmark

and Holland upon their shift away from free international education. "It's a daunting task," Steleno admits.

The university recently restructured its website in an attempt to make it more accessible and student-directed. Course descriptions have been updated and information on career opportunities has been added, as Lund University exerts itself to be what students look for. Social media, interviews with journalists, meetings with government scholarship committees, and attendance at education fairs are all further ways in which Lund University is making sure Sweden's traditions of innovation and idealism aren't forgotten by the next round of paying applicants.

**Teddi N. Constantine**



## is (also) for Helsingkrona Nation

*The Nations of Lund – From A to Ö*

Thanks to Eva-Lena Eriksson, Prokurator at Helsingkrona nation.

**When were you founded and why:** Helsingkrona was founded in 1890, when the former "Skånska Nationen" was judged to be too large and was split into five smaller nations.

**What is the pride of your nation:** Our very active members!

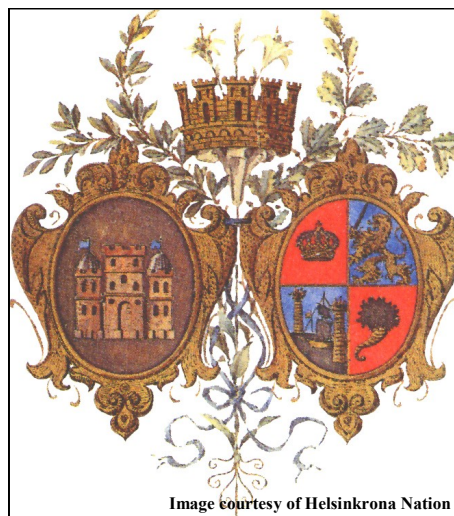
**What is your nation's symbol and why:** Our coat of arms is a mix between Helsingborg and Landskrona city coats of arms, designed by ladies from Helsingborg and Landskrona in 1891.

**Can you name a special event in your history:** One of our biggest events, that takes place every autumn, is the Snörsjöa Ball. The *Snörsjöa Orden* celebrates our bog, the Snörsjöa Bog, which the Nation got donated through a will of a previous member and is located in Småland.

**What international students can do in your nation:** We have a very active International Committee, which arranges a different number of activities every year. The coming attractions for this semester

are the Swedish cooking class (Oct. 24<sup>th</sup>), the International Food Market (Nov. 24<sup>th</sup>), the International Ball (Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>) and a trip to Stockholm (Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>).

If you want to participate in any of these activities, just stay in touch with [intsek@helsingkrona.se](mailto:intsek@helsingkrona.se).



**What are your plans for this year:** Two weeks ago the Snörsjöa Ball took place, which is one of our bigger events. In spring, we will participate in the big

*Tandem* bicycle race from Gothenburg to Lund, competing as a nation.

**What is your best beer:** Zlatopramen.

**Do you offer meals and if so how much:** We offer lunch both Mondays and Tuesdays. They contain one main dish and a dessert. Wednesdays we have Restaurant Temptation. We sell more fancy food there, and always have vegetarian alternatives, appetizers and desserts.

Every Friday we have Pub Fredmans, where we sell tacos, hamburgers, nachos and beer. It's a great place to chill out after a hard week of studying. After Fredmans we have the Sittning, it costs 130 SEK to go to a sittning, and there you will enjoy a nice three-course dinner.

**What is your best weekly event:** Fredmans!

**Where are you located:** Our address is Tornavägen 3, right next to LTH. Our office hours are 10:00-13:00, Monday-Friday, and also 17:00-18:00 every Thursday. Welcome in!

**Website:** [www.helsingkrona.se](http://www.helsingkrona.se).

*Missed the start of the alphabet? It's all at [dynamo.wordpress.com/](http://dynamo.wordpress.com/)!*



## Get inspired by Renaissance-rich Kristianstad

Travel

**Whether you want to visit a beautiful and genuine city center, go shopping or just relax in a café - Kristianstad is a nice place to go for a day trip, with something for everybody.**

In its first years, Kristianstad was Danish. Danish king Christian IV founded the trading town and fortress against Swedish attacks in 1614. It became Swedish in 1658.

