



## Letter of support for the Electoral Psychology Observatory, London School of Economics

The Swedish Election Authority has been following the work from the Electoral Psychology Observatory since it started 2020. As an election authority we have been facing challenges with an increasing threat to elections the last years. It has been a similar situation for all election authorities around the world. The risks for disinformation and misinformation is forcing us to communicate more with the voters. We need to understand the voters and how they perceive the elections process. The work from EPO is unique because it focuses on the conduct of elections from the voter's perspective. For us it has been really valuable to take part of Michael Bruter's, Sarah Harrison, and their team's research both in general and detailed specifics about Swedish elections. We find the research both insightful and actionable.

Our ongoing collaboration is continuous and takes multiple innovative forms. For instance, we invited EPO Director Michael Bruter to come to Sweden and observe our last (2022) General elections and provide his observation on the experience of our voters. Whilst we also invited chief executives from leading Electoral Authorities who could compare our elections to theirs, Michael's specific contribution was focused on the perceptions and experiences of the voters. After the election, we thus organised a debriefing event with the EPO team and the leadership team from our Election Authority. Based on our own questions and EPO's observations, we started discussions on key topics including the design of the polling stations, our two step voting process and the optimisation of perceptions of secrecy in that context, the complex ballot paper design, and how best to reassure voters in an election including efficiency of information, remote voting experience etc. In turn, this process helps us in our own role to feedback to Parliament about potential electoral improvements we continuously discuss.

Similarly, I participated in events focused on EPO's research at the United Nations where I presented the perspective of Election Authorities alongside international organisations and EPO's academic research in the fields of electoral inclusion, as well as events on EPO's research at the UK Parliament, and I also remotely followed Michael's participation in an event on the Future of Democracy organised by the Nobel Prize Comitée. Finally, I have been invited to be part of EPO's annual Advisory discussions which give stakeholders like myself a chance to participate in shaping or refining the Observatory's agenda to make sure it deals with issues on which we need more scientific research. I really think that EPO's work is unique in the way they cooperate with election authorities. In short, our work together is both fluid in that we can discuss on many different issues, and specific, in that we work together on very specific but very important aspect of the improvement of the voter's experience.

You could think that it is obvious to put the voter in the centre when you design election processes. Unfortunately it is not always the case, not in Sweden and not in other countries. The work that EPO does, helps election authorities like us to put the voter in the centre when we design election processes, like ergonomics, democratic inclusion, how the voters perceive different things. The EPO uses methodologies that can help us improve the Swedish process. We are very much looking forward in cooperating with the EPO in developing the election process in Sweden, from the voter's perspective.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Anna Nyqvist'.

Anna Nyqvist  
Chief Executive Officer, Swedish Election Authority