



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister to lead caretaker government

Published 10 November 2021

The Prime Minister has today requested to be relieved of office. The Prime Minister and the other ministers were therefore dismissed by the Speaker of the Riksdag. They retain their positions until a new government takes office. The Government is thus a caretaker government.

The Speaker will now consult with representatives of the party groups (Speaker's interview rounds) with the aim of proposing a new Prime Minister to the Riksdag.

A caretaker government primarily makes decisions on ongoing or urgent matters. The only explicit restriction on the powers of a caretaker government is that it may not decide to hold extraordinary elections.

The task of the Government Offices is to prepare government business and in other respects assist the Government and its ministers in their activities. This also applies when the Government is a caretaker government.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Covid-19, migration and energy prices on the agenda of the EU Summit

Published 21 October 2021

As the EU heads of state and government meet in the European Council in Brussels, the agenda includes the COVID-19 vaccine situation and how the EU can advance digital transformation. The high energy prices in many Member States will also be discussed. At Sweden's initiative, the leaders will hold a strategic discussion on trade issues.

COVID-19

The Council will take stock of the epidemiological and vaccine situation in Europe and discuss the coordination that will be needed in the EU to restore free movement and international solidarity in vaccine-sharing. Work to allow vaccine certificates from countries outside the EU is under way as part of efforts to normalise travel. Although border issues are dealt with at national level, Sweden considers it important that action within the EU is as coordinated as possible and that the joint recommendations are reviewed.

Digital transformation

Another matter on the European Council's agenda is the implementation of the EU's digital agenda and the negotiations on the major legal instruments in this area. Sweden welcomes strong EU engagement in advancing digital transformation. The EU needs clear regulations that do not impede development in this area. Prioritising digital transformation throughout the

EU will ensure more effective and rapid development, benefiting everything from health care to law enforcement.

Energy prices

At the request of a number of Member States, the EU leaders will discuss the recent hike in energy prices. The unusually high electricity prices affect both private individuals and businesses, and although Swedish electricity prices are among the lowest in the EU, we are also affected by the electricity shortage. This has been caused by a failure of production to meet the high demand that is emerging in the recovery from the pandemic. The European Commission has produced a toolkit with suggested measures that the Member States could take to tackle the situation and support those affected. For Sweden, it is crucial that the EU views a transition to sustainable energy as the only long-term solution and that the EU ensures access to cheap, fossil-free energy.

Migration

The EU leaders will also discuss the external dimension of migration and the proposals put forward by the Commission. It is important that the EU deepens its cooperation with countries of origin and transit countries to counter underlying causes of irregular migration and forced displacement, and that the EU works to strengthen these countries' own capacities. Sweden also considers it important that further efforts are made to put in place a long-term, sustainable joint asylum system.

COP26 in Glasgow

It is important to Sweden that the EU has a strong message to convey at COP26 in Glasgow. The climate crisis is happening here and now, and we must keep the target of 1.5 degrees alive. At COP26, the EU must establish how the Member States can live up to the commitments made. What is clear is that everyone needs to do more if the EU's climate finance target is to be met.

Trade

Sweden has taken the initiative to place trade discussions on the European Council agenda. Trade issues have long been characterised by trade conflicts and trade defence instruments. Sweden sees a need to transform a negative

trade agenda into a more open and forward-looking agenda. Trade plays a key role as a driver of growth, jobs and welfare.

One matter that is not on the agenda but may be touched upon is the Polish Constitutional Tribunal's widely discussed ruling on the relationship between EU law and national law.

Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will attend the meeting in Brussels.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Malmö Forum Breakout Sessions (2)

Published 13 October 2021

2.1 Implementing strategies and ensuring security

2.2 Combating antisemitism and hate speech on social media

2.3 Preserving testimonies and developing education for the future



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Malmö Forum Breakout Sessions (1)

Published 13 October 2021

1.1 Promoting remembrance, fighting distortion

1.2 Developing education and reaching new target groups

1.3 Countering contemporary antisemitism and other forms of racism online and offline



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven arrives at the conference Remember–ReAct

Published 13 October 2021

Wednesday morning 13 October Prime Minister Stefan Löfven arrived at Remember–ReAct, the Malmö International Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

“We all have a duty to stand up against antisemitism”

Published 11 October 2021

What does Prime Minister Stefan Löfven hope that the Malmö International Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism will result in, and what has Sweden pledged to do? Interview with Stefan Löfven ahead of the Malmö International Forum, which will take place on 13 October.

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven has invited heads of state and government, international organisations and social media platforms to Remember-ReAct, the Malmö International Forum for Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism. The Forum will take place on 13 October in Malmö.

Why is this conference important?

“Even though antisemitism should be confined to history, we see that it is spreading in today’s society. Hatred of Jews is found in our history, in extreme right-wing groups, in certain left-wing groups and in Islamist environments. We see conspiracy theories in social media and how the memory of the Holocaust is distorted and exploited for political purposes.

“We all have a duty to stand up against antisemitism. An important part of this is Holocaust remembrance, which is becoming more difficult now that those who survived are growing old and will soon no longer be able to share their experiences. By remembering and taking action against antisemitism today, we ensure that something like the Holocaust never happens again.”

During the conference, all countries are to make concrete pledges to strengthen Holocaust remembrance efforts and combat racism. What do you

hope this will result in?

“Our moving from words to action. The basis for remembrance efforts and combating antisemitism is already established, in part in the Stockholm Declaration from 2000. What we need now is not fine words and lofty phrases, we must ensure that more concrete action is taken. I hope that the fact that all Remember-ReAct participants are coming to the Forum with concrete pledges will result in our being able to jointly make real progress in this important work.”

What has Sweden pledged and why?

“We have made several pledges in connection with Remember-ReAct to contribute both to the memory of the Holocaust and to preventing antisemitism today and in the future. Sweden pledges to preserve and pass on the memory of the Holocaust; to promote education to prevent antisemitism and other forms of racism and to strengthen Holocaust research; to combat antisemitism, antigypsyism and other forms of racism – online and offline; and to promote Jewish life, strengthen Roma inclusion and enhance security for civil society.

“To accomplish this, we are implementing a range of measures, including establishing a museum to preserve and pass on the memory of the Holocaust, and an education initiative to prevent antisemitism and other forms of racism.”

Sweden’s pledges at the Malmö Forum



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Malmö Forum Videos

Published 11 October 2021

Videofilms from Malmö Forum

- Arrivals and doorstep at Malmömässan (Web-TV on demand)
- Prime Minister Stefan Löfven arrives at the conference Remember–ReAct (Web-TV on demand)
- Plenary session I – Remember (Web-TV on demand)
- Breakout sessions, 2 x 3 parallel sessions, in all six sessions (Web-TV on demand)
- Plenary session II – ReAct (Web-TV on demand)
- Press conference with Prime Minister Stefan Löfven (Web-TV on demand)

The content of the films are the opinions of the speakers



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Education and Research

The Programme of the Malmö Forum

Published 04 October 2021

The programme format will be interactive and action-oriented, with a focus on discussions between Heads of Delegations with active moderation. The head moderator of the Malmö Forum is Ms. Hala Gorani, anchor and correspondent for CNN International. HM King Carl XVI Gustaf and HM Queen Silvia will honour the Malmö Forum with their presence throughout the day the 13 October.

Tuesday 12 October

18.00–20.00 Welcome Reception (not open for media)

A welcome reception for the Heads of Delegations will be hosted by the Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven. Delegates are invited to a separate welcome reception. This will be hosted by the State Secretary to Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Ms Karin Wallensteen, and State Secretary to the Minister for Education Anna Ekström, Ms Kristina Persdotter. The receptions will feature music in Yiddish by the Swedish/Danish duo Ida&Louise.

Wednesday 13 October

08.30–09.45 Doorstep

Web-TV on demand: Doorstep

10.00–11.15 Plenary Session I – Remember

Web-TV on demand: Plenary Session I – Remember

Today, few survivors remain to bear witness to the horrors of the Holocaust. The opening Plenary Session will reflect on the consequences of the diminishing number of survivors and witnesses of the Holocaust, the Roma genocide and the persecution that different groups were exposed to during the Holocaust. The international community has an obligation to ensure that the Holocaust is remembered and that future generations understand the causes of and the process leading up to the Holocaust, and to reflect on its consequences to prevent this from ever happening again.

The first Plenary Session will feature klezmer musician Giora Feidman and musical performances in Yiddish by Gabrielle Aaron-Johansson, and in Romani by Maria Salamanca Taikon Gonzalez. The speakers in this Plenary Session:

- Prime Minister of Sweden Stefan Löfven
- Mayor of Malmö City Katrin Stjernfeldt Jammeh
- President of the European Council Charles Michel
- President of Israel Isaac Herzog
- Professor Yehuda Bauer
- President of the World Jewish Congress Ronald Lauder
- President of the European Roma and Travellers Forum Miranda Vuolasranta
- President of France Emmanuel Macron
- United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

11.15–11.35 Family photo

11.50–12.50 Breakout Sessions

(Web-TV on demand: Breakout Sessions 1)

Three parallel Breakout Sessions will feature interactive discussions focusing on the different themes of the Forum with short interventions (approx. 3 min) by Heads of Delegations. Each Breakout Session will start with a brief “scene setter” by an expert. The format of these sessions is a moderated conversation where the moderator will play an active role. The organisers kindly ask all speakers to respect the limited time for interventions in order

to allow for an interactive conversation. At the end of each session there will be possibilities for questions or comments from delegates.

1.1 Promoting remembrance, fighting distortion

This session will focus on the significance of museums, memorials, and commemorative activities to promote Holocaust remembrance. Discussions will also cover how to combat denial and distortion – which includes safeguarding independent free research – to guarantee a correct presentation of historical facts and honour the memory of all victims of the Holocaust and other mass atrocities. This is also a prerequisite for lessons to be learnt and efforts to prevent mass atrocities in the future.

1.2 Developing education and reaching new target groups

This session will explore the development of Holocaust education and its various aims. These aims include preserving the memory and understanding of the historical course of events, and the role of education as a mean to prevent and combat antisemitism, antigypsyism and other forms of racism. The ways that Holocaust education and education to prevent antisemitism can reach a wider target group and approaches to capacity-building for teachers will also be covered.

1.3 Countering contemporary antisemitism and other forms of racism online and offline

This session will explore the nature of contemporary antisemitism and the various contexts where it exists. Discussions will also cover good examples of combating antisemitism, antigypsyism and other forms of racism and intolerance. A special area of emphasis will be antisemitism on social media platforms, Holocaust denial, distortion, disinformation, conspiracy theories and incitement to hate crimes and hate speech online.

13.00–14.30 Lunch

A lunch for the Heads of Delegations will be hosted by Prime Minister Löfven. Delegates are invited to a separate lunch. The lunch at the Malmö Forum will feature a musical performance by the Alma Quartet from the Malmö Symphony Orchestra. The lunch for the delegates will be hosted by the State Secretary to Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Ms Karin Wallensteen, and State Secretary to the Minister for Education Anna Ekström, Ms Kristina Persdotter.

14.50–15.50 Breakout Sessions

(Web-TV on demand: Breakout Sessions 2)

Three parallel Breakout Sessions will feature interactive discussions focusing on the different themes of the Forum with short interventions (approx. 3 min) by Heads of Delegations. Each Breakout Session will start with a brief “scene setter” by an expert. The format for these sessions is a moderated conversation where the moderator will play an active role. The organisers kindly ask all speakers to respect the limited time for interventions in order to allow for an interactive conversation. At the end of each session there will be possibilities for questions or comments.

2.1 Implementing strategies and ensuring security

This session will deal with the use of different tools, for example strategies and action plans to combat antisemitism, and the appointment of special coordinators/rapporteurs to combat antisemitism. The session will also explore examples of implementation of the IHRA non-legally binding Working Definitions on antisemitism and antigypsyism/Roma discrimination. Discussions will also cover the promotion of Jewish life and ensuring safety and security of persons belonging to minorities affected by antisemitism, antigypsyism and other forms of racism and intolerance.

2.2 Combating antisemitism and hate speech on social media

This session will address the use of social media to spread disinformation, incite hatred and incitement to violence and how these developments can be prevented and countered by various actors at state, regional and local level (law enforcement, education systems, etc.), social media platform companies and civil society. The session will also explore how social media can be part of the solution to promote human rights and strengthen democracy. Discussions will also cover media and information literacy.

2.3 Preserving testimonies and developing education for the future

How can we ensure that the testimonies and witnesses of survivors remain accessible and continue to be shared in the future? In order to reach new and changing target groups, diverse forms and methods within Holocaust Education will be explored. This includes coalition-building involving various sectors, such as civil society, experts and academics. Participants will also explore new practices and technologies of reaching out and making an impact.

16.15–17.15 Plenary Session II – ReAct

Web-TV on demand: Plenary Session II – ReAct

The Holocaust was driven by hatred against Jews. However, it affected not only Jews but the whole society. Antisemitism is a concern for society as a whole and may be symptomatic of eroding democracy. Contemporary antisemitism, antigypsyism and other forms of racism and intolerance exist in many forms and flourish in different contexts. Wherever we see it, we must both react – and – act. The concluding Plenary Session will focus on action, the steps forward to ensure implementation of the pledges presented at the Forum, and how we can join forces to strengthen the work for Holocaust remembrance and combating antisemitism and other forms of racism.

This concluding Plenary Session will be opened by the Swedish art music composer, Jacob Mühlrad. Cello soloist Johannes Rostamo will perform "Maggid", composed by Mühlrad. The Session will end with a musical performance by Swedish singer Lisa Nilsson. The speakers will be:

- President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen
- Panel:
 - President of Finland Sauli Niinistö
 - Prime Minister of Albania Edi Rama
 - Minister of State for Europe at the Federal Foreign Office of Germany Michael Roth
- Secretary-General of the United Nations António Guterres
- President of European Jewish Congress Moshe Kantor
- COO of Facebook Sheryl Sandberg
- Panel:
 - Secretary General of the Secretariat of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Kathrin Meyer
 - High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Miguel Ángel Moratinos
 - Minister of Diaspora Affairs of Israel Nachman Shai
- Prime Minister of Sweden Stefan Löfven.

17.30–18.00 Press Conference with Prime Minister Stefan Löfven

Web-TV on demand: Press Conference with Prime Minister Stefan Löfven

Prime Minister Löfven will host the Malmö Forum Press Conference. Heads of Delegations will have the opportunity to hold parallel press conferences after 18.00.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Education and Research

Sweden's pledges at the Malmö Forum

Published 13 September 2021

Sweden will assume the Presidency of the IHRA from March 2022 to the end of February 2023. This was Sweden's first pledge in connection with the Malmö Forum. Pledges presented at the Malmö Forum will be followed up during the Swedish Presidency. The ambition of the Swedish Government is to implement the measures below and allocate a total amount of approximately EUR 9.3 million/year.

We pledge to preserve and pass on the memory of the Holocaust

- A museum to preserve and pass on the memory of the Holocaust will be established in Sweden in 2022. The activities of the museum will be built up and formed over the years to come. One starting point is that stories of Holocaust survivors with a connection to Sweden will be at the core of the museum's activities. A Swedish-language version of the Dimensions in Testimony installation (developed by the Shoah Foundation) that allows visitors to interact with Holocaust survivors via pre-recorded answers to questions – using artificial intelligence technology – will be spread by the museum to schools and other museums all over the country.
- The Swedish Government will make a contribution of 5,5 million kronor to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation, so that this place is preserved and new generations can build a future from learning, reflecting and remembering the terrible past.

We pledge to promote education to prevent antisemitism and other forms of racism and to strengthen Holocaust research

- Education for active citizenship to prevent antisemitism and other forms of racism will be promoted through a nationwide undertaking conducted by the Swedish National Agency for Education in cooperation with the Living History Forum. It will focus on a wide range of target groups encompassing formal and non-formal education.
- Activities, based on the recommendations of the Swedish Research Council's survey of Swedish research on the Holocaust and antisemitism, including groups such as the Roma and antigypsyism, will be initiated during 2022, with funding allocated by the Swedish Research Council.

We pledge to combat antisemitism, antigypsyism and other forms of racism – online and offline

- An action programme with measures against antisemitism will be presented in 2022. Action programmes targeting antigypsyism, islamophobia, Afrophobia and racism against the Sami will also be presented. The IHRA working definitions of antisemitism and antigypsyism/Roma discrimination will be considered in these respective programmes. The programmes will e.g. include measures in the field of education, continued and enhanced efforts by the police to counter racism and hate crime, as well as an assignment to the Swedish Defence Research Agency to continuously monitor antisemitism and other forms of racism, hate speech and violent extremism in digital environments.
- Organised racism and support for organised racism will be criminalised. The Government will also consult the Parliament and appoint a parliamentary committee of inquiry to unbiasedly consider whether Holocaust denial should be more clearly criminalised.

We pledge to promote Jewish life, strengthen Roma inclusion and enhance security for civil society

- A government inquiry on a strategy to promote Jewish life in Sweden will be appointed. The National strategy for Roma inclusion will continue and permanent resources will be allocated from 2022. Language centres for Yiddish and Romani will be established.

- Funding for security-enhancing measures for civil society, including the Jewish community, will increase significantly from 2022.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister leads caretaker government

Published 28 June 2021

The Prime Minister and the other ministers were dismissed by the Speaker of the Riksdag today. They retain their positions until a new government takes office. The Government is thus a caretaker government.

The Speaker will now consult with representatives of the party groups with the aim of proposing a new Prime Minister to the Riksdag.

“Sweden is facing a difficult political situation following the Riksdag’s vote of no confidence, at the same time as we are in the midst of a pandemic. In this situation, my priority and that of my Government has been to do what is best for the country. With this in mind, rather than calling extraordinary elections I have today requested my dismissal as Prime Minister from the Speaker of the Riksdag. I have informed him that I stand ready to lead a government that can be tolerated by the Riksdag,” says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

The task of the Government Offices is to prepare government business and in other respects assist the Government and the ministers in their activities. This also applies when the Government is a caretaker government.

A caretaker government primarily makes decisions on ongoing or urgent matters. The only explicit restriction on the powers of a caretaker government is that it may not decide to hold extraordinary elections.

On 21 June, the Riksdag voted in favour of a declaration of no confidence in the Prime Minister.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

LGBTIQ and Russia on European Council agenda

Published 28 June 2021

Discussions on the situation in Russia and how the EU should manage it, along with LGBTIQ issues, dominated the EU summit on 24–25 June. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and other EU leaders also addressed the COVID-19 situation and the economic recovery.

LGBTIQ issues in Hungary

The EU leaders began the summit with a discussion on new legislation in Hungary and the EU's fundamental values.

- Many of us are appalled by the legislative amendments proposed by Hungary. In addition to restrictions on academic freedom and limitations on freedom of the press and on civil society, Hungary has now crossed another line. The proposed amendments are appalling and contrary to the EU's fundamental values relating to the equal value of all human beings. The EU must now continue the legal proceedings currently under way to protect our common values. If you are a member of the EU you must respect all people, commented Mr Löfven after the meeting.

Russia and Belarus

The situation in several countries and regions was discussed at the summit, including Turkey, Russia, Libya, Belarus and the Sahel.

- There must be dialogue and contact between the EU and Russia, and these

already take place. But what several of us pushed for was to make clear demands for Russia to change the direction of its actions. The most important of course is to end the illegal annexation of Crimea and the involvement in the conflict in eastern Ukraine, said Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren at a press briefing in connection with the summit. The EU leaders also followed up the discussions they had in May on the situation in Belarus, and reiterated the demand that all political prisoners in the country be released, including Raman Pratasevich and Sofia Sapega.

COVID-19 coordination and migration

The EU leaders had a general discussion on vaccination efforts and the COVID-19 situation in and outside the EU, and what lessons for the future can be learned from the COVID pandemic.

Some Member States had presented conclusions on the external dimension of migration – how migration is affected by the situation in countries around the EU.

Economic recovery and Euro Summit

On Friday, the heads of state and government discussed economic recovery in the EU after the pandemic, with focus on the Next Generation EU recovery plan they had adopted in July 2020.

A Euro Summit in inclusive format with President of the Eurogroup Paschal Donohoe and President of the European Central Bank Christine Lagarde was also held on Friday.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Economic recovery and foreign affairs at EU Summit

Published 24 June 2021

When the EU's heads of state and government meet in Brussels on 24–25 June, they will discuss the economic situation in the EU, migration and a number of foreign policy issues. They will also look at activities related to COVID-19. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and his colleagues will kick off the summit with a working lunch with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

COVID-19 coordination and migration

As in earlier meetings, the EU leaders will have a general discussion about COVID-19 vaccinations and the situation in the Member States and globally. The EU leaders will likely also undertake an initial discussion of what lessons can be learned from the COVID-19 crisis.

Some Member States have initiated a discussion on the external dimension of migration at the summit – in other words, how migration has been impacted by the situation in countries around the EU.

Turkey, Russia and other foreign affairs

The heads of state and government will discuss the situation in several countries and regions at the summit, including Turkey, Russia, Libya, Belarus and the Sahel region.

With respect to the situation in Russia, they will proceed based on the discussions at the last meeting of the European Council and the report that

the EU institutions have since drafted. The EU leaders will also follow up on the discussions they held in May on the situation in Belarus, when they adopted a series of measures, including sanctions.

Economic recovery and Euro Summit

The heads of state and government will spend Friday discussing post-pandemic economic recovery in the EU. The discussion will likely focus on the Next Generation EU recovery instrument that they agreed on in July 2020. Almost all EU Member States have submitted draft recovery plans to the European Commission. Now several countries are awaiting the Commission's decision on the allocation of loans and grants.

On Friday, a Euro Summit will also take place in an extended format. This means that EU Member States outside the euro area are welcome. The heads of state and government will discuss the banking union and the capital markets union.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Government Offices

Government plan for phasing out restrictions

Published 28 May 2021

The spread of COVID-19 and the number of hospital patients being treated for it are now decreasing dramatically. The largest vaccination campaign in Sweden's history is protecting more people every day from serious illness. At a press conference on Thursday, the Government presented its five-stage plan to adapt and phase out the restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Government's plan has five stages. In Stage 1, which starts on 1 June, the Government will ease a number of restrictions. In the final stage, Stage 5, the Government will essentially lift all restrictions and recommendations imposed in response to COVID-19. The Government is keen to ensure that it lifts the restrictions responsibly and remains prepared to handle any situation in which transmission increases again.

The Public Health Agency of Sweden uses three levels as its basis for continued adaptations of COVID-19 restrictions. The Government, in dialogue with the Public Health Agency, determines these levels based on an overall assessment of the following indicators: infection rates, the burden on health and medical care and stability of the situation, and vaccination rates.

To determine whether it is possible to proceed to the next stage and lift further restrictions, the Government will make an overall assessment based on the indicators identified by the Public Health Agency. These will be used to describe the progression of the pandemic and to inform the continued

adaptation of COVID-19 restrictions.

Adapted restrictions from 1 June

Stage 1, as partly communicated earlier, includes new participant limits for activities such as public gatherings and public events. Permanent funfairs and markets are no longer subject to participant limits. Funfairs will be regulated as amusement parks and similar facilities, and markets will be regulated as shopping areas. Opening hours of eating and drinking establishments will be extended to 22.30. The Public Health Agency will no longer advise against small-scale camps and sports cups for children and young people. Outdoor matches and competitions for adults will also be permitted.

Stage 2, which is expected to begin around 1 July, will include raised participant limits for public gatherings and events and private gatherings. At that point, the Public Health Agency will completely withdraw its advice against sport and recreation activities to individuals. The opening hours of eating and drinking establishments will be extended further, and the regulation concerning the maximum number of people per group and distance between groups for outdoor establishments will be lifted. The advice to socialise only within a very limited circle will be withdrawn, but socialising outdoors will still be preferable. Advice to clubs and associations to cancel, postpone or hold meetings remotely will be relaxed. Such meetings can then take place, but close contact should still be avoided.

In Stage 3, expected to start on 15 July, limitations on long-distance public transportation and regulations limiting the number of people per square in indoor and outdoor environments will be lifted.

Stage 4 is expected to start in September, at which point all participant limits for public gatherings and events and private gatherings will be lifted. The restrictions in the restaurant sector with respect to group size will also be eased.

All remaining restrictions will be lifted with the start of **Stage 5**. These include regulations concerning crowding in shopping areas and cultural and recreational activities. The requirement on certain central government agencies to ensure that only employees whose physical presence is necessary are present in the workplace will be lifted. The Public Health Agency will withdraw general advice concerning avoiding crowding,

working from home and maintaining especially good hand hygiene. It has not been determined when Stage 5 can start.

Proof of vaccination

In mid-June, the Government plans to communicate its position on whether it will introduce the possibility of using a vaccination certificate or similar proof of vaccination for certain public gatherings and events for a limited period. The position will clarify how this should be regulated and which public gatherings and events it would concern. Proof of vaccination could be used to enable large-scale events that would not otherwise be possible due to the pandemic to take place.

