



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

Common and long-term sustainable solutions for Baltic Sea fisheries discussed at BALTFISH meeting

Published 07 September 2018

State Secretary Lisa Backteman raised the importance of continued close dialogue and cooperation around the Baltic when BALTFISH (a forum for discussion Baltic Sea Fisheries) met in Stockholm.

Sweden is Chair of the regional body between 1 July 2018 and 30 June 2019. During this period, Sweden will work to advance the efforts on long-term sustainable fisheries in the Baltic Sea and to ensure that management measures are in line with the objectives and principles of the Common Fisheries Policy. The meeting in Stockholm on 5 September, the first of the Swedish Presidency, gathered around 50 representatives of the Baltic Sea states, as well as representatives of the fishing industry and environmental organisations.

In the meeting's opening address, Ms Backteman emphasised that constructive and effective cooperation on long-term sustainable fisheries in the Baltic Sea is a matter of high priority for the Swedish Government. This is mainly because many of the challenges traverse borders, and can therefore only be advanced through close dialogue and cooperation between the concerned Baltic Sea states and stakeholders to find common and long-term sustainable solutions.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice

Government agencies and authorities respond to effects of drought and heat

Published 09 August 2018

Rescue services, government agencies and local authorities are engaged in intensive efforts in response to the forest fires raging around the country, the widespread drought and the ongoing heat wave. More information about these efforts is available below. Crisis preparedness is part of the remit of every government agency and authority.

Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency

The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) manages coordination and national priorities for international support. The MSB maintains constant preparedness and can provide reinforcement resources, both equipment and expertise, if requested by rescue operations leaders or county administrative boards. The MSB is also in regular dialogue with neighbouring countries and the EU Emergency Response Coordination Centre concerning international resources.

The MSB has forest fire depots (with hoses, motor pumps and six-wheel ATVs) located around the country, which are being used for several of the fires.

The MSB can also provide personnel with collaboration and leadership

expertise to reinforce actors' management functions.

The MSB reinforces relevant county administrative boards' staffing and their reception of international support. Moreover, the MSB can provide housing solutions, hygiene facilities such as showers and toilets, and high-capacity pumps – resources that include accompanying expertise.

More information about ongoing events and measures relating to the forest fires is available on the MSB website

Information about the forest fires from county administrative boards, municipalities and rescue services is gathered at www.krisinformation.se, the national website for emergency information. Important public announcements (in Swedish only) are published on this website.

- [Krisinformation.se](http://www.krisinformation.se) website

Swedish Armed Forces, including the Home Guard

Swedish Armed Forces, including the Home Guard

The Swedish Armed Forces is providing continued support in the form of personnel and equipment, in response to expressed needs.

More information is available on the Swedish Armed Forces website

Swedish Transport Administration

The Swedish Transport Administration is assisting with firefighting equipment and staffing resources, especially tracked vehicles equipped with water tanks and fire suppression equipment, and personnel to staff this equipment. At the moment, the Swedish Transport Administration is supporting rescue services at forest fires in Gävleborg, Dalarna and Jämtland counties. Traffic is impacted in the affected counties and traffic information is being updated regularly.

More information is available on the Swedish Transport Administration website

Swedish Coast Guard

The Swedish Coast Guard has specially equipped marine patrol aircraft, two of which are now being used to assist rescue services and the MSB with

patrolling, documentation and directing other aircraft resources in connection with the forest fires. The Coast Guard has also produced special maps of the fires.

More information is available on the Swedish Coast Guard website

Swedish Police Authority

The Swedish Police Authority is providing local support from each region and police from unaffected regions. The Police Authority's main task in connection with the fires is to save lives and reduce injuries. This involves cordoning off areas, directing traffic and evacuating residents in accordance with rescue service decisions. The National Operations Department has taken decisions concerning nationwide special events in order to support regions with national resources, where necessary, and prepare for potential decisions concerning nationwide special events. The fires are primarily affecting the Mitt, Nord and Bergslagen police regions. The Police Authority has decided to reinforce resources in the central police region Mitt with a number of police officers from the Öst, Väst Syd and Stockholm police regions.