This town was also a prestige project for the king, which can be seen in many of the buildings. One of the most impressive is the Church of the Holy Trinity (*Heliga Trefaldighetskyrkan*), built between 1617 and 1628. It is considered to be one of the finest Renaissance churches in Northern Europe, with its slender pillars of granite and the extraordinary altar.

Getting around within the city center is pretty easy because of the perpendicular street system. Paying a visit to the Tourist Office situated next to the City Hall, where they provide some information about what to do and where to go, is a good starting point.

On a walk through the city center, one passes lots of old buildings from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The *Prytz Lejehus* (1641), with a nice wall painting inside, or the *Fortifikationshuset* (1630), which was first a boot making factory and is today an administration building, are just a few examples.

Kristianstad is regarded as the cradle of Swedish film. The oldest recording studios were located here in 1909-1910 and are used today as a unique museum about Swedish film.

Another must-see museum for everybody who is into culture, history, art and film is the Regional museum, with permanent exhibitions about

out the place where the historic café *Darvins* meets the innovative pastry shop *Fantasi*. Home-made pies, pastries, their own ice-cream or even lunch are offered.

Kristianstad is also a good place for all shopaholics with about 250 shops, both unique



**Visit one of the finest Renaissance churches in Northern Europe.**

**Shoppers delight in the city center.**



the landscape of Skåne, textiles and films from Skåne, information on the history of the town, as well as temporary exhibitions covering a wide spectrum of topical subjects.

Hungry or thirsty after exploring the city center? Lots of nice cafes offer something for all tastes.

You should check

stores and the usual clothing stores, on a relative small area, especially around *Lila Torget*.

And after an excessive shop tour it could be time for some relaxing and swimming in the *Tivolibadet* in the middle of the Tivoli Park (60 SEK), where you end the day in a sauna or in the whirlpool.

***Getting to Kristianstad is pretty easy from Lund. Just hop on the Öresundståg north and you'll be there 55 min. later. It costs 96 SEK or even less with the JoJo card.***

*For a little intro to Kristianstad in advance, check the kommuns website:  
[www.kristianstad.se](http://www.kristianstad.se).*

**Text and Photos: Nadine März**





# We asked: “Would the introduction of tuition costs for international students affect your decision to study at LU, had it applied to you and your program?”

*Vox Pop*



**Julia Steinmann- Switzerland; Erasmus: Special Area Studies/Swedish**

“As an Erasmus student, the change in fees would not affect me, but there are other places I could study for much less or free, so I would go there instead.”

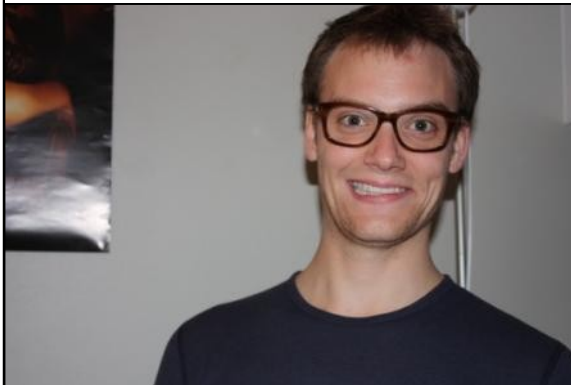


**Elias Edo- Ethiopia; Theology Studies**

“The change in fees may not be affordable for me based on my finances from my home country. Also, here it is quite difficult to find a job as a student.”

**Spencer Lowe- USA; Masters: Asian Studies**

“I would try to make it work because I want a different perspective for my graduate experience. However, the greater cost would require much more financial consideration.”



**Yaelle Kalifon- Israel; Masters: Linguistics**

“It would be too expensive. The free cost now was probably 50% of my decision to come study here.”



**Dorteia Schieunemann- Germany; Masters Exchange: Physics**

“It would be too expensive. Coming here for free was a large part of my decision in addition to the faculty for my program.”

**Pictures and comments taken by Lydia Cardinal**

## Ö revoir öre

### *How to make numismatists happy*

The Swedish 50 öre coin is officially no longer valid tender in Sweden since October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010. The öre, while still valid as a counting measure, no longer exists as cash.

