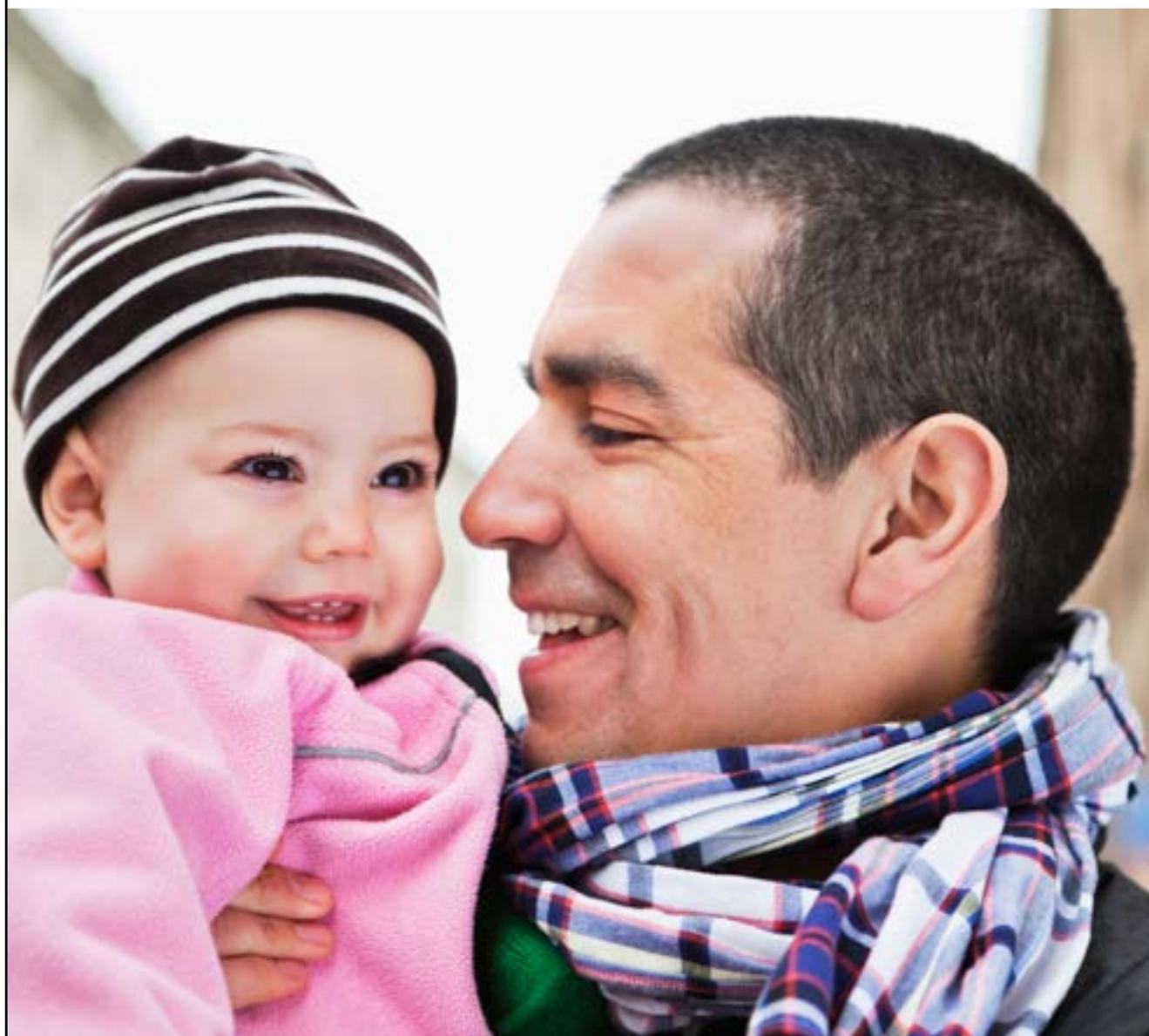


# Gender equality policy in Sweden

A feminist Government



# A feminist Government

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Sweden has a feminist Government. In practice, this means a commitment to building a society in which women and men, girls and boys can live their lives to their full potential. This is a human right and a matter of democracy and justice. Gender equality is also part of the solution to society's challenges and a matter of course in a modern welfare state - for justice and economic development.

Gender equality has been recognised as a separate policy area in Sweden since the early 70s, and the progress made towards gender equality started even before that. Since then Sweden has shown clear results in terms of high levels of employment and growth. These developments did not happen by themselves. They have come about as a result of political dialogue, together with hard work from a strong civil society and the women's movement. Despite a number of important achievements made towards gender equality, challenges remain and there is still work to do for the feminist Government.

A feminist Government ensures that a gender equality perspective is brought into policy-making on a broad front, both nationally and internationally. The overall objective of the Swedish gender equality policy is that women and men shall have the same power to shape society and their own lives.

The Government is committed to achieving this objective through a policy agenda that reduces inequality and stereotypical gender roles and structures.