More information is available on the Swedish Police Authority website

County administrative boards

The county administrative boards are monitoring the forest fires and coordinating efforts between local actors and national level. They are also coordinating county information to the media and the public. County administrative boards also take decisions about fire bans and provide information to the public. All county administrative boards are closely monitoring access to animal feed and water in each county. The grazing and hay harvesting situation is extremely serious in several counties. Some county administrative boards have provided resources to other affect counties. The MSB's assessment is that resources to deal with the ongoing forest fires are currently available at county administrative board level.

County administrative board website

Municipal rescue services

All municipal rescue services are providing assistance based on their

capacity. The number of firefighters and other personnel working to contain the ongoing fires in Sweden is constantly changing. A large number of volunteers, Home Guard personnel, police, and others are also assisting.

Svenska kraftnät

Svenska kraftnät is the government agency that ensures Sweden has a secure electricity supply. Its remit includes ensuring that the country's electricity supply is prepared to handle extreme events, such as fires, that may entail serious strains on society. The electricity system is monitored around the clock. Svenska kraftnät is monitoring the ongoing forest fires closely and is in dialogue with rescue services on the ground and, when necessary, can provide emergency equipment to restore the power grid. This includes tracked vehicles equipped with wireless communications, such as the Raket system. These mobile command and communication units (MOLOS) are operated by Sweden's Voluntary Radio Organisation as instructed by Svenska kraftnät.

[Svenska kraftnät website](#)

Swedish Board of Agriculture

The Swedish Board of Agriculture is working actively to find solutions to alleviate the situation for affected farmers. These solutions include exemptions from regulations, higher advance payments from support funds to help liquidity, and more. For example, the Board has granted an exemption allowing farmers to take feed from grassland that otherwise must not be harvested.

[More information is available on the Board of Agriculture website](#)

National Food Agency

The protracted drought in large parts of the country is creating major problems for agriculture. This also means that everyone must conserve drinking water. At present, around 80 municipalities have introduced a ban on watering. Thus, it is equally as important to save municipal drinking water as private well water. Water is needed for many important activities, such as food production, hospitals and agriculture.

The National Food Agency is cooperating with the Swedish Board of

Agriculture and other authorities to manage the difficult situation of farmers.

More information is available on the National Food Agency website

Swedish Forest Agency

The Swedish Forest Agency is supporting firefighting efforts by providing map data, landowner contact information and equipment such as hoses, pumps and drones. The Agency can also provide staffing resources and coordinate the exchange of information between the forestry sector, the MSB and other government agencies and actors, as well as provide status reports to landowners and the public. The Agency can also conduct inventories and offer support and guidance to affected forest owners.

More information is available on the Swedish Forest Agency website

Swedish Work Environment Authority

Heat can impact employee attentiveness and judgement, which can lead to an increased risk of accidents. The Swedish Work Environment Authority is responsible for issues regarding work environment and working hours, and monitoring legal compliance. At present, the Authority is providing information about relevant risks, work environment responsibilities, preventive measures and applicable regulations. For example, the Authority has gathered information on its website about temperature and climate conditions at workplaces. The Authority is monitoring and analysing developments to prepare for additional measures.

More information is available on the Swedish Work Environment Authority website.

The social partners are monitoring compliance with labour legislation such as the Annual Leave Act and collective agreements that may regulate working hours, for example.

Swedish Work Environment Authority website

SOS Alarm

Response times for the emergency number 112 are increasing, and the system is under pressure. SOS Alarm has heightened its level of

preparedness, producing status reports each day (at 06.00, 09.00, 15.00 and 20.30) and enabling measures to be taken when necessary. SOS Alarm is urging people to refrain from calling the emergency number 112 if they are not in acute or immediate need of help.

More information is available on the SOS Alarm website

National Board of Health and Welfare

The National Board of Health and Welfare works to strengthen the preparedness of health, medical care and social service providers before, during and after serious incidents. In light of the ongoing heat wave and the many serious forest fires in the country, the Board is working with other government monitoring agencies.

More information is available on the National Board of Health and Welfare website

Public Health Agency of Sweden

The Public Health Agency of Sweden provides targeted advice for municipalities, county councils, regions and private actors to use in their efforts to reduce health risks associated with heat waves. This advice is then passed on to the individuals concerned.

