



## **The Swedish National Rural Development Agency (Glesbygdsverket)**

This is our main contact in the national administration. They have a responsibility to follow how different national activities effect the people in the archipelago as well as in all sparsley populated areas in the country. A national program for the archipelago is adopted. They are also governing the 12 Leader+ programmes in Sweden.

As part of the national program the agency have formed a network on archipelago issues. In the network we have representatives from about ten different national agencies responsible for roads, ferries, nature conservation, cultural heritage, coastguard, ministry of industri, employment and communication. The network meets regularly and exchange information on the activities taken by the different agencies.

### **Our main issues**

Our task is concentrated in three main areas; living conditions, working conditions and service conditions. Under such broad subjects there are of course many specific topics.

### **The exploitation conflict**

There is a growing conflict between different interests in the archipelago. There are interests of exploitation for recreational purpose on one side and nature conservation on the other. Many times the respect for the people living in the area is obviously of less importance in that balance. In recent years, however, there is a growing knowledge that the people living here are an important part in this process.

In the economic competition of the resources we are often the weaker part. We are now facing a situation were the price of houses or farms are far beyond what can be paid by a family who earn its living in the archipelago. We also have an estate national tax system that makes it almost impossible to afford living in the most attractive areas. A yearly house is based on the marketprice for all houses sold, including summerhouses. This means a high tax based on a non-existing income.

We have for many years tried to inform the government and national administration that our way of life in the archipelago needs some special care. We need some protective rules to make it possible for a living archipelago in the future. Strategic planning of the archipelago must be done in cooperation with the people living there. In september 2002 we published a "whitepaper" on the different problems around housing and planning in the archipelago.

### **Working conditions**

The archipelago areas in Sweden differ very much in ways of living. Close to Stockholm and Gothenburg the economy is much influenced by the cities. Good transportation gives lots of commuters. But further away more of the economy comes from service proffessions connected to the tourism and the many summerhouses. In the archipelago areas far from the major cities farming and fishing still is important as well as service proffessions.

The associations efforts in these issues have been connected to the formulation of EU-programmes. We have contributed to make the national programmes for Leader+ and Objective 2 as constructive as possible.

We also take active part in the national discussion on how the rural development within EU may change in the future.



### **Housing and planning**

Strict legislation prohibiting building close to the sea. High pressure from summer house market. Residents houses turn to summer houses. Difficulties for islanders to afford to buy houses on islands.

Special problem with high taxes on houses based on prize level set by "summer house market". National discussion on how to restrict the present negativ development. Initiatives on planning to restrict areas only for residents.

Lack of rental apartment houses on islands. Almost all houses are privately owned houses or farms.

### **Emplyment**

Traditional work declining like farming and fishing. Government positions on islands are reduced like pilotstations, lighthouseworkers, wetherobservatory, customs, military etc. Some new jobs in nature reserves and conservation.

Tourism and service sector is growing. New islanders bring their old citybased job to the summerhouse on the island with help of new technique. If everything works they stay and become new islanders.

### **Helth**

All medical service is mainland based exept in the biggest islands. In Stockholm archipelagoe there is a medical boat with a doctor that can visit all small islands.

### **Care for elderly**

Service is generally on mainland. Bigger islands have special service.

### **Emergency**

Islands with ferry can take ordinary ambulance. Helicopterservice, coastguard and sea rescue is available. Fire service is very limited.

### **Education**

On bigger islands there is school up till 2<sup>nd</sup> level. Many islands do not have a school. Children have to take schoolboat to the mainland. In some cases the children has to live on the mainland. Many small schools are regularly threatened.

### **Waste management**

Communes are responsible. Almost all waste is taken to mainland big operations. Waste water is often refined on the islands and infiltrated back to nature.

