

Other important negotiation issues in 2018

2 March 2018



General Affairs Council (GAC)

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the global goals for sustainable development

The Commission Work Programme for 2018 announces a reflection paper on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. The reflection paper will be an important input into work on drafting an action plan for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Government considers that the EU must continue to be a global leader regarding the 2030 Agenda and will therefore work to achieve an ambitious action plan that deals with both the internal and external current work of the EU and sets out the overall direction up until 2030.

Foreign Affairs Council (FAC)

A strong and united EU voice for human rights

In recent years the unity of the EU on human rights issues has been challenged more and more often by individual Member States, and this has led to time- and resource-consuming internal discussions. This applies both to thematic issues and regarding public criticism of third countries. The Government will work to promote strong and united action by the EU for human rights, democracy and the rule of law, both on the ground in third countries and in multilateral forums. The work of the EU rests on common norms and values, including human rights, and the credibility of the EU depends on coherence and consistency.

Gender equality in the external work of the EU

The Government is pressing the gender equality perspective in the EU's external relations in line with the Government's feminist foreign policy. One central instrument here is the EU Action Plan for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment through EU external relations 2016–2020 (GAP). In the negotiations on the EU's next multiannual financial framework (MFF) the Government will press for a gender equality perspective in the EU's external instruments.

Post-Cotonou

The Cotonou Agreement is an agreement between the EU and the ACP countries (79 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries) that is intended to link up economic markets. The Agreement expires in 2020 and for the Government it is important to design a new structure for cooperation with

the ACP countries. The Government also considers that the expiry of the Cotonou Agreement gives the EU an opportunity to harmonise its relations with countries in and outside the ACP group and that a future framework should avoid special treatment of the ACP countries. In 2018 the EU is to agree a common line ahead of negotiations with the ACP countries.

A strong and united EU voice for rules-based and predictable multilateral trade

The Government is working to maintain the multilateral rules-based world trade system in the WTO to defend it from protectionism and harmful special interests. In 2018 it is important that the EU assumes a leading role to defend and develop the multilateral trade system in negotiations in the WTO.

Investment screening

The Commission's proposal of a regulation on the screening of foreign direct investments into the European Union is intended both to clarify the legal position regarding the right of Member States to screen foreign direct investments and to establish a mechanism for cooperation and the exchange of information between the EU and its Member States on investments that may have a negative impact on security or public order. The Government shares the view that there are problems concerning the taking over of activities that handle sensitive infrastructure and technology, and is prepared to become involved in how these challenges can best be handled.

Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN)

Deepening of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU)

Work on the deepening of the EMU is expected to start from the proposals presented by the Commission in December 2017 in its Communication on further steps towards completing Europe's economic and monetary union. This involves introducing new budgetary instruments in the EU budget for a stable euro area; establishing a European Monetary Fund; transferring parts of the international Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the EMU to the EU legal framework and establishing a European Minister of Economy and Finance. Sweden has a strong interest in a well-functioning EMU. The Government therefore takes a positive view of the fact that various ways of improving the functioning of the monetary union are being investigated. At the same time, the Government takes a sceptical view of proposals that move in a strongly federal direction. Cohesion between all EU Member States should be safeguarded.

Tax evasion, tax avoidance, tax fraud and harmful tax competition

Work to reduce tax evasion, tax avoidance, tax fraud and harmful tax competition is important to the Government, as are an effective internal market and safeguarding the authority of Member States in the tax area. The Swedish Government will work to ensure predictability and that administrative burdens and costs are as low as possible. The Government also supports the EU's ongoing work to introduce common EU provisions on reporting obligations for intermediaries of certain cross-border tax planning schemes and automatic exchanges of information about these schemes between the tax authorities of Member States (DAC 6) and the ongoing work regarding administrative cooperation in the EU in the area of value added tax.