“Very few people use it nowadays,” explains Susanne Meyer, Press secretary at the *Riksbank*, Sweden’s central bank. “There were a lot of articles in newspapers and on the radio about this change,” she adds.



The government decided to stop producing the coin (worth half a Swedish krona, 1/2 SEK) in 2009, with September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2010, marked as the last day on which it would be valid.

“There were 394 million 50 öre coins in circulation,” states Meyer, “which is a lot. We needed to make new ones all the time.”

Öres can still be exchanged

at banks until March 31st, 2011.

Meyer explains that now, when paying cash, 49 öre or less are rounded down, and 50 öre and over are rounded up to the next krona. (The öre is still counted for card payments.)

The *Riksbank* is considered to be the oldest central bank in the world: it was founded in 1668. It is responsible for monetary policy and has the objective of maintaining price stability.

**Philippe-Antoine Charbonneau**

## Lesser-known Lund : adding charm to... charm



(Continued from page 1)

**Where:** UB (University Library... the big one!) 3rd floor, back right corner.

**Why:** It is usually pretty quiet and removed from the usual hustle of the library. There's a great window to peer out of in thought and you're surrounded by the far reaching knowledge of the main stacks.

**When:** Whenever you find it empty, it's hit or miss. Open M-F 9.00-19.00, Sat 10-17.00, closed Sundays.

*Find more hidden spots on our blog!*

**Text and Photos: Lydia Cardinal**



## On tuition fees

*Editorial*

**As we all know, save some exceptions, non-exchange students who are citizens of countries outside the European Union (EU), European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland will be required to pay application and tuition fees starting next year.**

At *The Dynamo*, we think this is a sad, but understandable decision.

Understandable because countries' whose residents will now have to pay tuition fees themselves charge foreigners tuition fees. In Canada, for example, tuition fees for one year of university can cost around 3000 Euros; international students can sometimes pay double that. This brings in a lot of money for universities.

Understandable also because charging tuition fees is becoming the norm. There are still a few countries in Europe that are charging a reasonable price for non-EU students, but they might not offer the same range of programs in English as Lund University, nor the same quality.

But it remains sad.

Sad because perhaps it is a vision of Sweden that is changing. A country that is offering free tuition to foreigners is, well, a cool country. Sweden has an excellent reputation abroad but perhaps this will change a little now (add to that some results of the recent elections...).

Sad also because many students will never have the chance to live what we are living now. Most international students in Lund who are here doing a Master's degree would not be here if they had to pay 10 000 Euros per year. Only a very small percentage of the world's population can afford to pay that price.

We are aware that scholarships will be offered, but we are not sure who will benefit from them. Current students from Africa or Asia are not the most underprivileged, if they can study and live in Sweden. But thousands of Euros make a difference.

Middle-class students are the ones less likely to be represented under the new scheme, unless they are particularly brilliant perhaps.

And for those who do have the money, why would they choose Lund over, let's say, schools in the UK or the US? Swedish universities are surely tearing out their hair trying to answer that riddle right about now.

Swedish universities will have to adapt to the realities of competition. They will have to advertise and to compete with other universities in the country (and abroad) for students. Sweden and Swedes in general don't seem comfortable boasting and promoting themselves, but they won't have a choice now.

If they want to convince their targeted audience, they might need to change a few things (if they want to have Australians or North Americans, they might have to change their academic calendar). They will have to hire staff experienced with this kind of system already, and have more staff from abroad to help current staff adapt and new students feel at home.

The Master's students' population in Lund will definitely change. Diversity will certainly decrease, and there will be richer students on campus, with all the good and bad that can bring. It will be interesting to see the interaction between 1<sup>st</sup> year and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students next autumn.

Reading through the list of Master's programs, it is possible some could disappear. Or that some will have to accept almost every applicant, therefore diminishing the 'quality' of students – although national rules on accepting international vs. Swedish students might mean some programs accept no one at all!

But we understand that we do not have many supporting arguments when someone asks, "Why should foreigners have free tuition fees in Sweden?". The page is turned.

*The Dynamo* raises its glass to Sweden, and to all the last lucky ones.



# Simple and classic: Vegetable fried rice

Recipe

## Ingredients:

Rice - 2 cups;  
*Garam Masala* - 3 teaspoons;  
 Salt - 3-4 teaspoons;  
 Vegetables - Potato, Carrot, Green Peas, Green Beans;  
 Oil - 3 table-spoons.



