

LOORA



Living With Our and Others' Religions
Together in Diversity

Questionnaire
Situation of religious minorities

Country:	Sweden
Name of religious minority 3	Syrian Orthodoxism; The Syrian Orthodox Church of Santa Maria in the town of Norrköping, Sweden
Number of believers:	There are app 70 000 members of the Syrian Orthodox Church in Sweden.
Regional, national distribution within the country (e.g. are believers dispersed or concentrated in one or more places?):	All over but mainly in the big cities. The Santa Maria congregation consists of app 1 000 families.
Are believers organized in communities or similar structures?	Congregations and dioceses. There are 2 bishops in the town of Södertälje.
Legal position/ status (e.g. is the religious minority recognized and is there equal status with the religion of the majority?):	Yes, they feel they are generally accepted by the Swedish society but maybe not to 100%. The church however does not feel opposed in any way by anyone. The Swedish State Church and the Syrian Orthodox Church are very similar in almost every aspect. The only difference is that the Syrian church does not receive any monetary support from the church taxes.
Are there reasons which stop the religious minority enjoying freedom of worship in the country? <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, what are the reasons... <input type="checkbox"/> -legal reasons <input type="checkbox"/> -social reasons <input type="checkbox"/> -other reasons <input type="checkbox"/> -	No important limitations as the church is so similar to the Swedish state church. We both believe in Jesus and share the same wish to go to heaven. The only limitation is of an economic kind. As they don't get any part of the church taxes they don't have much money for e.g. salaries. There are no limits when it comes to freedom to practice
Is the religious minority visible to others? When yes, how?	They are not that visible to others but sometimes they organize activities together with the Swedish church, e.g. a choir.
What influence does the majority culture of the country have on the religious minority?	For instance are married couples now allowed to get a divorce. The church does have its opinion about that but can't force people to stay together. Young people want to live a more "Swedish" life and spend more time with friends.
What influence does the culture of the religious minority have on the majority culture of the country?	The Syrian Orthodox Church has no influence whatsoever on society. It's more likely the other way round.
What influence does the majority culture of the country have on the architecture of the religious minority's places of worship?	The architecture of the church is of no importance. The faith is what counts and the church is a meeting place for families and members.
What's it like to be a young catholic person today?	A young person is not supposed to argue with his or her parents. The family is to be respected. It's important to spend time with your family and to be close. Young people are supposed to follow the 10 commandments.