Although the situation in Sweden is improving, the Government considers that it is still necessary to be well-prepared to take measures if the situation should deteriorate. If this happens, the Government may have to modify its plan for adapting the restrictions.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Belarus and climate action key issues at the EU Summit

Published 26 May 2021 Updated 26 May 2021

Discussions at the special meeting of the European Council on 24 May were dominated by the events in Belarus involving the forced landing of a passenger plane in Minsk to detain a journalist. The EU leaders also discussed the situation in Russia. On 25 May, discussions mainly centred on EU climate action and vaccine coordination.

Events in Belarus

The Council meeting opened with a discussion on the recent events in Belarus involving the forced landing of a commercial flight.

- As you know, the European Council decided last night on a range of measures against Belarus, and we demand the immediate release of Raman Pratasevich and Sofia Sapega, the two people detained when the plane landed, said Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at a press briefing on Tuesday morning.

- We also decided to call for an international investigation, adopt further sanctions both through listings of persons and entities and targeted economic sanctions, call on EU Member States to suspend overflights of Belarusian airspace, and prevent access to EU airports of flights operated by Belarusian airlines. It's encouraging that we could quickly agree on clear and resolute measures by the EU, fully in line with Sweden's demands, added Mr Löfven.

The situation in Russia

The EU leaders also discussed the situation in Russia.

- Many, myself included, emphasised the importance of the EU Member States being united on the issue of Russia. We'll continue our discussions on this issue at the next European Council in June.

COVID-19 vaccine coordination

The EU leaders engaged in a general discussion on COVID-19 vaccination and the COVID-19 situation in the Member States and globally.

- The EU is continuing its work to ensure global access to COVID-19 vaccines. It is the leading exporter of vaccines around the world, but we've also purchased more vaccine doses than we need. Today we agreed to donate at least 100 million doses by the end of the year. This is an important step. Sweden will contribute 3 million surplus vaccine doses, said Mr Löfven after the meeting.

EU climate action

The European Council previously agreed on a binding EU target of a reduction in carbon emissions of at least 55 per cent by 2030 and climate neutrality by 2050.

- Efforts to implement the EU's climate goals and fulfil our commitments under the Paris Agreement continue. We must maintain a high level of ambition and every country must contribute to the EU becoming climate neutral by 2050, said Mr Löfven.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Climate change and Russia on European Council agenda

Published 24 May 2021

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will meet with other EU leaders at the European Council in Brussels on 24–25 May. Items on the agenda include climate action, vaccine coordination and the situation in Russia. The EU leaders will also discuss the EU's relations with the UK.

EU climate action

The European Council previously agreed on a binding EU target of a reduction in carbon emissions of at least 55 per cent by 2030 and climate neutrality by 2050. At the meeting, the EU leaders will engage in an orientation debate on how to proceed ahead of the Commission proposals to be presented in June.

External relations and the situation in Russia

The EU leaders will also discuss the situation in Russia. A previously scheduled discussion had been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The human rights situation and other conditions in Russia have now worsened and EU-Russia relations have also deteriorated. The EU leaders will also raise the issue of the passenger plane bound for Vilnius on 23 May that was forced to land in Minsk and the Belarusian journalist on board the plane who was subsequently arrested.

COVID-19 vaccine coordination

The EU leaders will hold a general discussion about COVID-19 vaccination and the situation in the Member States and globally. Issues will include vaccination and how to lift restrictions now that agreement has been reached on the EU digital COVID certificate. The leaders are also likely to discuss how vaccines should be distributed globally to ensure equitable access.

EU-UK relations

The leaders will discuss the EU's relations with the UK, following the entry into force of the EU-UK trade and cooperation agreement on 1 May 2021.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven welcomes US decision to join global Leadership Group for Industry Transition

Published 28 April 2021

The United States and President Joe Biden have joined the global Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT). The Group, launched in 2019 by Sweden's Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, gathers countries and companies to drive the low-carbon transition of energy-intensive industries.

- It is very gratifying that the United States and President Biden have joined the Swedish-Indian initiative LeadIT. Heavy industry and the transport sector account for around 30 per cent of global emissions. Their transition is essential in the fight against climate change. I look forward to working with the US and others to realise the goals of the Paris Agreement by pushing for action to achieve fossil-free heavy industry and net-zero emissions by 2050, says Prime Minister Löfven.

LeadIT has been developed in cooperation with the World Economic Forum and gathers more than 30 countries and companies collaborating to achieve a fossil-fuel-free future and net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement. The LeadIT Secretariat is hosted by the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI). In the 2021 workplan, agreement was reached on concrete public and private action to promote innovation and technology exchange, the development of roadmaps for industry

transition, and policy solutions to drive the transition. At the annual LeadIT Summits, LeadIT's actions and results are followed up and new ambitious goals for future action are set. LeadIT also encourages increased international collaboration between key actors to accelerate the global climate transition of energy-intensive industries.

For Sweden, LeadIT is an important global platform for spreading the successful concept and working method developed through Fossil Free Sweden. Many of the companies involved in Fossil Free Sweden have also joined LeadIT.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Vaccine coordination and a meeting with Joe Biden at video conference

Published 26 March 2021

Vaccines and COVID-19 coordination were the main items on the agenda when Prime Minister Stefan Löfven met with other EU leaders at a video conference on 25 March. The single market and digital transformation were also on the agenda. The conference ended with a meeting with US President Joe Biden.

COVID-19 and vaccine coordination

The EU leaders had a general discussion about the COVID-19 situation in the Member States and the ongoing work to vaccinate their citizens.

- Access to vaccines is a critical issue and all countries naturally want their citizens to be vaccinated without delay. Of course I want Sweden to receive as many vaccine doses as possible and as fast as possible. But at the same time, it's crucial that vaccines are available throughout the EU and around the world. We're in the midst of a pandemic and no one is safe until everyone is safe, said Prime Minister Stefan Löfven after the meeting.

Meeting with President Biden

On Thursday evening, US President Joe Biden joined the video conference for a discussion on transatlantic relations.

- President Biden spoke of the need for EU-US cooperation on COVID-19,

climate action, restarting the economy, and collaboration on democracy and values. President Biden emphasised that the highest priority now is to boost vaccine production and to vaccinate large numbers of people. He also said that the US will contribute to the COVAX vaccination programme as soon as possible, said Mr Löfven.

The single market and digital transformation

The single market is a recurring theme at the spring summits and this time the central issue was how digital transformation can strengthen the single market.

- We are in the throes of a digital transformation and it's important that Europe continue to develop its capacity to benefit as much as possible from the transformation, but this must be done in a smart way.

External relations and the Euro Summit

European Council President Charles Michel informed the EU leaders of his talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin ahead of a discussion on EU relations with Russia at a future physical meeting.

At the video conference of the members of the Euro Summit, EU leaders discussed the international role of the euro.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Coordination of COVID-19 response and meeting with Joe Biden at video conference

Published 25 March 2021

Coordination of the COVID-19 response is the main topic when Prime Minister Stefan Löfven meets his head of state and government colleagues during a two-day video conference on 25–26 March. On Thursday evening, the EU leaders will also have a meeting with US President Joe Biden. On Friday, they will discuss issues related to the single market and digital transformation, and hold a Euro Summit.

COVID-19 and vaccine coordination

The EU leaders will hold a general discussion on the COVID-19 situation in Member States. They will address the ongoing efforts to vaccinate citizens of EU countries and discuss efforts to produce and distribute vaccines. Efforts to produce a vaccination certificate will most certainly also be discussed, as will the COVAX global vaccine initiative.

Meeting with President Joe Biden

On Thursday evening, US President Joe Biden will join the conference for a discussion with the EU heads of state and government on future cooperation between the EU and the US.

Digital issues and the single market

The EU leaders usually address the single market at each March conference, and this time they will also discuss how digitalisation can strengthen the single market and open up to the world at large, while ensuring that everyone is able to participate. The single market is fundamental for the economy of EU Member States, and the pandemic has increased the demands on digitalisation.

Foreign policy issues

The EU's relations with Russia and Turkey will also be discussed on Thursday. European Council President Charles Michel will inform the EU leaders of his talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin ahead of a discussion on the EU's relations with Russia at a future physical meeting.

Euro Summit

On Friday, a Euro Summit will take place, in inclusive format. This means that EU Member States outside the euro area also participate. The heads of state and government will then discuss the international role of the euro together with President of the European Central Bank Christine Lagarde and President of the Eurogroup Paschal Donohoe.



Article from Government Offices

Gender equality will make post-Covid recovery more prosperous and stronger

Published 08 March 2021

Stefan Löfven joins eight fellow EU leaders in an open letter to the bloc and its people

This year is a special International Women's Day. Not only is it exactly 110 years since the first International Women's Day, when more than a million women and men joined forces and raised their voices for equal rights.

We are also at an important turning point this year on this March 8. Over the past year, many of our lives have been temporarily halted by the worst health crisis in generations. As they stood at the forefront in the fight against the pandemic in our hospitals and nursing homes, women were disproportionately affected by the pandemic; they paid a higher price, both economically and socially.

Domestic and gender-based violence increased, women took on a larger share of household tasks and Eurostat's unemployment figures show that while the male unemployment rate increased from 6.2pc to 7.1pc in December 2020, the increase among women was more significant, from 6.7pc to 7.9pc.

In the coming years, we need to rebuild our societies and our economies for the better. If we want to grow and thrive in the post-Covid-19 world, we need a more inclusive approach that unlocks all talents, including those of women.

How can we manage to do this? First of all, we need to move beyond the ideological debates of the past. Equality between women and men is

enshrined in Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights. This right is non-negotiable. It is one of the fundamental pillars on which we have built our European societies.

Secondly, more than ever, we have to advance the economic case for gender equality. Of course, gender equality is morally the right thing to do. But equal opportunities also matter to enable social and economic progress. When women prosper, societies prosper. Gender-equal societies are richer societies, in all senses of the word. Gender equal economies perform better, according to all research.

Whether we manage to build back better will depend on the choices we make when rolling out our post-Covid-19 recovery plans. They are a unique opportunity to rebuild more efficiently and more inclusively, ensuring women's participation in the economy and addressing income inequalities.

If we want to build long-term economic resilience after Covid-19, we must address gender-specific issues that have been preventing women from having equal rights and opportunities. This is why we need to incorporate successful gender approaches in European stimulus and recovery packages. Gender equality and, more in general, inclusiveness are important transformation drivers for the renewal of our economies after the pandemic. If we succeed in unlocking women's full economic and entrepreneurial potential, our recovery efforts will lead stronger and more resilient economies and societies.

Thirdly, we need to step up our international efforts. Women and girls are often the first victims during crises. This was no different for the Covid-19 pandemic. The severe health crisis has exposed the vulnerable position of girls and women in many parts of the world, especially in fragile and conflict-affected states.

It is important the new US administration is back at the table to fight, together with us, for the rights of girls and women around the world.

As global development leader, Europe has a special responsibility. We must make every possible effort to make sure its humanitarian and development response to the Covid-19 pandemic includes strengthening access to education and healthcare for girls and women, including promoting SRHR [sexual and reproductive health and rights], and supporting girls and women in their journey to economic independence.

One op-ed on International Women's Day will not suffice to get there. It will require a much more sustained effort, for many years to come.

Let us seize this moment to build more inclusive and caring societies where equal rights are paramount, not only on paper but also in everyday life. It will not only empower women, but also men. Since equal rights will be a step forward for both, allowing men as well to break out of traditional roles and stereotypes.

It will not be easy. But it is possible.

Alexander De Croo
Prime Minister of Belgium

Klaus Iohannis
President of Romania

Kaja Kallas
Prime Minister of Estonia

Stefan Löfven
Prime Minister of Sweden

Sanna Marin
Prime Minister of Finland

Micheál Martin
Taoiseach

Kyriakos Mitsotakis
Prime Minister of Greece

Pedro Sánchez
Prime Minister of Spain

Ursula Von Der Leyen
European Commission President

Xavier Bettel
Prime Minister of Luxembourg



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Employment

The Government's gender equality work is more important than ever

Published 08 March 2021

Sweden has the first feminist Government in the world. Gender equality is central to the Government's priorities – in decision-making and resource allocation. The Government's gender equality work is based on six objectives. It addresses power and influence, gender equality in economy and education, and the equal distribution of unpaid housework and provision of care. It is also about gender equality in health and ending men's violence against women. In brief, it is about gender equality in all facets of life and society.

- Women and men must have the same power to shape society and their own lives – this is the primary goal of our feminist Government. This means that the work of all the ministers in my Government will contribute to the development and implementation of gender equality policy, says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

- Sweden is one of the most gender-equal countries in the world – but we can never take this for granted. We must continue to fight so that every woman can live a life in security, free from violence and oppression. We must do more to reduce the gender gap in lifetime earnings. I am proud to be involved in this work in a feminist Government, where all ministers are responsible for promoting gender equality, says Minister for Gender Equality and Housing Märta Stenevi.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

COVID-19 and vaccine coordination at the video summit

Published 25 February 2021

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will meet the other EU heads of state and government during a two-day video summit on 25–26 February. The EU leaders will discuss COVID-19 and vaccine coordination on Thursday. On Friday, they will discuss foreign and security policy and relations with the EU's Southern Neighbourhood

COVID-19 and vaccine coordination

The EU leaders will hold a general discussion about the COVID-19 situation in Member States. They will also discuss the ongoing vaccination efforts, as well as various testing methods and the work to produce and distribute vaccines. Travel restrictions and vaccine cooperation with countries outside the EU are other topics that the heads of states and government may address.

Security and defence

The EU leaders will also discuss enhanced cooperation on security and defence issues, for example within the framework of NATO and the UN. Cybersecurity is another topic that the heads of state and government will discuss. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg will join the discussion on Friday.

EU relations with the countries in Southern Neighbourhood

The EU's relations with the Southern Neighbourhood, i.e. Algeria, Egypt,

Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia, is another topic that the heads of state and government will discuss. The objective of this partnership is increased stability through economic development, initiatives for young people, transport and energy links, migration, and security.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Research

The Swedish Holocaust Museum will be established in Stockholm

Published 27 January 2021

The Statement of Government Policy presented by Stefan Löfven in the Riksdag in January 2019 announced that a new museum would be established to preserve and perpetuate the memory of the Holocaust. Today, 27 January, on Holocaust Remembrance Day, the Government has announced that the museum is to be established in July 2022 and that it will be located in Stockholm.

The Government will establish the Swedish Holocaust Museum as an independent museum within an existing museums agency. By doing so, the museum can be incorporated into an established organisation with management functions and museum expertise, thus providing stability for the new museum. Facilities for storage, conservation, archives and other functions can be jointly used and coordinated. If the museum is located in Stockholm, it will be easier for school pupils and the general public from around the country to visit.

Memories of the Holocaust can be found all over the country in all the local communities where thousands of Swedes volunteered to help refugees and survivors.

The Holocaust museum should collaborate with many key actors, such as county museums and local museums, both to facilitate involvement of the country's entire population in the activities and because the accounts, testimonies, objects and places concerning the Holocaust are found

throughout the country.

The murder, persecution and terrible suffering of the Jewish people, Roma and millions of other victims of Nazism have left an indelible scar across Europe. Although the killing did not take place on Swedish soil, Sweden both influenced and was influenced by what happened. The Holocaust is also part of Sweden's history. As a society, we have an obligation to promote education, remembrance and research on the genocide committed by the Nazis and their allies so that new generations will be able to learn from history. The Swedish Holocaust Museum will be one way of doing so.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Research

Sweden to lead the work of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance in 2022–23

Published 27 January 2021 Updated 28 January 2021

Sweden has been entrusted with holding the Presidency of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) from 1 March 2022 until 28 February 2023. The decision was taken at the IHRA's digital plenary meeting in Leipzig on 3 December 2020.

Sweden will chair the IHRA twenty plus years after the first Stockholm Forum on the Holocaust and one year after the Malmö Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism.

“I have promised survivors to do what I can as Prime Minister – and as a human being – for Holocaust remembrance and combating antisemitism today. I intend to keep that promise. The Presidency of the IHRA, the Malmö Forum and the coming museum about Sweden and the Holocaust are all important parts of these efforts”, says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

“Even though history has shown us what the ultimate consequences of antisemitism, antiziganism and racism can be, they still exist in all parts of society. Sweden must set an example and do all it can to prevent something similar from happening again. Remembering is also about learning from history”, says Minister for Culture and Democracy Amanda Lind.

In May 1998, on the eve of the new millennium, Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson, British Prime Minister Tony Blair and the President of the United States Bill Clinton agreed to set up a Task Force to promote international cooperation on Holocaust education, remembrance and research, laying the foundation for the IHRA.

The first Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust took place on 26–28 January 2000. The Stockholm Declaration became the founding document of the IHRA.

It is with a sense of historical responsibility that the Government of Sweden declares itself ready to lead the IHRA, twenty years after its establishment, thus building on to the work of Prime Minister Persson two decades earlier.

Prime Minister Löfven's deep commitment to the cause of combating antisemitism has been expressed through a series of measures to strengthen security for Sweden's Jewish community.

A state museum for passing on the testimonies of those Holocaust survivors who sought refuge in Sweden is to be established. 50 heads of state and government and 20 organizations have been invited to the Malmö Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism, 13-14 October 2021.

The IHRA presidency will be another significant undertaking by Prime Minister Löfven and his government.

One central priority of the Swedish Presidency will be to follow up on the Malmö International Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism.

"Taking upon itself the Presidency of the IHRA, is the first and a central national pledge for Sweden", says Annika Ben David, Ambassador for Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law and Head of Sweden's delegation to the IHRA.

"The magnitude of the Holocaust must be forever seared in our collective memory. The unprecedented character of the Holocaust will always hold universal meaning", says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

"Antisemitism and all forms of racism are threats to us all and to our open and democratic societies. Wherever we see antisemitism, and no matter who expresses it, we must step in and – with unwavering resoluteness – expose, confront and combat it. Antisemitism is a direct threat to Jews, but it is not a

problem to be borne by Jews alone. We must address Holocaust denial and antisemitism by protecting and promoting democratic values and respect for human rights”, he continues.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

European Council on vaccine coordination

Published 22 January 2021

Vaccine coordination was the main topic on the agenda when Prime Minister Stefan Löfven met other EU leaders via a video conference on Thursday afternoon. They also discussed the production and distribution of vaccines and cooperation with countries outside the EU.

At the video conference, the heads of state and government exchanged experiences of the ongoing efforts to vaccinate people in the Member States.

“We noted that the situation continues to be serious with a high infection rate and new infectious virus mutations. At the same time, we have rolled out the vaccine in record time and it is now important to ensure that deliveries are as fast as possible so that the vaccination rate can increase,” said Mr Löfven after the video conference .

The President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen also provided the EU leaders with a status report on vaccination in the Member States.

“We also discussed how we can hold the infection rate down and at the same time secure access to vaccines, both inside and outside the EU. There was also broad consensus on continuing the work on a vaccine certificate, which may form part of a return to more normal travel,” added Mr Löfven.

Mr Löfven represented Sweden at the video conference.

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Vaccine coordination on European Council agenda

Published 21 January 2021

Coordination of the ongoing COVID-19 vaccination efforts will be the main topic for Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and other EU leaders when they meet by video conference on Thursday afternoon. Production and distribution of vaccines and cooperation with countries outside the EU are other topics that the heads of states and government will address.

The meeting will begin with President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen providing the EU leaders with a status report on vaccination in the Member States.

The heads of state and government will then exchange experiences of the ongoing efforts to vaccinate at-risk groups – and in due course everyone in the Member States – against COVID-19. The work to produce and distribute a vaccine, and how it will be deployed, is another topic that will likely be raised at the meeting.

The EU leaders will also discuss the issue of a possible vaccine certificate for those who wish to travel and vaccine cooperation with countries outside the EU.

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will represent Sweden at the meeting.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Draft agreement between the EU and the UK

Published 24 December 2020 Updated 30 December 2020

The Swedish Government welcomes the fact that EU and UK negotiators have now agreed a draft agreement on the future relationship between the EU and the UK.

“It is very gratifying that the negotiators have now reached an agreement. This is something that we in the EU have worked together on for a long time. The agreement will be an important basis for the continued relationship with the UK,” says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

The fact that the draft agreement is now in place creates predictability for Swedish citizens and companies. A no-deal scenario between the EU and the UK has thus been avoided.

“This is good for Sweden, good for the EU, and good for the UK. The agreement is broad and spans many areas. In addition to a free trade agreement and rules for a level playing field, the agreement also covers important areas such as internal security, fisheries, transport, climate and environment. It provides the conditions for long-term cooperation and good relations between the EU and the UK in the future,” says Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren.

The agreement has been negotiated on the basis of the negotiating mandate given by the Member States to the European Commission. The text is currently being analysed and will be reviewed by EU Member States in the Council in the coming days. To enter into application from 1 January, the agreement needs to be approved by the UK parliament. The Council must also adopt a decision to apply it provisionally, as the European Parliament will not be able to consider it until after the turn of the year.

“The fact that the negotiators from the EU and the UK were finally able to present a draft agreement demonstrates the taking of shared responsibility and the great value of regulated and deep cooperation,” adds Mr Dahlgren.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Climate, COVID-19 and the long-term budget at the European Council

Published 11 December 2020

The climate, COVID-19 and the long-term EU budget were among the issues in focus when Prime Minister Stefan Löfven met with his head of state and government colleagues at the European Council in Brussels on 10–11 December. The EU leaders also considered a number of foreign policy issues and the EU's future relationship with the UK.

Coordination of the COVID-19 response

The EU leaders held a general discussion about the COVID-19 situation in the Member States.

“Firstly, we discussed the pandemic situation as it exists in the Member States and it is quite clear that it is serious in many places. However, there is naturally light at the end of the tunnel in the shape of the vaccines. There is broad consensus among the EU leaders on the importance that EU cooperation has had for gaining access to vaccines so quickly. This also strengthens our conviction to continue cooperating on COVID-19,” said Mr Löfven after the summit.

EU climate targets for 2030

The EU must review its climate targets for the next few years to become climate-neutral by 2050. At the Summit, the heads of state and government

decided on tighter climate targets for 2030.

“There were very long and at times difficult discussions on the climate. All science shows that we must do more here and now – time is quite simply running out. EU countries must actively drive the climate transition. It was therefore important that we could agree on a tighter target for 2030, namely a reduction of at least 55 per cent. By being at the forefront of the climate transition, the EU’s competitiveness is also strengthened, with more jobs in Sweden and the EU as a whole,” Mr Löfven also said.

The long-term EU budget

“Yesterday, we also agreed on the final part of the long-term budget. Sweden has long advocated that there must be a link between the payment of funds on the one hand and the rule of law on the other. When countries fail to respect the EU’s fundamental values, there must be consequences in terms of how much support they are still eligible to receive from the EU budget. Now that the German Presidency has proposed an explanatory statement, we finally have such a mechanism in place,” said Mr Löfven.

At the end of July, EU heads of state and government agreed on a proposal for a new long-term budget for the EU, as well as a recovery package. Since the summer, negotiations on the long-term budget have been ongoing and have been concluded with the European Parliament. Some EU Member States have had difficulty approving the agreement as payments from the EU budget are linked to the rule of law for the first time.

“This has been absolutely vital to ensure that the agreement between the European Council and the European Parliament remains in place. And it does. I would like to take this opportunity to say that the German Presidency, led by Angela Merkel, has done a very good job of getting this over the line without compromising on the rule of law,” added Mr Löfven.

Future relations with the UK

Negotiations between the EU and the UK have been intense in recent weeks. Outstanding issues include the formulation of regulations for a level playing field and agreement on fishing, as well as the formulation of regulations for dispute settlement.

At the Summit, the EU leaders were given a very brief account of the

negotiations on the future relationship with the UK by the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen.

Turkey and Russia

"Turkey was also discussed and it was noted that developments there have continued in the wrong direction during the autumn. It was agreed for preparations to be made to extend the sanctions already in place," Mr Löfven said.

"Finally, the green light was given to again extend the sanctions against Russia. It is extremely important that the EU continues to show unity on this issue."

Euro Summit

On Friday, a Euro Summit also took place in an extended format whereby EU Member States outside the euro area were also welcome. The heads of state and government discussed the banking union and the capital markets union.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

COVID-19 and the climate at EU Summit

Published 10 December 2020

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will meet his head of state and government colleagues at the European Council in Brussels on 10-11 December. The EU leaders' agenda includes climate targets, coordination of the COVID-19 response and foreign policy issues. They will also discuss the EU's long-term budget and the EU's future relations with the UK.

Coordination of the COVID-19 response

The EU leaders will hold a general discussion about the COVID-19 situation in Member States. Various testing methods and work to produce and distribute a vaccine, as well as how it will be deployed, are issues that will be raised at the meeting.

