

250 Years with the Freedom of the press Act

The year 2016 marks the 250th anniversary of the Freedom of the Press Act issued in the kingdom of Sweden. It is still an essential part of the constitution of both Sweden and Finland. At the time of its adoption in 1766, the Act introduced a unique addition to European legal culture. It was the most liberal Freedom of the Press Act of that time and simultaneously the world's first Freedom of Information Act.

The introduction of the Freedom of the Press Act can largely be credited to the scholar Peter Forsskål and politician Anders Chydenius. They were both in Finland, which was then a part of the Swedish kingdom. Forsskål and Chydenius were in many ways ahead of their time as predecessors to the liberal wave that swept through Europe at the end of the 18th century.

Sweden and Finland are both leading countries of the world regarding the freedom of the press; they have been and still are forerunners when it comes to free word, transparency, openness and the citizen's right to public information. The freedom of the press Act still governs the rules on the freedom of information and prohibition of censorship. The legacy of the Act carries on and it has had a big influence to present days. However there is always more work to be done to ensure the citizens right to know, to write and to speak. Thus it is important to know the history of how we got to this point.

Program

17.00 Welcoming remarks

Mr Håkan Jevrell, Ambassador of Sweden

Ms Paula Parviainen, Ambassador of Finland

17.20 Peter Forsskål and his contribution on the 1766 Ordinance

Dr David Goldberg

17.40 Should Singapore Adopt a Freedom of Information Law?

Dr Kevin Y L Tan

18.00 Panel discussion - comments and questions

Moderated by Dr Jack Tsen-Ta Lee

18.30 Drinks and small snacks

About the speakers

Dr David Goldberg

David Goldberg directs Project Forsskål, which spearheaded the publication of the first English translation of Peter Forsskål's *Thoughts on Civil Liberty* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2009; ISBN 978-91-7353-360-7). He is a Senior - Visiting Fellow at the Institute of Computers and Communications Law, Queen Mary College, University of London and an adjunct Associate Professor of Law, Southwestern Law School, Los Angeles. He has worked for the Campaign for Freedom of Information in the UK since 1984.

Dr Kevin Y L Tan

Kevin Tan is a leading expert on the legal history and constitutional law of Singapore. He graduated from the National University of Singapore (NUS) with an LLB (Hons), and holds an LLM and JSD from Yale University. He is currently Adjunct Professor at the Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore as well as at the S Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University. Kevin has written and edited over 30 books and numerous articles on the law, history and politics of Singapore.

Dr Jack Tsen-Ta Lee

Jack Lee is an assistant professor at the School of Law, Singapore Management University, where he teaches and researches constitutional and administrative law, and media law, while maintaining an interest in heritage law. He graduated with an LLB (Hons) from the NUS, and an LLM from University College London in 2003 which he completed on a British

Chevning Scholarship. In 2012, he was conferred a PhD in Law by the University of Birmingham, which was funded by a teaching assistantship.

Mr Håkan Jevrell, Ambassador of Sweden

Ambassador Håkan Jevrell was appointed Ambassador of Sweden to Singapore in August 2013 and he is also the non-resident Ambassador of Sweden to Brunei Darussalam.

Mr Jevrell was State Secretary at the Swedish Ministry of Defense from 2007-2012. He was also the Political Adviser at the Swedish Prime Minister's office between 2006-2007.

Mr Jevrell holds Masters of Law from Stockholm University and has also completed an Executive Management Program at the Institute for Leadership at Stockholm School of Economics.

Ms Paula Parviainen, Ambassador of Finland

Ambassador Paula Parviainen became Finland's 7th Ambassador to Singapore in September 2015. Prior to that Ms Parviainen served four years as Minister, Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Finland in Beijing, PRC.

Ms Parviainen has a Master's Degree in International Relations from Abo Academy, the Swedish speaking University in Turku Finland and Master Studies in Corporate Communications and Public Relations at the Boston University, in Massachusetts, USA.

250 years of Sweden's Press Freedom Act

20:th of October at 17:00-19:00

Venue: the Swedish Residence

39 Andrew Road, Singapore 299957



In close cooperation with the School of Law, Singapore Management
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