Gender equality is central to all decision-making and resource allocation. Translated into feminist foreign policy, this means focusing on strengthening women's and girls' rights, representation and resources. In order to do so, measures must be based on reality and knowledge, and able to deliver results that make a difference. We need analyses that apply a rights and gender equality perspective and shed light on the global inequality between girls and boys, and women and men. Using data disaggregated by sex and age is essential. In 2015, Sweden ap-

pointed its first Ambassador for Gender Equality, a function that also leads the coordination of the feminist foreign policy. Gender equality is not only a goal in itself but also a prerequisite for sustainable development, and an essential part of the solution to many of the challenges we face in our time, nationally as well as globally.

This material provides an overview of main areas of the Government policy on gender equality. It describes current political goals and strategies and gives a brief historical background to important reforms. It also identifies further remaining challenges and explains how the feminist Government is addressing these and what measures are taken in order to initiate change.



Åsa Lindhagen, Minister for Gender Equality



Ann Linde, Minister for Foreign Affairs

# The Swedish gender equality policy

The overall objective guiding the Swedish gender equality policy clarifies that women and men must have the same power to shape society and their own lives. With this as its starting point, the Government is working towards six sub-goals.

## 1. Equal distribution of power and influence

Women and men must have the same rights and opportunities to be active citizens and to shape the conditions for decision-making in all sectors of society.

## 2. Economic gender equality

Women and men must have the same opportunities and conditions for paid work that provide economic independence throughout life.

## 3. Gender equality in education

Women and men, girls and boys must have the same opportunities and conditions with regard to education, study options and personal development.

## 4. An equal distribution of unpaid housework and provision of care work

Women and men must have the same responsibility for unpaid housework and have the opportunity to give and receive care on equal terms.

## 5. Gender equality in health, care and social services

Women and men, girls and boys must have the same conditions for a good health and be offered care and social services on equal terms.

## 6. Men's violence against women must stop

Women and men, girls and boys must have the same rights and opportunities to physical integrity.

# Gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting

Gender mainstreaming has been the Swedish Government's overarching strategy for the implementation of the gender equality policy since 1994. It is an important strategy for reaching the gender equality objectives.

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy used to implement the Government's gender equality objectives. This approach is combined with measures designed to specifically target gender inequalities in different policy areas (such as extra funding, extra focus, action plans, etc.). This dual approach is necessary for moving forward on gender equality.

As part of the gender mainstreaming efforts, Sweden also runs a programme for Gender mainstreaming in Government agencies (GMGA) – to ensure that the activities and services provided by participating Government agencies contribute to achieving the Government's gender equality objectives. In addition, the Government's gender equality vision is implemented through gender-responsive budgeting.

The Swedish Government Offices define gender mainstreaming as the incorporation of a gender equality perspective in all policy areas, at all levels and at all stages, by the stake-holders normally involved in the policy-making process.

Responsibility for the entire Government  
In order to ensure full and effec-

Gender-responsive budgeting is a strategic tool for realising policy objectives. The Swedish Government has incorporated gender-responsive budgeting as a means to incorporate a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to reach the realisation of the Government gender equality objectives. The approach is based on the understanding that there are no gender-neutral budget allocations.

All gender mainstreaming actions are guided by the objectives set out in the policy on gender equality as well as of policy specific goals that have been formulated based on the gender needs assessment of each Ministry.

Gender-responsive budgeting a strategic tool for realising policy objectives

The Swedish Government has incorporated gender-responsive budgeting as a means to incorporate a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to reach the realisation of the Government gender equality objectives. The approach is based on the understanding that there are no gender-neutral budget allocations.

The budget process and the Budget Bill are of key importance in realizing the Government's policy agenda and it is therefore important that budget work is based on a gender impact assessment which can inform the direction and distribution of resources. The intention is to ensure that policies with a gender-neutral design or outcome are identified and averted from the outset, while at the same time promoting gender responsive policies.

The Government has taken a number of steps to strengthen the sustainability and effectiveness of the gender-responsive budget work. For instance the Ministry of Finance has introduced a formalised requirement in the budget circular which demands that all ministries include a gender-equality impact assessments as part of their proposals they put forward to the Ministry of Finance. The Government has also reinforced support and capacity building measures in order to improve practices on conducting gender-equality impact assessments.

# The implementation of gender mainstreaming in Government agencies (GMGA)

In order to step up the implementation on gender mainstreaming the Government introduced a new programme to strengthen gender mainstreaming in selected Government agencies in 2013. The aim has been to further develop the core activities and/or services provided by each agency in order to achieve gender equality policy goals. Furthermore they have been assigned to draw up an agency specific action plan on gender mainstreaming. The results provided by each agency are reported to the responsible Ministry on a yearly basis. To support these actions the Swedish

Agency for Gender Equality provides capacity building measures to reinforce the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the Government agencies. Each year the Minister for Gender Equality gathers the Director-Generals of the agencies to follow up on their results.

