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**Presentation title:** Exoneration in Sweden: about time to reform the system?

Recently, several cases of wrongful convictions have been exposed in Sweden, highlighting flaws in the system. Two cases are noteworthy in this context. They illustrate e.g. that several applications for exoneration are necessary to be exonerated. The first case concerned a man who was convicted of killing a close friend. He was sentenced to fifteen years in prison. He had to apply two times for exoneration before the Supreme Court granted the application. At the new trial, he was acquitted. The second case concerned a man who was convicted for murder and he was sentenced to life imprisonment. Although his first and second application showed faults regarding the evidence, both applications were denied. In his third application, he made the same argument as before. This time the Supreme Court approved the application. After the new trial, he was acquitted. He spent thirteen years in prison. Until today, that is the longest time a person (who was later exonerated) has been imprisoned in Sweden. An application for exoneration in Sweden is administered exclusively within the court system. But it seems that a successful application depends on engaged journalists and lawyers. Only then is an application apparently formulated so it adheres to the language of the court. This suggests that there might be cases today that meet the criteria for exoneration, but is not given the necessary scrutiny. By introducing an independent review committee, which would administer applications for exoneration, the equality and fairness in the Swedish criminal justice system would increase. A committee could e.g. provide guidelines for applicants, be given the mandate to order certain investigation matters etc. This would enhance the applicant's odds for a fair chance. Hence, in order to improve access to justice in criminal law matters and for a fair and equal assessment in these cases, it is crucial that the current system of administering applications for exoneration is reformed.