



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

New solutions in focus at the End Violence Against Children Solutions Summit

Published 18 February 2018

As one of the currently 15 pathfinding countries, Sweden, was the first to host the 2030 Agenda for Children: End Violence Against Children Solutions Summit in cooperation with the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children and the WePROTECT Global Alliance on 14-15 February. During the Summit, both Japan and The United Arab Emirates made a commitment to become pathfinding countries, with Brazil expressing interest too. In addition, Japan announced that the country donated 6 million US Dollars to the Fund to End Violence Against Children.

Government ministers, youth delegates and high-level representatives of UN bodies, civil society, academia and the private sector from 67 countries attended the End Violence Against Children: Solutions Summit in Stockholm on 14-15 February 2018.

"Every country that has signed up to the 2030 Agenda has promised to achieve target 16.2: to end exploitation and all forms of violence against girls and boys. Violence against children is a disgrace, a disgrace that must be confronted with the full force of the global community. And this is not just something we wish or hope for – this is something we have promised," said Sweden's Prime Minister, Stefan Löfven.

Summit delegates presented and discussed good practices, concrete examples of legislation and collaboration, action plans that can be shared across the globe and new solutions – all with the potential to end violence against children.

"The purpose of this summit is to present and promote those solutions. But we also need leadership. Leadership in governments, in the United Nations and other governmental organisations, in civil society and in the private sector. I offer my leadership, and Sweden's leadership – but we need your leadership too. Let us all step up," urged the Swedish Prime Minister.

"The Global Partnership will continue to serve as a crucial platform for national government, civil society, academics, the private sector and international organisations to share knowledge and expertise on effective solutions to end violence against children. We need to keep learning from one another, support each other and accelerate action both globally and at home. The cost of inaction is simply too high. I believe that this summit has shown us what can be achieved if we work together to strengthen the rights of the child, by ending all forms of violence against children, supporting parents and building sustainable and equitable societies," said Sweden's Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality, Åsa Regnér.

The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children

The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, launched in July 2016, is a joint initiative by world leaders, UNICEF, WHO and others to promote international collaboration between governments, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders to put an end to violence against children. The initiative is linked to the Global Goals of the 2030 Agenda, particularly to target 16.2 to end exploitation and all forms of violence against girls and boys.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven to open an international high-level conference on violence against children

Published 01 February 2018

The Swedish Government is hosting the high-level conference Agenda 2030 for Children, End Violence Solutions Summit in Stockholm on 14–15 February 2018. The participants include Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, HM Queen Silvia and UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohamed. The co-organisers of the conference are the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children and WePROTECT Global Alliance.

At least 1 of every 2 of the world's children have experienced violence and 18 million girls aged between 15 and 19 have experienced sexual abuse. As part of Agenda 2030 world leaders have pledged to attain 17 global goals, one aim being to realise human rights for all. Target 16.2 is about preventing and ending violence against and exploitation of girls and boys.

As part of action to attain this target an international high-level conference – **Agenda 2030 for Children, End Violence Solutions Summit** – is being held in Stockholm on 14–15 February 2018.

– I am proud and pleased that Sweden is the first country to host this extremely important conference. At present human rights are being questioned in many places around the world, and by hosting this summit we want to stress that it is possible to make progress in assuring the right of

children to grow up free from violence. Governments, the UN and the EU have a responsibility for achieving this, as do civil society and the private sector. I hope that the meeting can result in concrete examples of solutions, legislation, collaboration and action that lead to a reduction in violence against girls and boys, says Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Åsa Regnér.

The purpose of the conference is to share good experience and new solutions in work to end violence against children. Government ministers from 75 countries, youth delegates and high-level representatives of UN bodies, civil society, the academic world and the private sector have been invited to attend the meeting.

The list of participants includes Prime Minister Stefan Löfven; Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Åsa Regnér; HM Queen Silvia; Director-General of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus; Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Henrietta H Fore; UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohamed; the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Yury Fedotov; and, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children, Marta Santos Pais.

During the conference several workshops will be held at which participants will be able to discuss and exchange knowledge and expertise on various themes concerning violence against children.

Sweden is a pathfinding country

Sweden was the first country to join the Global Partnership as a "pathfinding country". These countries identify successful solutions to eliminate violence against children in various settings, from the family to the community as a whole.

– Sweden aims to be the best country in the world for a child to grow up in. As part of this, all children must be safe from violence, abuse and violations. This also means that children must themselves be aware of their rights. Then we will see more children daring to speak out, and to tell adults close to them when and if they are victims of offences. One important step in achieving this is to make the Convention on the Rights of the Child law in Sweden, says Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Åsa Regnér.

About the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children

The Global Partnership to End Violence against Children was launched in July 2016 and is a joint initiative by a number of governments, Unicef, the WHO and others for international collaboration between governments, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders to bring about change. The initiative is linked to the global goals in Agenda 2030, especially target 16.2 about preventing and ending violence against and exploitation of children.

Read more at end-violence.org/summit

Follow the conference and join the conversation on Twitter:

#EndViolenceSWE



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

The new Swedish Gender Equality Agency inaugurated in Gothenburg

Published 18 January 2018

On 12 January, the new Swedish Gender Equality Agency was inaugurated in Gothenburg, with speeches by Minister for Gender Equality Åsa Regnér, Director-General Lena Ag, County Governor Anders Danielsson and chair of the municipal executive board, Ann-Sofie Hermansson. The Agency will contribute to strategic, coherent and sustainable governance and effective implementation of gender equality policy.

One of the agency's main tasks is to increase the impact of the Government's gender equality policy and make a real difference to people's lives. This covers all of the Government's gender equality policy objectives: power and influence, economy, education, health, unpaid housework and care work, and an end to men's violence against women.

"It has been exciting and inspiring to follow the growth of the Swedish Gender Equality Agency. Professionals, organisations and private individuals have long been calling for an agency like this. There is a continuous and growing need for follow-up, analysis, coordination and support in the area of gender equality policy. This is a strategic and long-term task. We want to see real results," says Minister for Gender Equality Åsa Regnér.

"It feels fantastic to finally get started on the agency's work. Having our premises in Angered gives us major opportunities – we certainly noticed this today when we met pupils from Angered Upper Secondary School," says

Lena Ag, Director-General of the Swedish Gender Equality Agency.

In connection with Friday's inauguration, Ms Regnér and Ms Ag visited Angered Upper Secondary School to talk to pupils about gender equality, sexual harassment and violence. During the afternoon they also visited the family centre in Angered.

Tasks of the agency

- Contribute to strategic, cohesive and sustainable governance and the effective implementation of gender equality policy.
- Be responsible for follow-up, analysis, coordination and support based on the gender equality policy objectives.
- Coordinate the national strategy to prevent and counter men's violence against women, including honour-related violence and oppression, as well as prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes.
- Collect and disseminate knowledge in its area of responsibility.
- Examine matters concerning government grants for gender equality projects and women's organisations.
- Assist the Government in other respects on gender equality policy issues, such as international cooperation in the area.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Employment, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice

The Government of Sweden's measures against sexual violence and harassment

Published 03 January 2018

One of the Swedish Government's gender equality policy sub-goals is that men's violence against women must stop. With reference to #metoo, the following lists some examples of implemented and forthcoming measures to counteract sexual violence, harassment and assault.

The Government's work involves preventive initiatives, stronger protection and support, more effective law enforcement, work environment investments and awareness-building measures.

Article: The Government of Sweden takes action against sexual violence and harassment

Work at an overarching level

- On 1 January 2017, the ten-year national strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women, including honour-related violence and oppression, as well as prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes, came into effect. The strategy, which contains a package of measures, is intended to guide central government steering in this area and has a particular focus on developing efforts to prevent violence. In total, the Government is setting aside around SEK 1.3 billion for efforts to counteract men's violence against women in 2017–2020.

Fact sheet: National strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women

- A new gender equality agency begins working in January 2018. The agency will work with follow-up, analysis, coordination, knowledge and support for achieving the Government's gender equality policy goals. One of the sub-goals is that men's violence against women must stop, and that women and men, girls and boys must have the same right and access to physical integrity.

Summary of the Government Communication 'Power, goals and agency – a feminist policy'

Stronger protection and support

- At the end of 2017 the Government proposed to the Council on Legislation new sexual offence legislation that is based on consent. The Swedish Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority will receive resources to implement information and training initiatives in the area of sexual offences.

Press release: New sexual offence legislation based on consent

- The Act on special protection for workers against reprisals for whistleblowing concerning serious irregularities, the Whistleblowing Act, which entered into force on 1 January 2017, can be applicable in situations where an employer takes reprisals against an employee for reporting sexual harassment to a government agency or the media.

- In its bill on enhanced penal protection of personal integrity, the Government proposed that the protection against threats and violations be strengthened and modernised. Most of this enters into force on 1 January 2018.

- At the turn of 2016/17, the legislation for counteracting workplace discrimination was tightened.

- The issue of better protection against discrimination and violations in schools (based on SOU 2016:87) is being processed at the Government Offices.

More effective law enforcement and preventive efforts

- The Government is implementing a historic investment through additional funding to the Swedish Police Authority of just over SEK 9.8 billion over the period 2017–2020. Assignments in the appropriation directions to the Police and the Swedish Prosecution Authority allow the Government to follow how these authorities are working to develop their working methods for investigating rape and other sexual offences.
- The Government has an agreement with Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, SALAR, in 2017 to strengthen the focus of gender equality work on men, boys and questions of masculinity.

Work environment investments

- The Government has adopted a national work environment strategy in close consultation with the labour market and union partners, containing concrete measures in three priority areas, one of which is the psychosocial work environment. The strategy has been produced partly in light of gender segregation in the Swedish labour market. Research indicates that a gender unequal organisation goes hand in hand with psychosocial aspects such as conflict, harassment and high staff turnover.

A Work Environment Strategy for Modern Working Life 2016–2020

- The Government's strategy emphasises that initiatives are needed to strengthen the organisational and social work environment. The Swedish Work Environment Authority's regulations on organisational and social work environment were adopted in spring 2016 and entail a major step forward in work environment management. Victimisation is a focus area in the regulations.
- The Government has enhanced resources for its work environment policy by over SEK 100 million per year during this term of office. The funds have enabled the Work Environment Authority to strengthen its supervisory activities. Around a hundred new work environment inspectors have been hired.
- The Government has adopted some changes to the Swedish Work Environment Authority's instructions, which enter into force on 2 January 2018. The instructions now explicitly state that the Authority is to conduct its activities so as to promote diversity and gender equality and a work environment free from victimisation (Section 4 a).