Evaluation finds that GMGA is yielding results. An evaluation by the Swedish Agency for Public Management (the Government's organisation for analyses and evaluations of state and state-funded activities) shows that the agencies have

reached a number of results that help achieve the national goals on gender equality. Several authorities show evidence of having changed their way of working and have also started practicing more gender-responsive services.

Selected results from a number of agencies:

- The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth is assigned to foster sustainable growth and competitiveness across Sweden. As a result of the agency's work on gender mainstreaming it has succeeded in doubling the financial resources approved

for businesses run by women (13 percent in 2017 compared to 7 percent in 2015).

- The Swedish Migration Agency handles applications from people regarding for example permanent residence, requests for Swedish citizenship or applications for visiting the country. As part of the Migration Agency's gender mainstreaming activities, it is working on individualizing asylum procedures and the payment of compensation to individuals. Such compensation was previously disbursed to the man in the family. However, now the routines are changed to ensure that both women and men get individual

payments. Furthermore, a gender equality perspective is integrated as part of the country specific information used by the Migration Agency's officials. This includes information regarding women's living conditions in the asylum seekers' home countries.

- The Swedish Research Council, Sweden's largest body providing Government funds to research, has reached gender equal allocation of its research grants.
- The Social Insurance Agency is a Government agency that is responsible for managing large parts of the Swedish social insurance system. The Agency has made

great efforts to identify men's violence against women in connection with women's requests for sick leave. The authority works systematically to detect clients that face domestic violence and have developed a standard procedure to inform and refer victims to agencies that can provide support, legal action and protection. In the framework of a collaboration with other agencies the "improved detection of clients facing domestic violence", has been shared and implemented by the Swedish Employment Service, the National Board of Health and the Swedish Migration Agency.

## The Swedish Gender Equality Agency

The Swedish Gender Equality Agency was established in January 2018. The agency is commissioned to contribute to an effective implementation of gender equality policy. The establishment of the agency has strengthened the institutional framework and promotes sustainable and strategic gender equality work. The work of the agency requires close cooperation with other Government agencies and with regions, municipalities and civil society. The main task of the Gender Equality Agency is to coordinate, follow up and provide various forms of support in order to reach the gender equality policy goals. The work is carried out in the following domains:

- Analysis and follow-up of the development towards gender equality.

There is a need for an overall assessment of the development concerning gender equality in relation to the measures implemented and actions taken. The agency shall therefore analyse the progress made with respect to Sweden's six gender equality sub-goals and evaluate the measures implemented. The findings can for example be used to design interventions at various levels, and by various actors, in society.

- Support to Government agencies, including County Administrative Boards, and to regions and municipalities in the implementation of gender equality policy.

- Coordination and implementation of certain assignments in

the area of gender equality policy. For example, the agency supports other agencies in their work to gender mainstream their core activities. Another example is the assignment to support and coordinate the work to discover and prevent violence against women together with the Social Insurance Agency, the Public Employment Service, the Migration Agency and the National Board of Health and Welfare.

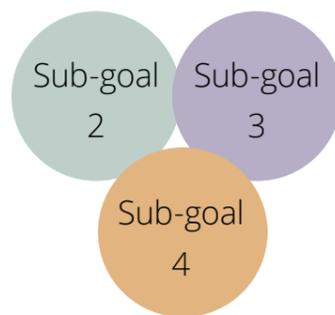
- Allocation of Government grants to gender equality projects and women's organizations.
- Participate in international gender equality cooperation on an expert level.



The minister for Gender Equality gather the agencies Director-Generals to follow up on their results in October 2019.



## Three important welfare reforms to promote gender equality in Sweden



Some of the most important reforms for promoting gender equality in Sweden were imposed in the 1970s, such as the individual income taxation, the development and expansion of public childcare and the gender-neutral parental leave benefit.

These reforms promoted gender equality and increased women's prospects to have the same opportunities as men to enter the labour market, and to remain and develop there. Parts of the unpaid household and care work, mostly performed by women, became the responsibility of the public welfare system. Consequently women could gain access to employment and greater financial independence, which increased their well-being and bargaining power in the

household. In addition, men were encouraged by law to take responsibility for their parental duties and household work to a greater extent. These different reforms also contributed to the development of a modern welfare state in Sweden which has proven to be essential for gender equality, as a well-functioning welfare sector enables both women and men to participate in the labour market on equal terms.

Separate income taxation for wife and husband (1971)  
 Separate income taxation was imposed in 1971. This created an incentive for women to take part in the labour market, as their income was no longer considered part of the husband's income which had meant being subject to a high tax discouraging them from working outside the home. Individual taxation made it beneficial for both parties to work. In combination with the expansion of child

care services and a steady increase of the reserved parental leave months for each parent, it had an important positive impact on women's employment rate.

