Sweden’s migration and asylum policy

The Government’s objective is to ensure a sustainable migration policy that safeguards the right to asylum and, within the framework of managed immigration, facilitates mobility across borders, promotes needs-based labour migration, harnesses and takes into account the effects of migration on development and deepens European and international cooperation. This fact sheet describes the Government’s work in this area during the first half of 2017.

The Government’s management of the current refugee situation

Sweden has taken a large share of the responsibility in the ongoing global refugee crisis. In autumn 2015, when the EU Member States were unable to deal with the large number of asylum seekers within the framework of the common EU asylum system, the situation became untenable, placing a great strain on Swedish society. The Government has therefore taken temporary measures to substantially reduce the number of asylum seekers.

• The Government has decided to introduce temporary border controls at internal borders. The decision has been extended on a number of occasions and currently applies up to and including 10 May 2017.

• The Government has decided to introduce temporary ID checks on all modes of public transport to Sweden from Denmark to maintain public order and internal security, and ensure a well-ordered reception system. The ordinance applies until 4 May 2017.

• On 20 July 2016, a temporary law was introduced, adapting Sweden’s asylum rules to the minimum levels under EU law. Under the temporary law, refugees and persons eligible for subsidiary protection (quota refugees excepted), are granted temporary residence permits and the opportunities for family reunification have been limited. The restricted access to being granted a residence permit in Sweden is considered necessary to maintain for a period of at most three years. When the law has been in force for two years, the Government will consider the need for it to apply also during the last period of validity.

Better conditions for returns

To be able to maintain a long-term, sustainable asylum and migration policy, it is crucial that persons who, following a legally secure examination of their claim for asylum, have received a final rejection on their asylum application and been issued with a refusal-of-entry or expulsion order, return to their country of origin as quickly as possible. The Government has implemented a large number of measures to increase numbers of returns. On 1 July 2016, the amendments to the Reception of Asylum Seekers
and Others Act entered into force. The amendments included the removal of the right to assistance for childless adults who have received a refusal-of-entry or expulsion order that has become final and non-appealable. It is also essential that the EU puts in place stronger cooperation on readmission with third countries to ensure more efficient returns. This includes requiring that other countries receive their citizens and, where necessary, enter into readmission agreements with the EU. On 5 October 2016, Sweden and Afghanistan signed a memorandum of understanding on the readmission of people whose residence permit applications have been rejected. During autumn 2016, the Government announced additional measures to increase returns.

Efficient and sustainable European cooperation

Enhanced and constructive cooperation both in the EU and globally is a cornerstone of a long-term, sustainable migration policy. More countries must be encouraged to take responsibility for better sustainable solutions to managing the migration and refugee situation. The Commission presented seven new legislative proposals in 2016 to reform the common European asylum system. These included revising the Dublin Regulation, transforming the current Qualification Directive and the Asylum Procedures Directive into regulations, and revising the Reception Conditions Directive. In addition, it proposed a regulation on a common EU system for resettlement. Sweden supports proposals aimed at evening out the distribution of asylum seekers and enhancing harmonisation in the area, even though we consider that a Member State should be able to have more favourable rules in certain regards. The EU’s future asylum system should be sustainable, protect the right to asylum and at the same time achieve a more even distribution of asylum seekers between Member States. This is so as to maintain a spirit of solidarity within the EU, but also to be able to uphold Schengen cooperation. Sweden will continue to be a strong and important voice in Europe for the protection of the right to asylum and vulnerable groups.

Resettlement as a safe and legal route into the EU for people in need of protection

Sweden will continue to work towards realistic proposals for more legal avenues into the EU to seek asylum and for all EU Member States to enhance the resettlement of people in need of protection. Resettlement is a well-established system and the safest way for people in need of protection to enter the EU. The Government has appointed an Inquiry Chair who will take a broad approach in analysing the conditions for creating legal routes into the EU to seek asylum. The report is to be presented by 31 December 2017. In addition, the number of people resettled in Sweden will increase from 1 900 in 2016 to 3 400 in 2017 and 5 000 as of 2018.

International cooperation and global division of responsibility

In 2017, Sweden together with other countries will promote work towards increased global division of responsibility, collabora-

At the UN summit on 19 September 2016 addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants was adopted. The Declaration states that two global frameworks including principles, commitments and agreements will be drawn up and adopted by the UN in 2018— one on migration and one on refugee situations. These will be important processes on the path towards enhanced coordination and better management at global level. One key aspect is also the integration of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in the UN system.

Facts about migration policy:

Swedish migration policy covers asylum and immigration policies, returns, support for return and repatriation, and the connection between migration and development. It also includes cooperation at international level on these issues. This area also covers issues concerning Swedish citizenship.