More information is available on the Public Health Agency of Sweden website

Lantmäteriet

Lantmäteriet, the government agency that produces maps of Sweden, is currently using its expertise to support other agencies. It has established a 'geo cell' in Färila, Sweden, staffed by Lantmateriet personnel with GIS expertise, and equipped with hardware such as computers, printers and plotters that can compile, analyse and print out maps based on the needs of rescue services, the police, county administrative boards and the MSB. Lantmäteriet takes part in regional collaboration conferences and the national collaboration conferences for government agencies.

Lantmäteriet website

Swedish Post and Telecom Authority

The Swedish Post and Telecom Authority (PTS) is collaborating with other government agencies and societal actors, providing regular status reports on electronic communications. PTS is in regular contact with sector actors and has convened a meeting of the National Telecommunications Coordination Group (NTSG). PTS has also assigned a radio frequency permit to Polish rescue services.

More information is available on the Swedish Post and Telecom Authority website

Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth

The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth is reaching out to businesses and organisations in the hospitality industry to enable them to inform tourists about the serious situation in Sweden and current conditions.

Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth website

Swedish Maritime Administration

The Swedish Maritime Administration has had an ongoing dialogue with the MSB for the past week concerning the type of support the Administration can provide to fight the fires raging around Sweden. The Administration is supporting the MSB by coordinating society's combined resources. This involves overall planning, leadership and strategies for system managers, staff functions and prioritising society's resources from a national perspective. It also includes aircraft coordination and logistics support, which may entail optimising fuel supplies of the aircraft resources taking part.

More information is available on the Swedish Maritime Administration website

Meteorological and Hydrological Institute

The Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI) issues heat warnings when a period of high or extreme temperatures is expected. High temperatures put a strain on the body, creating problems particularly for risk groups.

Heat warnings on the SMHI website

SMHI and the Geological Survey of Sweden (SGU) collaborate and provide continuous updates on the risk of water shortages in their 'water shortage risk' service.

Water shortage risk service (in Swedish) on the SMHI website

Geological Survey of Sweden

The Geological Survey of Sweden (SGU) monitors groundwater trends and publishes up-to-date maps showing how much groundwater levels differ from normal monthly levels.

Groundwater levels on the SGU website

Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management

The Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management has national responsibility for supervision guidance on drinking water and groundwater protection, and water-related activity (including withdrawing water for watering/irrigation).

Water guidelines on the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management website

Information about water shortages on the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management website

Swedish Environmental Protection Agency

The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency provides general information about water shortages, drought and actions individuals can take.

Information about water shortages (in Swedish) on the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency website

Medical Products Agency

The Medical Products Agency is responsible for approving and regulating medicinal products and natural remedies, and for the supervision of medical devices. Advice from the Medical Products Agency about storing medicinal

products during periods of prolonged heat is available on the 1177 Vårdguiden website.

More information is available on the 1177 Vårdguiden website



Article from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

The agricultural sector and the drought

Published 08 August 2018

The extreme drought of recent months has had an impact on the Swedish agricultural sector. The Government is following developments closely and continues, alongside government agencies and other actors, to seek solutions to the challenges emerging so as to alleviate the situation for farmers now and in the future.

Sweden has had a warmer and drier spring than normal, coupled with an unusually wet autumn, which led to poorer autumn harvests and smaller coarse fodder supplies than normal. This is adversely affecting agriculture in the country. Forage harvests are smaller and there are fewer pastures available for livestock than normal. This also applies to the expected grain crop harvest.

Government efforts and decisions

The Government has presented a national crisis package valued at more than SEK 1.2 billion, primarily to cover the fodder shortage and other loss of income that farmers are experiencing due to the drought. The Government and government agencies have also made it possible for farmers to receive some regulatory relief in this difficult situation.

SEK 400 million to improve farmers' cash flow situation in 2018

To provide better opportunities for dairy, beef and lamb farmers to cope with

the fodder shortage and resulting price increases, the Government is contributing SEK 400 million in 2018. These funds will be paid out as soon as possible, but no later than December 2018.

SEK 60 million in reduced slaughterhouse inspection fees in 2018

The Government will contribute SEK 60 million in 2018 to reduce the fees slaughterhouses pay for mandatory inspections. By keeping costs down at slaughterhouse level, the Government is facilitating reduced costs for animal producers, which may improve their cash flow situation during a period of major economic challenges.