Awareness-building measures

- The Children's Welfare Foundation Sweden is receiving SEK 500,000 from the Government to disseminate information and support materials on sexual harassment to all compulsory and upper secondary schools.
- In order to raise the basic competency of particularly relevant professional groups, the Government has decided to make teaching about men's violence against women and violence in close relationships, including honour-related violence and oppression, compulsory in a number of higher education programmes.
- The Swedish Schools Inspectorate is reviewing the sex and human relationships teaching of compulsory schools, compulsory education for pupils with intellectual disabilities, upper secondary schools and upper secondary education for pupils with learning disabilities. The completed assignment is to be presented by 16 February 2018 at the latest. The teacher's guide "Dags att prata om" [Time to talk about] has been launched for schools to improve their ability to talk to children about sexual abuse.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Research,
Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs,
Ministry of Justice

The Government of Sweden takes action against sexual violence and harassment

Published 03 January 2018

The #metoo movement in Sweden strongly demonstrates that more needs to be done to combat sexual harassment and sexual violence in workplaces and society at large. The Swedish Government requires all employers to take responsibility for a secure work environment. In the area of work environment and discrimination there are already many tools and relevant legislation, but the power and size of the petitions show that there are deficiencies in compliance with the regulations. For this reason, Minister for Employment Ylva Johansson and Minister for Gender Equality Åsa Regnér have met with the labour market and union partners, and several ministers have in recent weeks convened meetings with heads of government agencies and business leaders in order to focus on the responsibility of employers to counteract sexual violence and harassment.

The testimonies regarding sexual violence and harassment in a great number of workplaces and schools that have emerged in the wake of the #metoo

movement confirm that more needs to be done. The Government has already adopted a number of initiatives, and the long-term measures against sexual violence and harassment already adopted by the Government include a proposal for improved legislation on sexual consent and sexual offence, the national strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women, the establishment of the new gender equality agency, and a national work environment strategy.

"Thanks to the important petitions in industry after industry, with testimonies about violations and harassment, we have moved the focus from women's behaviour and appearance to talking about the responsibility of men. Feminist policy is needed, and the work against sexualised violence and harassment is a high priority for the Government. The new gender equality agency, which commences its activities in January, will play an important role in supporting government agencies and organisations to systematically achieve societal change," says Minister for Gender Equality Åsa Regnér.

"Several of the testimonies made public have clarified the frequent link between working conditions and vulnerability to sexual harassment and abuse. Criminal acts committed at workplaces shall of course always be reported to be dealt with by the judicial system. But in addition to punishable acts, many women also bear witness to a completely unacceptable work environment. It is obvious that not enough has been done to rectify these problems," says Minister for Employment and Integration Ylva Johansson.

Meetings with government agencies and the social partners

With reference to the #metoo petitions, the Government has initiated meetings about sexual violence and harassment with heads of government agencies, labour market and union partners, business leaders and the initiators behind the petitions.

Concrete measures against violence and violations

The Government has both ongoing and planned measures to counteract sexual violence, harassment and violations. This involves preventive initiatives, stronger protection and support, more effective law enforcement, improved supervision and awareness-building measures.

Article: The Government of Sweden's measures against sexual violence and harassment



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Ministerial conference on how gender equality can contribute to fair jobs and growth

Published 13 November 2017 Updated 13 November 2017

Sweden's Minister for Gender Equality Åsa Regnér hosted a conference on how gender equality can contribute to fair jobs and growth on 8 November in Gothenburg. Gender equality ministers from the upcoming EU presidencies took part and discussed gender equality in relation to the labour market and overall progress in the area of gender equality in the EU based on the Gender Equality Index of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).

The conference was held ahead of the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth, which will take place on 17 November, and be hosted by the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker and Sweden's Prime Minister Stefan Löfvén.

The conference brought together ministers responsible for gender equality in several EU Member States, representatives of the EU institutions, the social partners, and civil society, as well as researchers working in this field.

Prime Minister Stefan Löfvén opened the conference with a video message.

"A truly social Europe cannot be achieved without gender equality. Not only because gender equality is a fundamental right, but also because it is a prerequisite for economic growth, a well-functioning labour market and efficient social security systems," said Minister for Gender Equality Åsa

Regnér at the conference.

Each session opened with a speech, followed by a panel discussion that included ministers, experts, and representatives of the social partners and civil society.

- Session 1: Gender equality – a key to growth
- Session 2: Gender equality – a key to fair jobs
- Session 3: Work balance – a key to gender equality
- Concluding remarks: Integrating gender equality in the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth.

[Link to program, conclusion observations and list of participants](#)

"After hearing your thoughts and ideas during our discussions, it is even clearer to me that gender equality must be placed at the highest level of the EU political agenda. The outcome of these discussions will provide valuable input and a strong message to the Social Summit and to our heads of state and government on how gender equality can contribute to fair jobs and growth," said Ms Regnér in her concluding remarks.

The hashtags used for the meeting were #equalityworks17 and #socialsummit17.

Ministers in dialogue with citizens in Gothenburg

A social Europe must also be created in close dialogue with its citizens. For this reason, Minister Åsa Regnér at the end of the day organized an open forum in the Gothenburg area of Angered. Together with Estonian Minister of Health and Labour, Jevgeni Ossinovski, the attending citizens were told about the day's conference, followed by an exchange of views with the participants on how gender equality can contribute to fair jobs and growth.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Reforms for increased security and welfare in the Budget Bill for 2018

Published 27 September 2017

In the Budget Bill for 2018, the Government presents a range of proposals to increase security and welfare in Sweden. Here you can learn more about the proposals related to the areas of responsibility of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs.

Children's rights

The proposal is presented in expenditure area 9 'Health care, medical care and social services'.

Summit on ending violence against children

In February 2018, Sweden will host the Solutions Summit, a high-level gathering bringing together representatives of governments, international organisations and other actors working to end all forms of violence against girls and boys. The Summit is part of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, of which Sweden is a member, launched at the initiative of UNICEF and WHO.

Disabilities

The proposal is presented in expenditure area 9 'Health care, medical care and social services'.

Increased standard amount for assistance allowance

The Government intends to increase the standard amount for assistance allowance by 1.5 per cent. This is a higher adjustment than in 2017, when the standard amount was increased by 1.05 per cent.

Improved interpretation services in working life

The Government is investing in greater access to interpretation services in working life. The aim is to strengthen the labour market opportunities of women and men who are deaf, deaf-blind or have a hearing impairment. The Government intends to allocate SEK 15 million per year for this purpose in 2018–2020.

Gender equality

The proposals are presented in expenditure area 13 'Gender equality and integration of newly arrived immigrants'.

Multi-year investment to combat honour-related violence and oppression

The Government intends to make a coordinated, multi-year investment to prevent and combat honour-related violence and oppression comprising measures worth SEK 100 million in 2018 and SEK 57 million per year in 2019–2020.

Appropriations to the new gender equality agency

The Government has decided to establish a gender equality agency to help ensure strategic, coherent and sustainable governance, and effective implementation of gender equality policy. The agency, which will be located in Gothenburg and open on 1 January 2018, has been allocated SEK 80 million for 2018.

Social insurance

The proposals outlined below are presented in expenditure area 10 'Financial security for the sick and disabled'.

Higher ceiling in the sickness insurance system

The ceiling for the sickness benefit qualifying income will be increased from seven and a half times to eight times the price base amount from 1 July 2018.

1. The housing supplement and the special housing supplement will be increased from 1 January 2018.
2. Tax will be reduced for people receiving activity and sickness compensation from 1 January 2018.
3. Guarantee compensation will increase by SEK 300 from 1 July 2018.

Improvements for people receiving activity and sickness compensation

The Government proposes reforms in three different areas that improve the financial situation of people receiving activity and sickness compensation.

4. The housing supplement and the special housing supplement will be increased from 1 January 2018.
5. Tax cuts for people receiving activity and sickness compensation will apply from 1 January 2018.
6. Guarantee compensation will increase by SEK 300 from 1 July 2018.

Proposal for sickness benefit pending a final decision

The aim of the proposal is to ensure that people on sick leave will not have their benefit suspended retroactively.

Under the proposal:

- A matter concerning sickness benefit may not be decided to the detriment of the insured without informing the insured of the content of the upcoming decision and giving them an opportunity to comment on it.
- Sickness benefit qualifying income will apply during the time the insured is waiting for the final decision.
- If sickness benefit has been paid previously, it will be paid until Försäkringskassan (Swedish Social Insurance Agency) has made a final decision.

Proposal for enhanced rehabilitation to promote return to work

The Government and the Left Party have together proposed measures to stimulate and ensure early assessment of rehabilitation needs and early measures for adaptation and workplace rehabilitation. The aim is to strengthen the individual's access to rehabilitation.

The proposals outlined below are presented in expenditure area 11 'Financial security for the elderly'.

Higher housing supplement for pensioners

The housing supplement, the special housing supplement and maintenance support for older people will be increased from 1 January 2018. The Government is investing SEK 655 million annually and 290 000 pensioners will be affected by the increase, 75 per cent of them women.

Tax cut for pensioners

On 1 January 2018, taxes will be cut by up to SEK 5 000 per year for 75 per cent of people over the age of 65. This will apply to 1.5 million over 65s, which means that 3 out of 4 older people will receive tax cuts in 2018.

The proposals outlined below are presented in expenditure area 12 'Financial security for families and children'.

Increased child allowance

The Government proposes that child allowance and extended child allowance be increased by SEK 200 per month per child from 1 March 2018.

New age-differentiated maintenance support

The Government wants to raise maintenance support for older children to improve the situation of families with children with the greatest financial needs. This is a twofold initiative for teenagers aged 15 and over, and children aged between 11 and 14.

Health care

The proposals outlined below are presented in expenditure area 9 'Health care, medical care and social services'.

Patient billion – enhanced health care guarantee in primary care and patient contract

The Government wants to support the introduction of an enhanced health care guarantee in primary care to improve patient accessibility. SEK 1 billion per year will be allocated for this in 2018–2021. The 'Patient billion' will also support the introduction of a patient contract to promote a more coherent approach to planned care. This is particularly important for patients with complex care needs and frequent contact with health care providers.

Good working conditions and new working methods for health care staff

The Government is investing to improve conditions for health care staff and develop health care activities. When health care staff have more time to provide their patients with treatment and care, patient safety is strengthened. SEK 2 billion will be allocated per year in 2018–2021 for this purpose.

More investments in maternity care

To address the problems and shortcomings experienced in maternity care, the Government proposes that the current investment be extended and expanded by SEK 1 billion per year up to 2022.

Increased general dental care subsidy

The Government intends to double the general dental care subsidy from SEK 300 to SEK 600 for the 22–29 age group, from SEK 150 to SEK 300 for the 30–64 age group, and from SEK 300 to SEK 600 for the over 65s.

Free cervical cancer screening

The Government is investing in free cervical cancer screening to ensure that no woman feels she is unable to afford a pap test.

Initiatives to improve mental health

The Government sees a major need to expand investments in mental health services and mental health. It is therefore strengthening efforts in this area by providing SEK 650 million in 2018 and SEK 1150 million per year in

2019 and 2020.

Strengthened child health services

The Government wants to increase accessibility to child health care services for groups with poor general health and poor dental health. SEK 137 million per year will be allocated for this purpose in 2018–2020. These funds will also be used to develop vaccine information and communication efforts to increase vaccination levels. The Government also intends to take a decision concerning the inclusion of the rotavirus vaccine in the national vaccination programme for children.