EU climate targets for 2030

The EU must review its climate targets for the next few years to become climate-neutral by 2050. At the Summit, the heads of state and government will decide on tighter climate targets for 2030. The objective of the EU is net-zero emissions by 2050, and to achieve that the Government wants to see a more ambitious EU target for 2030.

The long-term EU budget

At the end of July, EU heads of state and government agreed on a proposal for a new long-term budget for the EU, as well as on a recovery package.

Since the summer, negotiations on the long-term budget have been ongoing and have been concluded with the European Parliament. Some EU Member States are now having difficulty approving the agreement as payments from the EU budget are to be linked to the rule of law for the first time.

Future relations with the UK

Negotiations between the EU and the UK have been intense in recent weeks. Outstanding issues include the formulation of regulations for a level playing field and agreement on fishing, as well as the formulation of regulations for dispute settlement.

When the UK left the EU at midnight on 31 January, a transition period began that runs until the end of 2020. During the transition period, the EU and the UK are negotiating on the future relationship between the EU and the UK. High-level negotiations are now under way and the heads of state and government are likely to address the issue.

Euro Summit

On Friday, a Euro Summit will take place in an extended format. This means that EU Member States outside the euro area are welcome. The heads of state and government will discuss the banking union and the capital markets union during the Summit.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

A maximum of eight participants should be normative for all of society

Published 20 November 2020

The coming weeks are crucial to stop the spread of infection. Given our current situation, the Government considers that more measures are necessary. We therefore now propose that holding public gatherings and events with more than eight participants be prohibited. In addition, the previous exemption for eating and drinking establishments is removed.

“The decision to limit gatherings to eight participants is a very, very clear signal to every single person in our country and to all of Swedish society as to what applies in the days ahead.”

“No social situations involving more than eight people should take place, regardless of whether they are covered by the law in purely formal terms.”

“This is the ‘new normal’ for all of society, all of Sweden.”

This was the message Prime Minister Stefan Löfven delivered when new restrictions were presented at a press briefing on Monday, 16 November.

“Take your responsibility”

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven emphasised the seriousness of the situation we are now in and how important it is that everyone take their responsibility to prevent the spread of infection.

“Sweden is being severely tested. It’s going to get worse. Do your duty – take your responsibility to stop the spread of infection,” said Mr Löfven.

Advice to follow to avoid the spread of infection

- Only get together with those you live with.
- Stay home if you feel at all unwell.
- Wash your hands often and carefully.
- Employers should make it possible for employees to work from home.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

European Council meeting on the COVID-19 pandemic

Published 20 November 2020

Coordinated crisis responses and deployment of vaccines were two of the issues that Prime Minister Stefan Löfven discussed when he met other EU leaders via a video conference of the European Council on Thursday afternoon. The heads of state and government also considered the negotiations on the EU's long-term budget.

The EU leaders exchanged experiences of testing methods and discussed mutual recognition of tests and the efforts to produce and distribute a vaccine.

“We need to do more to coordinate our crisis responses. We must work together to procure and deploy a future vaccine, and we need to strengthen our joint preparedness. The EU's joint efforts to develop reliable rapid tests are also important,” said Mr Löfven.

At the meeting, the EU leaders also received an update on the negotiations on the EU's long-term budget and respect for the rule of law in relation to the long-term budget.

“From Sweden's perspective, it is important that the EU's long-term budget is adopted as soon as possible. It is very important that COVID-19 support can be rolled out to those who have been hit hard in the Member States. I don't want to speculate tonight on when it will be settled, but the negotiated budget, the recovery fund and the requirement of respect for the rule of law must apply,” added Mr Löfven after the meeting.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

COVID-19 response coordination on European Council agenda

Published 19 November 2020

Coordination of COVID-19 testing and deployment of vaccines are two of the issues that Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will discuss when he meets other EU leaders via a video conference of the European Council on Thursday afternoon.

The heads of state and government will exchange experiences of different testing methods and discuss mutual recognition of tests for travel within the EU. The work to produce and distribute a vaccine and how it will be deployed will also be raised at the meeting. The EU leaders will also look to the future and discuss different countries' thinking regarding restrictions in the longer term.

The meeting will begin with Angela Merkel, as representative of the German Presidency of the EU, briefly updating the EU leaders on the negotiations on the EU's long-term budget and respect for the rule of law in relation to the long-term budget

This is the EU leaders' second video conference on coordination of the COVID-19 response since the summer.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Prime Minister met Svetlana Tikhanovskaya

Published 19 November 2020

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, the exiled leader of the Belarusian opposition, yesterday, 18 November.

“Svetlana Tikhanovskaya is a symbol of the Belarusian people’s struggle and the peaceful opposition’s quest for democracy and human rights. It is a reminder of how valuable democracy is, and why we must stand up for it all over the world,” said Mr Löfven in a comment following the meeting.

Ms Tikhanovskaya received strong public support as a candidate in the presidential election in Belarus. The election was neither free nor fair, and was marked by widespread electoral fraud and political oppression. The Belarusian authorities have met peaceful demonstrations with brutal violence, and a large number of critics of the regime and political opponents have been detained. Ms Tikhanovskaya herself has left the country for her own safety.

A united EU has condemned the actions of the Belarusian authorities and introduced sanctions against Belarus, and will continue to support the Belarusian people’s legitimate demands to be allowed to choose the leader of their country through free and fair elections.

Sweden is one of the largest bilateral donors to Belarus, and Sweden’s long-term support has helped strengthen Belarusian civil society. In light of the very serious developments since the presidential election, Sweden’s support to civil society organisations has been further intensified.

During her visit to Sweden, Ms Tikhanovskaya also met with Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Sweden and Spain gathered world leaders for a meeting to boost UN cooperation

Published 13 November 2020

On Tuesday 10 November, some 10 heads of state or government met for a digital summit hosted by Spain and Sweden. The aim was to bring together a group of countries that together are ready to help strengthen the UN, in light of the UN's 75th anniversary. The countries also adopted a joint statement on this at the meeting.

The group represents countries from all over the world: Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Jordan, Canada, New Zealand, Senegal, South Africa, South Korea and Tunisia, which are all, together with Sweden and Spain, united in the idea that more cooperation is good for each individual country, but also for the world.

In addition to the vision of strengthening the UN's work, the meeting was also intended to build global support for sustainable post-pandemic reconstruction.

In September this year, when the UN celebrated its 75th anniversary, the countries of the world adopted an ambitious and forward-looking declaration to address the major challenges of our time. Sweden and the countries that attended the digital summit jointly wish to take the lead in implementing the goals presented in the UN75 Declaration.

Sweden views this as a long-term effort. We will continue to push for greater international cooperation. Global challenges require global responsibility – as well as global engagement. The results of the elections in the United States

mean there is good reason to believe that the incoming administration in Washington will be more involved in issues that concern the UN and international cooperation. We welcome this and look forward to cooperating with the US on these issues.

Read the full statement here:

Joint Statement Reinforcing Multilateralism together building on the United Nations 75th Anniversary Declaration



Article from Prime Minister's Office

EU conference on coordinated COVID-19 approach

Published 29 October 2020

On Thursday 29 October, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will take part in a video conference with other EU heads of state and government. The leaders will discuss how EU Member States can better coordinate their response in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

The heads of state and government will discuss what can be done at EU level to reduce the current spread of COVID-19 in EU Member States. They will share experiences of how to effectively conduct COVID-19 testing and contact tracing to reduce the spread of infection and discuss the possibility of coordinating quarantine rules.

They will also discuss the work of producing and then distributing a vaccine, and how its allocation should proceed.

This is the EU leaders first video conference since the summer. Three video conferences were held during the spring.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Climate change, Brexit and COVID-19 at the EU summit

Published 16 October 2020

The European Union's future relations with the United Kingdom and climate targets for 2030 were on the agenda when Prime Minister Stefan Löfven met the other EU leaders in Brussels on 15–16 October. The heads of state and government also discussed EU-Africa relations and the COVID-19 situation in the EU.

The EU's future relations with the UK

– There is strong consensus with regard to the negotiations on the future relations between the EU and the UK, and the negotiations are moving forward, but three very difficult matters remain unresolved. These are fisheries, a level playing field and dispute settlement, said Prime Minister Stefan Löfven after the summit.

On the first day of the summit, chief negotiator Michel Barnier updated the leaders on the EU-UK negotiations on the future relationship.

– Sweden naturally wants a deal, it is important for growth and employment. And we are united in the EU on continuing the negotiations. Both sides must do their utmost, said Mr Löfven.

EU climate targets for 2030

At the summit, the heads of state and government held an orientation debate on which climate targets the EU should achieve by 2030.

– With regard to the climate change issue, it is clear that there are different

levels of ambition among the EU countries. Sweden and like-minded countries have therefore taken the initiative to support the Commission's proposal to reduce emissions by at least 55 per cent by 2030, said Mr Löfven.

The European Council adopted the EU's current climate targets for 2030 in 2014.

– We must not end up in a situation in which the current target of a 40 per cent reduction is retained. It would mean that we would be unable to meet the long-term target of zero climate impact by 2050, added Mr Löfven.

COVID-19

The EU leaders also held a general discussion about the COVID-19 situation in the Member States.

– The increasing spread of COVID-19 is concerning. We also discussed what we can do together. Health care and decisions on disease control are national matters, as they should be. But perhaps we could also coordinate more with each other, exchange more experiences and learn from each other to help each other in this difficult situation,” was how Mr Löfven summed up the evening's discussion.

EU-Africa

The heads of state and government also discussed EU-Africa relations ahead of the upcoming summit between the EU and the African Union, as well as other foreign policy issues.

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven represented Sweden at the summit in Brussels.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Brexit and climate change at the EU summit

Published 15 October 2020

The EU's future relationship with the UK and climate targets for 2030 are two topics that Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and other EU leaders will address when they meet in Brussels on 15–16 October. The heads of state and government will also discuss EU-Africa relations and a coordinated approach to COVID-19.

EU's future relationship with UK

The summit will begin with chief negotiator Michel Barnier updating EU leaders on the negotiations with the UK on the future relationship with the EU.

The negotiations have been going on during the spring and summer. Still to be negotiated are the design of the rules for fair competition, what the fisheries agreement should include and how disputes will be settled.

When the UK left the EU at midnight on 31 January, a transition period began that runs until the end of 2020. During the transition period, the EU and the UK are to negotiate an agreement on the future relationship between them.

EU climate targets for 2030

To achieve climate neutrality by 2050, EU Member States must review their climate targets for the next few years. Negotiations on a European Climate Law have been under way since the spring and in September, the European

Commission proposed new climate targets for 2030. At the summit, the heads of state and government will hold an orientation debate on which climate targets the EU should achieve by 2030.

COVID-19

EU leaders will also have a general discussion on the situation concerning the pandemic in the Member States and on the EU recommendation that Member States that have chosen to introduce restrictions that affect free movement in the Union should coordinate their measures. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will update the heads of state and government on efforts to produce a vaccine.

EU-Africa relations

The heads of state and government will also discuss EU-Africa relations ahead of the upcoming summit between the UN and the African Union. Among the topics discussed will be how cooperation between EU Member States and countries in Africa can be improved and deepened.

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will represent Sweden at the summit in Brussels.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Address by PM Stefan Löfven at the General Debate of the 75th Session of the General Assembly of the UN

Published 26 September 2020

Today Prime Minister Stefan Löfven addressed the UN General Assembly. He focused his statement on the importance of working together in international solidarity to support the UN and jointly tackle the pandemic and the climate crisis. He stressed that we must seize this opportunity to build back stronger, greener & more equal societies.

Check against delivery.

Excellencies,

We are celebrating the 75th anniversary of the United Nations in the midst of a global pandemic – a pandemic that has placed enormous pressure on our societies, our communities and our families. I would like to express my deepest condolences for the lives lost.

Times like these test the resilience of our societies and our international cooperation. More than ever, we need to work together in solidarity.

In this spirit, Sweden and Qatar co-chaired the negotiations on the “Declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations”, which was adopted on 21 September. Member States sent a strong message of support for a rules-based international order and for

multilateralism. We all re-committed to strengthening international cooperation, with a modern, innovative and inclusive UN at the core.

We now have the rare opportunity to build better societies – societies that are more resilient. We have the opportunity to jointly address shared challenges:

- the pandemic,
- the climate crisis,
- widening inequalities,
- violations of international law
- and threats to international peace.

To create, as Secretary-General Guterres called for in his recent Mandela Lecture, a new social contract and a new global deal.

Excellencies,

Sweden fully supports the UN's leadership of the global COVID-19 response and recognises the crucial role of the World Health Organization.

So far, Sweden has contributed more than 170 million dollars to the global response. Together with a number of world leaders, I have expressed my commitment to securing equitable and global access to future COVID-19 vaccines. No one is safe until everyone is safe. Securing access to vaccines is a global challenge that requires international cooperation and solidarity.

Excellencies,

Climate change is one of our most pressing issues. Throughout the world, young and old people alike have marched together on the streets to demand that decision-makers like us act in line with scientific recommendations. We must reshape our societies and lower emissions. Sweden is striving to be the first fossil-free welfare nation but welcome all competition to beat us to the post.

We will continue to work with the industrial sector to achieve net-zero emissions, not least within the “Leadership Group for Industry Transition” that we launched with India at last year's Climate Summit. We call for more ambitious nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement. We will work for an ambitious outcome at COP26 in Glasgow.

Excellencies,

As we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, we need to strengthen our resolve to ensure that no one is left behind. Ensuring the equal participation of every individual, irrespective of their gender and sexual orientation, is essential to realising the 2030 Agenda.

The current pandemic is exacerbating existing discrimination and inequality and the risk of sexual and gender-based violence. It is having a disproportionate impact on women's and girls' access to essential health services. Robust funding of sexual and reproductive health and rights must be a priority.

The 25th anniversary of the landmark "Beijing Declaration" and Platform for Action" offers an opportunity to intensify our efforts for gender equality.

Sweden is ready to take on a leading role in UN Women's "Global Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights". I am delighted to see that others have joined Sweden in pursuing a feminist foreign policy.

Excellencies,

The pandemic is placing enormous pressure on the ability of democratic institutions to function and is having serious consequences for human rights. Far too many leaders and governments are using it as a pretext in their attempts to silence opposition, civil society and human rights defenders.

Sweden will continue to promote our Drive for Democracy, which aims to strengthen respect for democratic principles and institutions, civil society and international law. We support the Secretary-General's "Call to Action for Human Rights".

Excellencies,

Millions of people around the world have lost their jobs and livelihoods because of the pandemic. Social dialogue in the workplace can help mitigate the impact of the pandemic and shape solutions. We need a sustainable transition in the global labour market, an issue I worked very closely on with President of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, when we co-edited the ILO-report on the Future of Work. Sweden invites more countries to join the Global Deal partnership for Decent Work and Inclusive Growth.

We have also seen trade barriers introduced during the pandemic. Free, fair and sustainable trade is key in order to create new jobs and increase prosperity. The World Trade Organization has an essential role in upholding

a rules-based international trading system.

Around the world, record numbers of people need humanitarian aid to survive. The protracted conflict in Yemen has resulted in the world's largest humanitarian crisis. I urge donors to step up their support of the humanitarian response. We support UN peace efforts and urge the parties to immediately agree on a ceasefire, inclusive political talks and continued implementation of the Stockholm and Riyadh agreements.

We extend our solidarity and support to the Lebanese people following the devastating explosion in Beirut.

Excellencies,

The pandemic is a threat to international peace and security. Sweden and the EU strongly support the implementation of the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire. The UN Security Council has an enormous responsibility. To succeed in its mandated task of upholding international peace and security, it must be reformed to effectively address current and future challenges.

The fight against impunity for international crimes remains essential. Sweden is steadfast in its support of the International Criminal Court.

Women's influence – in peace processes, political transitions and crisis recovery – is crucial. This year marks the 20th anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325; it must be a year of concrete action.

Sweden remains an active partner to the United Nations through:

- financial core support,
- diplomacy,
- mediation
- and as a contributor of military and police personnel to UN peace operations, including MINUSMA. We are following developments in Mali with great concern. A peaceful, swift transition to civilian leadership, with democratic elections, is vital.

Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol and aggression in eastern Ukraine constitute serious breaches of international law, challenge global security and cause human suffering. The European Union is clear on the need for the implementation of the Minsk agreements. Sweden and the European Union condemn in the strongest possible terms the poisoning of

the Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny. The Russian government must investigate the assassination attempt thoroughly and transparently. Those responsible must be brought to justice.

We support, as the only viable means of solving the conflict between Israel and Palestine, a negotiated solution with two states living in peace and security. It must be based on internationally agreed parameters and an end to the occupation. The EU position is clear: annexation of occupied territory is illegal.

In Syria, sustainable peace can only be achieved through a political solution in line with resolution 2254. Sweden recently pledged 96 million dollars to the crisis response at the Brussels 4 Conference.

While there are plenty of challenges across the globe, there is also hope. Sudan now has a once-in-a-generation opportunity. Women and young people took to the streets in 2019, demanding political change, and courageous political decisions followed. Sudan deserves our support on its difficult path to democracy.

Excellencies,

Next year, Sweden will assume the role of Chair of the “Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe”. Our main priority will be working for conflict resolution that builds on the OSCE comprehensive concept of security, with democracy and human rights at the core. The European security order must be upheld, not renegotiated.

Sweden is alarmed at the situation in Belarus following the elections on 9 August, which were neither free nor fair. The increased repression of peaceful demonstrators, journalists and opposition leaders is unacceptable. We stand in solidarity with the Belarusian people in their desire to exercise their fundamental democratic rights. We continue to call on the Belarusian leadership to stop the repression and engage in genuine dialogue with the opposition. We stand ready to facilitate such dialogue.

Excellencies,

This year also marks the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It serves as a tragic reminder of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. The nuclear threat is as present as ever. Milestone treaties have been abandoned or are at

risk, and new nuclear capabilities are being developed. We call on the United States and Russia to agree on an extension of the “New START Treaty”, and on China to join discussions on follow-on arrangements.

As part of our multilateral disarmament diplomacy, Sweden – together with 15 non-nuclear-weapon states – continues to pursue the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament, which aims to contribute to a successful NPT Review Conference.

Together with the EU, we strongly support the full implementation of the “Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action”.

We call on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to adhere to its international obligations and take steps towards denuclearisation.

We remain committed to a peaceful resolution of the situation on the Korean Peninsula.

Excellencies,

Future generations will grow up in a different world. We now have the opportunity to shape its direction.

Together with other countries, Sweden will mobilise support for the Secretary-General in advancing our common agenda laid out in the seventy-fifth anniversary Declaration.

- Together, we can build better societies.
- Together, we can build stronger societies.
- And, together, we can address the challenges that lie ahead.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Statement by PM Stefan Löfven to IAEA General Conference 2020

Published 21 September 2020 Updated 21 September 2020

Today Prime Minister Stefan Löfven gave Sweden's national statement when the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) began its yearly General Conference in Vienna. Sweden is the current Chair of the Board of Governors of IAEA. In his statement, the Prime Minister focused on the importance of disarmament and non-proliferation as well as the benefits of using nuclear technology to address global issues such as the pandemic, the climate crisis and women's health.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Address by PM Stefan Löfven at the High-level Meeting of the Assembly to Commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the UN

Published 21 September 2020 Updated 21 September 2020

Today the United Nation's 75th anniversary is commemorated at the UN in New York. In his address to the high level meeting, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven focused on the importance of working together, across borders, to strengthen multilateralism and jointly face global challenges such as the pandemic and the climate crisis, while working to reform the UN.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Statement by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven honouring the victims of the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Published 06 August 2020 Updated 06 August 2020

Today marks 75 years since an atomic bomb was dropped on the city of Hiroshima in Japan. Three days later, Nagasaki met the same terrible fate. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven has been invited to attend the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony to honour the many victims. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, foreign officials will take part in the commemoration via video messages that will be broadcast in conjunction with the official ceremony.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Deal reached on long-term budget at EU summit

Published 21 July 2020 Updated 21 July 2020

After a marathon summit, the leaders of the 27 EU Member States reached a deal on the long-term EU budget for 2021–2027. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and his EU colleagues also agreed a post-COVID-19 recovery package.

- After four days of intensive and tough negotiations, we finally reached an agreement, said Mr Löfven after the meeting, and added:

- Europe is facing many challenges that we need to tackle collectively, and it's important that the budget is in place. And with the recovery package, we are also better equipped to manage the COVID-19 crisis and its economic impacts.

The Prime Minister commented on the difficult negotiations at the summit.

- Despite a difficult starting position, Sweden's interests and priorities have had a substantial impact. Sweden's budget contributions have been reduced, the rebates are the largest ever, and for the first time the EU has a framework that links EU payouts to respect for the rule of law. This is a huge change, said Mr Löfven.

Mr Löfven also commented on the good cooperation with several other EU member states during the negotiations.

- Together, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands and Austria also succeeded in tightening the conditions for the recovery package and getting green and digital investments that will build a stronger EU and speed up the green

transition.

The long-term budget for the entire period is worth EUR 1 074 billion. The recovery package is worth EUR 750 billion, EUR 360 billion of which will be provided as loans and EUR 390 billion as grants.

The meeting began on Friday morning and was concluded early on Tuesday morning.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

EU long-term budget at summit

Published 17 July 2020

The EU long-term budget will be the main focus when heads of state and government meet in Brussels for the first time since February. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and his 26 colleagues will negotiate the EU long-term budget for 2021–2027.

EU long-term budget for 2021–2027

At the end of May, the European Commission presented an updated proposal for the EU long-term budget for 2021–2027. After having spoken to heads of state and government, President of the European Council Charles Michel presented a more detailed proposal at the end of last week.

At the summit on July 17-18, the EU leaders will discuss the new proposal for a long-term budget with the aim of reaching an agreement. They will decide on the size of the budget, its financing and rebates for countries that are net contributors.

To support affected countries, there is also a proposed recovery package, known as the Recovery Instrument. EU leaders will discuss whether recovery support should be in the form of loans or grants, who should receive support, how large the support should be and how long it should be paid out.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Statement by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven in honour of the victims of the Srebrenica genocide in 1995

Published 11 July 2020

Today we honour the memory of the victims of the Srebrenica genocide in 1995. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven has been invited by Sefik Dzaferovic, the Bosniak member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to attend the commemoration at the Memorial Hall for Srebrenica in Potocari. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, foreign officials will take part in the commemoration via a video message that will be broadcast at the official commemoration ceremony.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Video conference on long-term EU budget

Published 22 June 2020

On Midsummer's Eve, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven took part in a video conference of EU heads of state and government. The main topic was the long-term EU budget for 2021–2027 and the proposed recovery package.

- Europe remains in a serious situation with risk to life and health, and we are far from through this crisis. The pandemic's economic consequences have hit the EU and the world hard and we agree that it will require joint efforts to set the wheels in motion again. The package of economic measures has an important role, but it alone cannot solve the economic problems. To kickstart the real economy, the single market and free movement must function, said Mr Löfven after the summit.

At the end of May, the European Commission presented a revised proposal for the long-term EU budget for 2021–2027, as well as a proposal of measures to help those countries that have been hit hard by COVID-19.

- We believe that the recovery fund should be based on loans and not grants to the Member States. The Commission's proposal would increase the budget by 50 per cent, which is unreasonable. An arrangement involving long-term loans at favourable interest rates enables smart jobs, productivity and competitiveness throughout Europe, added the Prime Minister.

- The Commission has presented a revised budget proposal, but as previously we consider that the total volume remains too large and that continued rebates are a prerequisite for an agreement. However, it is positive that the budget is modernised through, for example, greater focus on the climate and

digitalisation, and that a clear link is proposed between the receipt of EU funds and respect for the rule of law. Sweden has fought hard for this, emphasised Mr Löfven.

The Prime Minister was clear that agreement was not expected at the video conference.

- The EU's recovery is important to Sweden, and I look forward to the continued discussions, concluded Mr Löfven.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

EU's long-term budget via video conference

Published 18 June 2020

On Midsummer's Eve, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will take part in a video conference with his fellow EU heads of state and government. The discussion will mainly focus on the EU long-term budget for 2021–2027, but Brexit will also be brought up.

EU's long-term budget for 2021–2027

At the end of May, the European Commission presented an updated proposal for the EU's long-term budget for 2021–2027. The new proposal contains measures to help countries hit hard by the COVID-19 outbreak to recover.

The meeting will be the first time that EU leaders discuss the new proposal for a long-term budget. Among the issues to be addressed are how the measures will be financed and which sectors, countries and regions are in greatest need of support.

To support the affected countries, the European Commission also proposes a recovery instrument. EU leaders will discuss whether recovery support should be in the form of loans or grants, who should receive support, how large the support should be and how long it should be paid out.

