

The Convention on the Rights of the Child in practice

Summary

What has SNAO examined?

Almost 15 years ago, Sweden undertook to comply under international law with the United Nations Convention on Children's Rights, the so-called children's convention. According to this convention, all decisions and measures in public activities concerning children must be made with children's best interests as first priority. A working strategy for incorporating the convention in Sweden was adopted by parliament almost six years ago. It consists of a broad and long-term undertaking as well as a large number of measures. The Swedish National Audit Office (SNAO) has examined whether the government and authorities have complied with the national strategy. Government information to parliament concerning developments has also been examined.

What does the audit show?

The government, authorities, and municipalities have so far not completely complied with requirements and fulfilled the goals of the national strategy adopted by parliament for work with the children's convention in Sweden. There are also certain deficiencies in the government's information to parliament. The government has taken a number of measures to implement the adopted strategy, but many undertakings remain to be fulfilled. Analyses of consequences for children are rare. Authorities and municipalities, as a rule, have no strategies for implementation work. Knowledge at a national level about work within authorities and municipalities is limited. Children's perspective is not often considered in decisions which relate to children.

The information in the government's reports to parliament mostly concerns general reports of political decisions and other changes which have taken place in different areas related to children, but not always in the way that the connection between national strategy and the children's convention is clearly stated. Outcome at the municipal level is reported scantily.

What are the recommendations of SNAO?

The government should formulate more precise goals for different items in the strategy and clearly state what requirements the authorities involved must comply with. The government should also consider measures for improving its reports to parliament. Furthermore, the government should take measures to improve follow-up work of developments at the municipal level.