SEK 760 million for further measures in 2019

In 2019, the Government will contribute additional funds for further measures to alleviate the situation for the drought-affected agriculture and food industry. These measures will be designed in dialogue with the sector so that funds can be directed within the regulatory framework to provide support where it is most needed for the Swedish agricultural sector and Swedish food production.

Regulatory relief and application for advance payments

The Government and government agencies have reviewed the possibility of regulatory relief and exemptions that could simplify the situation for farmers. For example, Sweden has applied for higher advance payment of rural development support, the Swedish Board of Agriculture has given exemptions to organic farmers to use conventional fodder, and county administrative boards have in several cases granted farmers the opportunity to harvest forage and pastures in nature reserves and national parks.

Fact sheet: Measures taken in efforts to alleviate the drought

Further information on efforts to support the agricultural sector

Swedish Board of Agriculture

The Swedish Board of Agriculture is actively seeking solutions to alleviate

the situation for affected farmers. These solutions include exemptions from regulations, higher advance payments from support funds to improve cash flow, and more. For example, the Board has granted an exemption allowing farmers to take fodder from grassland that otherwise must not be harvested. The Board will be responsible for paying out most of the SEK 1.2 billion that the Government has presented to support farmers.

Information about the drought on the Swedish Board of Agriculture website.

National Food Agency

The National Food Agency is cooperating with the Swedish Board of Agriculture and other agencies to manage the difficult situation for farmers.

Information (in Swedish) about the drought on the National Food Agency website

Federation of Swedish Farmers

Information about the drought (in Swedish) on the Federation of Swedish Farmers website



Article from Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice

Cooperation to combat effects of drought and heat

Published 20 July 2018 Updated 08 August 2018

The prolonged heat and drought have impacted many sectors of society. There have been numerous forest fires, the agricultural sector has been severely affected by the drought and groundwater levels have dropped. The extreme temperatures can also cause health problems, especially among older people and the sick. The Government is following developments closely and taking the necessary decisions. The Government Offices is in continuous contact with the responsible government agencies.

In view of the forest fires around the country, the widespread drought and the ongoing heatwave, intensive efforts are under way among rescue services, government agencies and municipalities.

Efforts to stop the forest fires

At present, several forest fires are raging around the country and the rescue services are making tremendous efforts to protect people, property, forests and the functioning of society.

The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency is coordinating relevant agencies and supporting municipal rescue services, together with the Swedish Armed Forces and the county administrative boards, by providing reinforcements in

terms of equipment, staff and expertise.

Via the EU, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency has requested assistance in the form of firefighting aircraft from other European countries.

The work of the authorities is crucial to combating the fires. But everyone also carries a personal responsibility. In many parts of the country, fire bans are in place. Remember to check whether a fire ban is in place where you are.

EU Civil Protection Mechanism

Information about the forest fires at krisinformation.se

Information about the forest fires on the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency website

Efforts to support agriculture

The Government is closely following developments in the agriculture sector and continues alongside government agencies and other actors to seek solutions to the challenges emerging so as to alleviate the situation for farmers. For example, the Government will provide SEK 1,2 billion in national funds to strengthen the liquidity of our farmers. Sweden is also an active dialogue with the EU about exemptions and other solutions to alleviate the situation for Swedish farmers.

Heatwave and health

The heatwave can cause problems for people's health. Exposure to heat carries with it different risks for different individuals. Risk groups are above all elderly people, the chronically ill, people with disabilities, young children, pregnant women and people on medication.

The Government has ongoing contact with the relevant government agencies and local authorities. The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs holds weekly meetings with the Public Health Agency of Sweden, the National Board of Health and Welfare and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions. These meetings bring the Government up to date on what the government agencies are doing to help older people and others cope with the heat. The meetings will continue as long as the current situation persists.

Private individuals can contact their county council and 1177 Vårdguiden for information and advice about various heatwave-related health risks.

Advice about the heatwave (in Swedish) on the 1177 Vårdguidens website

The Public Health Agency of Sweden provides advice for different target groups that can be used by municipalities, county councils, regions and private actors in health and medical care services.

High temperatures can influence the growth of bacteria in drinking water and food. The National Food Agency website has information and advice.

Water levels and water supply

The Government is closely following developments in groundwater levels and water supply and has continuous contact with the responsible agencies. Municipalities are responsible for the public supply of drinking water.

The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency provides general information about water shortages, drought and what measures people can take themselves.