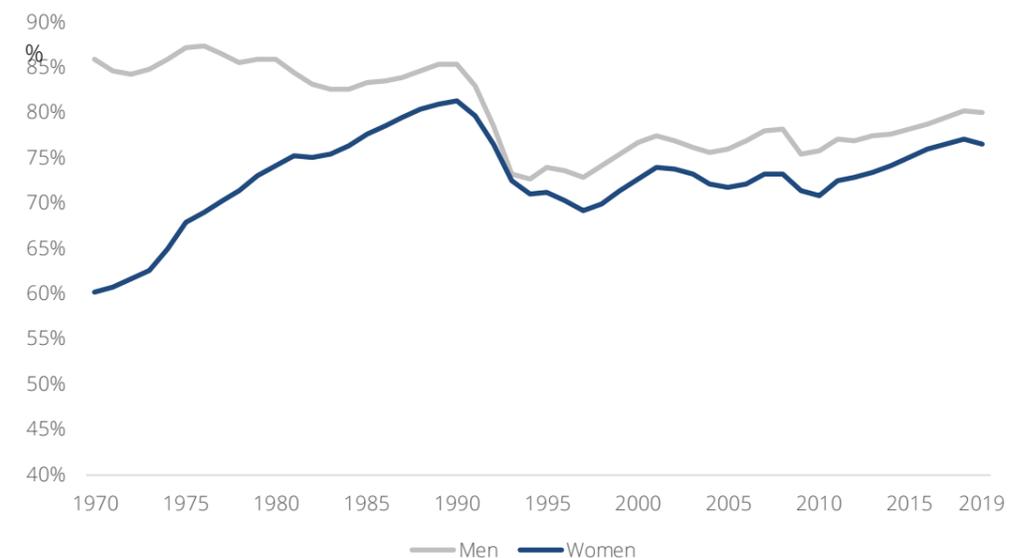
Development of public child care (1974)  
 The broad expansion of the day-care and pre-school system began in the 1970s. Previously, women had the main responsibility for the care of children and if they worked they had to make child-care arrangements with the help of nannies, friends and relatives. Women often faced impossible daily schedules balancing paid work and full responsibility for the domestic and care work. The development of affordable public child care facilities available to all has been prerequisite for the large proportion of women in gainful employment in Sweden. Together with public elderly care, this gives both women and men an opportunity to combine professional life and family life.

First country to introduce gender-neutral paid parental leave benefit (1974)  
 In 1974, Sweden became the first country in the world to introduce a gender-neutral paid parental leave benefit. Since then, the parental leave reform has been revised several times. The policy is aimed at supporting a dual-earner family model, which is a cornerstone for the development of gender equality, women's empowerment and an important part of gender equality policy. In 1995, the first reserved month for each parent was introduced. The reserved month was a non-transferable paid parental leave. The policy was later expanded with a second month in 2002 and a third month in 2016. Today, women and men are entitled to 480 days of paid parental leave (16 months) per child. Ninety days are reserved for each parent and cannot be transferred to the other parent. The intention behind the increased number of

reserved months for each parent has been to achieve a more even distribution of unpaid household and care work, and gender equality in the labour market.

The employment rate of women  
 Promoting equal economic opportunities for women and men is a fundamental part of the gender equality policy. Parental insurance, combined with an extensive system of public child care and elderly care, has made it possible for both parents to improve their work-life balance. In 1979 the Swedish Gender Equality Act was introduced. It had several obligations ensuring that the labour market is free from discrimination based on sex.

Employment rate for men and women (16-64 years) in Sweden 1970-2019



# Gender equal division of power and influence

Sub-goal  
1

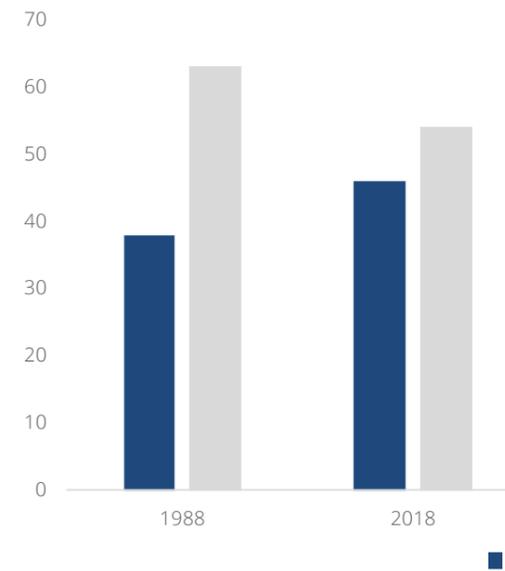
Power and influence must be divided equally between the sexes. It is a question of justice and democracy.

One of the sub-goals of Swedish gender equality policy is that women and men must have equal access to power and influence. This should be reflected on all levels but utterly through an equal representation in decision-making assemblies and in leading positions. Equal representation of women and men is not in itself a guarantee that real power is evenly distributed between the sexes. However, it is a crucial prerequisite for qualitative aspects of the exercise of power to change in an equal direction.