Social welfare services

The proposals outlined below are presented in expenditure area 9 'Health care, medical care and social services'.

Free holiday activities and swimming lessons

The Government is investing in free school holiday activities. It intends to allocate SEK 250 million per year in 2018–2020 to enable the municipalities to offer free activities during school holidays.

Support to older people with considerable health and social care needs

Older people with multiple illnesses and those in great need of care require the involvement of many different actors. Organisational changes are required and health care and social services need to be coordinated. The Government proposes that SEK 12 million per year be allocated for these initiatives in 2018–2020.

Falls prevention

Falls are the leading cause of accidental death, hospitalisation and visits to emergency departments. To achieve the goal of halving the number of fall-related accidents, the Government intends to enhance prevention efforts.

Staff reinforcements in social care for children and young people

The Government's ongoing investment to increase staffing levels in social care for children and young people will continue as planned. In 2018–2020, the Government intends to invest an additional SEK 250 million per year to strengthen initiatives for children subjected to or at risk of abuse.

Reinforced appropriation to the National Board of Institutional Care

Over the last three years, demand has been very high for residential care places provided by the National Board of Institutional Care (SiS). To enable SiS to expand its capacity, the Government intends to increase the administrative appropriation by SEK 40 million in 2017, SEK 110 million in 2018 and SEK 150 million per year in 2019–2021.

Central government initiative to combat acute homelessness

In 2018–2021, the Government will provide the municipalities with SEK 25 million per year as support for their work to combat acute homelessness.

Habilitation compensation

As of 2018, the Government intends to provide municipalities with a grant of SEK 350 million for their efforts related to habilitation compensation.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Questions and answers on the Convention on the Rights of the Child becoming law (adapted for children)

Published 14 July 2017

The Swedish Government wants to incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) into Swedish law. The CRC contains rules about children's rights. Here are answers to common questions children may have about this.

What is the CRC?

The UN adopted the CRC in 1989. The CRC contains rules about children's rights. These rules apply to all children under the age of 18. Nearly every country in the world has signed the CRC. When a country signs a convention, it promises to follow the various rules of the convention.

The rules of the CRC are divided into 54 articles. The articles say, for example, that children are to be treated equally, that adults must listen to children and that children have the right to go to school. In other words, children have special rights just because they're children.

Why does the Government want to make the CRC part of Swedish law?

An inquiry that examined the rights of the child in Sweden found that adults do not always use the CRC the way they should. The Government wants to change this by making the CRC part of Swedish law. The Government feels that this will raise the status of children's rights so that everyone will take

children's rights seriously.

If the CRC becomes Swedish law, all the rules of the CRC will be gathered in one act. This means that the CRC will be clearer and have better visibility.

With the CRC as Swedish law, the Government wants it to be clearer that children are to be considered rights holders. This means that children are to be seen as people with rights of their own.

What does this act mean for me as a child?

The act will make it clearer that you as a child have rights of your own and that those rights must be followed. With the CRC as Swedish law, it will be clearer that the CRC's rules must be followed.

The act means that you as a child can be more involved in decisions that concern you. Adults have to listen to what you say. When adults take decisions that concern you, they have to think about and talk about what is best for you. Adults cannot just talk with other adults about you, – they have to talk with you about matters that concern you.

Is the Government doing anything else to strengthen the rights of the child?

Yes. Sweden has a special policy area for children's rights. The Government wants Sweden to be one of the very best countries to grow up in.

The Ombudsman for Children in Sweden is a person appointed by the Government to represent the rights of children and young people, monitor compliance with the CRC, and provide information and spread knowledge about the CRC.

The Government wants everyone to know what rights children have and how the CRC should be used. The Government has therefore instructed the Ombudsman for Children to make sure that children and young people are able to learn about their rights, for example in school. The Government has also instructed the Ombudsman for Children to ensure that adults who work with children – in schools, hospitals, local government or other places – learn more about children's rights.

If you want to learn more about children's rights and the CRC, you can find more information on the Ombudsman for Children's website.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Questions and answers on incorporating the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into Swedish law

Published 14 July 2017

The Swedish Government has decided to submit a proposal to the Council on Legislation to incorporate the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) into Swedish law. The Government considers that the CRC's strong position must be made clearer and that a child rights-based approach must have a major impact on how the law is applied.

Why does the Government want to incorporate the CRC into Swedish law?

Despite strategic measures and the fact that the rights of the child are regularly transformed into applicable law and have been reflected in new legislation, these rights have not had a sufficient impact on decision-making processes concerning children. Nor has the fact that, in relation to children, the CRC involves obligations for central and local government activities had a sufficient impact.

The Government considers that the CRC's strong position must be made clearer and that a child rights-based approach must have a major impact in on how the law is applied.

In what way do the rights of the child have insufficient impact?

The Inquiry on the rights of the child found in its surveys that the impact of

children's rights and of a child rights-based approach has been insufficient in many ways. This is most obvious with regard to the principle of the best interests of the child and a child's right to express their views.

How can the rights of the child be expected to have a greater impact on the application of the law in Sweden if the CRC is incorporated into Swedish law?

Incorporation of the CRC means that officials and decision-makers will have to take a different approach to the CRC than at present. Incorporation entails a clearer obligation on legal practitioners to consider the rights that follow from the CRC in deliberations and assessments in decision-making processes in cases and matters concerning children.

Incorporation of the CRC makes clear that the principle of the best interests of the child must be the approach used in decision-making processes in cases and matters concerning children, and be based on the rights a child has under the CRC. Incorporation means that a child's role as a legal entity with specific rights of their own is made clearer.

What will the difference be between the CRC as a legal act and as a ratified convention?

Incorporation of the CRC will gather the human rights that children are entitled to in a single act. The CRC as a whole will have greater visibility, and it will be clear that the rights in the CRC are connected and must be interpreted in relation to one another.

Incorporation of the CRC makes clear that other legislation concerning children, such as the provisions of the Parents Code, the Aliens Act, the Education Act, the Act concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments and the Social Services Act, must be interpreted on the basis of the CRC in its entirety and not only on the basis of the provisions transformed into each act.

Are other measures needed to strengthen implementation of the rights of the child?

For the rights of the child to have the desired impact, the CRC must continue to be transformed in addition to being incorporated.

In the proposal referred to the Council on Legislation, the Government also presents the measures taken to increase knowledge about the CRC among

children and young people, in local government and government agencies. In the proposal, the Government states that an inquiry will be appointed to conduct a broad study of how the CRC is dealt with in Swedish legislation and in the application of the law, and that the significance of the CRC's provisions will be systematically analysed based on Swedish conditions. In addition, the Government states that a guidance document will be produced on how to interpret and implement the CRC, based on rules of interpretation of international law, and that a new Swedish translation of the CRC should be published in connection with the incorporation.

How will children in Sweden notice that the CRC is part of Swedish law?

Incorporation of the CRC entails a clearer obligation on legal practitioners to consider the rights that follow from the CRC in deliberations and assessments in decision-making processes in cases and matters concerning children. In addition, incorporation means that the child's role as a legal entity with specific rights of their own is made clearer and can therefore be expected to contribute to greater focus on the child in situations concerning the child.

How do other acts relate to the CRC?

In principle, the proposed incorporation does not entail any new tasks for practitioners, since legislation is already to be interpreted in accordance with the CRC. However, incorporation entails a clearer obligation on legal practitioners to consider the rights that follow from the CRC in deliberations and assessments in decision-making processes in cases and matters concerning children, and interpret Swedish provisions in relation to the CRC based on principles of interpretation in international law.

Incorporation will make the provisions of the CRC applicable as law and may – with the reservation that all the provisions are not directly applicable in each individual case – form the basis of decisions by public authorities in cases and matters and so fill any gaps in the legislation. Incorporation of the CRC does not mean that it takes precedence over other legislation. How any incompatibility between the incorporated CRC and other legislation is to be settled must be determined by means of general legal principles of interpretation.

Why will entry into force of the act be delayed until 2020?

It is proposed that the act enter into force on 1 January 2020. The

Government considers that more time than the inquiry thought necessary is needed before the act enters into force. This is so law enforcement authorities have time to prepare.

The Government has concluded from earlier studies that Swedish law overall is well in line with the CRC, but it is of great importance that transformation continues both before and after incorporation to facilitate matters for legal practitioners and to increase predictability. Entry into force at a later date provides greater scope for transformation ahead of incorporation. The Government is also aware that there may be a lack of experience and knowledge of interpreting and implementing international conventions, and therefore considers that, prior to incorporation of the CRC, additional knowledge-enhancing measures are needed alongside the work already under way and the measures being taken, including by the Ombudsman for Children and within the framework of the Government's strategic human rights efforts. Entry into force at a later date also provides scope for additional analyses and studies, including of the significance of the CRC's provisions.



Article from Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Launch of gender equality web portal for newly arrived children and young people

Published 11 July 2017

On Thursday 6 April 2017, Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Åsa Regnér inaugurated the multilingual Youmo.se website that provides information about health, gender equality, and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The website, which targets newly arrived children and young people aged 13–20, is part of the Government's efforts to provide more information for young people who did not grow up in Sweden and who do not have Swedish as their first language.

“The Youmo website has been eagerly awaited. Sweden has received many unaccompanied minors in a short period of time. The Government wants their reception to be as good as possible, and education is an important part of this. I hope this website will improve knowledge about gender equality among newly arrived children and young people,” says Ms Regnér.

In April 2016, the Government instructed the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society, in collaboration with the national internet-based youth clinic UMO, to promote information campaigns on health and gender equality for newly arrived children and young people. The result – Youmo.se – is based on content from the UMO.se website and contains easily accessible content in Swedish, English, Arabic, Dari, Somali and Tigrinya.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Sweden and Romania exchange experiences

Published 14 June 2017

It is two years since Romania and Sweden signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation and the exchange of knowledge about children's rights, gender equality and social welfare.

“The memorandum of understanding has strengthened our bilateral relations and served as a platform for exchanges in efforts concerning vulnerable groups at various levels. At the same time we are enhancing our expertise through study visits at expert level. The MoU has also facilitated cooperation at EU level,” said Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Åsa Regnér.

To mark the second anniversary of the memorandum of understanding, the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs hosted a dialogue meeting to provide information about ongoing efforts and learn about organisations' experiences, input and views. The dialogue meeting was co-chaired by State Secretary Pernilla Baralt of Sweden and State Secretary Adrian Marius Dobre of Romania.

Participants in the dialogue meeting included organisations active in Romania (Swedish Civil Society Network for Romania), representatives of the parties represented in the Riksdag, Romania's Ambassador Iulian Buga, head of the international department of Romania's social affairs ministry, Ivona Batali, and the coordinator for EU citizens without right of residence, Claes Ling-Vannerus, from the Stockholm County Administrative Board.

