

The Union of Civil Servants in Sweden



*The Trade Union for us who
have chosen to work for the
state and the citizens*

ST, The Union of Civil Servants, is a trade union for employees in the government sector and the largest white-collar union in this sector in Sweden. ST is independent in party-political and religious terms and organises its members according to the principle one workplace – one trade union. ST has about 100 000 members and as a rule there is a ST section at every authority, public utility or state company.

Read more about our activities at www.st.org

Working for the state and its citizens entails special responsibilities. It is work guided by political goals, as well as by values such as public interest, demands for public transparency, integrity and the needs of the citizens.

We understand how the state operates!

ST – the Union of Civil Servants is very knowledgeable about state operations. This is because ST has worked for 100 years to improve the working conditions of civil servants. ST's demands for development at the workplace and for having an influence on the work content also mean that we can take responsibility for the operations, as well as for their development and results.

Everyone who works in the government sector is welcome to ST as a member. As a result, ST has members in large areas of the government sector, and in different positions. With this, ST has unique insight into the way the state sector operates. ST is thus able to attain a comprehensive view of public administration, and can provide dependable statements on issues concerning the state. When ST takes a stand, it is always on issues that are important for people who work in the state sector.

This is what ST
thinks about...

... democracy, legal security, efficiency – political leadership and resources

Effective public administration requires unambiguous political leadership. The distribution of roles between the political decision-makers and those who carry out the decisions must be visible and comprehensible. Furthermore, there has to be a sense of balance between the political goals and the funding that is provided for the operations. Unclear assignments and insufficient resources reduce the likelihood of achieving these goals. The cuts and structural changes of this past decade have solely focused on economic efficiency. This in turn has had a negative effect on both the employees and the operational results.

... the role of public officials – the servants of democracy on a mission for the citizens

Working on behalf of the state and the citizens is something to be proud of, however, it also entails special demands on the employee. Civil servants handle operations that are of significant public interest, and which should contribute to the furtherance of important functions in society. State operations should be a model of legal security, equal and uniform handling of matters at all levels, and equal treatment and conditions for all. High ethical and moral standards should apply in all contact with the public, as well as in the exercise of public authority. The role of civil servants is to enforce the decisions taken by the government and the parliament. At the same time, the decision-makers must receive feedback and supporting data for reappraisal and improvement when the political goals have not been achieved.

... openness and transparency

State sector activities should be characterised by openness. An open administration is a guarantee for transparency and participation, and should counteract corruption and the misuse of authority. The public sector should be transparent in its relations with the decision-makers, the users, and the public. The workplace should also be characterised by an open and broad-minded atmosphere.

The principle of public access to official records and the freedom of communication must be protected. The conversion of public utilities into independent companies and privatisation have had a dramatically adverse effect on transparency. One of ST's requirements is that the protection of whistle blowers' and of people investigating matters should also include people employed in state-owned companies and in other endeavours financed by the state.

... citizen perspective

Public sector operations are carried out on behalf of the citizens. The citizens are the recipients of the fruits of these efforts. All citizens, regardless of gender, age, nationality, place of residence, etc., must exert equal influence on the decisions and have equal access to cases related to them. There must be equal treatment in the exercise of public authority, as well as equal access to public activities and services.

The users' increased demand for transparency, participation and service, affect government services organisation and working manner. The users should feel satisfied with the contacts they have with government agencies, authorities and other public entities. The assignments must be carried out in a way that will guarantee continued public trust.

... supply of qualified competence, generation changes and strategic human resources policies

One quarter of the public servants are 55 or older. Of the 13 000 managers who work in public administration, 4 600 are over 55. There is an urgent need for recruiting new staff – and this is not limited to government services. Competition for the hiring of manpower is increasing. To be an attractive employer, it is no longer enough to offer meaningful job assignments. The job needs to be gratifying and challenging, and provide the employee with a say in the nature of the tasks. The job and the assignments should reward people who take on responsibility, training and career development. The state must pursue a strategic human resources policy that appeals to younger generations, and that will provide those already employed with opportunities for further development.

... leadership

Leadership plays a very important role in attracting the workforce of the future, and also in retaining those who already work for the state. Leadership should be used as a steering mechanism in the development of working methods and positive work places. The government sector should be permeated by responsible leadership. Managers in this sector should be able to motivate and instil enthusiasm in their co-workers. Delegation of assignments, opportunities to take responsibility, and the development of competence, will allow people to develop in their jobs, and thus enable them to take on new assignments. Government sector officials must be given the proper conditions to lead operations, and to practice sound leadership. The state sector should have confident managers who dare to speak up when the conditions for exercising leadership are lacking.

ST in brief

- About 100 000 members.
- 96 departments within public authorities, civil services, colleges and universities, state-owned and private companies and foundations.
- About 12 000 representatives at the workplaces.
- Offices in Stockholm, Malmö, Gothenburg, Norrköping, Örebro, Sundsvall and Umeå.
- During the current period of congress, which extends until 2008, we prioritise wage politics, gender equality, diversity and leadership.



What do you think?

Please let us hear from you, and give us your opinion.

Annette Carnhede,

Chair of the Union of Civil Servants

annette.carnhede@st.org



ST – The Union of Civil Servants

P.O. Box 5308, SE-102 47 Stockholm

Office: Sturegatan 15

Telephone: +46 8 790 51 00 Telefax: +46 8 24 29 24

E-mail: st@st.org Web site: www.st.org