The financial union

The Government intends to work to ensure that all future proposals, including in the Capital Markets Union, meet requirements of transparency and financial stability and that strong and appropriate investor and consumer protections are maintained or reinforced. In the ongoing negotiations the Government has the aim that the banking union will be designed in a way that makes equivalent treatment possible of the countries that do not have the euro as their currency.

Combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism

In light of the disclosures from the 'Panama Papers' and the terrorist attacks in recent years, work to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism is an increasingly topical issue. In 2018 the Commission is expected to present a proposal on broader access to bank account registers for law enforcement agencies. The Government will work to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to counter the use of the financial system for money laundering or the financing of terrorism

Stability and Growth Pact

The Stability and Growth Pact is the EU framework for ensuring sustainable public finances. The implementation of the Pact and the development of its regulatory framework will be monitored during the year. The Government considers it important for the credibility of the regulatory framework that the rules in the Stability and Growth Pact are respected and applied equally and transparently.

Justice and Home Affairs Council (JHA)

e-evidence

At the start of 2018 the Commission intends to present a legislative proposal regarding the right of authorities to collect e-evidence in cross-border criminal matters. In view of the difficulties that exist regarding the detection and investigation of IT crime the Government considers that it is positive that attention is being given to these issues at EU level.

Civil Protection Mechanism

In autumn 2017 the Commission presented a proposal for the revision of current civil protection legislation that concerns matters including the prevention of, preparedness for and action in the event of natural disasters, including environmental disasters and disasters caused by people. The proposal is intended to increase the requirements on Member States regarding preventive and preparatory work at national level and to expand the possibilities of providing support to Member States in the event of major incidents of a serious nature. The Government welcomes a special focus on preventive and preparedness measures but is monitoring whether the proposals are appropriate and involve an effective use of EU funds.

Certain civil law matters

Within the framework of the Digital Single Market negotiations are currently under way on a proposal for a directive regarding contracts for the supply of digital content and a proposal for a directive on the sale of goods. The Government is positive to these proposals that are intended to improve consumers' access to, for example, games, music and films offered on the internet in the EU and to make better use of the potential of e-commerce. During the year negotiations will also be conducted on a directive on company reorganisation and debt restructuring. It is important to have effective and legally certain rules that provide predictable circumstances for business operators and investors.

Family law

Since summer 2016 a revision has been under way of the Council Regulation concerning jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in matrimonial matters and the matters of parental responsibility and concerning international child abduction (the Brussels II Regulation). This Regulation is of great practical importance for the area of family law. It is

important that cross-border disputes about children can be solved in a way that is predictable for the parties involved.

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO)

Working conditions directive (directive on transparent and predictable working conditions in the European Union)

On 21 December 2017 the Commission presented a proposal for a revised Written Statement Directive. The purpose is to promote safer and more secure employment and to ensure the adaptability of the labour market and to improve living and working conditions. Fair jobs and working conditions are a priority issue for the Government. The Government's starting point is that national labour market models and the autonomy of the social partners must be respected.

A European labour authority

In its Work Programme for 2018 the Commission has announced a proposal for a new European authority that will ensure that the EU's rules on labour mobility are enforced in a fair, simple and effective way. The Government's starting point is that the distribution of powers between the EU and Member States, national labour market models and social security systems must be respected and that funding must be provided within the reduced limits that follow from the reduced income of the EU after Brexit.

Working environment directives

The Government is working for a modernisation of the working environment directives to ensure that the regulatory framework becomes better adapted to modern working life and working environment risks. This should take place with a high level of protection and respect for national competencies and involve no reduction in the level of protection.

Greater environmental consideration in the EU's pharmaceutical legislation and work to address antibiotic resistance

In cooperation in the EU the Government intends to continue to work to achieve greater environmental consideration in work on pharmaceutical matters at EU level and to show leadership in efforts to address antibiotic resistance. Emissions of pharmaceuticals to water and land are an important environmental problem. In addition to the environmental impacts, human health can also be affected, for example through the link to antibiotic

resistance. The Commission intends to publish a strategy on pharmaceuticals in the environment in 2018.