In general, the memorandum of understanding has contributed to a good climate for cooperation with Romanian representatives at central and local level. It has also been valuable for Swedish organisations working with

vulnerable groups and social inclusion in Romania.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

International high-level meeting in the Riksdag on displaced children

Published 28 April 2017

On 24 April, a high-level meeting on displaced children was held in the Riksdag. It was organised by the Ombudsman for Children in Sweden, the Children's Welfare Foundation Sweden and the Riksdag. Sweden's Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Åsa Regnér was one of the keynote speakers at the meeting, which was attended by children's representatives from a number of European countries and child rights experts from across Europe, as well as representatives of Swedish government agencies and civil society organisations working with child rights.

The aim of the meeting, which was a follow-up of a prior initiative on the same theme by the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children, was to exchange experiences and bring a child rights perspective to the ongoing discussions on a new Common European Asylum System.

"Displaced children seeking asylum in Sweden must have their rights guaranteed and receive protection and support. Girls and boys must receive the proper support, based on their different experiences and needs. Making the Convention on the Rights of the Child part of Swedish law, a process which is currently under way, is an important step for the Government, which has also reinforced social care for children and young people with more than SEK 1 billion during the period 2016–2019," says Ms Regnér.

Other keynote speakers included Tomas Bocek, the Council of Europe's

Special Representative on Migration and Refugees, and Ambassador Nicola Clase, the Swedish Government's Coordinator for Migration and Refugee Issues.

During the meeting, a panel discussion was held on child rights challenges in migration in Europe. Participants in this discussion included Fredrik Malmberg, Ombudsman for Children in Sweden, Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, Swedish Member of the European Parliament, George Moschos, Ombudsman for Children in Greece, Geneviève Avenard, Children's Ombudsman in France, Per-Anders Sunesson, Sweden's Ambassador to Combat Human Trafficking, and Livia Stoica, Children's Rights Division, Council of Europe.

A panel discussion was also held on the child rights challenges in the new Common European Asylum System. Pernilla Baralt, State Secretary to Ms Regnér, was one of the participants.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Sweden a strong voice for women's rights at 61st session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women

Published 16 March 2017 Updated 16 March 2017

“This year, it feels more important than ever to participate. Many of us view what is happening around the world today with concern. Human rights and gender equality are not at the top of the global agenda. In particular, the rights of young girls, women and LGBT people are questioned,” says Minister for Gender Equality Åsa Regnér in connection with her participation at the 61st session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York on 13–24 March.

The aim of the Swedish delegation is to be a strong and constructive voice for the rights of women and girls.

"Sweden has every opportunity to be a clear and brave voice and stand up for the rights of women and girls. We take this responsibility very seriously. In New York, I am meeting with women's organisations who are putting great personal effort into fighting for a better world for all of us. Through Sweden's international network and development assistance, we are strengthening these brave women activists. Partly because it is the right thing to do – but also because we realise that we all live in the same world," says Ms Regnér.

Women's economic empowerment

This year the main theme is 'Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work'. Sweden's priorities in relation to this include issues concerning:

- differences in pay and pensions between women and men;
- gender segregation in the labour market, including gender-stereotypical educational and vocational choices;
- conditions for women's participation in the labour force, through such means as parental insurance, child and elderly care and individual taxation, and measures that promote a modern working life such as a good working environment and good working conditions;
- women's opportunities to take part in working life on a full-time basis;
- an even division of unpaid housework and care work among men and women; and
- the role of men and boys in the promotion of gender equality.

The Government's feminist policy, gender equality policy objectives and the feminist foreign policy

On the ground in New York, the delegation is spreading knowledge about Sweden's national and international experience of the work to achieve gender equality. The priorities and starting points are based on the Government's feminist policy, which includes the national gender equality policy objective and targets as well as the feminist foreign policy.

Rights perspective central

Swedish starting points include reaffirming previous commitments and emphasising the importance of the full implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform and the 2030 Agenda.

For Sweden, the rights perspective is central, likewise the view that human rights are universal.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) have been prioritised by

the Government and are central to Sweden's international work for gender equality, human rights and health. Swedish experience and knowledge concerning SRHR have important added value. SRHR issues are always controversial on the international policy agenda. They can be expected to appear in connection with the CSW, regardless of the session's main theme.

Side event on prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes

During the CSW, member states, organisations, UN funds and programmes arrange 'side events'. Together with France and the Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution (CAP International), Sweden hosted a side event at the French Embassy on prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes. Also taking part in the seminar was actor and gender equality debater Sissela Kyle, who is known in part for her role as women's rights activist Dagmar Friman in the drama series 'Miss Friman's War'.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

UN report gathers Swedish initiatives for the rights of older people

Published 18 November 2016 Updated 18 November 2016

On 31 October, the Government sent the Swedish report ‘National follow-up of the regional implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) in Sweden’ to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). “People do not become more alike simply because they get older. We continue to have different interests. Our needs continue to be individual. A modern policy for older people must not only take this into account – this must be an obvious starting point that informs this policy. The rights of older women and men must be in focus when we develop care for older people in Sweden,” says Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Åsa Regnér in connection with Sweden having now submitted the report.

The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) is a UN global action plan that highlights the rights of older people. The MIPAA encourages Member States to draw attention to and take measures to strengthen the rights of older people – against the background of the global challenge of an ageing population.

The MIPAA was adopted in Madrid in 2002 and is followed up every five

years; Sweden presented its report to the UN Economic Commission for Europe in October. A global report will subsequently be submitted to the Commission for Social Development in New York.

The report describes the measures taken in Sweden in 2012–2016 to strengthen the rights of older women and men.

To cover the breadth of the initiatives carried out, a number of government agencies and ministries have been involved in reporting, as have representatives of pensioners' organisations.

An active life and influence in society

The report to the UNECE contains facts and data that can be used by the Government and others in efforts to develop policy for older people and plans to meet the needs of older women and men, now and in the future.

Noteworthy in the Swedish report is that Sweden, compared with other OECD countries, has an ageing population with a large proportion of people over 80, but also that these older people are relatively healthy.

The Government has carried out several initiatives based on a rights perspective. The objective has been for older women and men to be able to lead an active life and exert influence in society and their own everyday lives, to be able to age in security, retain their independence, be met with respect and have access to good health and social care.

One example is increased staffing levels in care for older people. Staffing is crucial for the quality of care. The Government allocated SEK 1 billion for 2015 and has allocated SEK 2 billion per year to the municipalities for 2016–2018 for increased staffing levels in care for older people.

As a supplement to increased staffing levels, the Government has also set aside SEK 200 million this year for a training initiative targeting support staff in care for older people and people with disabilities.

To create long-term planning conditions for municipalities and county councils, the Government will allocate an additional SEK 10 billion per year to the municipal sector for 2017 and onwards. This money will strengthen welfare and develop the Swedish model.

Investment grant for housing for older people

Sweden's population is increasing dramatically and the need for housing has increased considerably. The Government has introduced a new investment grant for housing for older people. This grant is to stimulate the reconstruction and new construction of housing for older people. The aim is to improve accessibility and encourage older people to continue to live in their own homes. This year, the Government has allocated SEK 150 million for this purpose.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice

Summary: National strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women

Published 14 November 2016 Updated 14 November 2016

Stopping men's violence against women is a priority issue for Sweden's feminist government. The Government is therefore now presenting a national strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women.

The strategy contains measures that strengthen protection for and support to women subjected to violence, measures to combat violence in same-sex relationships as well as measures that counteract destructive masculinity and notions of honour. The strategy also emphasises the participation and responsibility of men in stopping the violence.

With a long-term strategy and a targeted action plan, the Government is laying the foundation for increasingly goal-oriented and coordinated action on men's violence against women. Developing violence prevention measures is particularly important. These measures must reach all groups in society and be developed in a variety of arenas. The national strategy is included in the Government's gender equality policy communication to the Riksdag (2016/17:10). The strategy spans a ten-year period and will come into force on 1 January 2017.

The strategy's four objectives

- Increased and effective preventive work to combat violence.
- Improved detection of violence and stronger protection for and support

to women and children subjected to violence.

- More effective crime-fighting.
- Improved knowledge and methodological development.

Special emphasis on preventive measures and men's participation

To date, measures have tended to deal with the consequences of violence rather than the causes. The Government's ambition is to shift the perspective and focus on preventing violence. This requires effective measures to prevent both the use and reoccurrence of violence. It also requires broader and more constructive involvement of men and boys than previously, and breaking with the norms that justify violence, the purchase of sexual services and other restrictions on the freedom of action and life choices of women and girls.

There are major challenges with regard to men's violence against women, honour-related violence and oppression, and action to combat prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes. Society must become better at detecting violence, and knowledge about the extent of the violence and effective practices needs to improve. Action to prevent violence must be well coordinated between relevant actors at all levels. Therefore, the control, coordination and follow-up of the measures to stop men's violence against women will be strengthened.

Long-term action plan for goal-oriented, coordinated and effective action

As a part of the strategy's implementation, the Government is allocating SEK 600 million to an action plan containing new measures for 2017–2020, in addition to SEK 300 million in development funds to municipalities and county councils. The role of the county administrative boards as regional coordinators will be clarified. The gender equality agency to be established by the Government will eventually be given overall responsibility for the work to end men's violence against women. Within the framework of the action plan, the Government intends to:

For increased and effective preventive work to combat violence

- support the development and spread of universal violence preventive efforts with the objective of reaching all young people,

- conduct a review of sex and relationship education in schools,
- counteract demand for the purchase of sexual services,
- strengthen professional treatment of men who have been violent and investigate the ability of municipalities to work with perpetrators of violence early on, and
- further strengthen prevention of reoffending by convicted perpetrators of violence, both within the Swedish Prison and Probation Service and with other stakeholders.

For improved detection of violence and stronger protection of and support to women and children subjected to violence

- provide training to professionals, in social services and health and medical care for example, and on routines for asking about exposure to violence,
- strengthen protection of and support to children who have witnessed or been exposed to violence,
- strengthen expertise in the field of honour-related violence and oppression,
- continue the development of knowledge support on prostitution targeted at health and medical care and social services.

For more effective crime-fighting

- develop police methods and practices for preventing repeated violence,
- evaluate the 2014 legislative amendments on forced marriages and child marriages,
- prevent online threats and abuse.

For improved knowledge and methodological development

- survey the extent of honour-related violence and oppression,
- develop national statistics on measures in social services and health and medical care, and provide guidance to municipalities on calculating the cost of violence,
- strengthen knowledge about effective violence prevention,
- amend the degree descriptions in the Higher Education Ordinance so that men's violence against women and domestic violence are included in education and training for professional groups who may encounter victims of violence,
- allocate funds for skills development for relevant professional groups.

Extensive initiative since Government took office in 2014

Since taking office, the Government has decided on a long list of measures to counter men's violence against women and domestic violence (these measures are presented on the Government website). For instance, the Government has provided increased support to local women's shelters for 2015–2019 totalling SEK 425 million. In addition, the Government has decided on, or in other ways taken, more than 20 measures directly related to proposals from the National Coordinator on Domestic Violence.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

#FirstGeneration Global Goals Forum – focus on young people and joint efforts for a better world

Published 10 October 2016 Updated 10 October 2016

More than 300 engaged young people, teachers, inspirers and representatives of civil society and the business sector gathered on 5 October for the #FirstGeneration GlobalGoals Forum in Stockholm. Optimism for the future permeated the entire day, which focused on young people and the UN Global Goals.

