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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC,  
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Third periodic reports submitted by States parties under  
articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant in accordance with  
the programmes established by Economic and Social Council  
resolution 1988/4

Addendum  
SWEDEN\*

[22 June 1994]

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Guidelines on article 15: paragraphs 4 to 6

325. Since the second periodic report of the Government of Sweden no changes have taken place regarding the right to freedom of scientific inquiry. In the report it was stated that the 1977 Act on Higher Education includes general principles for the conduct of research. Researchers and scientists are free to choose their research topics and the scientific methods used. Scientific results can be published without any restrictions.

326. This applies to research financed by the Government and Parliament and carried out at universities and colleges. As there are few research institutes outside the higher education system in Sweden, the overwhelming amount of research is carried out at universities and colleges. For research and development work financed and carried out by industry different rules apply.

327. In the last couple of years, the Swedish Government and Parliament have stressed the need for universities and colleges to work more closely with business and industry in order to diffuse and make use of the results of research. For example, special research companies are being established with universities as major owners. In these companies research of direct interest to industry can be carried out in cooperation with university institutions. This is done in close cooperation with industry, but in a way which does not interfere with the basic objectives of the universities.

328. More relevant to the purpose of this report may be the increased efforts to disseminate information about scientific activity and the results of research to the general public. This is related to what is usually called public understanding of science.

329. As was stated in the earlier report, universities and colleges as well as other actors in the research system, for example, research councils, have an obligation to disseminate information about their activities. The Government and Parliament have made special allocations to universities and colleges to this end. The Council for Planning and Coordination of Research has also a special responsibility to promote

public understanding of science through various activities: publications, debates and projects involving museums, schools, teachers and the media.

330. Very recently, the Swedish Government has decided to establish a special task force on science information. This group will be in charge of intensifying efforts in this area to evaluate what is already being done and to find creative means to reach out to the general public.

331. As an example of the Government's increased efforts in the area of science information, an exhibition of Swedish research will be shown in three Swedish cities in the summer of 1994. Other activities will be arranged in connection with the exhibition, such as public debates and lectures, theatre, and music events.

332. International cooperation in higher education and research is a high priority in the Swedish Government's policies. In the last couple of years a number of initiatives have been taken to foster contacts between Swedish universities and colleges and their counterparts abroad. The closer relationship between Sweden and the European Union has been the most important feature in the internationalization of Swedish higher education and research. Fellowships enabling an exchange of researchers between Sweden and other countries have increased in number. Special allocations have been made to enable Swedish universities to conclude agreements on the exchange of research students and professors with centres of excellence in other countries. In the bill on higher education and research, presented to Parliament in March 1994, proposals to establish Swedish university centres abroad and to strengthen Swedish cultural institutes in other countries were put forward.