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will represent Sweden at the meeting.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Social distancing and markedly reduced travel in Sweden

Published 18 June 2020 Updated 18 June 2020

Swedes are largely following the government agencies' advice and recommendations. This has been shown through surveys and data concerning movement patterns. Now travel within Sweden is permitted again – but if the guidelines are not followed, the Government is prepared to take measures.

More than eight in ten Swedes are keeping a greater distance from others than they normally would. Just as many are avoiding shaking hands and are washing their hands more often than usual. Over 60 per cent are taking part in social activities outside the home to a lesser extent and are avoiding public places where there are lots of people. This is clear from a survey on behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic conducted by analysis company Kantar Sifo on behalf of the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency. In other words, Swedes are largely following the advice and recommendations issued by the Public Health Agency of Sweden.

Travel decreased by over 40 per cent

The travel advice of the Public Health Agency of Sweden has also been heeded. When the Agency advised against non-essential domestic travel at the end of March, travel in the Stockholm region decreased by over 40 per cent. Data on movement patterns from telecom company Telia's mobile network shows that, in Sweden as a whole, travel decreased by more than 20 per cent. Since 13 May, when the advice was changed to permit travel corresponding to one to two hours by car from home, travel in the country has gradually increased again.

According to the Public Health Agency of Sweden, it is not travel per se that spreads the virus, it is personal hygiene and social contact. Now that fewer Swedes are receiving care in hospital and tracing and testing have got under way, as of 13 June it is permitted for people with no symptoms to travel freely within Sweden.

“Common sense, a large portion of responsibility and caution are required. The vast majority have demonstrated this so far, and it still applies,” says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

New restrictions may be issued

A number of restrictions remain in place. These include the ban on visits to homes for older people, the ban on gatherings of more than 50 people and the rules concerning crowding in restaurants, bars and cafés. Businesses that do not follow the regulations may be closed after an inspection; so far, this has happened on some ten occasions in Stockholm and Gothenburg. The tourism and hospitality industry is also covered by the guidelines on crowding. The situation remains serious and if the curve indicating the number of seriously ill people turns upwards again, new restrictions may be issued.

“Although some restrictions are lifted, this does not mean that life can return to normal. Important restrictions will remain. It is important to hang on, otherwise the spread of infection might take off. We all need to continue to take great personal responsibility,” Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin says.

“If it turns out that this doesn’t work, we’re prepared to take measures and tighten the recommendations,” says Minister for Business, Industry and Innovation Ibrahim Baylan.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven on international collaboration to handle COVID-19

Published 18 June 2020

Sweden is a firm believer in international cooperation, the Swedish Prime Minister stated at a press briefing on May 15.

Life is not carrying on as normal in Sweden. Sweden has the same goals as all other countries: to save lives and to protect public health. In addition, the Government has provided 220 million SEK to specific international measures to handle COVID-19, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven said at the press briefing.

“This crisis clearly demonstrates the need to strengthen international collaboration as well as multilateral institutions, to invest in partnerships with civil society as well as in the private sector and to formulate a plan for recovering from this pandemic and coming back stronger, more resilient ahead of next crises,” Prime Minister Stefan Löfven stated.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of the Environment

Government to establish a Ministerial Working Group on Climate Policy

Published 12 June 2020

The Government's goal is for Sweden to be the world's first fossil-free welfare nation. To achieve this, all policy areas must pull in the same direction and the issue of climate change must be integrated into all relevant policy areas. For this reason, the Government has decided to form a ministerial working group on climate policy.

– Climate change is the defining issue of our time and it cannot be solved if we're stuck in a silo mentality. All relevant policy areas must contribute to the transition of society as a whole, says Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin.

The purpose of the ministerial working group is to strengthen the Government's work to achieve the climate objectives and to implement the climate policy action plan. The working group will hold regular meetings chaired by the Prime Minister. In addition to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Environment and Climate, the group will include six other ministers whose areas are crucial to the climate transition: the Minister for Business, Industry and Innovation, the Minister for Infrastructure, the Minister for Energy and Digital Development, the Minister for Rural Affairs and the Minister for Financial Markets and Housing.

The Ministerial Working Group on Climate Policy will have a central role in efforts to drive the transition and pursue the green recovery.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

EU leaders discussed economic recovery

Published 24 April 2020

The COVID-19 virus is primarily a risk to human life and health. But it has also had serious consequences for jobs and the economy, both globally and in Sweden. Economic recovery following the COVID-19 crisis was the theme when Prime Minister Stefan Löfven met his EU colleagues via a videoconference on 23 April.

- The COVID-19 virus has seriously affected our continent, and cooperation and solidarity in the EU has been tested. For example, it is difficult to grant the use of intensive care beds when you do not know how many you need yourself, and EU cooperation was discounted at the beginning of the crisis. But Sweden needs a strong EU that stays together, for the economy and welfare – and with a strong EU we can also combat climate change, said Mr Löfven after the summit.

- We are now facing another challenge, and that is the recovery. At the summit today, we gave the European Commission the task of assessing the needs and proposing an EU recovery fund. Together with like-minded countries, we have presented a number of requirements for this fund. For example, it must concern loans, with strict repayment requirements.

The heads of state and government discussed what EU Member States can do together to strengthen the single market, how a financial aid fund could be designed and what the EU should do to support other affected countries, including in the EU neighbourhood and in Africa.

This was the fourth such videoconference since the COVID-19 outbreak. Previous videoconferences took place on 10, 17 and 25 March.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Strategy in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Published 06 April 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic is testing our society. In recent months, the Swedish government has presented a range of different measures. The government's overarching goal is to safeguard people's lives and health and to secure the health care capacity.

“This crisis will continue for a long time. It will be tough. But our society is strong. If everyone takes their responsibility, together we will overcome it,” says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

On 1 February, the Government classified COVID-19 as a disease that constitutes a danger to society, opening the possibility of extraordinary communicable disease control measures.

The overall objective of the Government's efforts is to reduce the pace of the COVID-19 virus's spread: to ‘flatten the curve’ so that large numbers of people do not become ill at the same time.

It is important to implement the right measure at the right time, to achieve the best possible impact. The Government will take every decision necessary to safeguard people's lives, health and jobs.

The measures taken by the Government and government agencies to reduce the pace of the virus's spread need to be weighed against their effects on society and public health in general. The measures taken are reviewed constantly as the situation develops.

An important starting point is careful consideration of the expert knowledge contributed by government agencies. These expert agencies can make

recommendations to the Government on the measures they consider should be taken, but they can also take decisions of their own.

“Our government agencies and our health care system are doing everything they can. But every person in Sweden needs to take individual responsibility. If everyone takes responsibility, we can keep the spread of the virus in check. Follow the authorities’ advice: if you have even the slightest symptoms, do not go to work and refrain from meeting other people,” says Mr Löfven.

People in Sweden have a high level of trust in government agencies. This means that a large proportion of people follow government agencies’ advice. In the current situation, people in Sweden are on the whole acting responsibly to reduce the spread of infection by, for example, restricting their social contacts.

This crisis may continue for a long time, and in order for the measures to work over time, people need to understand and accept them.

The efforts and decisions of the Government aim to:

1. Limit the spread of infection in the country

By limiting the spread of the virus, the Government aims to relieve pressure on the health care system and protect people’s lives, health and jobs.

2. Ensure that health and medical care resources are available

The Government aims to ensure that the municipalities and regions, which provide the health care, have all necessary resources. For this reason, central government will cover all extraordinary costs arising as a result of the pandemic, e.g. higher costs for additional staff and protective equipment.

3. Limit the impact on critical services

To ensure that society can continue to function, the Government monitors needs and takes the decisions required to ensure that the health care, police, energy supply, communications, transport and food supply systems, for example, can maintain their activities.

4. Alleviate the impact on people and businesses

The Government has presented crisis packages to mitigate the financial impact of the pandemic on Swedish businesses, organisations and agencies, and to save people's jobs and livings.

5. Ease concern

By continuously providing information, the Government aims to make it clear what measures are being taken, and why. The Government broadcasts important information live on its website, [regeringen.se](https://www.regeringen.se). Written information about the Government's efforts, measures and decisions is also available there.

6. Implement the right measures at the right time

The Government is monitoring developments in the COVID-19 pandemic closely. It is taking the decisions that are needed, when they are needed, to limit the spread of the virus and counter its impact on society.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Employment

The same power to shape society and their own lives – the work of Sweden's feminist government continues

Published 08 March 2020 Updated 08 March 2020

All government policy must redistribute power and resources for a more gender-equal society. The goal is to ensure that women and men have the same power to shape society and their own lives.

"I am proud to lead the world's first feminist government. International rankings show that we have come a long way in our gender equality efforts. But we are not finished yet – we will continue our work until women and men have the same power to shape society and their own lives. Today is International Women's Day. This is an important day that reminds us that we cannot rest on our laurels", says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

"So far during this electoral period we have conducted major initiatives to combat men's violence against women and honour-based violence and oppression. In 2019, more than SEK 460 million was invested, and for 2020 the Government has so far taken decisions on investments amounting to over SEK 300 million in this area. We also recently appointed a commission on gender-equal lifetime earnings. But at the same time, much remains to be done before we have achieved gender equality. Women generally have lower wages than men, take more sick leave and take greater responsibility for unpaid household and care work. Far too many are also subjected to violence by men with whom they have close relationships. This is why we must continue to move gender equality work forward", says Minister for Gender Equality Åsa Lindhagen.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

No agreement on long-term budget at EU summit

Published 25 February 2020

Heads of state and government from the 27 EU Member States met in Brussels on Thursday and Friday to try to agree on the EU's long-term budget for the period 2021 to 2027. The meeting ended without the EU leaders reaching an agreement.

“For us it has been important to keep Sweden's contribution to the EU budget in check. The proposals presented are not good enough. Some progress has been made but unfortunately our positions remain far apart,” said Prime Minister Stefan Löfven after the summit.

“The level of the budget is still too high and our rebates too low. We are in complete agreement on this with like-minded countries Denmark, the Netherlands and Austria.”

At a later date, the leaders will resume the discussions on how large the budget should be, how the money should be distributed in the various expenditure areas and where the money should come from.

Mr Löfven represented Sweden at the summit in Brussels.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Summit on the EU's long-term budget

Published 20 February 2020

On Thursday 20 February, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will be in Brussels to meet his colleagues in the European Council. They will try to agree on the EU's long-term budget for 2021–2027.

At the extraordinary summit of the European Council, the EU leaders will try to agree on the EU's next long-term budget. They will discuss how large the budget should be, how the money should be divided between different expenditure areas and where the money should come from. The long-term budget will apply for 2021–2027.

Negotiations on the EU's long-term budget have been under way since May 2018 and are now nearing their conclusion. To prepare for the summit, President of the European Council Charles Michel has held talks with all 27 EU leaders.

Sweden's priorities remain in place. Just like like-minded countries Austria, Denmark and the Netherlands, Sweden wants to limit the total volume to 1 per cent of the EU's total GNI. Sweden's contribution must be kept down and the Government wants to achieve this by ensuring an adequate rebate. The Government therefore considers that the proposals presented by the President of the European Council ahead of the summit are not good enough.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Employment, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Infrastructure

Several Ministers participated in commemorating Holocaust Remembrance Day on 27 January

Published 30 January 2020

On Holocaust Remembrance Day January 27 several representatives from the Swedish Government participated in memorial services to honour the victims of the Holocaust and to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven attended a memorial ceremony at Auschwitz-Birkenau to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the liberation. The memorial service began in Auschwitz and ended with a candle lighting ceremony in Birkenau.

Minister for Education Anna Ekström spoke at a memorial service arranged by the Council of Roma representatives in Malmö and then at a memorial service arranged by the Jewish Community of Malmö in the Synagogue of Malmö.

Minister for Home Affairs Mikael Damberg spoke at a ceremony arranged by The Living History Forum at Raoul Wallenberg's Square and then at the memorial ceremony in the Great Synagogue of Stockholm. Minister for Environment and Deputy Prime and Climate Isabella Lövin, Minister for Justice and Migration Morgan Johansson and Minister for Financial Markets and Housing Per Bolund also participated at the ceremony in the Great Synagogue.

Minister for Culture and Democracy Amanda Lind visited the Jewish Community of Gothenburg and spoke at the memorial ceremony in the evening.

Minister for Gender Equality, with responsibility for anti-discrimination and anti-segregation Åsa Lindhagen spoke at the memorial ceremony at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

Further Minister for Energy and Digital Development Anders Ygeman and Minister for Justice and Migration Morgan Johansson participated in a memorial service at the The Royal Dramatic Theatre.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven visited Yad Vashem to participate in the World Holocaust Forum

Published 23 January 2020

On 22 January, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven visited Jerusalem to participate in the World Holocaust Forum to honour the victims of the Holocaust and commemorate the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. The memorial ceremony took place at Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust remembrance centre.

"Of all the history and all the knowledge we have about the genocide perpetrated by the Nazis and their collaborators, it is the fate of the children that affects me the most. The children who had to flee without their parents before the war. The children who were forced out of their homes and who had to go with their parents to the ghettos and the concentration camps. The children who died of starvation and who were murdered in the camps and by the death squads. The children – around 1.5 million children – who were robbed of their lives and of their futures in what can only be described as humanity's darkest hour," says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

During his visit to Jerusalem, the Prime Minister also met representatives from Jewish civil society. Discussions centred on remembrance of the Holocaust and the work against antisemitism – issues that will be the focus of the forum to be hosted by the Prime Minister in Malmö in October 2020.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Climate, long-term budget and Brexit at EU summit

Published 12 December 2019

On 12–13 December, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will meet his European Council colleagues for the final summit of the year. EU leaders will discuss the EU's climate goals for 2050, the EU's long-term budget and external relations. Deepening Europe's Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and Brexit are on Friday's agenda.

EU climate goals for 2050

EU leaders will begin the summit by discussing the EU's climate goals and whether the EU can adopt the target of achieving climate neutrality by 2050.

The Government's view is that the EU should adopt an ambitious long-term climate strategy as soon as possible so that it can be communicated to the UN in early 2020.

EU's long-term budget for 2021–2027

The week before the summit, Finland's presidency presented a new proposal for the long-term budget with figures for the overall expenditure and the various expenditure areas. EU leaders will be discussing the quantified proposal for the first time at the summit.

The Government cannot accept this proposal, which involves an overall ceiling of 1.07% of EU gross national income (GNI). The Government considers that the budget should be capped at 1.00% of EU GNI.

The Government is pleased that the proposal contains a mechanism that creates conditionality between the EU budget and respect for the rule of law, and that at least 25% of the budget is for climate action.

EU leaders are not likely to conclude the long-term budget negotiations at the meeting.

Brexit

EU leaders will also discuss Brexit. The results of the UK general election on 12 December will be known during the summit and will shape the discussion.

EU climate goals for 2050

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Brexit

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Euro Summit

On 13 December, a meeting of the Euro Summit will be held and attended also by non-Euro countries. EU leaders will receive a report from the finance ministers on the work on a budgetary instrument for the euro area, the banking union and the European Stability Mechanism.



Government Offices of Sweden

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

Discussions, meetings and collaboration for developing Sweden

Published 06 November 2019

Interesting discussions and new perspectives characterised the National Innovation Council meeting and thematic day at Linnaeus University in Kalmar on 23 October. The aim of the Council's regional meetings is to learn from local and regional experiences and to develop the national policy. Alongside the meeting, various workshops were also organised as part of the Innovation Council's thematic day.

The National Innovation Council meeting, which was led by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, focused on how society can address complex social challenges through innovation and cooperation. The Council meets 6 times per year, of which two meetings are regional. The meeting and thematic workshops in Kalmar were jointly planned by the county administrative board and Region Kalmar and, in addition to the core issues of cooperation and innovation, focused on two themes: eHealth and sustainable water use, which are important issues for the region. Meeting participants discussed the problems associated with water scarcity and the challenges arising from a steadily aging population that put a strain on the health and welfare sector, particularly eHealth. A great deal of attention was given to the solutions and opportunities that innovation and technology can present.

Lena Miranda, CEO of Science Park Mjärdevi and member of the National Innovation Council, participated in the meeting in Kalmar.

Why is it important for the Innovation Council to have meetings in different regions of Sweden?

“The Government has expressed the desire to see more innovation – not just in the business sector but in all areas – throughout the country, and not limited to metropolitan areas. I think this is the right way to go. Innovation happens everywhere, and our job is to create the best possible conditions to contribute to this. We have to make sure that people feel they are involved and create an impact – inclusion is very important to also ensure the survival of democracy,” says Ms Miranda, and continues:

“Around our country, there are many good examples at local and regional level that are important for us to see and understand at national level when decisions on new initiatives are to be taken. From this perspective, the Innovation Council’s visits around the country are important.”

The Prime Minister, other government ministers and Council members, together with regional actors from academia, the business sector and society, took part in the meeting. One of the participants was Cecilia Schelin Seidegård, Deputy County Governor of Kalmar County.

What do you consider to be important lessons from today’s meeting and which are also relevant to the national policy?

“Innovation takes place throughout the country. We need to find forms to spread good ideas between different regions in order to benefit from what already exists. Kalmar County will gladly be part of various testbeds, both when it comes to water issues and eHealth. There is a strong commitment to work together to make a difference. We can take the initiative and conduct tests on a small scale, which can then be implemented on a large scale,” says Ms Schelin Seidegård.

High level of activity at Innovation Council workshops

Running alongside the meeting was the Innovation Council’s thematic day, with activities in workshops under the guidance of Vinnova and Hack for Sweden. Participants had the chance to test cooperation methods and find common goals and ways to solve social challenges. The theme here as well was sustainable water use and eHealth.

The day’s programme concluded with a meeting of participants from both the Innovation Council meeting and the workshops to jointly report on

experiences from the day. Many people spoke about the benefit of different actors meeting to discuss and provide different perspectives and solutions to complex social challenges. In conclusion, Mr Löfven highlighted the importance of regional cooperation for innovation, and also open dialogue between local, regional and national activities. The ambition now is to continue working on the ideas, comments and proposals that emerged during the activities of both groups.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Brexit and the EU's long-term budget at the EU Summit

Published 17 October 2019

On Thursday and Friday, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will meet his EU colleagues in Brussels. The meeting will be dominated by Brexit and discussions on the EU's long-term budget for 2021–2027. The heads of state and government will also discuss EU enlargement and climate change.

Brexit

The negotiations on a new agreement for the UK's withdrawal from the EU, Brexit, are continuing up to the last minute ahead of the meeting of the European Council. The heads of state and government will discuss Brexit at the meeting.

The EU's long-term budget for 2021–2027

Discussions on the EU's long-term budget have been under way at several levels since the second half of last year. The heads of state and government will discuss the continued work at the meeting.

EU climate strategy

The EU leaders will also discuss the EU's long-term climate strategy, and what long-term targets the EU should set.

The Paris Agreement from 2015 urges all signatories to formulate long-term climate strategies and communicate them to the UN by 2020.

Turkey

The heads of state and government will probably discuss Turkey's test drilling in the eastern Mediterranean, the migration situation and possibly the country's military action in Syria.

EU activities 2019–2024

At the previous meeting, the heads of state and government pointed to a number of areas the EU should work on during 2020–2024 in a strategic agenda. Examples of areas include climate change, migration, security and a strong economy. The strategic agenda can be likened to a guide for the work of the next European Commission when it takes office. At the meeting, the EU leaders will discuss the strategic agenda together with Ursula von der Leyen, the President-elect of the European Commission.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

The Innovation Council contributes to concrete initiatives for the future

Published 11 October 2019

On 16 September 2019, the National Innovation Council met to discuss climate change.

“The National Innovation Council helps us to raise our sights and find new solutions to the societal challenges we face as a country. The need for reforms to manage the climate transition and to ensure our competitiveness and our welfare is great, and innovation will be key if we are to succeed,” says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

Innovative power is needed in society and in politics. The societal challenges ahead of us are more complicated than previously and will demand collaboration, participation and engagement from all parts of society. It is a matter of readjusting society for new conditions, finding better courses of action and using new solutions.

The issues raised in the National Innovation Council are raised at the highest political level. During the previous electoral period, the work of the Council contributed to the reform of the State’s venture capital investment activities through the new company Saminvest AB, the innovative platform Testbed Sweden and the national approach to artificial intelligence.

At the core of the National Innovation Council are its members and the dialogues and discussions the Council has on societal development, with a focus on innovation. The members of the National Innovation Council are appointed for their personal expertise and experience, and because they represent various perspectives and sectors of society.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Top positions at special meeting of the European Council

Published 29 June 2019

On 30 June, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will meet the heads of state or government of the EU Member States. At the Special Europe Council, they will continue their talks on the EU's top positions, including who will become President of the European Commission for the next five years.

The EU leaders will meet in Brussels to discuss, and hopefully agree on, who will be the next President of the European Commission after Jean-Claude Juncker. They will also likely discuss other top positions, including who will be the next President of the European Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Later in the year, a new head of the European Central Bank will also be appointed. The newly elected European Parliament will appoint its President, most likely on 3 July.

According to the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Council should propose a new President of the European Commission taking into account the results of the European Parliament elections. This person must then be approved by the European Parliament. The European Council appoints its own President.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Climate and future issues at EU summit

Published 26 June 2019

Climate change, the long-term EU budget and the EU's strategic agenda for the coming institutional cycle were on the agenda when Stefan Löfven and other heads of state or government from EU Member States met in Brussels on 20–21 June. The EU leaders also discussed the EU's external relations and appointments to several top positions in the EU.

- I am pleased we pushed through many Swedish priorities regarding issues the EU should focus on in the next five years. This includes decent jobs, an ambitious climate policy, and a well-functioning migration policy, said Prime Minister Stefan Löfven after the first day ended.

The EU's climate strategy

Ahead of the United Nations Secretary-General's Climate Action Summit in September, the heads of state or government discussed the EU's long-term climate strategy. The discussion focused on the targets the EU should set. At the summit, the EU leaders agreed on raising climate ambitions and retaining the target of a rise in temperature of 1.5 degrees Celsius, consistent with the Paris Agreement. Most EU countries also supported the target of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.

- I also note that more and more EU countries are taking climate change seriously. Even though we did not achieve complete consensus yesterday, it is important to remember that just a few months ago only a few countries supported the goal of climate neutrality by 2050. Now 24 out of 28 countries

do. So we're moving in the right direction and we will continue to push the issue, said Mr Löfven.

The EU's strategic agenda for 2019–2024

The heads of state or government adopted a strategic agenda for 2019–2024, for the new European Commission that takes office in a few months' time.

The strategic agenda focuses on four main priorities for the EU in the coming institutional cycle:

- protecting citizens and freedoms,
- developing a strong and vibrant economic base,
- building a climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe, and
- promoting European interests and values on the global stage.

The long-term EU budget

Discussions on the long-term EU budget have been under way at several levels since the second half of last year. The heads of state or government discussed how the process should continue.

External relations

As usual, the EU leaders addressed the situation outside the EU, including relations between Turkey and Cyprus, the situation in Russia and relations with Ukraine. Disinformation and hybrid threats were also on the agenda. The EU leaders decided to extend the sanctions against Russia for an additional six months.

Top positions in the EU

The final point discussed by the EU leaders on Thursday was the allocation of the top positions in the EU.

- We will discuss candidates for the top positions this week and meet again on 30 June, said Mr Löfven.

The first positions to be filled are: President of the European Commission, President of the European Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Later in the year, the head of the

European Central Bank will be appointed. The European Parliament will appoint its President, most likely on 2 July.

The European Council will propose a new President of the European Commission, taking account of the election results. The new President must then be approved by the European Parliament. The European Council appoints its own President.

Euro Summit

On Friday, a Euro Summit took place in an extended format that also included countries outside the euro area. The heads of state or government discussed the euro area budget, reforms of the European Stability Mechanism and the banking union.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Top positions and future issues at EU summit

Published 20 June 2019

The EU's strategic agenda for the coming institutional cycle, the long-term budget, appointments to several top EU positions and external relations are on the agenda as the heads of state and government meet in Brussels on 20–21 June.

The EU's strategic agenda for 2019–2024

EU leaders will begin their meeting by discussing a proposal for the EU's strategic agenda for 2019–2024. The strategic agenda will guide the work of the next European Commission when it takes office in November.

The EU's climate strategy

Ahead of the United Nations Secretary-General's Climate Action Summit in September, the heads of state and government will also discuss the EU's long-term climate strategy. The discussion will involve what targets the EU will set.

The EU's long-term budget

Discussions on the EU's long-term budget, also called the multiannual financial framework, have been under way at several levels since the autumn. The heads of state and government will also discuss guidelines and a timeline for the remaining work.

The EU's external relations

As usual, the EU leaders will address the situation outside the EU, including the relations between Turkey and Cyprus, the situation in Russia and the relations between Ukraine and the Eastern Partnership. Disinformation and hybrid threats are also on the agenda.