Information about water shortages (in Swedish) on the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency website

The Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI) and the Geological Survey of Sweden collaborate and provide continuous updates about the risk of water shortages in their 'water shortage risk' service.

Water shortage service (in Swedish) on the SMHI website



Article from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

Innovation partnership programmes impact Swedish innovative environments

Published 04 September 2017

The collaborations, initiatives and projects that have resulted so far from the five innovation partnership programmes were presented when the National Innovation Council met on Monday 28 August. Together, the project managers and the Council looked to the future and discussed critical success factors, goals and opportunities for developing these partnerships. The experiences of partnership working, where the business sector, academia and organisations work together strategically, were highlighted and discussed by the Council.

The innovation partnership programmes originated from the three social challenges that the National Innovation Council highlighted at the beginning of the electoral period: digitalisation, life sciences, and environmental and climate technologies. The Council has followed the work over the year and provided input, stressing for example the importance of joining forces to increase skills supply.

The innovation partnership programmes were launched on 1 June 2016. The partnership groups associated with the programmes focused on identifying challenges and opportunities for each programme and priority setting of important areas for joint action. Several working groups have been established and a number of concrete partnership projects have been

developed.

Within the framework of a partnership project, available public resources and co-financing from the business sector can be used jointly to meet specified priorities. Even so, the Government has provided additional funds for measures related to the innovation partnership programmes, including through the Research and Innovation Bill adopted by the Riksdag in early 2017. These funds are primarily channelled through programmes and calls for projects from the Swedish Agency for Innovation Systems, the Swedish Energy Agency and the Swedish Research Council Formas.



Article from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

A long-term food strategy for Sweden

Published 06 April 2017

Swedish food creates jobs, sustainable growth and values for society as a whole. In addition to meeting the demand for food, we gain open landscapes and lively rural communities. The national food strategy will help strengthen competitiveness and to ensure the potential of Swedish food production is fully realised to the benefit of actors and stakeholders throughout the entire food supply chain – from primary production all the way to the consumer.

The strategy is a platform

In March 2015, Mr Bucht began the work of drawing up a long-term national food strategy. Following an extensive dialogue process, including a tour throughout the country and numerous meetings with stakeholder organisations, companies and other actors, work on drawing up the bill was begun and it has now been submitted to the Swedish Parliament. The strategy is a platform from which this and future governments will shape food policy up to 2030.

– Actors in the food supply chain need a long-term perspective, and this strategy shows that in terms of policy we believe in Swedish food production and think it is important – for jobs and growth throughout the country, but also in our transition to a sustainable society, says Mr Bucht.

A common direction

Implementation will now begin, based on the Government's action plan. The action plan will result in a large number of decisions on measures. At the same time, all actors in the food supply chain will be invited to contribute to the work of achieving the strategy's objectives.

– For me, it is important to emphasise that the strategy sets a common direction in which the entire food supply chain works together. The Government cannot do this on its own. Commitment and initiative from actors in the food supply chain are extremely important to ensure robust policy tools, says Mr Bucht.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of the Environment

A forum for shaping the future of the Baltic Sea region

Published 16 November 2016 Updated 16 November 2016

Creating a common future based on trust and dialogue is necessary for the prosperity and security of the Baltic Sea region. This was Prime Minister Stefan Löfven's message when he delivered the opening speech at the 7th Strategy Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

The overarching purpose of this year's Forum was to encourage a discussion about how the Baltic Sea region should equip itself ahead of future challenges and opportunities from a 2030 perspective and within the framework of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The Strategy Forum was held at The Brewery Conference Centre in Stockholm on 8–9 November and brought together a record number of participants – over 1 300 people from all over the Baltic Sea region. The participants represented the political level, the business sector, academia and civil society.

From social entrepreneurship to EU-Russian cooperation

During two intensive days, some 40 political seminars, workshops and other activities were held focusing on digital and social entrepreneurship, EU-Russian cooperation, bioeconomy, circular economy and sustainable seas.

This was the seventh Strategy Forum in a row, and the first to be held in Sweden. The Forum was hosted by the Swedish Government together with the Nordic Council of Ministers, in close cooperation with the European

Commission. In addition to the Prime Minister, participants from the Government included Minister for Culture and Democracy Alice Bah Kuhnke, Minister for Rural Affairs Sven-Erik Bucht, Minister for Infrastructure Anna Johansson and Minister for the Environment Karolina Skoog.