## Instructions:

Marinate rice in water for half an hour. Meanwhile cut the vegetables into pieces.

Add 3 spoons of oil to the pan, then add vegetable pieces, and 2 spoons of salt, and 1 spoon of *garam masala*. Fry the vegetables in the oil for 10-15 mins, until the vegetables are fried enough.

After that take a pot and then add the marinated rice in it (remove the water to last drop, just add rice), then add the fried vegetables to the pot.

Add 4 cups of water to the rice and vegetables, and then add 1 or 2 spoons of salt and 2 spoons of *garam masala* to the mix.

Boil the entire mix until rice is boiled completely.

That's the vegetable rice to eat! The whole process takes 45 mins and can serve up to 2 people.

**Text and Photo:**  
**Anil Kumar Metla**

The Dynamo is distributed in nations, university buildings and libraries, at the Lundaböcker book shop and at dynamolund.wordpress.com

## BECOME A VOLUNTEER!

We welcome the participation of all students, whatever your talents!

lund.dynamo@gmail.com  
 (Join us on Facebook!)

# Reshaping your plate

Nutrition

**Tested and recommended by many nutritionists and dieticians, the Plate Model is a unique way to regulate your meal in keeping with the daily nutritional requirements.**

Composing your meals according to the Plate Model means that you will enjoy a moderate yet diverse diet, keeping the risk factors for obesity and metabolic syndrome at bay. Accordingly, your meal should comprise the following:

### Fruits and vegetables (1/2 of the portion):

Fruits are rich in vitamin C and folic acid. Both fruits and vegetables are good source of dietary fiber. Don't hesitate to be a fan of local berries; you get plenty of varieties to choose from. *Björnbär, körsbär, vinbär* and *lingon* to name a few. Fruit soups like rose hip soup (*niponsoppa*) and blueberry soup (*blåbärssoppa*) are typically Swedish.

Pick vegetables in the cabbage family such as broccoli, cauliflower and Brussels sprout as much as possible. Vary according to season.

### Bread or pasta, potatoes and other roots and tubers, rice and other cereals (1/4 of the portion):

Try whole grain bread and pasta instead of refined wheat flour products.

Apart from the staple potatoes, many types of local roots and tubers are available to diversify your meal. Rutabaga



**Fish could make up a pretty tasty 1/4 of your plate.**

(yellow turnip - *kålrot*), parsnip (*palsternacka*) and celery root (*rotselleri*) are excellent alternatives. You have got several forms to try with; mashed, casserole and *au gratin*.

### Meat, fish or poultry, and their alternatives for the vegetarians (1/4 of the portion):

Try a few lean choices among the regular intakes of meat. More fatty fish like salmon (*lax*), mackerel (*makrill*) and herring (*sill*) in the diet maintains a regular

intake of essential fatty acids. Pickled herring is worth trying too due to its prominence in festive tables. Pulses, beans, peas and lentils are ideal replacers for meat and fish for the vegetarians.

### Milk and dairy products (approximately 1/2 litre per day):

Consider choosing low-fat varieties of milk and cheese to avoid the accumulation of excess fat through the diet.

The Swedish *filmjök* (fermented milk) is an admirable choice due to its beneficial effects on gut health. Yoghurt is another

smart option.

### Vegetable fat:

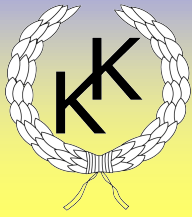
Vegetable fat is desirable as low-fat margarine and fat spreads.

Cooking oil with less saturated fatty acids and rich in the omega family of fatty acids will be a healthier choice.

Whether you eat much or less, maintaining the correct proportion is the key implication of the Plate Model.

**Chathudina Janitha Liyanage**

The Dynamo is an independent initiative for and by international students, printed with material support from Kuratorskollegiet.