Top positions in the EU

One agenda item that will receive a lot of attention is the discussion on the allocation of the top positions in the EU. The first positions to be filled are: President of the European Commission, President of the European Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Later in the autumn, the head of the European Central Bank will be appointed. The European Parliament will appoint its President.

Taking account of the election results, the European Council will nominate the President of the European Commission, who must then be approved by the European Parliament. The European Council appoints its own President.

Euro Summit

On Friday, a Euro Summit will take place in an extended format. This means that EU countries outside the euro area are welcome. At the Summit, the heads of state and government will discuss the euro area budget, reforms of the European Stability Mechanism and the banking union.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received the President of the Republic of Korea

Published 19 June 2019

In connection with the State Visit by President of the Republic of Korea Moon Jae-in, celebrating 60 years of diplomatic relations, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received President Moon for bilateral talks in Saltsjöbaden on 15 June.

President Moon is particularly interested in Sweden's work on labour market and welfare issues. During their talks, Mr Löfven therefore told him about the Saltsjöbaden Agreement – the labour market agreement concluded in 1938 – and the Swedish model based on social dialogue and gender equality.

They also discussed the potential to further strengthen trade, investment and cooperation on innovation, and oversaw the signing of cooperation agreements on economic development, innovation and start-ups.

Foreign and security policy was also on the agenda, including multilateral cooperation, climate issues, and democracy and human rights. The situation on the Korean Peninsula was discussed, with a particular focus on cooperation to bring about nuclear disarmament and a peaceful resolution.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Top positions important issue for EU national leaders

Published 28 May 2019

After the European Parliamentary elections, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will meet with other EU heads of state and government to begin talks on the allocation of top EU positions.

On 28 of May, EU leaders will meet in Brussels to discuss the top positions in the EU institutions after the elections to the European Parliament. They are also expected to ask the current President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, to begin the nomination process for the heads of the EU institutions.

The first positions to be filled in the autumn are: President of the European Commission, President of the European Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

Later in the autumn, the head of the European Central Bank will be appointed and the President of the European Parliament will be elected by the newly elected members of the Parliament.

Taking account of the election results, the European Council will nominate the President of the European Commission, who must then be approved by the European Parliament.

The European Council appoints its own President.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

EU leaders discuss EU's future in Sibiu

Published 09 May 2019

On 9 May, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will attend the informal meeting of heads of state or government in the Romanian city of Sibiu. The EU leaders will exchange views on the challenges and priorities for the EU for the years to come and discuss the next strategic agenda for the period 2019–2024.

Stefan Löfven will travel to Sibiu on Europe Day, 9 May, to discuss the future of the EU.

At the informal European Council, the heads of state or government will have an initial discussion of the EU's strategic agenda for the coming five years. The discussion will focus on the priorities for the new leadership of the European Commission, which will assume its five-year mandate in the autumn. The climate, migration, security and competitiveness are high on the strategic agenda.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister attended International Arctic Forum in St Petersburg

Published 11 April 2019

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven attended the International Arctic Forum in St Petersburg on 9 April and, in connection with the conference, held bilateral talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin. The theme of this year's Forum was sustainable growth in the Arctic region.

The Government pursues an active Arctic policy, particularly on issues linked to climate change. The conference in St Petersburg was an important opportunity for political dialogue with Russia and other participating countries, including Finland, Norway and Iceland, about these global challenges.

In connection with the conference, Mr Löfven had a bilateral meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin. The meeting was an opportunity to express Sweden's policy with respect to relations with Russia. The Government is seeking enhanced cooperation with Russia on issues of interest to Sweden, including trade, the environment and climate, and health.

There is also a strong interest in enhancing people-to-people contacts, particularly between civil society organisations. At the same time, Mr Löfven clearly communicated Sweden's position of principle with respect to Russia's aggression towards Ukraine and its conduct in our neighbourhood. Recent developments with respect to human rights and democracy were also raised at the meeting. During his visit to St Petersburg, Mr Löfven also met representatives of Russian civil society and Swedish businesses.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister to Brussels for Brexit summit

Published 10 April 2019 Updated 10 April 2019

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will meet fellow heads of state and government at an extraordinary summit of the European Council on Wednesday 10 April. At the summit, EU leaders will discuss Brexit, the UK's withdrawal from the EU. UK Prime Minister Theresa May will attend the first part of the summit to give her view of the situation.

The UK is currently due to leave the EU on 12 April, but the British parliament has not yet approved the withdrawal agreement. In a letter to the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, Ms May has asked the EU to delay the UK's withdrawal until 30 June. EU leaders will discuss possible solutions to avoid the UK leaving the EU without an agreement ('hard Brexit').

One possibility could be to give the UK until 30 June to leave the EU, another is to give the country the option to leave the EU later, when it is ready. If possible, the EU wants to avoid the UK leaving without an agreement, and the Swedish Government supports this position.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received EU's chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier

Published 04 April 2019

On 4 April, the Prime Minister and the Minister for EU Affairs received the EU's chief negotiator for Brexit, Michel Barnier.

Talks centred on the troubling situation in the Brexit process in which the United Kingdom, eight days prior to its expected withdrawal, has still not approved the negotiated Withdrawal Agreement.

Mr Löfven and Mr Barnier confirmed the need for the EU to take the action possible within their parameters to avoid having the UK crash out of the EU without an agreement.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Brexit and the single market at EU-summit

Published 25 March 2019

At the EU summit on 21–22 March, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and his EU colleagues agreed to offer the United Kingdom an extension until 22 May on condition that the British Parliament approves the withdrawal agreement next week. The heads of state and government also addressed the EU's long-term climate strategy and the EU's relationship with China.

Brexit – the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU

On the first day of the summit, the EU leaders discussed the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU.

“I have just concluded a meeting of almost eight hours with the other heads of state and government about Brexit. We agreed to give the United Kingdom an extension until 22 May on condition that the withdrawal agreement is approved by the British House of Commons next week. If it is not approved, the British must present a plan for how they wish to take the process further by 12 April at the latest,” said Prime Minister Stefan Löfven after the meeting.

The Prime Minister emphasised the importance of continuing to work for an orderly British withdrawal from the EU.

“We have to understand what a no-deal withdrawal would actually mean for individual citizens. There are 100 000 Swedish citizens living in the United

Kingdom and approximately 20 000 British citizens living in Sweden. A no-deal withdrawal will create major problems for companies and thus for our exports. Large financial values are at stake – it involves medicines, flight clearance – in other words, many different issues need to be resolved,” said Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

The EU leaders repeated that there can be no question of renegotiating the withdrawal agreement that the EU and the United Kingdom agreed on in November 2018.

The EU’s relationship with China

At the meeting, the EU leaders prepared for the approaching EU summit with China on 9 April. The heads of state and government held a broad discussion of the EU’s relationship with China. The EU leaders emphasised the importance of partnership and of finding cooperation areas with China, while also needing to safeguard the EU’s interests within trade and investment, for example by ensuring that rules are fair.

In the area of security too, the heads of state and government emphasised that the EU must protect its interests, for example as regards sensitive infrastructure.

Jobs, growth, competitiveness and climate change

On the second day of the meeting, the EU leaders and the heads of state and government of Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein marked the 25th anniversary of the single market.

The discussion then continued on the theme of jobs, growth and competitiveness. The EU leaders emphasised the importance of an efficient single market in which there are development opportunities for service companies and digitalisation, for example. They also emphasised the value of free and fair competition, a strong single market and an open, rules-based world trade system.

The EU’s long-term climate strategy

The EU leaders expressed their strong support for the Paris Agreement of 2015. In the Paris Agreement, the EU Member States committed to developing a long-term climate strategy to reduce emissions of greenhouse

gases by 2020. The day's discussions formed the initial stage of this work.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Brexit and the single market at the EU Summit

Published 21 March 2019

When Prime Minister Stefan Löfven meets his colleagues in Brussels on 21–22 March, Brexit will dominate the meeting's first day. The EU heads of state and government will also address the EU's long-term climate strategy and discuss jobs, growth and competitiveness.

Brexit – the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU

The EU leaders will open the meeting by discussing the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU in the EU27 format, which is to say without the United Kingdom.

On 14 March, the British Parliament voted to postpone the date on which the United Kingdom must leave the EU. Without such an extension, the withdrawal will take place on 29 March. At the meeting, the heads of state and government will agree a position on a possible request for an extension.

The EU's relationship with China

At the meeting, the EU leaders will also prepare for the EU summit with China on 9 April. Trade, human rights and foreign affairs will be on the agenda for the meeting with China.

Jobs, growth, competitiveness and climate change

On the meeting's second day, the heads of state and government will discuss jobs, growth and competitiveness in the EU as they note that the single market is celebrating its 25th anniversary.

The EU leaders will also address the EU's long-term climate strategy and disinformation ahead of the elections to the European Parliament in May.

The meeting of the European Council on 21–22 March will be the first of four planned meetings in 2019.

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will represent Sweden at the meeting in Brussels.

Produced by the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the European Union, Brussels



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Employment

Feminist policy must make a difference in people's daily lives and experiences

Published 07 March 2019

Since 21 January 2019, Sweden has a new feminist Government. “We will use our policies to build a society in which all people have equal value and equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities, and in which no one is limited by their gender,” say Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and Minister for Gender Equality Åsa Lindhagen.

A more gender-equal society

“We’re now proudly and vigorously continuing to build a gender-equal society for everyone, a society where women and men, girls and boys can live their lives to their full potential, where no one is held back. This is how we build a stronger society and a safer Sweden,” says Stefan Löfven.

The Government will take decisions and implement policies that offer new opportunities for those living in Sweden. The Government’s overall policy will redistribute power and resources for a more gender-equal society; the aim is for women and men to have the same power to shape society and their own lives.

A matter of human rights

Gender equality is also a matter of human rights. With a clear gender perspective in its policies, the Government wants to achieve more in

developing all areas of society. Gender equality is part of the solution to the challenges Sweden is facing. To tackle the challenges in the labour market, integration, schools and health care, the Government has to understand and take into account the needs and prevailing circumstances of women, men, girls and boys.

“To achieve more and take new steps, the Government will continue to include the gender perspective in all our efforts and continue to implement a gender responsive budget. A feminist government allocates resources and takes decisions that result in gender equality,” say Stefan Löfven and Åsa Lindhagen.

All ministers are pursuing feminist policy

“I am proud to be Minister for Gender Equality in a feminist government, with overall responsibility for our gender equality policy. But the work is carried out by all my minister colleagues; Sweden actually has 22 gender equality ministers, not just one. All ministers in the Government pursue a feminist policy in their respective policy areas,” says Åsa Lindhagen.

Being a feminist government means that the Government wants to make a difference in people’s daily lives and experiences. The Government will redouble its efforts to combat violence and oppression, and will prevent and combat both men’s violence against women and honour-related violence and oppression. Children and young people must live secure lives, in school and at home. The Government will also continue to promote the economic empowerment of women, and combat women’s ill health. The integration of women and men who come to Sweden must work better. The Government want integration to be feminist, with a clear gender perspective.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Brexit and the long-term budget at the EU Summit

Published 17 December 2018

Discussions about Brexit and the long-term EU budget for the period 2021–2027 dominated the European Council on 13–14 December. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and other heads of state and government adopted a number of conclusions on migration, disinformation, climate change and internal market cooperation. The Council ended with a discussion of EMU cooperation.

Brexit

The United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU once again dominated the EU leaders' agenda. At their meeting, they discussed how the EU would move forward and support the UK without opening the withdrawal agreement for renegotiation.

The heads of state and government confirmed the conclusions on the withdrawal agreement and the political declaration from the Summit on 25 November. They stressed that the EU supports the agreement and that it is not open for renegotiation. At the same time, EU leaders underscored that the backstop solution for Ireland is an insurance policy that is not intended to be used. Instead, the intention is to quickly negotiate alternative solutions in the future relationship between the EU and the UK.

Long-term EU budget

The Austrian Presidency gave a status update of the ongoing negotiations on

the long-term EU budget for 2021–2027. The heads of state and government were given the opportunity to present their views concerning when the negotiations should be completed and what the priorities should be.

Conclusions on the internal market and migration

At the Summit, the heads of state and government adopted conclusions stating that the internal market needs to be developed and needs to address issues such as digitalisation and artificial intelligence.

The heads of state and government discussed the conclusions on migration and concluded that the ongoing work should be continued.

Foreign affairs and disinformation

EU leaders take a very serious view of the situation in the Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov, as well as the violations of international law committed by Russia. They call for the immediate release of the imprisoned Ukrainian sailors.

The heads of state and government agreed to extend the sanctions against Russia.

The heads of state and government also made preparations for the Summit between the EU and the Arab League on 24–25 February 2019.

EU leaders noted that the spread of widescale and systematic disinformation is a threat to our democratic systems. They believe that disinformation must be countered swiftly and effectively, and that public authorities and other actors must coordinate their efforts.

Climate change

The heads of state and government urged the Council of Ministers to continue working on the European Commission's proposal on a long-term climate strategy for the EU. Within the next six months, the European Council will provide overarching guidance on priorities so that the EU can present a long-term climate strategy in line with the Paris Agreement by 2020.

Euro Summit

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven also took part in the Euro Summit, a meeting of euro area countries, to which the other EU countries are also invited. EU leaders adopted conclusions on the deepening of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and gave a mandate to the finance ministers to continue work on a budget instrument for the euro area.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Brexit and EU budget on the agenda when EU leaders meet

Published 13 December 2018

Brexit, the EU budget for 2021–2027 (Multiannual Financial Framework), foreign policy and migration are some of the issues to be addressed when Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and the other EU leaders meet in Brussels on 13–14 December.

Brexit

The United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU is an issue currently dominating the EU agenda. During the meeting, the EU leaders will discuss the continued process, which has been brought into sharp focus in light of the current uncertainty of political developments in the UK.

EU Budget

At the meeting, the Austrian Presidency will give the heads of state and government a status update of the ongoing negotiations on the EU budget for 2021–2027 (Multiannual Financial Framework). The EU leaders will have the opportunity to present their priorities in the negotiations and their view of when the negotiations should be concluded.

Single market

At the meeting, the heads of state and government will adopt the conclusions on the status of the single market, i.e. the cooperation on free movement of goods, people, services and capital.

Migration and foreign policy

Austria, which holds the Presidency, will report on the state of negotiations on migration issues. The heads of state and government will then adopt conclusions on the ongoing negotiations.

The EU leaders will also make preparations ahead of the EU-League of Arab States summit on 24–25 February 2019 and discuss the situation in the Sea of Azov.

Euro Summit

Mr Löfven will also take part in the Euro Summit, a meeting of countries using the euro as their currency, to which the other EU countries are also invited. They will discuss EMU deepening and how euro cooperation can be moved forward.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

EU leaders endorsed Brexit agreement

Published 26 November 2018 Updated 26 November 2018

On the Sunday of November 25, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and the other members of the European Council endorsed the Brexit agreement negotiated by the EU and the United Kingdom.

On the morning of 25 November, the 27 heads of state and government backed the political endorsement of the ‘Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community’.

The European Council also approved the ‘Political Declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland’.

Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration

The Withdrawal Agreement sets out the terms of the United Kingdom’s withdrawal from the EU that will help to ensure an orderly withdrawal. The agreement is almost 600 pages long and sets out the responsibilities and rights of the EU and the United Kingdom. It also clarifies what will apply during the ‘transition period’.

The Political Declaration sets out the broad framework for the future relationship between the EU and the United Kingdom after the withdrawal and transition period.

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven represented Sweden at the meeting in Brussels.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister to attend special meeting on Brexit

Published 23 November 2018

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will attend a special meeting of the European Council on Sunday, November 25. EU leaders will meet to take a position on the Brexit withdrawal agreement.

On November 25, EU heads of state and government will gather to take a position on the withdrawal agreement that has been negotiated between the EU and the UK. The leaders are also expected to approve a political declaration on future EU-UK relations.

Withdrawal agreement and political declaration

The withdrawal agreement sets out the terms of the UK's withdrawal from the EU that will help to ensure an orderly withdrawal. The agreement is more than 580 pages long and sets out the rights and responsibilities of the EU and the UK. It also clarifies what is meant by 'transition period'.

The political declaration sets out the framework for the future relationship between the EU and the UK after the withdrawal and transition period.

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will represent Sweden at the European Council meeting in Brussels.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Stefan Löfven took part in commemoration of end of the First World War

Published 11 November 2018 Updated 11 November 2018

On 11 November 2018, it was 100 hundred years since the ceasefire was concluded that led to the end of the First World War. This was commemorated in a major event in Paris on 10–11 November, attended by some 80 heads of state and government and heads of international organisations.

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven was invited by French President Emmanuel Macron to attend the Memorial Ceremony and speak at the Paris Peace Forum.

During the Paris Peace Forum, Mr Löfven spoke about the importance of building societies together that allay people's concerns with development and confidence in the future – this is the basis for peace and security.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

OECD takes over as host of Global Deal

Published 09 November 2018

On 9 November 2018, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven met Angel Gurría, Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), to hand over the Global Deal initiative.

Initiated by Mr Löfven, the Global Deal for Decent Work and Inclusive Growth is an initiative for social dialogue and better conditions in the global labour market. The initiative is about the advantages and gains of globalisation benefiting more people and addressing the challenges in the global labour market jointly. The initiative aims to promote better wages, better working conditions, increased gender equality and more equality for workers around the world. Social dialogue is central, which has so successfully helped Scandinavia, for example, to build robust societies.

In just a few years, the initiative has grown to include almost 100 actors from the whole world: governments, companies and organisations. The OECD, which, together with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Swedish Government, launched the Global Deal in 2016, will now be the host organisation for activities.

The new support unit will comprise six people, two of whom have been seconded from the ILO. Their duties will focus on providing support to Global Deal members and strengthening and sharing knowledge about social dialogue.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Brexit and migration at the European Council

Published 18 October 2018

The European Council discussed Brexit, migration and internal security on 17–18 October. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and his colleagues also addressed EU relations with the Arab League and the EU's negotiating mandate ahead of the COP24 climate conference.

Brexit

After an update from UK Prime Minister Theresa May, the EU leaders met in an EU27 format (i.e. without the UK) on Wednesday evening. The European Commission's Chief Negotiator Michel Barnier reported from the ongoing negotiations on the UK's withdrawal from the EU. The EU leaders discussed the state of the negotiations and reaffirmed their full confidence in Mr Barnier, but noted that sufficient progress had not yet been made to enable a meeting to be convened in November.

Migration and internal security

Migration and the control of the EU's external borders were among the main agenda points. The EU leaders discussed efforts to combat human smuggling, cooperation with countries of origin and transit, work on the common asylum system, returns and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency.

They also discussed how to improve internal EU security. The European Council conclusions state that the EU will strengthen its efforts to combat disinformation, for example in EU elections, and cyber threats.

External relations and COP24

The EU's external relations, for example with the Arab League, and the upcoming climate negotiations ahead of COP24 in Katowice, Poland, were also discussed.

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven represented Sweden at the European Council meeting in Brussels.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Brexit and migration on the agenda when the European Council meets

Published 17 October 2018 Updated 17 October 2018

Brexit, migration and internal security will be on the agenda when Prime Minister Stefan Löfven meets his European Council colleagues on 18 October. The EU leaders will also address external relations.

Brexit on Wednesday evening

On Wednesday evening, EU leaders will meet in an EU 27 format (i.e.) without the UK). They will receive a report on the ongoing negotiations on the UK's withdrawal from the EU and will have the opportunity to review the state of the negotiations.

Migration and internal security

The European Council will address migration and control of the EU's external borders. Discussions will also be held on efforts to combat human smuggling, cooperation with countries of origin and transit, and work on the common asylum system. Returns and the European border and coast guard are other issues that may be addressed.

The EU leaders will also follow up on an earlier discussion on internal security by discussing disinformation and influence campaigns ahead of the European Parliament elections in May 2019.

External relations

The European Council will also discuss the EU's external relations, including with Africa and the Arab League.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister to lead a transitional government

Published 25 September 2018

Today, in accordance with the provisions of the Swedish Constitution, a vote of confidence in the Prime Minister was held in the Riksdag. Because Prime Minister Stefan Löfven did not secure adequate support in the Riksdag, the Speaker of the Riksdag has relieved the Prime Minister and the other ministers of their duties.

“The work of the Speaker now begins. I am at the Speaker’s disposal to form a new government with broad support in the Swedish Riksdag,” says Mr Löfven.

Once the Speaker has relieved the Prime Minister and the other ministers of their duties, they remain in office until the process of forming a new government has been concluded and the new government takes office. During this process of forming a new government, the Prime Minister leads a transitional government. The task of the Government Offices is to assist the transitional government until a new government has taken office.

A transitional government primarily takes decisions on ongoing or urgent matters. The only explicit restriction on the powers of the transitional government is that it may not decide to hold extraordinary elections.

The Speaker now begins the work of producing a proposal for a new prime minister by inviting all party leaders for talks on how a government may be formed. The Riksdag will then once again hold a vote of confidence in the incoming Prime Minister.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Justice

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven on the car fires: “Society will always respond strongly to such acts”

Published 14 August 2018

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and Minister for Justice and Home Affairs Morgan Johansson met police in Västra Frölunda today to learn about their work following the car fires in western Sweden on 13 August. Chairman of the Municipal Executive Board of the City of Gothenburg Ann-Sofie Hermansson was also at the meeting.

"Society will always respond strongly to such acts. We have made the penalty for gross vandalism much tougher. In the autumn we will also present a bill on attacks against emergency services staff that may follow in the wake of such incidents," says Mr Löfven.

Last year the Government increased the penalty for gross vandalism, which can now lead to six years' imprisonment.

"We now hope that these thugs can be caught so that they can receive the punishment they deserve," says Mr Johansson.

Since the current electoral period began in the autumn of 2014, the Government has proposed more than 30 stricter penalties related to organised crime.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at mini-summit on migration

Published 25 June 2018

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven took part in a mini-summit on migration in Brussels on June 24.

The purpose of the summit was to discuss migration issues.

- It was good to meet today to prepare for next week's discussions on migration. It is important for us to continue working for a common asylum system in Europe – focusing on cooperation with countries that migrants come from, strengthening borders and achieving a fairer distribution within the EU, said Mr Löfven after the meeting.

Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Spain, Luxembourg, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Netherlands, Finland, Denmark, Greece, Slovenia, Austria, Malta and Sweden took part in the meeting, hosted by President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker.

The European Council, that is all heads of state and government, will meet on 28–29 June, when they will further discuss migration policy issues.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Both incentives and motivation needed to ensure learning becomes reality in the workplace

Published 11 June 2018

Supplying skills to the labour market, and to society at large, has been a recurring issue since the Government's National Innovation Council started meeting in 2015. When the Council met on 28 May at Harpsund, the meeting opened with the issue of lifelong learning in the workplace.

Minister for Employment and Integration Ylva Johansson summarises the discussions from the meeting: "Sweden has a strong starting position. The Swedish model means that we encourage and facilitate labour market adjustment. Both central government and the social partners take considerable responsibility in this. However, digitalisation and globalisation place major demands on skills development and learning in the workplace."

What is important to consider in the work going forward?

"The discussion emphasised the importance of business managers giving skills issues greater weight and of strengthening cooperation between working life and education providers. Both incentives and motivation are needed to ensure learning becomes reality in the workplace," says Ms Johansson.

What will the workplaces of the future look like?

"New opportunities to acquire new skills must be available to more people, for example through using online courses or other flexible means of

customising and making education accessible for concrete needs. But to ensure that these new skills benefit both the individual and the workplace, a good, supportive learning environment is important," says Ms Johansson.

In the current public debate, there is considerable engagement and interest in the issue of learning, lifelong learning and skills supply. Increasingly greater demands are being made today on continuous learning throughout one's entire working life, but how is this need being addressed in the labour market and at individual workplaces? What characterises a learning workplace?

Minister for Higher Education and Research Helene Hellmark Knutsson, one of the government members of the National Innovation Council, explains more from the meeting.

Could you give a brief summary of what the meeting concluded on this particular point? A concrete example to think about in the work going forward?

"It was an exciting discussion, including many well-informed contributions and good, concrete proposals. Technological developments in digitalisation and automation are resulting in new demands on knowledge and skills in working life. The days when it sufficed to acquire an education at the start of one's career are gone," says Ms Hellmark Knutsson.

"It's clear that we need a holistic approach to education and learning, where every part is needed to ensure a good overall outcome. Continuous learning in the workplace needs to be developed and regarded more as the strategic issue it actually is.

What is most important to ensure the success of lifelong learning?