Swedish YouTube star and presenter Clara Henry was the moderator for the day, and a large number of inspiring young people from all over the world took part in the programme. The Forum was opened by Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Åsa Regnér, and the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Ahmad Ahlendawi, sent a video message.

"Young people are not just the beneficiaries of the Global Goals, but rather they hold the key to their success. This is why I am especially encouraged by the #FirstGeneration campaign's focus on teachers and educators. Teachers have a unique opportunity to instil the importance of sustainability from a young age and to cultivate and enable the younger generation to serve as change-makers."

The day's activities offered many inspiring and educational moments. The audience were given food for thought in an interactive quiz, and Staffan Landin raised awareness of sustainable development. Audience members also had a chance to hold Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog and representatives from businesses including IKEA and E.ON to account in a

Global Goals grill, arranged by We_change. The #FirstGeneration Award was also presented for the first time. State Secretary Ulrika Modéer and Mats Djurberg, Secretary-General of the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO, presented the award to educators and inspirational figures from 17 countries, in recognition of their efforts to inspire and engage young people on issues to do with fair and sustainable development, peace and climate change. Following the award, Swedish-Sami hip-hop artist Maxida Mäarak performed a Sami joik. The Forum concluded with a video message from Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin. Her message was clear – global challenges require global solutions.

"We need role models around the world if the Global Goals are to become reality. Global challenges need global solutions. I'm sure you will continue your work to find these solutions together."

The Forum was held on World Teachers' Day, 5 October, as a fitting date to highlight the important role of educators and others in inspiring and engaging young people on issues to do with a just and sustainable future. The event, which was held at Norra Latin, an old school, went viral both nationally and internationally, with the hashtag #FirstGeneration trending on Twitter with more than 13 000 tweets.

The Swedish initiative #FirstGeneration aims to encourage young people to engage in the UN Global Goals for sustainable development. It is for this reason that the initiative particularly highlights educators and inspirers as those with an important role in engaging the young. The #FirstGeneration Global Goals Forum gave recognition to individuals around the world who, in their day-to-day work and in various ways, inspire young people on issues to do with fair and sustainable development. The educators and inspirers who were invited to the Forum were selected in collaboration between Swedish embassies and local partners including UN Women, the UNDP, UNESCO and various universities. Along with their young attachés in Stockholm, these educators and inspirers now form a network to exchange knowledge and ideas for a better world.

[Click here to watch #FirstGeneration Global Goals Forum \(Youtube\)](#)



Article from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of Finance, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Chilean State Visit ends

Published 18 May 2016 Updated 13 June 2016

On the afternoon of 12 May, Chile's President Michelle Bachelet left Sweden following a three-day State Visit. The President was in Sweden at the invitation of HM the King. This was the first State Visit by a Chilean president to Sweden. Several of the Government ministers took part in the programme. The purpose of the visit was to broaden and deepen bilateral relations between Chile and Sweden.

Swedish companies have long had a strong presence in Chile. Bilateral trade has increased over the past 15 years. Cooperation exists in various areas, such as mining, forestry, environment and CSR. Further steps to enhance cooperation were taken during the State Visit. Chile and Sweden have a common view on many foreign policy issues, not least with regard to the rights of smaller countries, UN cooperation, gender equality, marine issues and free trade. Several global challenges were discussed. Representatives of both countries also discussed issues concerning cooperation for social and gender equality.

The State Visit began on Tuesday with the traditional welcoming ceremony at the Inner Courtyard of the Royal Palace. The King and Queen, many members of the Government and other representatives of the Swedish public sector were present to welcome the President. This was followed by a lunch at the Royal Palace which was also attended by Princess Victoria and Prince Daniel.

Talks on increased trade and investment

In the afternoon, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received the President for talks at Rosenbad. Topics discussed by the President and the Prime Minister included the conditions for increased trade and investment. Within this framework, memorandums of understanding were signed on sustainable mining, forestry, urban development and CSR. Political, economic and cultural cooperation was another area in which memorandums of understanding were signed on welfare and holiday agreements. Issues concerning multilateral cooperation in gender equality, human rights and peacebuilding were also addressed. Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg, Minister for Rural Affairs Sven-Erik Bucht, Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Åsa Regnér and Minister for Finance Magdalena Andersson also took part in the talks.

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 concluded with a state banquet at the Royal Palace.

Wednesday's programme included a Swedish-Chilean Business Forum, a gender equality seminar, lunch at Stockholm City Hall and a meeting with Speaker of the Riksdag Urban Ahlin. President Bachelet delivered a speech in the Riksdag and took part in a ceremony at which a bust of Swedish diplomat Harald Edelstam was unveiled. During the afternoon, the President met part of the Chilean diaspora in Sweden. Afterwards, she took part in a seminar on social dialogue and the Global Deal, together with Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

Research and innovative companies in Gothenburg

On Thursday morning, the King and Queen and President Bachelet left for Gothenburg, where they were welcomed by the County Governor of Västra Götaland County Lars Bäckström and President of the Gothenburg City Council Lena Malm. Minister for Infrastructure Anna Johansson was also present. The first programme point was a visit to Astra Zeneca, where the President and the King and Queen learned about the work done there on research, development and cooperation with smaller, innovative companies. This was followed by visits to Volvo Torslanda and Lindholmen Science Park. The day concluded with lunch at the County Governor's residence.

In the afternoon, the King and Queen bid farewell to President Bachelet and the Chilean delegation at Landvetter Airport.



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.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Assignment for the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society to inform young newly arrived immigrants about health and gender equality

Published 21 April 2016 Updated 24 January 2017

The Government has tasked the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society with creating a digital platform containing information in relevant languages about health and gender equality for newly arrived children and young people. The assignment – for which SEK 5 million has been set aside – will be conducted in collaboration with the internet-based youth clinic UMO.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Government action to combat men's violence against women

Published 02 March 2016 Updated 24 January 2017

Men in all social groups and age groups use physical, psychological and sexual violence against women. And it is not decreasing, writes Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Åsa Regnér in an opinion piece. It is essential that newly arrived girls and boys have access to a good introduction to Swedish society, with knowledge about our society and values as important elements. This of course includes sex and relationship education.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

National Board of Health and Welfare and Ombudsman for Children in Sweden launch website about social services

Published 16 February 2016 Updated 24 January 2017

On instructions from the Government, the National Board of Health and Welfare and the Ombudsman for Children in Sweden have developed a national website containing information tailored to children and young people about social services and what social services can offer children and young people in need of support and protection.

The Ombudsman for Children in Sweden has been responsible for involving children and young people in the implementation of the assignment. On Tuesday 16 February 2016, Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Åsa Regnér attended the first showing of the webbsite.

"I am pleased to launch the new website today. Children can find information on the site about how to get help and support from social services. This is an important platform for vulnerable children," says Ms Regnér.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Swedish Agency for Health and Care Services Analysis to survey homes for care or residence

Published 12 February 2016 Updated 24 January 2017

The Swedish Agency for Health and Care Services Analysis is to survey and analyse homes for care or residence, as well as foster homes and emergency foster homes providing support from advisers. The Agency is conducting this work from the perspective of child protection and the rights of the child. Particular attention is to be given to the quality and costs of care. This was decided by the Government on 11 February.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Talks with trade unions about security situation in homes for care or residence

Published 08 February 2016 Updated 24 January 2017

On 8 February, Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Åsa Regnér met the relevant trade unions. The purpose of the meeting was to talk about the security situation in homes for care or residence and supported accommodation.

"I am pleased that we have a close and open dialogue with the social partners. It is important that we approach this challenge with social services and social care services for children and young people," said Ms Regnér.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Coordination responsibility for vulnerable EU citizens to county administrative boards

Published 01 February 2016 Updated 19 January 2017

On Monday 1 February, the national coordinator for vulnerable EU citizens presented his final report, *Framtid sökes* (Wanted: a future), to Åsa Regnér, the minister responsible for the issue, at a press conference. Martin Valfridsson, whose remit now ends, proposes that county administrative boards be instructed to coordinate this work, with the overall responsibility resting with the Stockholm County Administrative Board.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

New model to distribute unaccompanied minors fairly between municipalities

Published 28 January 2016 Updated 24 January 2017

Unaccompanied minors are not distributed fairly between municipalities, their reception is unpredictable and the conditions for planning could be improved. The Government has therefore instructed the Swedish Migration Agency to produce a new allocation model for unaccompanied children and young people. The model entered into force on 1 April 2016.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

National Board of Health and Welfare to analyse reception of unaccompanied refugee children

Published 14 January 2016 Updated 24 January 2017

The Government has tasked the National Board of Health and Welfare with conducting an in-depth analysis of the consequences for social services of the current refugee situation and the increase in the number of unaccompanied minors. The vulnerability of girls, access to interpreters and the skills needs in social services are three areas that are included in the remit.



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

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani visits Sweden

Published 04 December 2015 Updated 08 December 2015

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven today met Afghanistan's President Ashraf Ghani. In connection with the meeting, it was announced that negotiations will begin on an agreement concerning migration issues and readmission of those Afghans whose asylum applications in Sweden have been rejected. More than 30 000 Afghans have come to Sweden this year, of whom more than 20 000 are unaccompanied minors.

The Swedish measures in Afghanistan are long-term and have focused on political, diplomatic, police, military and aid-related areas, covering both humanitarian support and development cooperation. Afghanistan is one of the largest recipients of Swedish aid. Sweden has announced an aid package of up to SEK 8.5 billion for the period 2015–2024. A significant part of our aid focuses on improving the situation of women and children.

During the visit, Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin and President Ghani signed a cooperation agreement on aid. This is the first time that Sweden has signed an agreement of this kind with Afghanistan. The agreement affirms Sweden's aid commitments and deepens the countries' relations. It means that there will be regular, structured follow-up meetings at political level on aid and development in the country, which will complement the ongoing dialogue. Swedish aid is long-term and contributes to creating jobs, helping more children attend school, strengthening women's rights, fighting corruption and strengthening democratic institutions.

The difficult security situation in Afghanistan was also discussed. Since 2002, close to 10 000 Swedes have helped try to improve the security situation in the provinces that were part of the Swedish military area of responsibility in Northern Afghanistan. Today, the Afghan security forces have assumed responsibility for security throughout the country, which is an important step towards Afghan ownership and leadership. The Government recently presented a bill on an extension of the Swedish training mission in 2016.

President Ghani also held bilateral talks with Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström. The talks were followed by a lunch hosted by Ms Wallström. Ms Wallström began by thanking Mr Ghani for coming to Stockholm and pointed out that this year marks 75 years of diplomatic relations between Sweden and Afghanistan. Topics discussed during the lunch included foreign, security and defence issues. The agenda also included development policy, economy and social issues, and the topical migration issues.

Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Åsa Regnér also took part on behalf of the Government.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Meeting with NGOs

Published 27 November 2015 Updated 19 January 2017

On Friday 27 November, the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs held a consultation at official level with NGOs and agencies that work with vulnerable EU citizens in Romania. The Ministry listened to the NGOs' and agencies' problems, ideas, project proposals, topical issues and expertise.

The NGOs' and agencies' networks and coordination in Romania were discussed, among other issues. Some NGOs expressed an interest in taking part in work under the agreement that Sweden and Romania have concluded. Others expressed an interest in taking part in the network of organisations that was established following the conference on 11 September.

The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs provided information about the content of the agreement between Sweden and Romania, feedback from the work with the Romanian-Swedish working group, upcoming meetings in Bucharest and ongoing negotiations with Bulgaria on an agreement similar to the cooperation agreement recently entered into between Romania and Sweden.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Gender equality part of the solution to challenges in society

Published 11 November 2015 Updated 22 December 2017

“The world’s first feminist government is now implementing a policy to increase gender equality”, the Prime Minister established in the Statement of Government Policy.

Sweden has a feminist government. We place gender equality at the heart of both national and international work. Economic policy will be used to increase economic equality and help increase gender equality in society. The overall objective of the Government’s gender equality policy is equal power for women and men to shape society and their own lives. This is ultimately a question of democracy and social justice. At the same time, gender equality is part of the solution to creating jobs and growth. It contributes to economic development by making use of both women’s and men’s potential.

Gender equality policy aims to provide girls and boys, women and men with conditions to develop without being held back by structures, prejudices or stereotypical conceptions. Here it is important to note that also other identities, factors and power structures affect living conditions and circumstances for different groups of women and men.

Gender equality perspective from the start

A feminist government carries out a gender equality analysis early in the decision-making process, before the decisions are taken, to ensure that the gender equality perspective is present from the outset as a natural part of the solution to the problem. This strategy – gender mainstreaming – contributes not only to gender equality, but also to more effective measures.

One of many examples of inequality in Sweden is that women often take greater responsibility for care of relatives and children. Many women reduce their working hours to do so. According to Statistics Sweden's labour force survey, 170 000 people work part time to take care of children and/or an adult relative. The majority of these, 88 per cent, are women, who pay a high price for their efforts in the form of lower incomes and future pensions. To promote a more even distribution of unpaid household and care work, the Government has submitted a proposal to the Riksdag to introduce a third reserved month of parental insurance for each parent. Currently, two months of the parental insurance are earmarked for each parent, and cannot be transferred to the other parent. The Government wants to see a more gender-equal division of parental benefits days, and a third earmarked month will be introduced to promote gender-equal parenting. Gender-equal parenting is important in terms of a child's right to both parents, but it also contributes to increased gender equality in the labour market.

The Government has also announced funding for increased staffing levels in elderly care and targeted resources to stimulate access to childcare during unsocial working hours.

Internal work at the Government Offices increases pressure for gender equality perspective

The Minister for Gender Equality has convened a special ministerial group to develop gender equality policy and all ministers and state secretaries have taken part in gender equality training. This work is reflected in the Budget Bill, where the Government, as a first step and on the basis of the gender equality policy objectives, is now presenting concrete objectives for gender equality in a number of key policy areas and measurement criteria to follow up the work.

So far, it has been mainly women pursuing gender equality efforts. In recent years, however, there has been a growing awareness, both globally and in Sweden, of the role of men and boys in gender equality work. Participation by men and boys is an important part of the Government's strategic gender equality efforts, for instance through our commitment to the UN campaign HeForShe.

Gender equality is not just a question of social justice; it also helps establish growth and development.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

A feminist government ensures that decisions increase gender equality

Published 11 November 2015 Updated 11 November 2015

Below are a selection of the reforms and proposals that will contribute to increased gender equality presented in the Budget Bill for 2016 and the Spring Fiscal Policy Bill for 2015.

Boards of listed companies – at least 40 per cent representation for each sex

The Government aims for the boards of listed companies to have at least 40 per cent representation for each sex by the end of 2016. If this aim is not achieved, the Government will propose legislation on quotas.

Swedish Public Employment Service activities to promote gender equality

One clear expression of the lack of gender equality is the persistently large income disparities between men and women. One reason for this is gender segregation in the labour market. The education and labour market authorities have an important task in promoting work in professions outside 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.

Third reserved month of parental insurance for each parent

The Government has submitted a proposal to the Riksdag on the introduction of a third reserved month of parental insurance for each parent. Currently, two months of parental insurance are earmarked for each parent, and cannot be used by the other parent. The Government wants parental benefit days to be shared in a more gender-equal way.

Parental insurance better tailored to modern family life

The Government intends to appoint an inquiry to review the parental insurance system as a whole. The Government wants a parental insurance system that contributes to gender-equal parenting and good conditions for all children to grow up in. The parental insurance system must be better tailored to the modern labour market and its requirements, and to modern family life. Parental insurance must also be designed to be effective regardless of the form a family takes, and the Government therefore wants the upcoming review to investigate the possibilities to make it easier for non-nuclear families to use parental insurance.

Higher basic level of parental benefit

Single parents, particularly women, often have weaker finances than parents who live together. The Government has therefore raised the national maintenance support that is paid to single parents who do not receive child support from the other parent. The Government also proposes to raise the basic level of parental benefit, which would mean a higher amount of parental benefit for people on very low or no incomes.

Expertise in elderly care and care for people with impairments

The Government is investing in increased staffing in elderly care, and expertise in care of the elderly and of people with impairments. A gender equality perspective is to be integrated into these initiatives, not least in needs assessments, where particular attention is to be paid to differences between women and men. When it comes to resources and interventions, everyone – regardless of sex or gender identity – must be treated equally, based on their needs.

Basic income tax allowance for pensioners leads to tax reduction

The increased basic income tax allowance for pensioners will lead to a tax reduction for both women and men. More women than men have low pensions and, on average, women also live longer than men. The proposal will therefore benefit women more than men and will consequently help reduce economic differences between men and women.

Women's health

The Government is prioritising initiatives for women's health. In the 2015 Spring Fiscal Policy Bill, the Government announced investments in maternity care and women's health. The Government is now proposing further reinforcement in this area through a targeted primary care initiative on women's health. The Government also proposes that mammography screening be offered regularly and free of charge to women aged between 40 and 74 to increase coverage, particularly among socioeconomically disadvantaged groups. To safeguard young women's right to their own sexuality without unwanted pregnancies, the Government also proposes that contraception that comes under the pharmaceutical reimbursement system be offered free of charge to people under the age of 21.

Funding for non-profit women's and girls' refuges

Preventing and combating men's violence against women is a top priority for this Government. The Spring Fiscal Policy Bill therefore announced funding for non-profit women's and girls' refuges. The initiative, which has begun in 2015, will receive SEK 100 million annually from 2016.

Reforms in the Budget Bill for 2016 that contribute to greater gender equality

SEK millions, public finance impact

	2016	2017	2018	2019	Perm
Training initiative in care services	200				
Increased basic level of parental benefit	261	283	286	270	270
Women's health	130	130	130	130	

Free mammograms	100	207	207	207	207
Free contraception	3	27	27	27	27
Raised child maintenance element of national standard	181	181	181	181	181

Reforms in the Spring Fiscal Policy Bill for 2015 that contribute to greater gender equality

SEK millions, public finance impact

	2016	2017	2018	2019	Perm
Increased staffing levels in elderly care	2000	2000	2000		
Maternity care and women's health	400	400	400	400	
Increased support to women's refuges	100	100	100	100	
Higher maintenance support	624	629	625	625	625

Impact of the Government's reforms on individual incomes

- Together, the tax and transfer changes proposed in the Budget Bill for 2016 will help to strengthen economic equality.
- The increase in the child element of income support in this bill will

increase income more for women than for men, as it is more common for women to be single parents.

- The increase in the basic level of parental benefit is another reform that mainly benefits women, as women claim more days of benefit at this level.
 - The increased basic income tax allowance for pensioners leads to a tax reduction for both women and men. More women than men have low pensions and, on average, women also live longer than men. The proposal will therefore benefit women more than men and will consequently help reduce economic differences between men and women.
 - Among the budget consolidation measures, the gradual reduction of the earned income tax credit and no upward adjustment of the lower threshold for levying state income tax have a greater impact on men's incomes than on women's. This is because more men have an income above the threshold for state income tax and the threshold where the gradual reduction of the earned income tax credit begins. More men than women are therefore affected by the proposals, and on average, the men who are affected will also have a higher tax increase.
 - The proposed restrictions of tax-subsidised deductions for various kinds of work carried out in the home, e.g. repairs, maintenance and remodelling, and household services, will reduce the disposable incomes of both women and men. On average, men claim deductions for larger amounts, which means that the impact on men will be greater.
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Article from Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Efforts for gender equality are prioritised - excerpt from the Budget Statement

Published 11 November 2015 Updated 11 November 2015

Here you can read about the Government's gender equality policy – excerpt from the Budget Statement.

Economic policy is crucial for women's living conditions. How it is shaped, how resources are distributed and what is considered important and is prioritised has a major effect on women's lives and conditions. Sweden's government is a feminist government. The overall objective of the Government's gender equality policy is equal power for women and men to shape society and their own lives. Gender equality is ultimately a question of justice and democracy. At the same time, gender equality is also 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. The equal worth of all people is one of the fundamental principles of the Government's policy.

A feminist government is not content to merely analyse the consequences of its political decisions – it carries out the analysis before decisions are taken, to ensure that decisions are taken with the gender equality perspective in mind. This also leads to more effective actions. In view of this fact, the Government has begun work on gender-responsive budgeting (see the box entitled 'Gender-responsive budgeting' for more details). Economic policy is to be used to increase economic equality and help increase gender equality in society.

One clear expression of the lack of gender equality in society is the persistently large income disparities between women and men. In 2014, women's incomes were more than 13 per cent lower than men's incomes, if

all women and men had worked full-time. However, a much larger proportion of women than men work part-time, which means that the difference in actual earned incomes between women and men is approximately 25 per cent.

Women's work is valued less than men's work. Sectors dominated by women often have lower income levels. Income disparities between women and men can also be explained by gender segregation on the labour market and the fact that the equalising effect of the welfare systems has declined. The use of parental benefit days is currently unevenly distributed. The objective is completely gender-equal sharing of parental benefit days. This is important for tackling women's less favourable working conditions and lower incomes. The education and labour market authorities also have an important task in promoting work in professions outside 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.

It is also important to eliminate unjustified gender pay differentials. Reintroducing the requirement of annual pay surveys is an urgently needed action. Social partners' responsibility for wage formation is a cornerstone of the Swedish model. It is important that wage formation leads to closing the gap between women's and men's incomes.

Another expression of inequality in working life is that women are under-represented at the very top of the business world. Although the predominance of men on the boards of listed companies has dropped since the early 2000s, women only made up 29 per cent of board members in these companies in June 2015. The Government's objective is that the proportion of women on the boards of listed companies should be at least 40 per cent by 2016. If this aim is not achieved, the Government will propose legislation on quotas.