Common security

In his opening speech, Mr Löfven stressed the importance of cooperation that is both a driving force and forward-looking.

"We are here because we want to have our own hands on the rudder, and not simply be steered by events elsewhere. We are here to shape the future of the Baltic Sea. So welcome to Sweden, welcome to Stockholm, and welcome to the incredibly important work we have ahead of us.

"I am a firm believer in the idea of common security. Common security is a term coined by one of my predecessors, Olof Palme, and is based on the idea that we must cooperate across national borders and create a common future built on trust and dialogue. Which is exactly what we are doing here today," said Mr Löfven.

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at the Strategy Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

State Visit from Chile under way

Published 12 May 2016 Updated 12 May 2016

On 10 May, Chile's President Michelle Bachelet began her State Visit to Sweden. The President is visiting Sweden at the invitation of HM the King. The Visit will last from 10 to 12 May and is the first incoming State Visit from Chile to Sweden.

The purpose of the visit is to broaden and deepen bilateral relations between Chile and Sweden. Swedish companies have long had a strong presence in Chile.

The first day of the State Visit began with an official welcoming ceremony at the Inner Courtyard of the Royal Palace, as is tradition. Following an inspection of the guard of honour of the Life Guards, the President, the King and the Queen greeted the Speakers of the Riksdag, the Prime Minister and the ministers present.

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven then received the President at Rosenbad for talks.

Several memorandums of understanding were signed during the visit to Rosenbad.

Following a visit to Olof Palme's grave at Adolf Fredrik's Cemetery, President Bachelet travelled to Fryshuset where she and the King and Queen were met by the managing director of Fryshuset, Johan Oljeqvist. This part of the visit was also attended by Anja Frey, head of Fryshuset in Stockholm, and Camila Salazar Atias, responsible for social projects, as well as Stockholm City Commissioner Emilia Bjuggren.

The day ended with a state banquet at the Royal Palace.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Migration focus of EU leaders' meeting with Turkey's Prime Minister

Published 11 March 2016 Updated 11 March 2016

The migration crisis was once again the focus when the EU's heads of state and government met Turkey's Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu in Brussels on Monday. After their meeting with Mr Davutoğlu, the EU leaders gathered for an informal European Council, where further measures to limit migration flows from Turkey to the EU were among the topics raised.

"The main focus is to help Greece and the Western Balkan countries, and to develop cooperation with Turkey," said Prime Minister Stefan Löfven after the meeting.

The statement issued by the EU's heads of state and government after the meeting with Mr Davutoğlu particularly emphasises measures to prevent human trafficking to the EU. The importance of the EU gaining control of its external borders is also emphasised.

During the meeting, the Turkish Prime Minister presented a number of new proposals regarding Turkey's cooperation with the EU on migration and Turkey's EU accession negotiations. President of the European Council Donald Tusk was tasked with preparing these for the European Council's coming meeting on 18–19 March.



Article from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of the Environment

Sweden signs sustainable agriculture and forestry initiatives at climate conference in Paris

Published 03 December 2015 Updated 03 December 2015

Forests and agriculture were in the spotlight on 1 December at the COP21 climate conference. The Government has chosen to support two initiatives. The first aims to reduce deforestation, restore degraded forests and secure communities' rights to sustainably use the forests they live and work in. The second initiative aims to improve the potential of agricultural land to contribute to food production and climate change efforts.

Within the framework of the 'Lima-Paris Action Agenda', Sweden signed two initiatives on 1 December on forestry and agriculture: the 'New York Forest Declaration' and the '4/1000 Initiative: Soils for Food Security and Climate'. HM King Carl XVI Gustaf is in Paris taking part in the high-level discussions.

The New York Forest Declaration has three priorities:

- reducing global deforestation (which is also a target within the global sustainability goals);
- restoring degraded forests and deforested areas; and
- ensuring good management of the world's forests and allocating resources to support land rights.

Our ability to produce food in the future largely depends on how we are able to curb climate change and adapt to a changed climate. Agriculture and forestry play a key role in today's global society and are essential to welfare and development. Seventy per cent of the world's poor live in rural areas and the majority of these people are dependent on agriculture and forestry for their survival.