"From the perspective of higher education, I believe that collaboration between educational institutions and companies must improve. Close cooperation is required to develop the courses the business sector needs and help increase access to the courses currently offered. The development of courses for professionals, digital learning and skills validation opportunities are important parts of the overall picture. More people will need to change their career path or acquire new skills and knowledge throughout their working life. This is why opportunities to study at higher education institutions later in life must increase. We are now working in a coordinated way on a number of education-based reforms throughout the country and through all stages of life. One major reform is expanding higher education

throughout the country through resources equivalent to almost 25 000 new places by 2021.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Foreign and security policy and 5G the focus as Nordic prime ministers meet in Örnköldsvik

Published 21 May 2018

Nordic cooperation, current foreign and security policy issues and 5G are on the agenda as the Nordic prime ministers meet in Örnköldsvik on 22–23 May. The informal prime ministers meeting is held annually as part of the extensive Nordic cooperation.

Sweden is currently chair of Nordic cooperation and is hosting the meeting in Örnköldsvik on 22–23 May, to which Prime Minister Stefan Löfven has invited his colleagues Erna Solberg from Norway, Lars Løkke Rasmussen from Denmark, Juha Sipilä from Finland and Katrín Jakobsdóttir from Iceland. The prime ministers' spouses will also be present, and will have their own programme.

The prime ministers will have three different meetings. Nordic cooperation and foreign and security policy will dominate the meeting on 22 May. The meeting on 23 May will primarily be devoted to digital development and 5G.

Wednesday's activities will conclude with a working lunch with the autonomous Nordic territories, as well as the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Nordic Council.

About Nordic cooperation

Cooperation between the Nordic countries is one of the oldest and most extensive regional cooperation programmes in the world, and is pursued through a number of bodies and in various areas. The prime ministers are

ultimately responsible for Nordic intergovernmental cooperation. The Nordic Council of Ministers is the official cooperation body of the Nordic governments, with a rotating Presidency – held this year by Sweden. The Nordic Council is the forum for cooperation between members of the national parliaments.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

UN Secretary-General and Security Council visit Sweden

Published 23 April 2018

UN Secretary-General António Guterres visited Sweden on 21–23 April. During the visit, he met Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, gave the Dag Hammarskjöld Lecture in Uppsala and led an informal working meeting with the Security Council at Dag Hammarskjöld's farm, Backåkra, in Skåne.

“Following the developments in Syria in recent weeks, much of the discussion has been about the conflict there, which has been going on for more than seven years. The UN must lead efforts to bring an end to the suffering and start to build a lasting peace,” said Prime Minister Stefan Löfven after his bilateral meeting with António Guterres.

The talks between the Prime Minister and the Secretary-General were held at the National Library of Sweden in Stockholm. They were preceded by a private viewing of parts of the Dag Hammarskjöld archive. As UN Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld took the initiative to form the first armed UN peacekeeping mission. Still today, more effective conflict prevention remains one of Sweden's most important priorities in its work on the Security Council.

“Sweden is a close and staunch friend of the UN, but we also see the need for reforms. The UN must function more effectively and its activities on the ground must be better coordinated. The UN could also play a greater role in efforts to deal with the refugee flows and get more countries to share this responsibility. We have also discussed how the UN's peacekeeping missions can be strengthened and streamlined,” said Prime Minister Stefan Löfven after the bilateral meeting.

This was also the theme of the UN Security Council's retreat, which for the first time was convened outside the United States, at Dag Hammarskjöld's farm, Backåkra, in Skåne.

The UN Security Council also visited one of Europe's largest research infrastructure projects, European Spallation Source (ESS) in Lund, in the company of Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström. A discussion was held there on the interplay between technological development and global challenges, and how research and innovation can be used to address current problems and crises.

During his visit to Sweden, the Secretary-General also travelled to Uppsala, where he met Crown Princess Victoria and gave the Dag Hammarskjöld Lecture. In Uppsala, he also took part in a wreath-laying ceremony at Dag Hammarskjöld's grave.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Note to members of the media: Programme for UN Secretary- General and Security Council working meeting and visit in Sweden 20–23 April 2018

Published 20 April 2018

The annual informal working meeting with the UN Secretary-General and the Security Council will be held at Dag Hammarskjöld's farm Backåkra in Skåne on 21–23 April 2018. Afterwards, UN Secretary-General António Guterres will continue to Uppsala and Stockholm.

Media programme

Friday 20 April

Visit to the European Spallation Source (ESS), Lund

Members of the Security Council visit the European Spallation Source (ESS) in Lund. This is a unique material research facility based on the world's most powerful neutron source. Sweden and Denmark are the host countries of the ESS, which is one of Europe's largest infrastructure projects for research. The visit provides an opportunity to examine the interplay between technological development and global challenges, and how research and development can be used to meet current problems and crises.

The media will have the opportunity to cover the beginning of the visit.

Saturday 21 April

Secretary-General and Security Council informal working meeting at Backåkra

Besides the Secretary-General and members of the Security Council, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will be on hand in connection with the informal working meeting.

Photo opportunity on arrival.

Press briefing/doorstep with Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, UN Secretary-General António Guterres, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and President of the UN Security Council, Peru's UN Ambassador Gustavo Meza-Cuadra.

Sunday 22 April

Secretary-General visits Uppsala

Secretary-General António Guterres delivers the Dag Hammarskjöld Lecture at Uppsala Castle. Since 1998, the Lecture has been an annual event held in memory of Dag Hammarskjöld and the values he stood for in his deeds and actions. Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate and Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin will attend on behalf of the Government. In addition to the Lecture, the Secretary-General will take part in a wreath-laying ceremony at Dag Hammarskjöld's grave and have a meeting with Crown Princess Victoria.

A separate press invitation will be sent by the co-organisers, the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation and Uppsala University.

Monday 23 April

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven receives Secretary-General António Guterres in Stockholm

Press invitation



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Webcast: (Translated to English) Prime Ministers Stefan Löfven and Narendra Modi

Published 17 April 2018

Prime Ministers Stefan Löfven and Narendra Modi each made a statement regarding today's discussions.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Webcast: (Translated to Hindi) Prime Ministers Stefan Löfven and Narendra Modi

Published 17 April 2018

Prime Ministers Stefan Löfven and Narendra Modi each made a statement regarding today's discussions.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Webcast: (Not translated) Prime Ministers Stefan Löfven and Narendra Modi

Published 17 April 2018

Prime Ministers Stefan Löfven and Narendra Modi each made a statement regarding today's discussions.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Innovation and sustainable development the focus of Indian official visit

Published 17 April 2018

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Sweden on 16–17 April. India is currently the world's fastest growing major economy, and the Swedish Government is working to strengthen Sweden's role as a key partner in the areas of sustainability and innovation.

Global economic growth is predominantly happening in Asia, not least in India. Swedish companies have a significant presence in India, and Indian companies are making substantial investments in Sweden. Increased trade and investment between the two countries creates more jobs and higher growth.

Areas of expertise including the environment, renewable energy, health, research and innovation are at the heart of the discussions on Sweden and India's continued bilateral cooperation.

During the official visit, Prime Ministers Stefan Löfven and Narendra Modi will hold talks at Sager House and Rosenbad. At 13.20 they will each make a statement on the discussions in the entrance to Rosenbad.

Prime Ministers Löfven and Modi and Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg will meet Swedish business leaders at round-table discussions at Stockholm City Hall. There will be an outdoor photo opportunity on Tuesday 17 April from 13.15, as the participants arrive. It will then be possible to take photographs indoors during the introductory talks, and a group photograph will be offered at the close.

The official visit also includes an India-Nordic Summit, during which Prime Ministers Löfven and Modi will host a dinner at Grand Hôtel in Stockholm attended by the Prime Ministers of all the Nordic countries. On Tuesday 17 April from 16.45 there will be an opportunity to take group photographs of the Prime Ministers at the India-Nordic Summit.

On the evening of 17 April, Prime Ministers Löfven and Modi will visit Stockholm University, where Mr Modi will give a speech in Hindi to the Indian diaspora.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Nerve gas attack in Salisbury and Brexit in focus when Stefan Löfven received Theresa May

Published 10 April 2018

On Monday 9 April, UK Prime Minister Theresa May visited Stockholm for a meeting with Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

One important subject of the talks was the aftermath of the nerve gas attack in Salisbury against the Russian former agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter. At the EU summit on 22 March it was decided there would be a coordinated reaction. The EU has recalled its Ambassador from Moscow and 14 EU Member States, including Sweden, have decided to expel Russian diplomats.

During the meeting, Ms May also informed Mr Löfven about the UK's view of its withdrawal from the EU and the upcoming future-oriented talks between the EU and the UK. Sweden and the other EU countries will be represented by the European Commission in these negotiations.

Mr Löfven and Ms May also discussed bilateral cooperation between Sweden and the UK.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Government marks anniversary of terror attack on Drottninggatan

Published 05 April 2018

On 7 April, the City of Stockholm and the Government will mark the anniversary of the terror attack on Drottninggatan. Several members of the Government will attend a memorial service and Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will deliver a speech at a memorial concert in Kungsträdgården.

The commemoration will begin at 12.00 with a memorial service at Adolf Fredrik's Church for relatives, people particularly affected, police officers, emergency services staff, medical staff and others who made important contributions on 7 April last year. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and many other government ministers will attend. The memorial service will be led by Vicar Annika Millde. Archbishop Antje Jackelén, Bishop Eva Brunne and representatives of Stockholm's interreligious council IRIS will also take part.

At around 14.15–15.00 there will be a memorial concert in Kungsträdgården organised by the City of Stockholm to honour the victims and their families, and to remind us all that Stockholm is and should be an open and democratic city. Stefan Löfven will deliver a speech during the concert.

Government's work to combat terrorism

Since the terror attack on Drottninggatan on 7 April 2017, the Government's work to combat terrorism has intensified. Here are a few examples of measures taken over the past year.

- In June 2017, cross-party agreements were reached on additional anti-terrorism measures.

- Criminal anti-terrorism legislation will be further tightened and made more comprehensive. Tightened regulations will make it possible to intervene earlier against people who intend to commit terrorist offences.
- The Government has proposed total reinforcements for the period 2017–2020 of SEK 9.8 billion to the Swedish Police Authority and SEK 213 million to the Swedish Security Service.

All information about the Government's work to combat terrorism is available at:

Combating terrorism



Article from Prime Minister's Office

EU leaders discuss steel tariffs and Brexit

Published 26 March 2018

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven met his head of state and government colleagues at the European Council on Thursday and Friday 22–23 March. Trade and the threat of steel tariffs were among the issues on the agenda. Brexit and the EU's reactions to the nerve agent attack in Salisbury were other important issues.

Trade and the United States

Following US President Donald Trump's statement that he intended to introduce import tariffs on steel and aluminium products, the EU's relations with the United States and trade with the country have become one of the most important subjects for discussions between the heads of state and government.

At the meeting, the EU leaders regretted the United States' decision to introduce import tariffs on steel and aluminium. They consider that the decision cannot be justified for reasons of national security. The EU was eventually given an exemption from the tariffs, but the heads of state and government are urging the US to make the exemption permanent. They also expressed their full support for the measures taken by the European Commission to protect the EU's interests, in line with WTO rules. EU leaders value transatlantic relations and stress the importance of dialogue on trade issues.

Nerve agent attack in Salisbury

Another current issue dealt with by EU leaders was reactions to the nerve agent attack in Salisbury, in which two people were seriously injured. They strongly condemned the attack, expressed their support for those affected and said that they share the United Kingdom's assessment that Russia was behind the attack.

Turkey and the Western Balkans

At the meeting, the heads of state and government condemned Turkey's continued unlawful actions in the eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea, and urged Turkey to immediately cease these.

The heads of state and government also established that they hope the summit in Sofia on 17 May will deepen the EU's relations with the Western Balkans. They confirmed that the European Council summit in June will deal with enlargement issues.

Single market, climate and growth

At the meeting, the EU leaders also discussed the single market and stated that decisions on changes to the single market should be implemented in an efficient manner. The EU has to adapt the single market to the digital economy and will promote competition, innovation and sustainability.

The European Council also urges the European Commission to present a long-term strategy for reducing the EU's greenhouse gas emissions, in line with the Paris Agreement.

The heads of state and government also adopted conclusions on meeting the objectives of the European Pillar of Social Rights. They support the priorities in the Commission's annual growth review and urge Member States to use them as the basis of their own reform programmes.

Brexit

On Friday, the heads of state and government discussed the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU in the EU27 constellation, i.e. without the UK.

The heads of state and government approved new guidelines for the European Commission so that the Commission can now begin negotiations on future relations between the EU and the UK after Brexit.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Trade, Brexit and the nerve agent attack in Salisbury on the European Council agenda

Published 21 March 2018

Trade with countries outside the EU and the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU are two of the issues Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will raise with his heads of state and government colleagues when they meet on Thursday and Friday, 22–23 March. They will also discuss the nerve agent attack in Salisbury

Trade and relations with the United States

One important issue at the meeting will be the EU's relations with the United States, including trade, as President Donald Trump has announced his intention to introduce import tariffs on steel and aluminium products.

Nerve agent attack in Salisbury

The heads of state and government will also discuss the consequences of the nerve agent attack in Salisbury on 4 March. At the meeting they will adopt conclusions condemning the attack.

Single market, the European Semester and social issues

The heads of state and government will discuss how the EU single market could facilitate competition, sustainability and innovation. Discussions on the 'European Semester' for economic policy coordination and on social issues are also planned.

Taxes and Turkey

The dinner discussions will focus on various tax issues and relations with Turkey ahead of a high-level meeting in Varna, Bulgaria on 26 March.

Brexit

On Friday, the heads of state and government will discuss the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU in the EU27 constellation, i.e. the UK will not take part in the discussion.

The heads of state and government are likely to approve new guidelines for the European Commission so that the Commission can begin negotiations on future relations between the EU and the UK after Brexit.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Regions and innovation important for Sweden's growth

Published 14 March 2018

“The more we can do together, the better the results we can achieve,” said Prime Minister Stefan Löfven when he opened the meeting of the National Innovation Council and invited regional actors in Skellefteå on 20 February. The focus of the meeting was the northern region's strengths and challenges, and its interaction with the national level.

For Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, regional meetings with the National Innovation Council play an important part in developing national innovation policy. This is the second time in the past six months that Mr Löfven and the Council have held meetings around the country. In October, the Council was in Västra Götaland County speaking with stakeholders in the region. This time a meeting and subsequent seminar were held in Västerbotten County. It is important for national innovation policy to identify the diverse opportunities and circumstances that exist in the different regions.

"It's about creating good conditions to advance society as a whole. An open, inviting approach and constructive discussions will enable us to create a platform for developing ideas and policies that will generate growth throughout the country," said Mr Löfven.

Mr Löfven led the meeting. Also on site in Skellefteå were Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg, Minister for Higher Education and Research Helene Hellmark Knutsson, State Secretary to Isabella Lövin Eva Svedling and Council members Darja Isaksson, Jane Walerud and Ola Asplund. County Governor Magdalena Andersson, Regional Council member Erik Bergkvist, chair of the municipal executive board Lorents

Burman, and other regional actors from industry, academia and the public sector also took part in the meeting, the focus of the which was the northern region's strengths and challenges, and its interaction with the national level. The extraction and processing of resources for a sustainable society were discussed, along with how innovation can help communities outside the major cities to grow.

"There were many interesting comments and discussions that we in the Government will take back with us. All conditions are in place here; we have the people, the environment and the natural resources. Northern Sweden can lead the way, for example, in digitising health care. There are obvious challenges here in terms of an ageing population and the need for better nationwide medical care that is closer to the community. But there are also ideas and solutions here," said Mr Löfven after the meeting.

Following a meeting of the National Innovation Council, work on harnessing the views and ideas addressed continues at the Government Offices. This is the job of the National Innovation Council Secretariat, which follows up issues in cooperation with the relevant state secretaries and ministries. Follow-up and feedback also take place at future Council meetings.

"This helps to develop more policy areas to ensure that they better promote innovation, which in turn leads to improved innovation policy and to Sweden becoming more competitive. That's the whole point," concluded Mr Löfven.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Jobs and security in focus when Stefan Löfven visited the United States

Published 07 March 2018

Growth, innovation, job creation and security were on the agenda when Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and US President Donald Trump held talks at the White House in Washington DC.

The aim of the meeting on 6 March was to further deepen relations between Sweden and the United States. Another important area of discussion was Sweden–US cooperation in external relations, defence and security.

Following the talks, Mr Löfven and Mr Trump held a joint press conference at the White House. "As we celebrate 200 years of diplomatic relations, we are also planning for shared prosperity and security for many, many years to come," said Mr Löfven, who also stated that Sweden builds security by building ties.

"Sweden is a great country"

Mr Trump said that Sweden is a great country that the US has cooperated with for about 200 years. "Our relations have never been better," said Mr Trump, who also said that Swedes are terrific people.

Mr Löfven is the first European head of government to meet the US President since he announced his intention to impose tariffs on steel and aluminium. "I am convinced that increased tariffs will hurt us all in the long run, and as a Swede I of course support the efforts of the European Union to achieve trade with as few obstacles as possible," said Mr Löfven.

Following the press conference, the Swedish Embassy in Washington hosted a reception to celebrate 200 years of diplomatic relations between Sweden and the United States.

Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg, who also took part in the visit, had a meeting with US Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross on 6 March.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

A secure EU in a secure world

Published 02 March 2018 Updated 02 March 2018

As part of the EU's global strategy for foreign and security policy its common policy is being developed to contribute to security both in and outside the EU. The European security order is still being challenged by Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Important progress has been made to lay the foundation for inclusive and ambitiously structured defence cooperation (PESCO), and work is continuing to highlight this broad view of security.

An active neighbourhood policy is the best guarantee for democracy, welfare and stability in our neighbouring region. Within the framework of the EU's new development policy the overall objective of EU development cooperation is still poverty reduction, but the policy also points the way to how EU development cooperation will contribute to the sustainability goals of the 2030 Agenda.

The Government will work to ensure that:

- Both the civilian and the military priorities of the EU's global strategy are implemented, including the permanent structured cooperation, PESCO, and the further development of civilian crisis management;
- The EU's dialogue with Russia is clear and principled, and that support for Ukraine and the other countries in the Eastern Partnership is strong; The EU's sanctions against Russia are upheld for as long as the reasons for their introduction remain;
- The EU contributes to conflict prevention, crisis management and conflict resolution in Europe, the Middle East and Africa, in close cooperation with the UN and regional actors;

- The EU integration processes for the Western Balkans are maintained based on the qualification of each country.

The EU's internal security

Responding to the threats from terrorism, IT crime and other cross-border criminal activity requires preventive action based on close and effective cooperation. We see how, in addition to its many advantages and possibilities, an ever more digitised world also leads to vulnerabilities and security challenges. The threats to the EU's internal security are often linked to conditions beyond the borders of the EU and the most effective measures for the EU's internal security may therefore be operations outside the EU, for example the EU's civilian and military crisis management operations.

The Government will work to ensure that:

- The control of the EU's external borders is strengthened, thereby improving the possibilities of detecting and preventing crime and the import of illegal goods. This is essential for a secure and well-functioning Schengen area.
- Law enforcement agencies' access to information and possibilities of exchanging information match up to what is essential for effective and legally certain cooperation to combat threats including those from terrorism;
- EU cooperation in the area of cybersecurity is promoted, particularly within the framework of the Information Security Directive and the Framework for a Joint EU Diplomatic Response to Malicious Cyber Activities.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

A social Europe for jobs and inclusive growth

Published 02 March 2018 Updated 02 March 2018

Even though the economic situation in the EU has improved, we see high long-term unemployment, growing gaps and unacceptably high youth unemployment in many parts of Europe. Well managed public finances at both national and EU level lays the foundation for greater confidence in the policy being pursued and stable economic growth shared by everyone.

A modern long-term budget

In spring 2018 the Commission will propose a new long-term budget for the period after 2020. The Government will work intensively to influence that proposal as much as possible, mainly along with other like-minded Member States. Negotiations on the new proposal are expected to start in mid-2018.

When the UK leaves the EU, a large contribution to the EU budget will disappear, as will an important ally for Sweden in the budget negotiations.

The Government will work to ensure that:

- The total expenditure in the EU's multiannual financial framework does not exceed 1 per cent of the EU's GNI, that the Swedish contribution is kept down and that the use of EU funds is controlled more effectively.
- The EU has a modern budget with refocused priorities benefitting security, migration, competitiveness, research and actions against climate change. This means less funding for agricultural support and

structural funds. At the same time the Government will protect the relative return of funds to Sweden.

- All Member States stand up for our common values and decisions made. EU membership brings both rights and obligations. There must be a cost for not taking responsibility.

Inclusive growth through open trade and a competitive Single Market
More than 70 per cent of Swedish exports go to the Single Market and our export industry employs more than 1.4 million people in Sweden. In the past twenty years over 80 per cent of all the new jobs have been created in the services sector. Disproportionate barriers to trade must be removed to facilitate the development of the services sector. Market surveillance of goods on the Single Market also needs to be modernised to enable consumers to feel secure that products are safe and environmentally sustainable and to enable companies to compete on equal terms.

The EU needs to increase its ability to generate and attract highly qualified activities in global value chains. The innovative capacity of European industry needs to be enhanced.

The Government will work to ensure that:

- Disproportionate barriers to the movement of goods and services disappear, especially through the implementation of the Single Market Strategy for goods and services;
- An ambitious free trade agenda with more free trade agreements between the EU and other parties;
- Action in the EU's coming framework programme for research and innovation makes more of a contribution to increased competitiveness and more jobs.

A digitalised Europe

Digitalisation is driving the development of society, promoting competitiveness and creating new jobs. If the EU is to be able to retain a leading position in the digital economy, investment is needed in infrastructure, education and skills development.

One important step on that path is to complete the Digital Single Market strategy. Since most businesses depend on free, cross-border flows of data in their activities, the development of the Digital Single Market must support the free movement of data across national borders both within and beyond

the EU.

The Government will work to ensure that:

- The proposals in the EU's Digital Single Market strategy are implemented in 2018.
- The proposal concerning free flows of data is adopted speedily and the flows of data to and from third countries are facilitated, for example by international agreements.

Fair jobs and working conditions

Conditions in the European labour market must be fair and decent. To protect workers' conditions, companies' competitiveness and the legitimacy of free movement, cross-border work must be combined with the principle of equal pay for equal work and conducted in line with good working conditions and a good work environment. The Government's starting point continues to be that the competence of Member States; national labour market models and the autonomy of social partners; and the standing of collective agreements must be respected.

The Government will work to ensure that:

- The revision of the Posting of Workers Directive is completed so as to confirm the principle of equal pay for equal work in posting situations.
- The coordination of social security systems is developed and promotes the dialogue between Member States and mobility for persons in the EU, especially workers.
- Clear rules and fair competition for a well-functioning Single Market steer legislation in the area of transport and lead to better working conditions in the whole of the EU as well as that the protection of social rights is strengthened.

Stronger gender equality and flexibility

A Europe for jobs and inclusive growth builds on a synergy between growth, competitiveness and social progress. The implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights will make a positive contribution to women's and men's quality of life at the same time as the division of competence between the EU and its Member States is retained.

Stronger gender equality is both a rights issue and needed to increase Europe's growth and global competitiveness. When women are outside the

labour market, potential for growth goes to waste.

Access to life-long education contributes to a flexible labour market. The need for further education throughout life is increasing, especially as a result of the digitisation and robotisation of society. People's skills need to develop in pace with the technological development and to be matched to new types of jobs.

The Government will work to ensure that:

- The principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights are monitored in a structured way within the European Semester;
- The Directive on Work-Life Balance is designed in a way that contributes to a more gender equal working life and enables high labour force participation among both women and men irrespective of their family situation.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister discussed long-term EU budget with European colleagues

Published 26 February 2018

The priorities for the long-term budget of the European Union were discussed when Prime Minister Stefan Löfven met with his EU colleagues on Friday 23 February. The composition of the European Parliament following the 2019 elections and the lead candidate process were also on the agenda.

The EU's long-term budget

"The EU budget must go to the right things and be allocated equitably. We want to see a modern budget with money going to growth, security and handling migration," said Mr Löfven after the meeting. He also emphasised the need to shift priorities rather than increase resources.

This was the first time the heads of state and government had discussed the priorities for the next multiannual financial framework – the EU's long-term budget – for the period 2021 to 2027.

Ahead of European Parliament elections

Ahead of the European elections in the first half of 2019, the heads of state and government discussed how many members of the European Parliament each country should have. They also debated the lead candidate process, whereby the European Parliament nominates the candidates for the next European Commission President.

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven represented Sweden at the meeting in Brussels.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister congratulates Estonia's Prime Minister on 100th anniversary

Published 19 February 2018

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received Estonia's Prime Minister Jüri Ratas for a breakfast meeting at Sager House on Sunday 18 February.

Mr Löfven opened the meeting by congratulating Estonia, which celebrates 100 years as an independent state on 24 February. Both prime ministers noted that 100 years of good bilateral relations have benefited both Estonia and Sweden. Cooperation can be deepened in several areas, including digital transformation and cyber security.

