



Swedish voter casts a ballot. Photo from Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB).

Sweden Defends Its Elections Against Disinformation

The Russian state information influence attack against the 2016 US presidential election rattled authorities in Sweden. With a general election approaching in September 2018 and public apprehension about a possible influence attack high, officials at the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency began preparing measures to defend the credibility of the country's electoral process. Rather than attempt to halt the creation and spread of disinformation, the agency aimed to build the resilience of institutions and society overall to withstand information influence activities. It trained thousands of civil servants, built and strengthened interagency coordination structures, coordinated with traditional and social media, raised public awareness, and monitored the digital information landscape. Despite a cyberattack on the Swedish Election Authority website that fanned claims of fraud and generated a flood of homegrown political disinformation, the election ran smoothly and the government doubled down on the resilience-building approach for protecting the 2022 election.

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This case study is part of a series on combating election disinformation. The focus extends an early ISS case study series on election administration.

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