Access to and pricing of pharmaceuticals

Discussions have been under way for a time about the pricing of and access to pharmaceuticals in the EU. The focus of this discussion is access to new, innovative pharmaceuticals and incentives for R&D in relation to the sustainability of health systems. The Commission is expected to present an analysis of incentives in the pharmaceuticals market in the first half of 2018. The Government is working to assure a balanced discussion of incentives in the pharmaceuticals industry and is monitoring that the right of Member States to design their own price and subsidy systems is not eroded.

Competitiveness Council (COMPET)

Measures for enhanced movement of services in the Single Market

In January 2017, the Commission presented a 'Services Package' consisting of several legislative proposals to strengthen and improve the Single Market for services. The package includes proposals on a European Services e-card that aims to allow service providers to only need to liaise with a single authority in their home country to, for example, apply for permission in another Member State. The Services Package also contains a proposal of a new directive on a proportionality test before adoption of new regulation of professions. The directive includes a European framework of criteria for assessing a proportionality test before introducing new regulation of professions and is intended to improve Member States' national regulation of professions. The Government has welcomed the Commission's Services Package to achieve full impact for the EU Services Directive and thereby remove barriers to Swedish service providers that want to extend their activities to new markets.

Measures for enhanced movement of goods in the Single Market

At the end of 2017 the Commission presented a 'Goods Package' containing proposals to facilitate mutual recognition of goods and more effectively take measures against products on the market that do not comply with existing regulations. It is important for the Government that entrepreneurs can easily offer their products in other Member States provided these goods meet the correct level of protection and that the authorities are given the conditions and tools to control that goods circulating in the Single Market actually meet existing requirements.

Copyright

Negotiations are under way on a directive on copyright in the Digital Single Market and a regulation on certain online transmissions of television and radio programmes. Copyright that functions well is a priority issue for the Government and essential to the modern economy and a competitive European business sector. The Government takes a positive view of the ambition to adapt the legal framework for copyright to the digital environment and improve the conditions of cultural creators. The Government is working to ensure that this legislation will be balanced and will safeguard the interests of both rights holders and users, as well as other public and private interests. It is also important that Member States will still be able to use and develop extended collective licensing schemes.

New research and innovation programme

In June the Commission is expected to present a proposal on the next EU framework programme for research and innovation (FP9). The Government considers that FP9 is a priority part of a modern EU budget and should, in general terms, be a development of the present Horizon 2020 programme. FP9 must do more to respond to social challenges with solutions that have a great impact on society and that create positive effects and added value for citizens. Proportionally, the FP9 budget's share of the total EU budget should increase, even in a scenario whereby the next multiannual financial framework decreases.

A European defence industrial development programme

In June 2017 the Commission presented a proposal for a regulation on a defence industrial development programme (EDIDP). The regulation is intended to enhance the competitiveness of the union defence industry by providing support for cooperative projects for the development of new technologies and systems. For the Government the most important issue is that all companies in Sweden must be able to participate irrespective of ownership. Negotiations on the regulation are expected to be completed in summer 2018.

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (TTE)

Review of the regulatory framework for electronic communications

Within the framework of the Digital Single Market the Commission presented a new regulatory framework for the market for electronic communications on 14 September 2015. The Government wants to see simplified and modernised sector-specific competition rules, coordination of radio spectrum management in which Member States continue to control the allocation processes and a

technology-neutral approach regarding the regulation of services. Action to promote expansion must not be taken at the expense of competition. Negotiations between the Council and the European Parliament are expected to conclude in 2018.