Mr Löfven and Mr Ratas devoted much of their time to talking about regional cooperation and security issues. Sweden chairs five different regional cooperation organisations and is working to find synergies between them. This benefits cooperation and security in our region. Security in the Baltic Sea region and cyber security efforts are important to Sweden and Estonia.

Mr Löfven and Mr Ratas also discussed the EU, focusing mainly on the EU's next financial framework, Brexit, digital issues, migration and work on issues concerning the future of the EU.



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



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister in talks with President of Iceland

Published 17 January 2018

In connection with the Icelandic State Visit to Sweden, the Prime Minister welcomed Iceland's President Guðni Thorlacius Jóhannesson for talks at Rosenbad on 17 January.

During their talks, they discussed gender equality, Nordic cooperation, transatlantic issues and climate change. The Prime Minister informed the President about the five chairs Sweden is currently holding in the regional organisations the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Council of the Baltic Sea States, as well as the Nordic and Nordic-Baltic cooperation forums. They also discussed Sweden's work as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Investing in youth is the theme of the EU-AU Summit

Published 29 November 2017

Future relations between Europe and Africa are the subject of discussion as leaders from the European Union and the African Union, AU, meet in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on 29–30 November. The Summit, which is the fifth between the EU and the AU, will particularly focus on investing in youth.

The Summit is an important opportunity to strengthen the political and economic ties between the European and African continents. The agenda includes migration, peace and security, democracy and economic development, but the main theme is investing in youth. Some 60 per cent of the African population is under the age of 25.

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven is representing Sweden. He will deliver a speech focusing on the importance of combating forced displacement, and how jobs and development can contribute to this.

Mr Löfven will also meet with African representatives, not least to follow up on the EU-Africa Summit on Migration held in Malta in November 2015.

It is ten years since the adoption of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The fifth summit called for a stronger EU Eastern Partnership

Published 27 November 2017

When Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and other EU Heads of State and Government met their counterparts from the Eastern Partnership countries in Brussels 24 November, reforms, deepened and broadened cooperation were on the agenda. Prime Minister Löfven particularly stressed the importance of democracy and human rights, gender equality and a strong civil society.

- Sweden's commitment to the Eastern Partnership remains strong. The Partnership is a strategic priority in support of stability and development in our Eastern neighbourhood and a sign of mutual solidarity. Our goal is to support the development of open and sustainable societies with responsible institutions that citizens can rely on, said Prime Minister Löfven and continued:

- We must remain focused, be patient, set clear goals and work consistently. We must understand that transformation takes time. I believe that the door for deeper relations between partner countries and the EU must remain open for those that are willing to work hard to transform their societies. That is good for both partner countries and the European Union.

20 goals to the benefit of people

At the Summit, Heads of State or Government discussed developments since they last met in Riga 2015, and ways to increase reform momentum and strengthen cooperation.

They agreed to cooperate to meet 20 goals to achieve concrete results to the

benefit of people. These areas include public administration, trade and economic development, gender equality, mobility, energy issues, the environment and climate change. They also underlined the important role of civil society implementing reforms and developing resilient societies. Common challenges facing both EU Members States and partner countries such as disinformation and cyber issues were also discussed.

Free trade agreements and visa freedom

The association and free trade agreements with Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine mean that these countries will gain access to the EU's single market. Since early 2017, citizens from Georgia and Ukraine can travel to the Schengen area without a visa. Moldova was granted visa-free travel in 2014.

In the margins of the Summit, EU and Armenia signed a Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement. Negotiations on a renewed agreement with Azerbaijan are underway, and with Belarus Partnership Priorities will be signed.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Fifth summit of the Eastern Partnership

Published 24 November 2017

When Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and other EU heads of state and government meet their counterparts in the Eastern Partnership countries, the agenda will include reforms and deepened cooperation. The Government will particularly highlight the importance of democracy and a strong civil society.

A strong civil society and democracy are important for Sweden

The Government is strongly committed to the Eastern Partnership. The aim is to ensure resilient, prosperous, peaceful and democratic societies with responsible institutions that have the confidence of citizens. The key to this is a strong civil society.

Developing closer ties with the EU requires engagement and hard work and for the Government, the priority is for countries that implement reforms to be offered more cooperation.

The Eastern Partnership involves strengthening the respect for human rights, promoting democratic development, increasing gender equality and promoting a strong civil society and independent media.

Citizens' trust and popular support are essential for the success of the comprehensive reforms and to achieve long-term sustainable development in the partnership countries. These reforms must yield tangible results for the population and it is particularly important to reach the young generation.

Deeper and more focused relations within the Eastern Partnership

At the summit, heads of state and government are discussing the latest developments, and how to increase the momentum of reform and strengthen cooperation.

The objective is to agree on 20 deliverables by 2020 in a number of areas: public administration, trade and economic development, gender equality, energy issues, environment and climate change. Civil society also needs to be stronger.

The three association and free trade agreements with Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine mean that partnership countries will gain access to the EU's single market. Since early 2017, citizens from Georgia and Ukraine can travel to the Schengen area without a visa. Moldova was granted visa-free travel in 2014.

In addition to these three countries, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus are also involved in the EU's Eastern Partnership.

The summit takes place on 24 November in Brussels.



Article from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

French-Swedish cooperation on green innovation

Published 17 November 2017

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and the French President Emmanuel Macron have signed a strategic partnership for innovation, digital transformation and green solutions. The partnership will help address social challenges, create new jobs and maintain social cohesion.

The threat of climate change, an ageing population and digital transformation place new demands on cross-border cooperation. By harnessing each other's strengths and working together to promote innovations and new technology, France and Sweden will be better prepared to meet these challenges. Both countries are strongly committed to fight climate change, which is why areas of cooperation include green transport solutions, clean energy, smart cities and green financing for climate-resilient economies. Both countries are also home to world-leading companies at the forefront of the digital transformation that we are witnessing. The partnership makes it possible to tap into the world-class expertise of these digital companies and startups. Pharmaceutical and environmental innovations promote a healthier lifestyle choice for our countries' citizens.

The partnership is based on the innovative capacity of public sector stakeholders, academia and the business sector, and covers four areas:

1. green solutions for transport, clean energy and smart cities,
2. green financing for climate-resilient economies,
3. digital transformation, smart industries and startups, and
4. health and life sciences innovation.

Each area contains subprojects linked, for example, to solutions for a fossil-free transport sector and knowledge exchange on smart cities.

Sweden and France are world leaders in the area of green innovation and can contribute to the transition to a more sustainable society. The partnership is expected to enable the two countries to advance developments together in a number of areas of mutual interest, both at EU level and in international forums. The agreement opens the way for continued and enhanced cooperation between Swedish and French companies and deepens existing relations.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth to be webcast

Published 14 November 2017

On Friday 17 November, you will be able to follow the Social Summit live via webcasts in English, French, German and Swedish. You can also follow the meeting on social media [#SocialSummit17](#).

The webcasts will allow people throughout Europe to follow the discussions on issues that affect their everyday lives, such as new job opportunities, guaranteeing decent work and access to skills development.

The first live session starts at 9.30 on Friday 17 November: [socialsummit17.se](#).

The webcasts will be available on demand after the Summit.

Follow [#SocialSummit17](#)

You can also follow the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth on social media: [#SocialSummit17](#).

Sweden's Prime Minister Stefan Löfven on Twitter: [@SwedishPM](#)

The EU Commission on Twitter: [@EU_Commission](#)

The Facebook event (by the EU Commission)

The Swedish Government on Instagram: [@sverigesregering](#)

[#SocialSummit17](#)



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Sweden's centenary gift to Finland – 'Free Fall'

Published 01 November 2017

At a reception on 31 October at Hanaholmen, the Swedish-Finnish Cultural Centre on the outskirts of Helsinki, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and Finnish Prime Minister Juha Sipilä unveiled 'Free Fall', a sculpture by artist Anna Uddenberg.

The sculpture is one of the centenary gifts to Finland from the Swedish state. The gift was announced by HM the King of Sweden on 1 June in connection with the official celebration of Finland's centenary by the Nordic heads of state and government.

'Free Fall' is a bronze sculpture set four metres up in the air with a water jet fountain – a contemporary statue of liberty.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Regional perspectives essential for innovation policy

Published 27 October 2017

For the first time, the National Innovation Council is hosting a regional meeting, to take place in Trollhättan on 25 October. Below, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven tells us more about the Council's work and the importance of developing innovation policy that benefits all of Sweden. The Council is also hosting an open seminar to discuss the Government's policy with those most closely affected by it.

What are your expectations of the meeting?

– By meeting in a region and having a dialogue with regional actors, I hope to gain even more perspectives, ideas and suggestions for developing innovation policy that benefits the entire country. In Trollhättan, five members of the National Innovation Council – Isabella Lövin, Helene Hellmark Knutsson, Carola Öberg, Sigbritt Karlsson and Charles Edquist – and I are meeting regional and local actors from the county administrative board, the region, municipalities, academia, business and cooperation arenas, such as Lindholmen Science Park and Innovatum. The Council's work is important for gaining new knowledge and new ideas to develop national policy. It is a matter of creating good conditions for innovation, strengthening our international competitiveness and improving our ability to resolve social challenges together.

Why is it important for the National Innovation Council to have a regional meeting?

– As I travel around the world and meet other heads of government, business

leaders, academics and innovators, considerable interest is often shown in Sweden's capacity for innovation and its transition to a sustainable society. This attracts knowledge cooperation and investment, which in turn enables Swedish exports to grow, with new products on new markets. All this is taking place in various locations across Sweden, and new products, services and companies are constantly being developed. This is why regional collaboration is so important and why national policy must provide the best possible conditions for innovation throughout the country. During the visit to Trollhättan, a seminar is also being held on how various actors can collaborate to advance society through innovation.

What is the purpose of a seminar?

– I want the Government's approach to be open and inviting. This is necessary for a constructive discussion and development of government policy based on dialogue with those most closely affected by it. The seminar aims to enable more people to participate in this discussion and contribute their ideas and suggestions.

What are the Council's most important results to date?

– Close and frequent cooperation between several ministers and external members of the business sector and academia has enabled us to establish a good platform for developing ideas and policy. The Council has helped ensure that important processes and decisions, such as the government bill on public venture capital, the research policy bill, the innovation partnership programmes, the procurement strategy, the digital transformation boost, the focus on open data in the Budget Bill and the issue of employee stock options, have been given priority and discussed at strategic level. This has helped advance several policy areas to ensure they better promote innovation which, taken together, means that the Government is pursuing a better innovation policy. Dialogues with other actors in society are also developing well. I particularly want to call attention to the high level of interest the National Innovation Council has generated in China, France, Germany and India, for example.

What else is taking place in the Council now?

– Extensive work on the five strategic innovation partnership programmes is under way. It is very gratifying that this initiative from the National Innovation Council brings together so many actors from different sectors and parts of the country. The various groups set important priorities and generate

new ideas for collaborations and projects. With regard the Council's upcoming meetings this autumn and spring, I am looking forward to addressing issues such as Sweden's contribution to the global transition towards sustainable societies, skills supply and development of the labour market, the role of the public sector in promoting innovation, and several initiatives aimed at strengthening companies' innovative capacity, growth, expansion and participation in global innovation environments. Another aim of the Council is to help increase and enhance cooperation between ministries and with government agencies. The innovation partnership programmes contribute to this. I am also seeing more cross-ministerial collaboration at the Government Offices and many government-led initiatives based on close collaboration between various ministries. This is a welcome development that I would like to see even more of in the future.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

The Prime Minister speaks about the future of Europe in Uppsala

Published 27 October 2017

Today, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven held a speech titled 'Our Europe – our shared responsibility' at Uppsala University. The speech was a contribution to the debate on the future of Europe that is currently under way.

Financial and migration crises, increased unemployment and security concerns have led to more people losing confidence in the EU and the ability of policy to solve real problems when they arise. In today's speech, the Prime Minister indicated what future developments he would like to see, and why.

“The EU is beginning to lose its leading position in the global competition. We are no longer the largest market, and we are not always the leading foreign policy actor that we could be either. We must change this by focusing on delivering solutions to the challenges we face today. This is about more and better jobs, a sustainable migration policy, security for the citizens and leading climate efforts,” says Mr Löfven.

In his speech, Mr Löfven particularly highlighted the importance of the EU being at the forefront of creating new jobs and increasing growth, for example by deepening the single market and negotiating more trade agreements. He also emphasised that the EU must also ensure that working conditions are favourable and that competition is healthy and fair.

These are issues that will be discussed at the upcoming summit in Gothenburg on 17 November, where EU leaders will discuss how to create new jobs, how to create fairer competition in the EU and how adjustment

possibilities for EU citizens can be improved. The question of how the European labour market can be more efficient and fair is central to the future of the EU and it is a great achievement for Sweden that these issues are now being discussed at the highest EU level.

The Prime Minister also said that the EU must lead climate efforts, do more to guarantee the safety of its citizens and that much still remains to be done to achieve a sustainable and responsible migration system. The efforts to reduce the number of displaced people has had an impact, but this must be combined with every country taking its responsibility for refugees.

The Prime Minister also stressed that all countries in the EU must live up to the values that the EU stands for, abide by decisions taken jointly and not shirk from our common responsibility.

“When we do the right things and focus on delivering solutions to the problems that people see, there is great strength and potential in EU cooperation,” says Mr Löfven.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Migration, digitalisation and Brexit at European Council

Published 25 October 2017

When Prime Minister Stefan Löfven met his colleagues at the European Council meeting of 19–20 October, the heads of state or government adopted conclusions on migration, a Digital Europe, security and defence, and external relations. Afterwards, they discussed Brexit, without the participation of the UK. When Prime Minister Stefan Löfven met his colleagues at the European Council meeting of 19–20 October, the heads of state or government adopted conclusions on migration, a Digital Europe, security and defence, and external relations. Afterwards, they discussed Brexit, without the participation of the UK.

Migration

The heads of state or government began the meeting by discussing migration. They agreed to continue the work on migration carried out so far in the EU, and to provide the proper support to Member States as necessary. In their conclusions from the meeting, the EU leaders also pointed out the importance of cooperation with countries of origin and transit, and called for further efforts to increase returns.

The European Council also reiterated the importance of vigilance on all migration routes and readiness to react to new trends. The Council undertook to ensure funding, including through the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa.

The EU leaders also said that they would return to the reform of the Dublin system and the issue of responsibility and solidarity at the European Council meeting in December, and seek to reach a consensus during the first half of 2018.

Digital Europe

The EU leaders followed up on the Tallinn Digital Summit and emphasised that digitalisation offers immense opportunities for more jobs, growth, and global competitiveness. To build a Digital Europe, the EU needs a future-oriented regulatory framework, a first rate e-infrastructure, a common approach to cybersecurity, and training and education systems that are fit for the digital age. It is also important that funding opportunities are available for research and innovation that support a Digital Europe.

Security and defence

The EU leaders welcomed the progress made to reach agreement on enhanced security and defence cooperation, and look forward to the launch of a Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in the area of defence at the European Council meeting in December.

North Korea, Iran and Turkey

The European Council held a debate on relations with Turkey. It also reaffirmed its commitment to the nuclear deal between the EU and Iran. The Council also urged North Korea to abandon its missile programmes and stressed that lasting peace must be achieved through peaceful means.

Brexit

The European Council welcomed the progress made in the negotiations. This applies to the first phase, regarding citizens' rights, and how concerned citizens and their family members can be guaranteed the rights they currently enjoy as EU citizens, even after Brexit.

The Council also acknowledged that the EU and the UK have made progress on convergence on objectives and principles concerning Ireland, primarily as regards protecting the Good Friday Agreement and maintaining the Common Travel Area. With regard to the UK's financial obligations, the European Council noted that it was waiting for greater clarity from the UK.

At its next session in December, the European Council will reassess the state of progress in the negotiations. If sufficient progress has been achieved, the Council will adopt additional guidelines on the EU's future relationship with the UK and possible transitional arrangements. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven represented Sweden at the meeting in Brussels.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Migration, a digital Europe, security and defence on European Council agenda

Published 18 October 2017

Migration, digital issues, security and defence will be on the agenda as Prime Minister Stefan Löfven meets his European colleagues in the European Council on 19–20 October. On the second day of the Council the heads of state and government will discuss the negotiations on the UK's exit from the EU.

Migration

The European Council will look at the migration situation in Europe and evaluate measures aimed at controlling irregular migration flows. The EU leaders are expected to raise the issue of enhanced cooperation with humanitarian organisations such as the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

A digital Europe

Taking the Tallinn Digital Summit held on 29 September as a starting point, the European Council will consider how the EU can take advantage of the opportunities offered by digital transformation.

It will also assess the work on the digital single market.

Security and defence

A discussion on permanent structured defence cooperation is also on the agenda, as the EU leaders agreed to such cooperation in June.

The EU's external relations

In light of recent developments, the EU leaders will review certain foreign policy matters, including relations with Turkey.

Brexit negotiations

On 22 June the European Council met in the EU 27 format, that is, without the UK. The Council will review the results of the fifth and latest round of negotiations. The European Council meets in Brussels. This is the third of four meetings this year.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Stefan Löfven met India's Minister of Commerce and Industry

Published 11 October 2017

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven met today with India's Minister of Commerce and Industry, Mr Suresh Prabhu, and his delegation.

Sweden and India have a close economic and trade collaboration, not least in the areas of renewable energy, smart cities, transportation, innovation and health.

In 2016, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi issued a Joint Statement on intensified cooperation in a broad range of sectors.

This visit is a key follow-up to the two countries' commitment of last year. Prime Minister Löfven and Minister Prabhu will also participate at the annual meeting of the India-Sweden Business Leaders Round Table.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Greater focus on the link between innovation and globalisation

Published 29 August 2017

Innovation and globalisation – two areas that go hand in hand for Sweden’s continued national growth and development. Since Prime Minister Stefan Löfven established the National Innovation Council in February 2015, several initiatives have been taken aimed at promoting Sweden’s exchanges with leading innovation communities. There is greater focus today on the link between innovation and globalisation, and this was discussed at the National Innovation Council’s meeting on 28 August.

Moving from idea to innovation requires learning and collaboration between countries. This is why the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation has taken over responsibility for innovation and research councils at Sweden's embassies in important regions such as the United States, China, India, Japan and Brazil.

The aim is to promote more effective networking with people and communities of interest to Swedish innovation, research and higher education. Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg and Sweden's newly appointed Ambassador to the United States Karin Olofsdotter described how this policy can be developed to increase synergies between various promotion initiatives and foster Sweden's exchanges with leading innovation communities.

Several international comparisons, including the Global Innovation Index, the European Innovation Scoreboard and the Bloomberg Innovation Index,

identify Sweden as a global leader in innovation. The Government is working to ensure Sweden continues at the forefront. The National Innovation Council, including representatives of the Government, business, trade unions and the research community, can serve as a contact point to strengthen Sweden's innovation capacity, thereby attracting the interest of other countries.

"Sweden is a global leader in innovation, and doors are opening in many countries for both the Government and the businesses accompanying the many promotional trips we carry out," says Mr Damberg.

In 2017, the Government has made several international visits and trips focusing on innovation, globalisation and new inter-country cooperation. On 31 July, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and Mr Damberg travelled to Paris for meetings with President Emmanuel Macron and Prime Minister Edouard Philippe. Discussion topics included jobs and growth, Swedish-French cooperation, the future of the EU, migration and security.

Press release: Prime Minister Stefan Löfven to meet President Emmanuel Macron

On 26–28 June, Prime Minister Löfven visited China, accompanied by Ministers Mikael Damberg, Ann Linde and Karolina Skog, and a business delegation within the framework of the Government's Team Sweden initiative. The visit focused on green innovation and sustainability, an area in which Sweden leads the world. Several agreements were signed in connection with the visit to promote bilateral trade and continued cooperation between Sweden and China.

Press release: Prime Minister Stefan Löfven to visit China

On 31 January, Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel visited Sweden. In connection with her visit, Germany and Sweden agreed on extensive innovation cooperation in digitalisation, eHealth and future mobility. A new innovation partnership was forged between the two countries involving a unique agreement on cooperation to promote innovative social solutions, new export products and stronger competitiveness.

Article: Innovation, digitalisation and asylum cooperation on the agenda as Löfven meets Merkel

Press release: Sweden and Germany in unique innovation partnership



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Festive celebration of Finland's 100th anniversary as an independent state

Published 25 August 2017

On Friday 25 August, Finnish Prime Minister Juha Sipilä visited Stockholm. The visit was part of the celebrations commemorating Finland's 100th anniversary as an independent state. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and Prime Minister Juha Sipilä marked the occasion by attending a commemorative festival in Kungsträdgården, the largest centenary celebration held outside of Finland.

As part of Finland's 100th anniversary festivities, Mr Sipilä and Mr Löfven also took part in an event where Finnish artist Marja Kanervo's sculpture ÅRTAL (YEARS) was unveiled at Engelbrektsplan in Stockholm. The work is part of an art project entitled 'Two countries – one future'. Swedish artist Eva Lange's work will be unveiled later in Helsinki.

Discussions and a press conference were subsequently held at Rosenbad. Bilateral cooperation, regional security, the bioeconomy and EU affairs such as migration, social growth and security were the main subjects discussed during the meeting.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Facts about the Global Commission on the Future of Work

Published 24 August 2017

In 2015, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) launched the Future of Work Initiative, a comprehensive endeavour to deepen understanding of the challenges facing the labour market of the future and equip the ILO to tackle them. The initiative's conclusions will be presented in conjunction with the ILO's centenary in 2019.

ILO Director-General Guy Ryder has written the following about the initiative: “In 1919, the founders of the ILO stated that they were ‘moved by sentiments of justice and humanity as well as by the desire to secure the permanent peace of the world’. In 1944, the Declaration of Philadelphia stated that ‘the war against want requires to be carried on with unrelenting vigour’. The initiative that will culminate in 2019 should give expression to those same sentiments and point the way to how that war can be carried on, with the same vigour, but also performing the tasks and applying the methods required by radically changed circumstances in the world of work.”

The Future of Work Initiative is a three-stage process. During the first stage (2016–2017), ILO Member States and other interested actors are invited to contribute input via national or regional conferences to the reflection on the future of work. The second stage involves establishing a High-level Global Commission on the Future of Work, including experts and companies, employers and trade unions, which will produce a report on the labour market of the future. In the third stage, Member States will be encouraged to

mark the ILO centenary in various ways.

The Commission, which was launched on 21 August 2017, will work until early 2019 to produce its report, which will be presented at the centenary session of the International Labour Conference in June 2019.

The work of the Commission will be organised around four ‘centenary conversations’, as ILO Director-General Guy Ryder has called them, which are the foundation of the Future of Work Initiative:

1. Work and society
2. Decent jobs for all
3. The organisation of work and production
4. The governance of work

Members

The ILO Governing Body agreed earlier this year on the following criteria for the Commission’s composition:

“Its members will be eminent individuals with outstanding personal achievements and vision, participating in their individual capacity. They will need to represent a balance of geographical regions and the realities of developing, emerging and industrialised countries. Gender balance will be a basic consideration. The ILO’s tripartite constituency should find their interests represented in the Commission which should also bring together multidisciplinary perspectives and knowledge to ensure that the exercise is well rounded and relevant to the entirety of the ILO’s constituency and mandate.”

A list of the Commission’s members is available at ILO.org

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and President of the Republic of Mauritius Ameenah Gurib-Fakim have agreed to co-chair the Commission.

ILO Director-General Guy Ryder is the principal secretary of the Commission, which together with the two co-chairs will comprise a total of 28 people.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister leading UN efforts on tomorrow's jobs – new ILO Commission presented today

Published 21 August 2017

What will we work with in the future? How will we ensure that adapting to climate change, an increasingly digital world and an ageing population lead to new jobs with better conditions? And that more people benefit from the advantages of globalisation than at present? These are questions that the ILO Commission, which was launched in Geneva today, will address. The co-chairs of the Commission, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and President of Mauritius Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, were present in Geneva.

The Commission brings together some 20 experts from different parts of the world to analyse what the impacts of the revolutionary and long-term changes that factors such as digitalisation, climate change and demographic shifts will mean for tomorrow's working life and labour market.

“It is time to make globalisation work for everyone. And it is by addressing the problems in the global labour market that we can build social cohesion and confidence, and shape a globalisation that represses no one and benefits everyone”, said Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

“The future of work is not decided in advance, we must make it according to the values and preferences that we choose for societies and true policies that we design and implement. This is precisely here the commissions work comes in: To identify the key work of challenging of our time and what we

must do to meet them,” said ILO Director-General Guy Ryder.

When we look to the future we must do so from a range of perspectives and situations. We must “place the wellbeing of people at the front and center of the agenda,” said Ameenah Gurib-Fakim.

