

# NO NATO REFERENDUM IN SWEDEN

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It looks increasingly unlikely that the Swedish people

will get to voice their opinion on the question of NATO membership.

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Finland and Sweden are getting ready to simultaneously file for NATO membership. Finnish [newspaper \*Ilta-lehti\*](#) reports on a proposal from the Swedish government that the two countries apply for membership together.

The paper also quotes Swedish Foreign Minister Ann Linde as saying that a parliamentary analysis group would publish its assessment of a NATO accession on May 13th. Once their report is available, the Swedish Parliament will be ready to decide on a formal membership application.

Despite the report in the *Ilta-lehti*, it remains unclear if the Swedish government will be able to proceed in lockstep with its Finnish neighbor. According to [the Swedish newspaper \*Expressen\*](#), the social-democrat government in Stockholm has not yet won approval for NATO membership from its own party organization:

*The Social Democrats explained last week through party secretary-general Tobias Baudin that a decision on [a Swedish] NATO membership could be made by the party's central committee no earlier than May 12th, but more likely May 24th. The party's parliamentary caucus had a marathon meeting as recently as last Friday [April 22nd] but claimed to not have reached a decision.*

On April 19th the largest Swedish social-democrat newspaper, *Aftonbladet*, [changed its editorial view](#), abandoning its previous opposition to NATO membership. The *Dagens Nyheter*, a daily newspaper, [reports that there is inter-party consensus](#) on NATO

membership in the Swedish Parliament.

It looks increasingly unlikely that the Swedish people will get to voice their opinion. Upon a direct question from the *Dagens Nyheter*, not one of the eight parties in Parliament is ready to propose a referendum on NATO accession.

Sweden and Finland approach NATO membership [from different points of military strength](#). While Finland currently has a traditional conscript military, Sweden will face significant investments in order to bring its armed forces up to NATO standards.