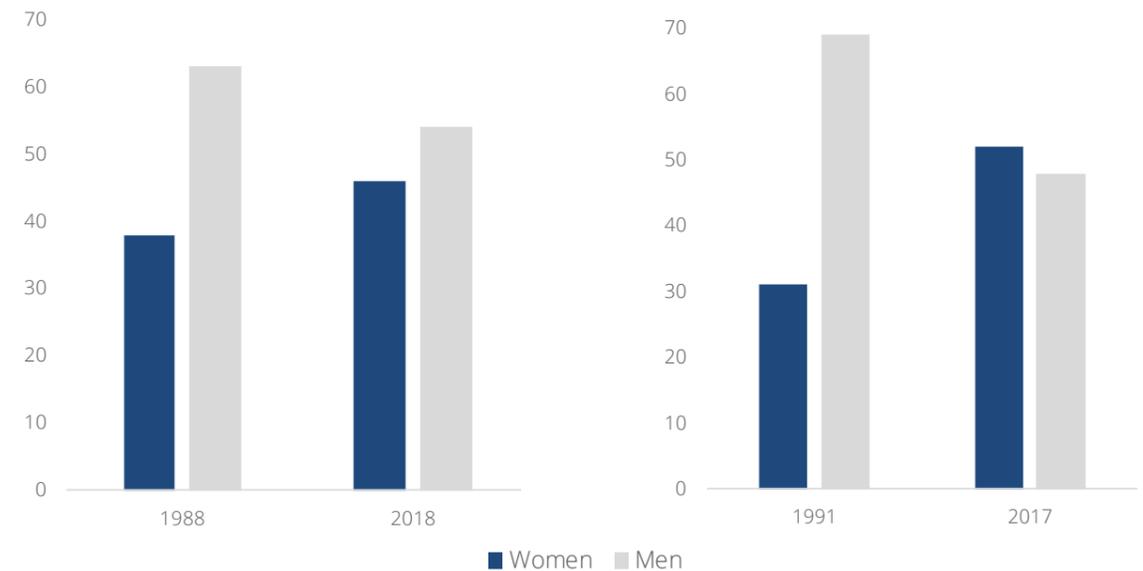
Women and men have since the mid-1990s been more or less equally represented in the Swedish Parliament and the Government. In the political assemblies at the regional and municipal levels, the gender distribution is within the range of 40-60. The proportion of women among Swedish members of the European Parliament has exceeded 40 percent since Sweden became a member of the EU in 1995. Also at the executive levels of Government it has been a norm since 1994 that half of the cabinet ministers are women.

Still male dominance remains high in the management of Swedish listed companies. In the boards of listed companies, there were 34 percent women and 66 percent men in 2019. However there has been a small increase of 9,5 percent women on boards of the largest listed companies in Sweden between 2010 and 2017. The proportion of women chairs in listed companies was only 9 percent while men accounted for 91 percent.

Parliament's composition after elections 1988 and 2018



Composition of members of state Government boards 1991 and 2017



The situation is better in company boards wholly or partly owned by the State, where the proportion of women was 47 percent and men 53 percent of the company board in 2018. The proportion of women chairing state-owned companies was 48 percent while men accounted for 52 percent in 2018.

The Government has developed goals for equal gender distribution in the boards of companies that are totally or partly owned by the state. These goals state that at least 40 percent women and men respectively should be represented in the boards.

Since 2014, the Swedish Corpora-

te Governance Board, which is responsible for the Swedish Code of Corporate Governance, has stated that each gender must have at least 40 percent share in 2020.

The sub-goal of ensuring an equal division of power and influence also includes the distribution of power and influence in other parts of society such as higher education, culture, media and the communication sector, and within social media. In sectors where the Government can influence decision-making, initiatives have been taken. One example is the increased ambition by the Government to improve the gender distribution among newly recruited professors. The target is to reach gender

parity by 2030. Another example is how policy goals for the film sector have resulted in an action plan from the Swedish Film Institute to achieve a better gender balance in terms of the proportion of women in leading positions in the film industry.

Preventing and counteracting violence, threats and hatred against journalists online and offline is a priority issue for Sweden. In July 2017, the Government adopted an action plan for the defense of the free word.

# Economic gender equality

Sub-goal  
2

Gender equality is important for jobs and growth. To safeguard jobs, all skills must be put to good use on the labour market and women's employment rate and working hours must increase.

Compared with other EU countries, women comprise a larger proportion of the paid labor in Sweden. However, it is still very common for women to work part-time, especially women with children. When children are born, it is common that women reduce their time in paid work, while men's time in paid work increases.

**Employment rate for women and men**  
The Swedish Government has a goal set out to reduce the differences in employment rate between women and men.

**Part-time work**  
Almost 30 percent of women who are employed work part-time, but studies show that many would prefer to work more hours. The main reasons that many more women than men are in part-time jobs are that they cannot find a suitable full-time job or that they are taking care of children.

The Swedish Government's objective is to ensure that full-time work is the norm, and part-time a possibility for those who wish to work less. In recent years, there has been an increase in temporary employments in the labour market, which are occupied to a gre-

ater extent by women than men. A legislative amendment has been introduced to ensure that temporary employment will be converted into indefinite employment if the aggregated length of employment in a general fixed-term position, exceeds two years.