A more even distribution of unpaid housework and care work is crucial for achieving the objective of economic equality. Women often taken greater responsibility for care of relatives and children. Many women reduce their working hours to do so. According to Statistics Sweden's labour force survey, 170 000 people, mostly women, work part-time to take care of children and/or an adult relative. To achieve a more even distribution of parental benefit days, the Government has submitted a proposal to the Riksdag to introduce a third reserved month of parental insurance for each parent. Currently, two months of the parental insurance are earmarked for

each parent, and cannot be transferred to the other parent. The Government wants to see a more gender-equal division of parental benefits days, and a third earmarked month will be proposed to promote gender-equal parenting. Gender-equal parenting is important in terms of a child's right to both parents, but it also contributes to increased gender equality in the labour market. In addition, the Government wants to review the parental insurance system as a whole. The Government has also announced funding for increased staffing levels in elderly care and targeted resources to stimulate access to childcare during unsocial working hours.

Single parents, particularly women, often have weaker finances than parents who live together. The Government has therefore raised the national maintenance support that is paid to single parents who do not receive child support from the other parent. The Government also proposes to raise the basic level of parental benefit, which would mean a higher amount of parental benefit for people on very low or no incomes. The Government has also submitted proposals to abolish the municipal child-raising allowance, as it tends to counteract economic equality between women and men. The child-raising allowance is a cash payment that municipalities can give to parents with children aged 1–3 years, if the parent stays at home with the child instead of the child going to preschool. More than 90 per cent of the parents who receive the child-raising allowance are women.

Men's violence against women is one of the ultimate expressions of inequality between women and men. This violence must stop. Preventing and combating violence and other abuse against women is a top priority for this Government. As announced in the Spring Fiscal Policy Bill, the Government therefore proposes that funds be allocated to non-profit women's and girls' refuges.

In the area of health and medical care, unacceptable differences between women and men persist. Illnesses that affect women more than men tend to be less prioritised in the health care system. In light of this, the Government proposes several investment initiatives in women's health. The Government is proposing further reinforcement in this area through a targeted primary care initiative for women's health, and free mammography screening. To safeguard young women's right to their own sexuality without unwanted pregnancies, the Government also proposes that contraception that comes under the pharmaceutical reimbursement system be offered free of charge to people under the age of 21 (see Section 1.6).

The Government intends to conduct a survey of the work environment and

working conditions in the household services sector, in response to reports of shortcomings in the work environment in this sector.

Gender-responsive budgeting

Sweden has a feminist government that works to achieve gender equality between women and men at all levels of society. The budget process and the Budget Bill are of key importance in realising the Government's policy and it is therefore important that budget work is conducted in a way that includes the effects and consequences for gender equality when taking decisions on the direction and distribution of resources.

Gender-responsive budgeting means that choices of priorities, direction and allocation of resources should as far as possible promote gender equality and make a tangible difference in people's daily lives in the short or long term. It is a matter of justice, but it is also an important prerequisite for economic growth, the development of the labour market and welfare.

To produce a central government budget that contributes to gender equality, this perspective must be included at the earliest possible stage, and in all areas of the budget process.

Since the 1990s, gender mainstreaming has been the central policy strategy for achieving a gender-equal society. This means that a gender perspective is to be included in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making. Gender-responsive budgeting is the application of the principle of gender mainstreaming in the budget process. This means evaluating budget policy gender equality effects, integrating the gender equality perspective at all levels of the budget process, and redistributing revenue and expenditure to promote gender equality. There can be a variety of solutions to the challenges and problems facing society. Gender-responsive budgeting makes gender equality an active part in resolving problems, and, if necessary, investigating alternative solutions, so as to ultimately choose the alternative that best contributes to equality between women and men.

Development work is under way at the Government Offices to strengthen gender-responsive budgeting efforts. In spring 2015, the focus was on methods development and implementation of gender analyses, which formed part of the decision-making data for the reforms presented in the Budget Bill. The Government has also set new goals on how gender equality is to progress in key areas, and indicators to follow up this progress. Work is

progressing on developing guidelines for how gender analyses should be carried out and included so as to better integrate gender-responsive budgeting in the ordinary budget process.

With the aim of maintaining serious, knowledge-based development work, the Government is allocating resources specifically to evaluating and developing efforts on gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting from 2016. The conclusions and analyses that emerge in the evaluations will be fed back into and put to use in the work being conducted in the Government Offices and government agencies. The aim is for efforts now being made to develop work on gender mainstreaming to lead to clear progress on gender equality.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Supported accommodation – a new form of placement for children and young people

Published 05 November 2015 Updated 24 January 2017

The Government has presented the Government Bill 'Supported accommodation – a new form of placement for children and young people' (Govt Bill 2015/16:43) to the Riksdag. In the Bill, the Government proposes a new form of placement for children and young people aged 16–20 under the Social Services Act – supported accommodation.

The Government wants to develop foster home care. In the Bill, the Government therefore clarifies the National Board of Health and Welfare's responsibility for its support and development. Developing foster home care should involve long-term, continuous and cohesive measures. Foster home care must maintain high standards and be sufficiently available. The experiences of foster parents and children placed in foster homes are important for developing this care.

The legislative amendments entered into force on 1 January 2016.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Pernilla Baralt visited Sofia

Published 03 November 2015 Updated 20 January 2017

Between 31 October and 3 November, State Secretary Pernilla Baralt visited Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria, to discuss a draft of a bilateral cooperation agreement on social issues.

In addition to the bilateral talks, Ms Baralt carried out a number of study visits and a field visit to meet relevant authorities and non-governmental organisations.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

The National Board of Health and Welfare coordinates information on foster homes for children

Published 29 October 2015 Updated 24 January 2017

On 29 October, the Government tasked the National Board of Health and Welfare with initiating and nationally coordinating initiatives to raise awareness of foster homes, emergency foster homes and legal representatives for unaccompanied minors and specially appointed custodians.

The idea is to highlight the need for accommodation and increase knowledge about what the assignment involves in order to secure access to foster homes.



Speech, Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Gender equality and children in focus as Åsa Regnér visits Japan

Published 23 October 2015 Updated 23 October 2015

Gender equality and children were in focus when Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Åsa Regnér visited Japan on 13–16 October. During her visit, Ms Regnér had talks with Japanese government representatives and members of parliament and also took part in a roundtable discussion on gender equality.

UN, gender equality and elderly housing

Ms Regnér began the day on Friday by visiting the UN Women Japan Liaison Office.

“I met with Director Kayoko Fukushima and we discussed the need for countries to preserve UN funding. We also spoke about the UN HeforShe campaign,” says Ms Regnér.

Ms Regnér later visited a home for elderly people in Shinjuku, where she spoke with some of the residents. In talks with local politicians and officials, Ms Regnér learned about the conditions and challenges facing care of the elderly in Japan. This home for elderly people has a sister home in Vendelsö.

“At the home for the elderly we met an older couple who had chosen to live in separate rooms. We also visited the preschool located on the premises. Interaction between the generations is important,” says Ms Regnér.

During a discussion on gender equality, organised by the Swedish Embassy and *Yomiuri* newspaper, participants talked about wider gender equality

issues from the Japanese and Swedish perspectives in the business world and public sector.

The day ended with the 'Kids Week' event, hosted by Business Sweden and the Embassy, at which Ms Regnér spoke about children's rights, equality and future cooperation between Japan and Sweden.

Finally, Ms Regnér presented the 'Most stylish dad' award in support of paternity leave and men's participation in the lives of their children.

Progressive reforms in Japan are important

On Thursday morning, Ms Regnér met Japan's newly appointed Minister of State for Gender Equality Katsunobu Kato. The ministers discussed women's participation in the labour market and opportunities for future collaboration between Japan and Sweden.

"Sweden's relations with Japan are important from a promotional perspective and as a partner in areas such as elderly care and gender equality. Japan is at a crossroads with an ageing population. Gender equality and women's increasing labour force participation are central to many issues. What is happening in Japan is significant for the rest of the world, and progressive reforms here will play an important role. In Japan there is great interest in Sweden, and we are interested in learning from each other," says Ms Regnér.

Ms Regnér gave the opening address at a seminar on children's literature in the afternoon, with the aim of supporting Swedish children's literature but also presenting the Swedish view of children's rights.

Speech by Minister for Children Åsa Regnér on children's literature in Tokyo, October 2015

Common interests in the UN Security Council

On Wednesday, Ms Regnér took part in roundtable discussions on the importance of highlighting the significance of UN Resolution 1325. Participants discussed opportunities for how Japan and Sweden can cooperate concerning women, peace and security from the perspective of Sweden and Japan taking seats as non-permanent members of the UN Security Council. Participants focused the discussions on suggestions that could be highlighted and further developed at a later stage.

“We spoke about future cooperation in the Security Council on women’s participation in conflict resolution and post-conflict work,” says Ms Regnér.

Cooperation with Japan developed further

The introductory meetings on Tuesday were productive. Both delegations stated in the discussions that cooperation should be developed.

The Swedish delegation met politicians, entrepreneurs and stakeholder organisations, and also visited some workplaces.

Gender equality and women’s participation in the labour market were the main focus of discussions.

“I am very pleased that there has been a strong focus on gender equality and women’s participation in the labour market during our visit,” says Ms Regnér.

Press release: Gender equality and children’s rights issues in focus during Åsa Regnér’s visit to Japan



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Call function supports municipalities in their work with the refugee situation

Published 22 October 2015 Updated 24 January 2017

On 22 October, the Government tasked the National Board of Health and Welfare with setting up a call function for the purpose of responding to questions from and providing support for the municipal social services in connection with the current refugee situation. The call function will be based on relevant legislation and available knowledge within the Board's areas of responsibility.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

How we are developing reception of unaccompanied minors and young people

Published 12 October 2015 Updated 23 January 2017

On 12 October, the Government arranged the national action 'Sweden together'. Participants were invited to around ten seminars as part of the event. One of the themes was 'How we are developing reception of unaccompanied minors and young people'.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Interest in de-institutionalisation of orphanages

Published 09 October 2015 Updated 19 January 2017

Romania and Sweden have appointed a working group comprising officials from both countries. The group met for the first time in Stockholm on 8–9 October. The group consisted of staff from Romania's Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and Elderly, the Ministry of European Funds and the Embassy of Romania.

The visit included presentations, workshops, study visits and discussions on the cooperation agreement entered into between Sweden and Romania.

Romania has good prospects, knowledge and capacity to apply for EU funds to finance projects covered by the agreement.

The Romanian working group wants to gain knowledge about Swedish experiences of de-institutionalisation of orphanages and homes for people with impairments. The group visited the City Mission's operations for vulnerable and homeless EU citizens and daytime activities for people with impairments.

The next meeting of the working group will be in Bucharest in mid-December.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice

Government presented measures in response to refugee situation

Published 08 October 2015 Updated 08 October 2015

In early October 2015 the Government presented a number of measures in response to the refugee situation.