- The '4/1000 Initiative: Soils for Food Security and Climate' focuses on increasing soil carbon storage in agricultural land by:
- developing and stimulating practical measures that can be implemented at local level and that benefit the work of farmers and livestock keepers;
- and encouraging cooperation, and knowledge and experience exchange, between various actors.

As the population rises around the world, Sweden needs strong and competitive agriculture and forestry sectors that can provide us with food and biomass produced using climate-smart and sustainable practices. Agriculture and forestry play a key role in our own transition to a bio-based economy and will make it possible to achieve the Government's vision of a fossil-free society. Minister for Rural Affairs Sven-Erik Bucht is very pleased that Sweden is supporting the two initiatives presented in Paris:

"It is very positive and relevant that agriculture and forests are in the spotlight at the climate change conference in Paris. A new global climate agreement is important for charting our long-term course and advancing climate adaptation around the world. Sweden is demonstrating leadership through action. Our forests are very beneficial for the climate and will lead us toward a fossil-free society and a growing bioeconomy."

Seventy per cent of Sweden is covered by forest. Forests are very beneficial for the climate by enabling us to replace fossil energy sources and energy-demanding materials, while also preserving high levels of carbon storage and safeguard biodiversity in the forest landscape.

"Globally, we are facing a difficult challenge to increase productivity, resource efficiency and resource use to feed and provide for a growing population. The pressure on our natural resources is rising, yet at the same time we must quickly change our agricultural and forestry practices and adapt to a new climate. To manage this, it is important to invest in research, capacity-building, efficiency measures and international cooperation in both agriculture and forestry," says Mr Bucht.

Sida is now supporting the creation of a new global fund aimed at ensuring community rights to land and natural resources among indigenous peoples and other population groups living in proximity to forests. The new fund is called the International Land and Forest Tenure Facility.



Article from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

Sweden takes a seat on Forest Europe General Coordinating Committee

Published 03 November 2015 Updated 03 November 2015

Minister for Rural Affairs Sven-Erik Bucht took part in a high-level Forest Europe Ministerial Conference in Madrid on 20 October. For the first time, Sweden has now taken a seat on the Forest Europe General Coordinating Committee.

“The forest nation of Sweden has been invited to take a seat on the influential General Coordinating Committee. Naturally, I am delighted that we have the confidence of our colleagues, and I am looking forward to presenting my visions for more dynamic and effective regional forest cooperation,” says Mr Bucht.

As a major forest nation, Sweden is the newest member of the General Coordinating Committee and will work to strengthen the political relevance of Forest Europe in the future. Sweden sees a number of opportunities for reform to highlight the importance of forests as an engine of the biobased economy in Europe and to clarify for other policy areas the forest policy tools (such as criteria and indicators) that Forest Europe has already developed to ensure sustainable forest management in Europe – thus securing the sustainability of forest products.

The most important and evident results gained through Forest Europe have included defining the concept of sustainable forest management and producing criteria and indicators related to this. Forest Europe has also produced the pan-European approach to national forest programmes. Between Ministerial Conferences the priorities set by the ministers in their

resolutions are implemented through a joint work programme. Countries present their progress every fourth year in the State of Europe's Forests Report, which reveals trends concerning the economic, environmental and social status of Europe's forests.

“The Government's initiative to develop a national forest programme for Sweden is in an intensive phase, in which the working groups have begun to draw up strategic recommendations to the Government. As a result, it is particularly interesting for me to see what we can also do in our region for forests as a key to a biobased future, including sustainable growth and green, decent jobs,” says Mr Bucht.

In Madrid, the countries adopted new political commitments to promote sustainable forest management in the region. The ministers presented their priorities at a roundtable discussion on the global challenges posed by climate change, for example, and discussed what can be done together to address this in the context of regional forest policy cooperation. The ministers stressed the role of forest in a green economy and the importance of taking further action to protect forests in a changing environment. At the 25th anniversary of Forest Europe, the ministers also decided to initiate a review of the Forest Europe process, as the parties want to strengthen the effectiveness of the partnership and how stakeholders and other sectors are included.

In addition, negotiations were concluded on a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe. The parties agreed to reconsider, no later than 2020, whether it may be possible to find consensus solutions to the differences of opinion that have blocked an agreement.

All decisions will now be put into practice by each of the signatories individually and together in joint activities, especially with a view to 2020.