**Gender pay gap**  
When weighing in factors such as education, age, profession, sector and hours of work, the gender pay gap between men and women is 4,4 percent (2018). These income disparities can also be explained by the gender segregation on the labour market. Furthermore, jobs in sectors dominated by women are generally valued less and these sectors have lower wage levels than the ones dominated by men.

The use of parental benefit days is unevenly distributed between women and men. In order to incentivise men to take more parental benefit days the Government subsequently increased the number of days reserved for each parent. In 1995, the first reserved month was introduced, and 2002 it was increased to two months. After these changes, fathers took out a higher proportion of the total parental allowance. In 2016 the Government added a third

month with the same effect.

Education and labour market authorities also have an important task of challenging students and work applicants to consider studies and employment that do not follow traditional gender roles. The Swedish Public Employment Service has therefore been assigned the task of tailoring its activities to promote gender equality and combat gender divisions in the labour market.

Further, the Swedish Government has presented an action plan for gender equal lifetime earnings.

**Requirement to conduct annual pay surveys**  
It is important to eliminate unjustified gender pay differences between women and men. Therefore, employers in Sweden have been tasked to conduct an annual survey and analyse pay differences between women and men who perform work that is equal or of equal value. The social partners', including the trade unions' responsibility for wage formation, is a cornerstone of the Swedish model. They can play an important role in addressing the persistent pay discrimination in certain sectors.



# Gender equal education

Sub-goal  
3

The Government objective to ensure gender equal education aims at safeguarding that girls and boys, women and men have the same opportunities and conditions with regard to education.

The curriculum for compulsory school states that all schools should actively and consciously further equal rights and opportunities for women and men and counteract traditional gender norms. It also specifies that education and teaching should not split children and students based on gender. The Government is also taking steps to include the same requirements in the curricula for upper secondary school, upper secondary school for students with learning disabilities and adult education.

In recent years statistics on education results and student welfare show a clear gender divide. For instance, girls receive higher education results than boys throughout the compulsory education system. The Government is therefore engaging in actions to enhance reading skills and extracurricular education during school

holidays. For instance there are significant differences in learning outcomes between girls and boys. The Government is therefore engaging in actions to improve learning results, such as enhancing reading skills and extracurricular education during school holidays. With regards to students welfare, statistics show that adolescent girls aged 15 have a higher degree of mental health issues (62 percent) compared to adolescent boys same age (35 percent). More resources have therefore been provided to strengthen and improve school-based health services.

Under Swedish law, higher education institutions should always promote and take account of gender equality in their activities. In addition, the Swedish Government has assigned over 30 universities and university colleges to work with gender mainstreaming to contribute to achieving the na-

tional targets for gender equality. While more women than men attend and graduate from higher education in Sweden, only 29 per cent of professors are women. Therefore, the Government has set a goal of ensuring that half of all newly appointed professors shall be women by 2030.

Gender equality is a matter that is relevant for the quality assurance of the entire research system. The four major research funding agencies in Sweden have been assigned to gender mainstream their activities and to promote gender equality in the allocation of research funding. The research funding agencies have in their annual reporting stated that the approval rate of research applications has been relatively gender equal over the past five years. Also, the Higher Education Institutions reported a more gender equal allocation of research funding.

## Gender equal health and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

Sub-goal  
5

In the area of health and medical care, unacceptable differences persist between women and men. Historically, illnesses that affect women more than men have tended to be less prioritised in the health care system. Therefore the Swedish Government has proposed several initiatives to invest in women's health.

### Free mammography screening and contraception

In 2015, the Swedish Government set aside on average SEK 1 billion a year in maternity care and women's health for the period 2019-2022. The funding aims to improve skills supply, including staffing, in areas including maternity care and to improve neonatal care. To safeguard young women's right to reproductive and sexual health, the Government has made contraception free of charge to people under the age of 21.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights – a matter of wo-

men's control over their lives and bodies

Gender equality can never be achieved without the realisation of sexual and reproductive health and rights. At this very moment, these rights are being challenged around the world.

Women and girls must have the right to decide and exercise control over their own body, sexuality, reproductive health and child-bearing. When women have these choices, it increases their prospects of participating on a more equal footing with men in socie-

ty. Sexual and reproductive health and rights is a matter of women's self-determination and the right to decide freely over their own bodies.

The Swedish Abortion Act  
In Sweden, women have the legal right to have an abortion until eighteenth week of pregnancy, without specifying a reason for the decision. After the eighteenth week of pregnancy, an abortion may be performed only if it is approved by the National Board of Health and Welfare. Swedish legislation on abortion derives from the woman's right to decide on her own body and the right to choose whether or not to become parent.

The legislation on abortion is also based on the ambition to minimise health risks for women who become pregnant involuntarily, and the balance between, on the one hand, women's right to abortion and, on the other hand, the fact that the foetus is gradually developing during the pregnancy.

## Preventing and combating men's violence against women

Sub-goal  
6

Men's violence against women is one of the ultimate expressions of inequality between women and men. This violence must stop. Women and men, girls and boys, must have the same right and access to physical integrity.