Respect for private life and protection of personal data in electronic communications (e-data protection)

Within the framework of the Digital Single Market, the Commission on 10 January 2017 presented a proposal for a new regulation to guarantee stronger privacy in electronic communications while opening up new business opportunities. The measures update the rules in the Directive concerning the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy in the electronic communications sector (Directive on privacy and electronic communications). The Government welcomes a renewal of the regulatory framework regarding privacy and electronic communications. The rules need to form a good balance between protection of the individual's privacy and other public interests. Negotiations in the Council are expected to be completed in 2018.

Cyber security regulation (ENISA)

Within the framework of the Digital Single Market, the Commission presented a proposal on 13 September 2017 that is intended to raise cyber security in the EU by extending the mandate of the European Union Agency for Network and Information Security (ENISA). It proposed granting ENISA a permanent mandate and that the Agency will be able to provide operational assistance in the event of cross-border cyber incidents at the request of Member States. Another proposal is that the Agency will be able to develop and manage an EU framework for the certification of cybersecurity products and services. The latter question is of great interest as a matter of principle and also has strong trade links. Negotiations in the Council are expected to be completed in 2018.

Re-use of public sector information

In 2018 the Commission is expected to present a review of the Directive on the re-use of Public Sector Information. The Directive is intended to increase the availability of public information so that various actors in society can use the information to create new products and services. The coming proposal may extend the scope of the Directive to also include state-owned companies, private providers and research data, reduce the charges for re-use and promote the release and re-use of public dynamic data.

Agriculture and Fisheries Council (AGRIFISH)

The EU's future agricultural policy

In summer 2018 the Commission is expected to present a legislative proposal on the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The Government is working to attain a more efficient, simpler and more results-oriented policy that contributes to greater sustainable productivity and greater competitiveness. The Government also considers that measures in the Rural Development Programme are more capable of promoting competitiveness and sustainable productivity than farm support and therefore recommends an increased focus on these measures within the framework of significantly lower overall expenditure for the CAP. The Government also takes a positive view of the higher ambitions regarding environmental protection, non-toxic environment and sustainable food production, in particular as regards implementing the Regulation on Organic Production as well as higher ambitions regarding the tackling of and adaptation to climate change. Finally, the Government considers that simplification of the policy should be a starting point for the coming reform.

Environment Council (ENVI)

Drinking Water Directive

On 1 February the Commission presented a review of the Drinking Water Directive. The Directive contains minimum requirements for drinking water. The microbiological and chemical parameters in the Directive's quality standards have not been updated since its adoption in 1998 and do not fully reflect scientific progress, improvements in risk assessment, changes in patterns of behaviour and ecological burdens. Safe drinking water of high quality is essential to public health and an important economic asset. A secure supply of drinking water is also a vital condition for economic development. Deficiencies in both quality and quantity can lead to very high social and economic costs.

Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council (EYCS)

Directive on audiovisual media services without borders (Audiovisual Media Services Directive)

The Commission's proposal to revise the Audiovisual Media Services Directive was presented in May 2016. Negotiations are under way between the European Parliament and the Council, and it is expected to be possible to conclude them in spring 2018. The revised directive will include

fundamental rules to protect minors and to counter incitement to hatred in services with user-generated content, known as video-sharing platforms. The content and advertising rules will also be more like those for TV and pay per view and the jurisdiction rules in the directive are further improved. The Government is working to guarantee that the future regulatory framework is compatible with the Swedish Constitution. The Government also has the ambition of ensuring that the revised directive balances Swedish interests, such as strong support for a developed internal market and an open and free internet that safeguards broad freedom of expression with strong consumer protection especially with regard to alcohol advertising, advertising targeting children, and advertising for gambling.

Erasmus

During the year the Commission is expected to present a proposal of a new regulation for the programme that will succeed Erasmus+. Education was on the agenda of the European Council at the end of December 2017. The conclusions from 14 December mention a strengthening and extension of Erasmus+. The Government is working to ensure that the successful work done in the area of education in the EU, mainly through Erasmus+, can continue and that new initiatives build in a clear way on the results achieved. Action should be taken in the programme to increase the participation of individuals from settings unfamiliar with study.