The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency is to coordinate at national level the management of the refugee situation by responsible actors

Stronger coordination is required to enable the actors taking part in dealing with the refugee situation – including central government agencies, municipalities, county councils, non-governmental organisations, faith communities and private actors – to work effectively together. The Government has therefore tasked the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency with coordinating the management of the current refugee situation at national level. The Agency is to produce national situation reports, with information on areas in need of measures that have not yet been adequately taken. The Agency is also to identify and report on other circumstances that the Government should know about in order to assess the Government's need to take action.

The Government is responsible for the overall coordination, priorities and direction of society's emergency preparedness. The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency's mandate will not change this. The mandate expires after 31 December 2015.

Financial support granted to the Swedish Red Cross for voluntary efforts to help refugees

The Government will pay out SEK 10 million in support without a requisition to the Swedish Red Cross to strengthen the organisation's role and civil society's management of the refugee crisis. The funds are to be used to perform, organise and coordinate humanitarian aid activities for refugees in Sweden. The funds are also aimed in particular at supporting and making use of the voluntary engagement in the refugee crisis, and the Swedish Red Cross is to collaborate with other organisations in carrying this out.

How these funds have been used will be presented to the Government Offices by 2 May 2016.

Health and Social Care Inspectorate to strengthen capacity in permit application processing activities

The sharp rise in the number of unaccompanied minors seeking asylum in Sweden is a major contributing factor to the increasing number of children and young people needing to be placed outside the home. Forecasts from the Swedish Migration Agency indicate that the number of unaccompanied minors seeking asylum will not decline. The Government has therefore tasked the Health and Social Care Inspectorate with strengthening capacity in its activities to ensure that the processing of permits for homes for care or residence takes place as quickly and effectively as possible.

In a referral to the Council on Legislation, the Government will also soon propose the introduction of an additional form of placement known as supported accommodation. Supported accommodation is intended for children and young people between the ages of 16 and 20, and is to be combined with individually adapted support for each person. The intention is that supported accommodation will also require a permit from the Inspectorate.

It should be possible for the new provisions to enter into force in the first quarter of 2016.

Government provides extra funding to the World Food Programme in Syria

The World Food Programme (WFP) has reported major and acute shortfalls in funding to ensure access to food supplies for refugees in Syria and neighbouring countries. Sweden is one of WFP's largest donors. The Government now intends to grant an additional SEK 25 million to WFP's

Syria response.

In addition to this extra funding to WFP, the Government also intends to grant an extra SEK 25 million to the Central Emergency Response Fund, which can rapidly respond to the increasing needs around the world. The Fund is a particularly effective instrument for funding ‘forgotten’ or chronically underfinanced humanitarian crises.

National Agency for Public Procurement to draw up guidance document on the current refugee situation

According to the Swedish Migration Agency, it has not been possible to complete procurements of asylum accommodation as a result of ongoing court proceedings, despite the fact that there are a large number of empty accommodation places available. The Government notes that from human and socio-economic perspectives, there is a need to offer guidance to central government and municipal agencies, and other relevant actors, on the opportunities procurement legislation provides to quickly meet asylum accommodation needs.

The National Agency for Public Procurement has therefore been tasked with providing information and guidance on legislative provisions that can be brought up in procurements related to asylum seekers. The Agency is to supplement and give tangible form to the European Commission’s communication on public procurement rules in connection with the current refugee crisis that was adopted on 9 September 2015. The Commission states that contracting authorities must consider all possibilities to substantially reduce the timeframes and assess on a case-by-case basis which procedure is to be used in order to find a solution to the crisis.

The report is to be submitted to the Government Offices no later than 1 November 2015.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

The National Board of Institutional Care to set up 1000 places

Published 08 October 2015 Updated 24 January 2017

On 8 October, the Government tasked the National Board of Institutional Care with looking into the possibility of setting up and providing at least 1000 places in supported accommodation and homes for care or residence for children and young people aged 16 to 20.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Billion kronor investment in social services will strengthen social care services for children and young people

Published 20 September 2015 Updated 23 January 2017

In the Budget Bill for 2016, the Government proposed that SEK 250 million should be allocated annually during 2016–2019 to strengthen and develop these activities. The funds will be devoted primarily to increased staffing, as well as to initiatives to promote skills and quality.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Romanian state secretary participated in conference

Published 11 September 2015 Updated 19 January 2017

Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Åsa Regnér and the Government's National Coordinator Martin Valfridsson hosted a conference on Friday 11 September. Conference participants included Romanian Secretary of State Ciprian Necula.

The aim of the conference was to promote cooperation between Swedish values-based organisations working with vulnerable EU citizens in Bulgaria and Romania. Mr Necula, State Secretary at the Romanian Ministry of European Funds, participated in a press conference held in connection with the conference.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Working together to find effective ways to manage the situation

Published 09 September 2015 Updated 20 January 2017

"In recent years we have seen an increase in the number of EU citizens staying in Sweden temporarily, many of whom come from Romania and Bulgaria. These people are in a vulnerable situation. We need to find effective ways to manage this situation, and cooperation between our countries is of course very important," said Ms Regnér when meeting her Bulgarian counterpart Mr Kalafin on 9 September.

Ms Regnér met Mr Kalafin at the informal meeting of the EPSCO Council in July and invited him to talks on vulnerable EU citizens.

At this meeting on 9 September, Ms Regnér and Mr Kalafin discussed subjects of common interest, including vulnerable EU citizens. A desire for increased cooperation was expressed during the talks.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Gender equality in health

Published 21 July 2015 Updated 21 July 2015

Avoidable health inequalities will be eliminated in a generation. The long-term goal is to eliminate the disparities between women's and men's sick leave, while reducing sick leave rates in general to a low and stable level. Men's violence against women must stop.

Current challenge

Sick leave

Sick leave in Sweden, as in many other countries, exhibits a considerable bias in its gender distribution. Women are off sick to a far greater extent than men; two out of three people on sick leave are women. This is a historic pattern that has persisted over time.

Psychiatric diagnoses are now the most common cause of sick leave and are increasing among both women and men; however, the increase is greater among women.

Mental ill health

The risk of a young woman attempting to take her own life is three times as high as the risk of a young man doing so. Self-reported mental and somatic problems are increasing, particularly among girls aged 13 to 15. In addition, the difference between girls' and boys' perceived health increases with age.

Men's violence against women

Many women are still subjected to abuse. In 2014, a total of 28 200 cases of

abuse of women were reported to the police. This is an increase of 5 per cent compared with 2013. The number of reported rapes increased by 13 per cent between 2013 and 2014, to 6 620 reported offences. Around 17 women are killed each year by a man they have or have had a close relationship with.

HeForShe goals

Avoidable health inequalities will be eliminated in a generation. The long-term goal is to eliminate the disparities between women's and men's sick leave, while reducing sick leave rates in general to a low and stable level. Men's violence against women must stop.

HeForShe initiatives

- The Government has appointed a national commission for health equity. Consistent attention will be given to gender health disparities in this work.
- To respond to women's higher sick leave rates, all relevant stakeholders in society need to be mobilised. This includes public authorities, employers, and health and medical care, as well as measures for women's work environment.
- The Government is considering a future long-term initiative to strengthen preventive work in the area of mental health and improve early action for young people suffering from mental health problems.
- The Government is investing in sport and expects the sports movement, at all levels, to redouble its efforts to achieve gender equality in sports to give those who are actively involved the same opportunities to realise their interest in participating, regardless of gender.
- A national strategy will be drawn up for work on men's violence against women. The Government will strengthen its support to women's shelters that support and protect women subjected to violence. The rape legislation will be reviewed so that more sexual offences are cleared up. Sentences for aggravated sexual offences will be made tougher. More will be done to promote increased participation by men in these efforts to promote change. The Government has extended support to a national telephone line which people, primarily men, who risk committing sexual assaults can call for advice and assistance in obtaining treatment. Work will be stepped up on changing gender stereotypes surrounding masculinity, violence and destructive masculine behaviour.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Convention on the Rights of the Child about to become Swedish law

Published 19 February 2015 Updated 10 October 2017

The Swedish Government has decided to submit a proposal in July 2017 to the Council on Legislation to incorporate the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) into Swedish law. The Government considers that the CRC's strong position must be made clearer and that a child rights-based approach must have a major impact on how the law is applied. Preparation of the proposal is now under way.

It is proposed that the act enter into force on 1 January 2020. This will give law enforcement authorities time to prepare for the introduction of the new act.

"Another important step is now being taken to highlight the importance of the CRC in Swedish law and clarify its strong status. With the CRC as Swedish law, officials and decision-makers will have to take a different approach to the CRC than at present. It will be more clearly required that legal practitioners must base any decisions concerning children on the rights contained in the Convention," says Sweden's Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Åsa Regnér.

Incorporation of the CRC will gather the human rights that concern children in one act, contributing to a holistic view and making it clear that the CRC's

articles must be interpreted in relation to one another.

Collaboration with child rights organisations on stronger rights for children

The Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva has reviewed Sweden's compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. One of the Committee's recommendations involves strengthening the legal status of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs has initiated a dialogue with a number of child rights organisations on the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. It is proposed that the act enter into force on 1 January 2020.

Dialogue between the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Government

The dialogue between the Swedish Government and the Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva was conducted in January 2015. The Committee on the Rights of the Child stated that while Sweden in many ways is a leader on child rights, there are also areas in which it needs to strengthen child rights. In early February the Committee on the Rights of the Child presented its recommendations on how Sweden can continue its efforts to strengthen child rights. For the Government, these recommendations are part of the work to realise the vision of Sweden as one of the very best countries to grow up in.



Article

Coordination concerning socially vulnerable EEA citizens staying in Sweden

Published 03 February 2015 Updated 02 March 2015

Sweden wants to coordinate work throughout the country concerning vulnerable EEA citizens staying temporarily in Sweden. On 29 January, Martin Valfridsson was appointed national coordinator for this work.

Martin Valfridsson's remit is to support work being conducted by government agencies, municipalities, county councils and organisations that come into contact with vulnerable EEA citizens staying temporarily in Sweden, i.e. no longer than 3 months, and who do not have the right of residence.

The aim is to support these actors in their efforts to create long-term sustainable conditions for cooperation. Better cooperation means that the temporary support provided to these people can be designed appropriately.

Need for coordination between actors

Municipal support to these people varies. Some municipalities put great focus on outreach activities, while others give funding to values-based organisations so that they are able to provide support to these people. There are also those who, in cooperation with values-based organisations, have started shelters or provide emergency funds for tickets to return home. Civil society shows a strong commitment to support these people.

There is a great need to promote efficient forms of cooperation, exchanges

of experience and spread good examples of actions among municipalities, county councils, government agencies and organisations that, in their respective areas of responsibility, come into contact with these socially and economically vulnerable EEA citizens who are staying in Sweden temporarily. Better cooperation means that the support can be designed appropriately. The national coordinator is to present his report to the Government Offices by 1 February 2016.