Women and girls are disproportionately exposed to domestic violence and sexual violence including forced marriage and honour-related violence. The Swedish Government aims at make concerted efforts to eradicate men's violence against women. The development of effective violence prevention measures is of importance for the Swedish Government along with the support to abused women and the Swedish women shelter organisations.

A national strategy to end men's violence against women  
In November 2016, the Swedish Government introduced a national 10-year strategy on preventing and combating men's violence against women, including forced marriage and violence and oppression in the name of honour. The strategy was drafted with the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (a.k.a. the Istanbul Convention) as an important point of reference. It consists of four objectives, a clear organisation for implementation and an action plan consisting of 44 commitments for the years 2017-2020. So far, the Swedish Government has allocated more than 1,6 bil-

lion Swedish Crowns for the implementation of the action plan.

A top priority in the strategy is enhanced and effective violence prevention including interventions to reduce relapse in offending. The Swedish Government is investing in primary prevention education in schools and counselling centres for perpetrators and behavior change programmes for male offenders. Mandatory training on violence against women and domestic violence has been introduced for students of Law, Medicine, Nursing, Physiotherapy, Dental Care, Psychology and Social Work. Key Government agencies such as the Swedish Agency for Gender Equality, the National Board of Health and Welfare as well as Sweden's 21 county administrative boards have been commissioned to promote violence prevention measures with a particular focus on young men and boys. A pilot hotline for adults at risk of using violence against intimate partners was established in 2019. The hotline motivates actual perpetrators of gender-based violence to seek professional treatment and has already managed to reach a significant number of callers who had never previously contacted any service about their violent behavior.

The Swedish Government has taken various measures to increase the detection of gender-based violence as well as to strengthen victim support provided by public authorities, including municipalities, health care services and civil society organizations.

In addition to already existing financial support to victim services, the Swedish Government has allocated more than EUR 10 million per year to women's shelter organisations, including shelters for women with substance abuse, women with disabilities and women in prostitution or human trafficking for sexual purposes.

Violence and oppression in the name of honour is a serious violation of women's rights, children's rights and LGBT rights. Furthermore it is also a serious challenge to gender equality. The Swedish Government is responding with measures such as legislation and increased support to regions, municipalities, and the civil society organizations. Governmental agencies have been commissioned various tasks to develop effective methods and policies that aims at the goal that women and men, girls and boys, must have the same right and access to physical integrity.



# Prostitution and trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation

Sub-goal  
6

Trafficking in human beings is a serious crime and involves the ruthless exploitation of other human beings. It entails serious obstacles for the full enjoyment of human rights and must acknowledge a gender and a child rights perspective. A vast majority of trafficking victims for sexual exploitation are women and girls but men and boys also fall victim to this crime.

The Swedish Government has for a long time given priority to combatting prostitution and trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation. This is one part of the Swedish Government's work to combat men's violence against women. In 2018 the Swedish Government decided on a new action plan to combat prostitution and trafficking in human beings. The Swedish Gender Equality Agency coordinates the work against prostitution and trafficking in human beings on a national level.

The underlying reasons for people being involved in prostitution vary, but Sweden recognizes that the primary factor that sustains prostitution as well as trafficking in human beings for sexual purposes is the demand. Efforts to undermine the market and to counteract the demand to buy sexual services are therefore fundamental in combatting prostitution and trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The Coun-

cil of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings underlines the importance of addressing the demand that fosters all forms of trafficking in human beings.

Swedish ambassador to combat trafficking in human beings The Swedish Government has taken a number of steps to enhance its work against trafficking in human beings. An ambassador to combat trafficking in human beings has been installed with an aim to especially acknowledge the gender equality perspective and criminalisation of the purchase of sexual services as a way to decrease the demand for sexual services.

The Swedish model: Purchasing sexual services is illegal On 1 January 1999, Sweden became the first country in the world to introduce legislation criminalising the purchase, and not the selling, of sexual services.

*A person who obtains a casual sexual relation in return for payment, shall [if*

*the act does not constitute another sexual crime] be sentenced for purchase of sexual service to a fine or imprisonment for at most one year. (Penal Code Chapter 6, Section11)*

The legislation marks Sweden's attitude towards prostitution and ideas of a gender equal society. In the majority of cases, the seller is the weaker party, who is exploited by the buyer. Further, in most cases it is men who are acquiring casual sexual relations with women against remuneration. This is unacceptable.

Criminalisation can never be more than a supplementary element in the efforts to reduce the demand for prostitution and cannot be a substitute for broader social interventions. Active involvement of social services in prevention efforts as well as in order to ensure proper support measures to people in prostitution is key.

Effects of the criminalisation of purchase of sexual services The legislation prohibiting the purchase of sexual services has been evaluated and an Inquiry report was presented to the Government in 2010. According to the assessment in the report, the prohibition has had the intended effect, and is an important instrument in preventing and combatting prostitution and trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

According to the report, street prostitution in Sweden had halved since the prohibition was introduced in 1999. The Inquiry found that previously voiced fears for negative effects on people exploited through prostitution as a result of criminalisation had not been realised.