## English-Swedish Mini-dictionary

**What time is it?:** Vad är klockan?

**Sorry I am late:** Ursäkta att jag är sen.

**I am hungover:** Jag är bakis.

**I mean, the dog ate my paper:** Eller jag menar... hunden åt upp min hemtenta.

**Academic Quarter:** Akademisk kvart

**Double-quarter:** Dubbelkvart

**Isn't there an Academic hour?:** Är det inte akademisk *timme*?

**Where's the library?:** Var ligger biblioteket?

**Why is it closed?:** Varför är det stängt?

**Already?:** Redan?

**Oh, it's been closed for hours:** Jaså, har det varit stängt i flera timmar?

**It's ok, I'll study at home:** Det gör inget, då pluggar jag hemma

**Party!:** Party!

Revision: Rasmus Persson

## "Dear Luke": Questions and Answers

**Q: Dear Luke,**

The seat on my bike has disappeared. Where do you think it is? What should I do? -Seatless in Sparta

**A: Dear Seatless,**

Sad to hear this, I am afraid it was stolen. That happens in Lund – 99% of the time it happens on a Friday or Saturday night, if you know what I mean. You can buy new bike parts at Biltema in Malmö Syd. But there are a number of bike shops in Lund too. I like the one on a back street near the Law building. Good luck! -Luke

**Q: Dear Luke,**

I am vegetarian – can I eat at nations?

-K. Lorie

**A: Dear K.,**

Yes! Most nations always have a vegetarian option for lunch and dinner, except for Göteborg and Malmö nations as far as I know. It usually says on their board that there is a vegetarian alternative. You sometimes wait a few minutes longer than the carnivores to get your meal but it's usually tasty and full of proteins.

-Luke

**Q: Dear Luke,**

I went to open a bank account the other day but they wanted my legs so I ran away – are Swedish bankers cannibals?

-Skare, Ed.

**A: Dear Ed,**

Good thing you ran away instead of taking your trousers off. But it's ok, you can go back to the bank! In Swedish, 'leg' is short for 'legitimation', which means identification (ID).

-Luke

### Unsolved Swedish Mysteries

## Patiently awaiting your reply

Opinion

**When I brought this subject up with my Swedish friends, most of them paused for a few seconds, and then said, 'I don't know'. That means this really is a mystery - and for everyone.**

It's about emails and phone messages. When I write Swedes an email or when I leave a phone message, it is rare that I get a reply.

Take this current issue of *The Dynamo*. Altogether, our volunteers wrote or called more than 30 people to ask them questions. How many wrote or called back? Only a handful. Okay, so we're not *The New York Times*. But even when it's just for something personal, like basic info – say *Komvux* for Swedish lessons (but don't get me started on that) – I feel like I'm playing phone tag!

And we try not to call random persons. Often we call people who work in communications; even them don't call back!

So why the silent treatment? I thought of 3 reasons that could explain it.

The first one would be that they think that if we really want to talk to them, we will call back. But I don't think this 'hard-to-get' attitude is really Swedish? But it's true that if we call a few times or we go see them in person, we end up reaching them...

The second one is a matter of choice. When someone hears a message from *The Dynamo* on their answering machine, it is possible they decide not to call back, especially if they are busy. They might not think it's important. But if it's part of their job, then they should call back!

Most likely, I think it's the third one. It's that they don't know us. I've noticed that in Sweden, people often go for the safe bet. If there's no queue, they won't start one. But if there's a big queue, they'll join. They don't know *The Dynamo*, they don't know this guy with the weird name who keeps calling to ask if he's still on the list for Swedish lessons, so they don't call back. Is that also why neighbors don't talk to each other much and also why they don't hold doors for others? They want to avoid con-

tacts with strangers?

But the same goes when we organize a school group meeting, let's say. We usually know who we invite so they should reply...

I've come to learn that no reply means 'I can't' or 'no'. But when you don't know this, you feel like writing them back asking 'Did you get my message??' but then you look kind of stupid if they don't reply again (and this could go on for a while) or worse, if they reply 'yes'...

But when you know about this "cultural aspect", it makes sense. Living abroad is often about tuning in to the same wavelength as the locals.

I've been brought up in the world of *acusés de réception* (acknowledgement of receipt, like for letters) so that I always reply to emails, unless the discussion is clearly over. But this can get tiring: if I'm emailing someone like me, the discussion never ends!

Philippe-Antoine Charbonneau