Évaluation et qualité de la législation: Quel rôle pour les parlements?

Paris, le 5 décembre 2013

Christer Åström, chef de secrétariat
Secrétariat des évaluations et des recherches
Division des services des commissions parlementaires
Sveriges Riksdag – Le parlement suédois
A constitutional obligation

- 2001: The Riksdag Act
- 2001: Riksdag Guidelines
- 2006: Riksdag Guidelines
- 2011: The Instrument of Government: “Each committee follows up and evaluates decisions of the Riksdag within the committee’s subject area.”
The role of Parliament

- Parliament is a crucial link and a key actor in the democratic chain of governance.
- The key tasks of the Swedish Riksdag: adopt laws, decide on central government expenditure and revenue, and examine the way in which the Government and public agencies perform their duties.
- *Ex ante* impact assessments of laws are primarily conducted by Government committees of inquiry and public authorities.
- *Ex post* evaluations are conducted by Riksdag committees, the National Audit Office, public authorities and Government committees of inquiry.
Parliamentary evaluations

• Each parliamentary committee is responsible for evaluating decisions taken by Parliament, e.g. decisions on new laws
• Evaluation is a way of obtaining information about results and creating more robust links with Parliament’s legislative decisions
• Evaluations have a forward-looking approach
• Evaluations provide a basis for solidly-based positions in committee deliberations
• Evaluations are carried out partly through thematic in-depth evaluations, and partly by means of ongoing follow-up and evaluation
Questions

- Have resources been distributed in accordance with political priorities?
- Have the intended results (output and outcome) been achieved?
- Have the laws had the intended effects?
- Are budgetary or legislative adjustments needed?
Evaluation Groups in the Committees

- Many committees have Evaluation Groups comprising MPs from the different political parties
- The groups consider evaluation proposals, carry out evaluations and submit evaluation reports to the committee
- Each of the 15 committees decides separately if it wants to carry out an evaluation
- A starting point for most evaluations is that some sort of problem has been observed
The evaluation process
– from idea to Parliament decision

**December:** Decision to accomplish an evaluation

**January:** Prestudy

**February:** Decision

**March-May:** Main study. Interviews, questionnaire, statistics etc.

**June:** Meeting of group

**June-September:** Analysis

**September:** Meeting of group, discussing observations

**October:** Meeting of group, discussing analysis, decision on the evaluation report

**November:** Decision of the Committee

**December:** Debate and decision of the Parliament
Specialist staff at the Parliament

- The Riksdag Administration has allocated resources to support evaluation work: Committee Secretariats and the Evaluation and Research Secretariat.
- Close cooperation between the committees and the evaluators. Evaluators help to prepare, implement and conclude evaluations.
- Special funds for procurement of researchers and other experts.
The roles of MPs and evaluators

- *Evaluators* produce the empirical parts of the evaluations. No political bias in the empirical parts!

- *MPs in the Evaluations Groups* agree on the description of the situation and observation of problems. The MPs are responsible for the assessments and conclusions in evaluation reports.

- *MPs* use the findings for discussions in the committees and in Parliament about what measures and actions to take. The results are considered in a Committee Report, which normally is decided upon in Parliament.
Conclusions

1. Parliaments have an important role to play. Evaluations are a way of strengthening Parliament in relation to the Government.

2. It takes long time to develop the way of doing evaluations in Parliament. In Sweden evaluation is a constitutional obligation.

3. It should be possible for committees to monitor the long-term development of performance results.

4. It’s important that the MPs are active in the evaluations. In Sweden the establishment of Evaluation Groups has promoted the use and understanding of evaluation results.

5. In the evaluations, problems are highlighted and analysed by the MPs. The possible solutions are discussed after the evaluations.

6. It’s important to have specialist staff for evaluations in the Parliament Administration.
More information about evaluations in the Swedish Parliament

- Website: www.riksdagen.se/en
- E-mail: christer.astrom@riksdagen.se
- You are very welcome to contact us!