The Inquiry notes that trafficking in human beings for sexual purposes is substantially less prevalent in Sweden than in other comparable countries. The prohibition

of the purchase of sexual services seems to act as a barrier for human traffickers and procurers.

The Inquiry report concluded that the prohibition of the purchase of sexual services also had a normative effect. There had been a change in attitude towards the purchase of sexual services that coincided with the criminalisation. In Sweden, there is strong support for the prohibition (72 percent of the population are positive towards the legislation).

## Sexual offence legislation based on consent

Sub-goal  
6

The incidence of sexual offences is increasing in Sweden, with young women facing the greatest risk. At the same time, too few of these offences are reported. Reversing this negative trend requires both new legislation and changes in attitudes. The Government has introduced new sexual offence legislation that is based on consent. Sex must be voluntary – if it is not, then it is illegal.

Since the 1 July 2018, Sweden has a new sexual offence legislation based on consent which states that if sex is not voluntary it is illegal. The legislation is a breakthrough in the sense that; there is no longer a need to establish that violence or threats were used, or that the victim's particularly vulnerable situation was exploited in order to convict a perpetrator of rape. This means that sex without consent can be considered rape, even when there are no threats or violence involved.

Focus on perpetrators The power of the Swedish #metoo-movement has made it pos-

sible to collectively shed light on the problem of sexual harassment and sexual abuse. There has been an important shift of focus – from talking about the behavior and way of dressing of women and girls – to a focus on perpetrators of sexual violence and harassment.

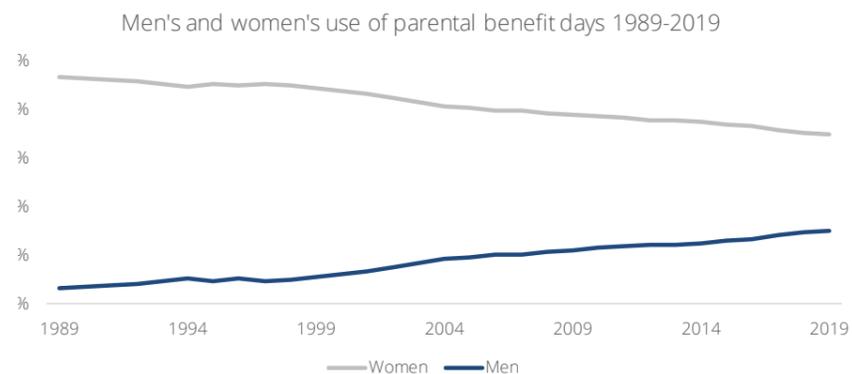
Legislation is not enough Legislation is only one part of the solution. For every girl and woman to be free to decide over her own body, there must also be a culture of consent. The Government therefore in connection with the new sexual offence legislation commissioned the Swedish Crime Victim Compensation and Sup-

port Authority to develop sexual offences education campaigns targeting primarily young people. The authority produced a web-based training material and an accompanying teacher's guide describing the new sex crime legislation and implemented an internet campaign.

The campaign addresses that all victims must be aware of their rights and have the courage to report. It also stresses the responsibility of men and boys to contribute to a culture of sexual consent.

## Involving men and boys in gender equality and promoting healthier gender norms

Knowledge about genderstereotypical norms needs to be given greater emphasis in the understanding of differences that exist between girls and boys, and women and men in different areas.



Traditional gender stereotypes hinder the empowerment of women and girls. Unequal gender power relations and traditional gender stereotypes can shape the likelihood of men and boys experiencing or perpetrating violence which seriously hinder the empowerment of women and girls, and gender equality. Therefore, more focus must be placed on challenging traditional gender stereotypes that link masculinity with violence as a root cause of violence. The Government has therefore introduced measures that bring about more effective prosecution of perpetrators and taken steps to lowering the threshold for men to seek help to change violent behaviour, for example with a helpline for persons that seek help against for instance their controlling behavior. Also investments in universal violence prevention in

schools to change norms and attitudes associated with masculinity, violence and sexist behaviour are in progress.

The Swedish Government has reached an agreement with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, to introduce and share lessons learned from the ongoing violence prevention programmes in Swedish schools. One of the programmes is Mentors in Violence Prevention, a peer mentoring program that invites young people to challenge attitudes, beliefs and cultural norms that underlie gender-based violence and other forms of violence. The program is undergoing research to analyse its impact.

Active responsibility and participation by men and boys benefits all. Time-use surveys show that men

in Sweden between ages 20 and 64 do 5 hours less of domestic work each week compared with women of the same age. And while it is true that trend show that men have picked up some of the household labor, a significant gap remains. Therefore the Government has introduced reconciliation policies such as a third reserved month for each parent in 2016. The Government is also currently reviewing the policy for further modernisation, promoting gender equal parenting with further individualised parental leave schemes. Men's increased use of the parental leave benefits have proven to have a clear positive impact on men's relationships with their children as well as a positive effect on the development of women's wages.



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