The Global Commission on the Future of Work was established as part of the International Labour Organisation’s Future of Work initiative. More than one hundred countries have taken part in preparatory work by holding national dialogues on the perceived opportunities and challenges facing working life of the future. The Commission will present its report in spring 2019. The Commission will also help implement the 2030 Agenda, and in particular goal 8 on work and economic growth.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is the UN specialised agency for employment and working life issues. The ILO was set up in 1919 and is the UN’s only tripartite organisation, of which countries, trade unions and employers are members.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Free trade agreement and export issues on agenda as Prime Minister met Japanese counterpart

Published 09 July 2017

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe met for dinner and talks on 8–9 July. The subjects discussed included the new free trade agreement between the EU and Japan, and prospects of increasing trade with Japan, which is Sweden's second largest export market in Asia.

The leaders specifically discussed how the two countries can enhance their cooperation in the area of innovation.

Mr Löfven and Mr Abe also discussed current issues on the UN Security Council agenda, including the situation on the Korean Peninsula, and agreed on continued cooperation to celebrate the 150th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Sweden and Japan in 2018.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

EU leaders discuss migration, security and defence in Brussels

Published 28 June 2017

At the meeting of the European Council on 22–23 June, EU heads of state and government adopted conclusions on security and defence, and the Paris Agreement on climate change. They also agreed to extend the sanctions against Russia but did not succeed in reaching agreement on the reform of the Common European Asylum System. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven represented Sweden.

On the first day of the meeting, EU leaders adopted conclusions on security and defence, and the Paris Agreement. They also discussed foreign policy issues.

They reaffirmed the commitment of the EU to swiftly and fully implement the Paris Agreement and to lead the global transition to clean energy.

They emphasised the EU's enhanced cooperation with international partners that demonstrate solidarity with future generations.

Brexit

Brexit was discussed on Thursday evening. UK Prime Minister Theresa May began by reporting on the situation following the recent parliamentary elections and announced that she would be presenting a proposal next week on the rights of EU citizens in the UK.

"The remaining 27 EU Member States do not want the situation to differ

from what it is today," said Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

Sanctions against Russia

The heads of state and government held a long discussion on Russia on Friday morning. They agreed to send a political signal to the Council of the European Union that the economic sanctions should be extended for another six months.

Mr Löfven underlined the importance of maintaining sanctions until the Minsk Agreements are implemented.

Migration

Migration was the other major issue on Friday. The EU leaders did not succeed in reaching an agreement on the reform of the Common European Asylum System.

"I am naturally disappointed that we did not manage to reach an agreement, as we had undertaken to do under the Maltese Presidency," says Mr Löfven.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven visited Poland

Published 20 June 2017

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven visited Poland on 19–20 June for talks with Polish Prime Minister Beata Szydło. The meeting focused primarily on common challenges within the EU, such as migration, unemployment and security.

Mr Löfven emphasised the importance of shared responsibility in the EU in order to move forwards on migration. He also highlighted the need for decent work and raised the efforts under way ahead of the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth to be held in Sweden on 17 November. The two prime ministers also discussed Brexit and the importance of constructive negotiations with the UK. Mr Löfven also highlighted the importance of fundamental EU values such as democracy and the rule of law.

Other topics of discussion at the meeting included bilateral issues, the Eastern Partnership (where Sweden and Poland enjoy excellent cooperation), security in our neighbourhood and Russia (where Sweden and Poland have similar interests).

During his visit, Mr Löfven gave a speech to students at the University of Warsaw on the EU of the future.

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at the University of Warsaw, 19 June 2017



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister in talks with President of Botswana

Published 19 June 2017

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received President of Botswana Ian Khama for bilateral talks today. The talks were characterised by the good relations that have existed between the two countries since Botswana gained its independence fifty years ago.

Botswana and Sweden share many values with respect to democracy and human rights, and the two countries are likeminded in many ways on international issues. The issues under discussion included regional development in the countries' neighbourhoods, and global issues such as the UN, migration, climate and the upcoming Africa-EU Summit. Opportunities to further reinforce and deepen bilateral relations through increased trade, for example, were also discussed.

During his visit from 19 to 21 June, President Khama will also meet the King and Queen of Sweden and a number of representatives of the Swedish Government. His programme will also include a visit to Linköping.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister of Bangladesh visited Sweden

Published 16 June 2017

On 15–16 June, Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visited Sweden on the first official visit at heads of government level between the countries. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received Ms Hasina for bilateral talks on the Global Deal, broader cooperation between the countries and human rights.

Ms Hasina also had talks with Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin and Minister for Justice and Migration Morgan Johansson. She also held talks with First Deputy Speaker of the Riksdag Tobias Billström and took part in a business seminar attended by by representatives of Swedish and Bangladeshi companies and Swedish trade unions.

[Joint Statement between Sweden and the People's Republic of Bangladesh \(pdf\)](#)



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister met President of Mauritius

Published 13 June 2017 Updated 19 June 2017

Opportunities to develop bilateral cooperation and relations were the focus as Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received President of Mauritius Ameenha Gurib-Fakim at Sager House on 13 June.

Sweden enjoys close cooperation on climate and environmental issues with a group of island nations that includes Mauritius. Mauritius was also actively involved in the recent Ocean Conference in New York. Mr Löfven and Dr Gurib-Fakim both emphasised the importance of increased trade between African countries, and spoke of the potential for increased business exchange between Mauritius and Sweden.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received Kailash Satyarthi, 2014 Nobel Peace Prize laureate

Published 08 May 2017

Kailash Satyarthi, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to end the oppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education, described new initiatives aimed at the more than one hundred million children around the world who are trapped in child labour.

The '100 Million for 100 Million' campaign gives children and young people the opportunity to learn about their rights, and to meet children who have been subjected to oppression. Mr Satyarthi has gathered over fifty previous Nobel laureates to lead the initiative. The campaign is supported by UN organisations such as UNICEF and global companies such as Google.

Kailash Satyarthi, who has been championing children's rights since 1980, works to prevent child labour and promote the right of children to education both through global campaigns and direct measures locally in India to help children who have been exploited. During his visit to Sweden, he also met Swedish students and teachers, as well as Swedish civil society representatives.

Sweden is one of the world's major donors in the area of children's rights. In its development cooperation, a child's rights perspective is to be applied to initiatives that affect children. Sweden is one of the largest donors to UNICEF. In 2016, Swedish support to UNICEF exceeded SEK 2 billion.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Agreement on guidelines for Brexit negotiations

Published 02 May 2017

EU heads of state and government agreed on 29 April on the guidelines for negotiations on the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU. The meeting was an extraordinary European Council due to the UK's decision to leave the EU.

EU heads of state and government met on 29 April to adopt the guidelines for Brexit negotiations.

"I regret that the United Kingdom is leaving the EU. But it is positive that we can now get started on the negotiations, 10 months after the UK referendum," said Prime Minister Stefan Löfven after the meeting.

The guidelines set the framework for the negotiations and the EU's general standpoints and principles. The European Council stressed the importance of a united EU in the negotiations with the UK.

"The most important thing is that we in the EU stick together and place the interests of our citizens, companies and Member States first. We must have a firm and fair stance in the negotiations," emphasised Mr Löfven.

On 29 March, the UK submitted the formal notification to the European Council of its intention to leave the EU. A draft of the guidelines was presented on 31 March and has since been negotiated so as to be adopted at the extraordinary Council meeting on 29 April.

The meeting took place in Brussels.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

EU leaders support joint future for Europe

Published 28 March 2017

On the 60th anniversary of the foundation of European cooperation, the EU leaders met in Rome. This was an occasion for reflecting on the history of the EU and for highlighting the EU's many successes, but above all for looking to the future. The EU leaders adopted a declaration on a shared vision for EU cooperation in the coming years.

"Sixty years of peace, security and growth are worth celebrating", said Prime Minister Stefan Löfven after taking part in the anniversary celebrations in Rome.

On 25 March 1957, government representatives from Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, France, Germany and Italy met in Rome to sign the Treaties of Rome. This was the start of the cooperation that has given the now over 500 million EU citizens the longest period of peace in Europe's modern history.

In spite of the many benefits of cooperation, the EU currently faces major challenges. Immediately after the referendum in the United Kingdom in June 2016, resulting in a vote to leave the EU, the EU leaders began a discussion on the future of the EU. In Rome, they expressed their support for a declaration on a shared vision for the future of the EU.

The declaration takes its cue from the ravaged Europe at the end of the Second World War and expresses pride in all that our cooperation has achieved; it affirms that the Member States must address challenges together.

"Now we have to look to the future. We need to create more jobs, combat climate change and find a way to deal with migration so that fewer people are forced to flee and so that all countries take their responsibility. We can and must do more in all of these areas", said Mr Löfven.

Mr Löfven began the visit in Rome by meeting the social partners, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Council Donald Tusk and Estonia's Prime Minister Jüri Ratas, President of the European Council of Ministers in the second half of 2017.

The purpose of the meeting was to prepare the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth to which Mr Löfven and Mr Juncker will invite EU leaders and the social partners in November 2017.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi discuss excellent and growing bilateral relations

Published 24 March 2017

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven spoke today with the Prime Minister of India, Mr Narendra Modi. Mr Löfven congratulated Mr Modi on his party's recent successes in four important state elections and commended the Indian Government's economic and development reform programme.

Both leaders recalled their meeting at the successful Make in India Week in Mumbai last year. Mr Löfven also invited Mr Modi to undertake an official visit to Sweden.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister met WTO Director-General

Published 24 March 2017

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received the Director-General of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Roberto Azevêdo, for talks on current trade issues, including how Sweden and the WTO can work together to ensure continued strong support for free trade around the world.

They also discussed social aspects of globalisation, including the labour market.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Stefan Löfven met UN Special Envoy for Syria

Published 21 March 2017

On 21 March, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven met UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura. During their meeting they discussed the serious situation in Syria and efforts to reach a political solution.

The discussions between Mr Löfven and Mr de Mistura focused on the UN-led intra-Syrian talks in Geneva, the fragile ceasefire and the ongoing restricted humanitarian access in Syria.

Mr Löfven underscored Sweden's wholehearted support for Mr de Mistura's efforts and the UN-led political process. He also emphasised the importance of women's participation in the peace process, accountability and the guarantors of the ceasefire meeting their commitments with respect to adhering to the ceasefire and providing humanitarian access.

In conclusion, he pointed out that the UN-led political process has a clear voice in the UN Security Council through Sweden.



Article

Economy and migration at European Council

Published 13 March 2017

When EU leaders gathered at a meeting of the European Council on 9 March, the economic situation in the EU was discussed. The agenda also included the situation in the western Balkans and migration issues with a focus on the situation in Libya. The European Council re-elected Donald Tusk to the position of President. Sweden was represented by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

Economy at European Council's March meeting

Traditionally, Europe's economic situation is in focus at the Council's March meeting. The EU leaders discussed jobs, growth, competitiveness and the European Semester. Attention was also focused on EU trade agreements and the work to deepen the internal market.

"We can note that all EU countries are enjoying economic growth, even if it is at different rates. There is still a lot to do with regard to unemployment and the internal market, but development is going in the right direction," said Mr Löfven.

Migration and follow up of Malta meeting

When EU leaders met informally in Malta on 3 February, a joint declaration on strengthening cooperation with Libya was adopted. The aim is to stabilise the fragile political process in the country, prevent human smuggling and the loss of more lives in the Mediterranean. The declaration has now been

followed up with a review of the now intensified cooperation with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) as well as training support to the Libyan coast guard.

Security and EU's external relations

The EU leaders considered the vulnerable political situation in the western Balkans and followed up conclusions adopted in December last year to strengthen cooperation in the defence area.

Election of President and anniversary of Treaty of Rome

Donald Tusk was re-elected as President of the European Council for the period 1 June this year until 30 November 2019.

"Donald Tusk has done a good job in a difficult and challenging time, and continuity is a good idea in the situation in which we find ourselves," said Mr Löfven.

On 10 March, the EU leaders held an informal discussion without the UK to prepare for the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome and to follow up on the discussion of the EU's future held in Malta on 3 February.

"We will now look forward to see which issues we need to focus on more closely to create a united and dynamic EU that serves our citizens. The EU's future is more important than ever in times of increased political tensions around the world," said Mr Löfven at the end of the meeting.

Caption:

Migration issues with a focus on the Central Mediterranean route and the situation in the western Balkans were on EU leaders' agenda when the European Council met in Brussels on 9 March. The Council also held an annual review of the economic situation in the EU. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven represented Sweden.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister in talks with Lithuania's Prime Minister

Published 06 March 2017

Today, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received Lithuania's new Prime Minister Saulius Skvernelis. During talks, the heads of government discussed bilateral, regional and EU issues, including trade, security, migration and energy.

Social issues in the EU and the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth were also discussed during the meeting. The Summit is being arranged by Sweden in cooperation with the European Commission and will be held in Gothenburg on 17 November this year.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Malta's Prime Minister Joseph Muscat visited Prime Minister Löfven

Published 28 February 2017

Earlier today, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven welcomed Joseph Muscat, Prime Minister of Malta, the current holder of the EU Presidency. The visit began with a joint wreath-laying ceremony at Olof Palme's grave.

This was followed by talks, primarily concerning current EU issues such as migration, social and growth issues in the EU and the UK's withdrawal from the EU. Mr Löfven also provided information about the summit on fair jobs and growth that he will be co-hosting with President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker in Gothenburg on 17 November.

Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth

The visit concluded with a joint press conference.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister in meeting with Canada's Governor General during State Visit

Published 21 February 2017 Updated 21 February 2017

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven met Canada's Governor General David Johnston in Stockholm in connection with the Canadian State Visit taking place on 20–23 February.

Bilateral relations between Sweden and Canada are excellent and there is great potential for closer cooperation in a range of areas.

During their talks, innovation, research and migration were discussed. Both Sweden and Canada have gender-equal governments and actively promote gender equality.

Mr Löfven and Mr Johnston also discussed opportunities to develop bilateral economic relations in light of the implementation of the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA).

Interest in Canada has increased in Sweden. In 2016, several Swedish ministers and government delegations visited Canada with the aim of developing Swedish-Canadian relations.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven visited Iran

Published 14 February 2017 Updated 14 February 2017

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven visited Iran on 11–12 February at the invitation of President Hassan Rouhani. A business delegation led by Minister for EU Affairs and Trade Ann Linde accompanied Mr Löfven on the trip. The delegation included Business Sweden and a number of other government agencies. Anders Ferbe, Chairman of IF Metall (metalworkers union), also took part.

Mr Löfven had bilateral discussions with President Rouhani as well as meetings with Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and Speaker of the Parliament Ali Larijani. Discussions at the political meetings dealt mainly with bilateral relations, regional issues focusing primarily on the crises in Syria, Iraq and Yemen, and human rights. It is particularly important to discuss these issues with Iran now, when Sweden is a member of the UN Security Council. Mr Löfven presented a clear message on the importance of Iran contributing to the achievement of political solutions to the region's conflicts. He emphasised Sweden's deep concern over the human rights situation in Iran, not least the use of the death penalty, limitations to freedom of expression and the press, and discrimination of women and minorities.

How to strengthen women's participation in the labour market

Mr Löfven also met Vice-President for Women and Family Affairs Shahindokht Molaverdi. The meeting was followed by a round-table discussion at which Mr Löfven, Ms Molaverdi and Iranian and Swedish

representatives discussed how to strengthen women's participation in the labour market and participation in society. Iranian representatives included women active in the parliament, business and civil society. Also taking part in these discussions were IF Metall Chairman Anders Ferbe and Swedish Institute Director-General Annika Rembe.

Several bilateral cooperation agreements were signed during the visit in areas such as higher education and research, transportation, technology and innovation, information technology, and strengthening women's participation in the labour force and entrepreneurship.

A number of commercial agreements were also signed between Swedish and Iranian companies.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

EU leaders agree to strengthen cooperation with Libya

Published 09 February 2017 Updated 09 February 2017

Preventing the loss of lives in the Mediterranean was a top priority when EU leaders met at an informal summit in Valetta on 3 February.

EU leaders met in Valetta on 3 February to strengthen cooperation with Libya. The aim is to support the country's development and prevent human smuggling, which has already taken the lives of thousands of people in the Mediterranean. Future European cooperation was also discussed at the meeting. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven represented Sweden.

The photo is from President of the European Council Donald Tusk's visit to Sweden last year. Photo: Government Offices/Martina Huber

"I welcome the fact that the EU has agreed on measures to combat human smuggling and save lives in the Mediterranean. This work will be done with respect for international law and in close cooperation with the UN bodies for refugees and migration."

Mr Löfven made this statement when representing Sweden at the informal EU summit on Malta.

Libya is the main country of departure to the EU for migrants along the Central Mediterranean route and is a base for human smugglers. The joint Declaration adopted by EU leaders on Malta means that the EU is strengthening cooperation with Libya. This will include operations and development assistance to stabilise the country's fragile political process.

The EU leaders also discussed the future of European cooperation. This discussion is a continuation of their reflections at the informal summit held in

Bratislava last September. The UK did not take part in the discussion due to the country's impending exit from the EU.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Migration and future of EU on agenda as EU leaders meet in Malta

Published 02 February 2017 Updated 02 February 2017

Migration, particularly the central Mediterranean route and Libya, will be the focus as EU leaders gather in the Maltese capital, Valletta, on 3 February for an informal meeting of heads of state or government.

Stefan Löfven will attend the informal meeting of heads of state or government in Valletta on 3 February. The agenda includes issues related to migration and the future of the European project. Image from President of the European Council Donald Tusk's visit to Stockholm last year. Photo: Government Offices/Martina Huber

Leaders of all 28 EU Member States will take part in a discussion on migration in the morning. The aim is for the EU to become more effective at combating human smuggling, thereby preventing the loss of more lives in the Mediterranean. EU leaders are expected to agree on concrete and immediate measures. Cooperation and relations with the Libyan authorities are a priority, as the situation in Libya is a key factor in combating human smuggling in the central Mediterranean.

Later in the day, EU leaders will discuss the future of the European project. The discussion is a continuation of their reflections at the informal meeting held in Bratislava last September. The UK will not take part in this discussion due to the country's impending exit from the EU.

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will represent Sweden at the meeting in Malta.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Innovation, digitalisation and asylum cooperation on the agenda as Löfven meets Merkel

Published 01 February 2017 Updated 01 February 2017

Together with Germany's Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received media representatives.

"I value your leadership. I value your friendship. Sweden and Germany have strong ties and we share the same values," began Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

Mr Löfven then talked about how deeply regrettable it is that the United States has decided to stop entry of people from seven countries. Mr Löfven said that this would increase tensions and suspicion and went on to stress that the EU has an important role to play in defending the equal worth and rights of all people.

"The Chancellor and I are agreed that we must work together for greater EU cooperation in these uncertain times. An EU that stands up for democratic values. An EU that is strong, cohesive and principled."

Chancellor Merkel stressed the importance of cooperation on digitalisation and innovation, and close relations between the countries around the Baltic Sea, which she chose to call the 'sea of freedom'.

Partnership on innovation

During the press conference, a 'partnership on innovation' was presented – a broad German-Swedish collaboration programme involving government agencies, the business sector and academia.

"The partnership will help us to address issues such as urbanisation, health and climate," stressed Mr Löfven, who said he was very enthusiastic about presenting the programme.

Common asylum system for the EU

Both Prime Minister Löfven and Chancellor Merkel spoke about the importance of negotiating common principles for asylum reception in the EU.

"We will work together for an EU reception system characterised by solidarity. We have great expectations of Malta's Presidency," said Chancellor Merkel.

Both heads of government also emphasised the importance of expanding cooperation with countries in North Africa.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Hopes of stronger EU cooperation on security, climate and migration

Published 26 January 2017 Updated 26 January 2017

In the midst of an extremely important time for the EU, Germany's Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel will visit Stockholm on 31 January for a meeting with Prime Minister Stefan Löfven. Brexit negotiations are due to begin, and a new asylum system will be put into place. Germany has a key role in both of these processes. Hans Dahlgren is State Secretary to Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, and he tells us more about the visit.

How are Sweden's relations with Germany?

We have good and close relations. This is evident from the large number of regular contacts between us at various levels. Here at the Prime Minister's Office we speak pretty much every week with our German counterparts at Angela Merkel's Federal Chancellery.

What are the most important issues in your contacts?

We are in agreement on the acute need for the EU to agree on a functioning refugee policy. We are working together to achieve an agreement on this in the first half of the year, with all countries taking their share of the responsibility. It is also important to us to find good negotiating positions with a view to the UK's withdrawal from the EU. We need to safeguard the future of the EU, but also ensure good relations with the UK.

Why are good relations and cooperation with Germany in particular so important?

Germany is the largest EU Member State. The Germans play a key role when most decisions are to be taken. Considering that we also have considerable trade with Germany, this is very significant for Swedish industry and Swedish jobs. We share a fundamental interest in a strong, functioning EU based on democratic values.

What is the reason for the meeting with Angela Merkel?

This is an extremely important time for the EU, so we are particularly delighted that she has chosen to come and visit Stefan Löfven now. The Brexit negotiations will get under way soon, and a new asylum system will be put into place. Germany has a key role in both of these processes.

What do you hope the meeting will result in?

We need a strong EU in an increasingly insecure world. We therefore need to strengthen our cooperation on issues concerning security, climate and migration. A Europe with its citizens in focus, that strengthens jobs and growth but also decent working conditions and good wage development, is also on our agenda.

I hope that the meeting will ultimately lead to a number of concrete cooperation initiatives for more jobs, in which innovations and ways to strengthen exchange between Sweden and Germany will be discussed further. And I also think that Stefan Löfven and Angela Merkel will strengthen our joint positions in our work for the future of the EU.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Migration policy and EU future in focus during Prime Minister Stefan Löfven's past meetings with Chancellor Angela Merkel

Published 26 January 2017 Updated 26 January 2017

Sweden and Germany enjoy close cooperation both in the EU and bilaterally. Since becoming Prime Minister in 2014, Stefan Löfven has visited Germany several times for talks with Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Reforming EU migration policy has been high on the agenda since the Government took office and was also the focus of Mr Löfven's visit to Berlin in September 2015.

25 February 2015

Stefan Löfven's first visit to Germany as Prime Minister took place on 25 February 2015. The purpose of the visit was to meet Chancellor Angela Merkel and Vice Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel in Berlin.

Press release: Prime Minister Stefan Löfven to meet German Chancellor Angela Merkel

8 September 2015

In the autumn of 2015, the international refugee crisis was in focus. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and Chancellor Angela Merkel met in Berlin on 8 September 2015.

Press release: Prime Minister Stefan Löfven to meet with Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel

26 August 2016

At the invitation of Chancellor Angela Merkel, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven visited Berlin on 26 August 2016, together with Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen, Finnish Prime Minister Juha Sipilä and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, to discuss the EU's future and challenges in the wake of the UK referendum on 23 June 2016. The meeting took place ahead of the informal European Council meeting in Bratislava in September 2016.

Press release: Prime Minister to meet with Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Estonian president visited the prime minister

Published 25 January 2017 Updated 25 January 2017

Estonia's new president, Kersti Kaljulaid, visited Sweden today. In the morning she met Prime Minister Stefan Löfven. Their talks focused on Estonia's upcoming presidency of the EU in autumn 2017 and issues that will be dealt with then, including digitalisation and the social agenda. They also discussed the Eastern Partnership, energy issues, and Russia and Ukraine.

During the course of the morning, President Kaljulaid also met Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, His Majesty the King and Speaker of the Riksdag Urban Ahlin.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Estonian president visited the prime minister

Published 24 January 2017 Updated 26 January 2017

Estonia's new president, Kersti Kaljulaid, visited Sweden today. In the morning she met Prime Minister Stefan Löfven. Their talks focused on Estonia's upcoming presidency of the EU in autumn 2017 and issues that will be dealt with then, including digitalisation and the social agenda. They also discussed the Eastern Partnership, energy issues, and Russia and Ukraine.

During the course of the morning, President Kaljulaid also met Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, His Majesty the King and Speaker of the Riksdag Urban Ahlin.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

The humanitarian catastrophe in Aleppo dominated the EU leaders' summit

Published 19 December 2016 Updated 19 December 2016

The war in Syria and the terrible humanitarian situation in the city of Aleppo was one of the main issues when the EU's 28 heads of state and government met in Brussels on 15 December. The European Council decided to increase pressure to try and ensure the evacuation of civilians and the protection of hospitals and ambulances. The EU leaders also reached an agreement that will enable the Netherlands to approve the Union's trade agreement with Ukraine. Migration, defence, economic and social issues, and future negotiations with the United Kingdom were also discussed.

Syria

In a joint statement, the EU heads of state and government condemned the continuing attacks against Aleppo carried out by the Syrian regime and its allies, in particular Russia and Iran. The statement urges Syria, Russia and others involved to allow the evacuation of the inhabitants of eastern Aleppo, to offer immediate and unconditional help and protection to all inhabitants of eastern Aleppo, and protection for all medical staff and all medical facilities throughout the country.

"We must do all we can to save lives and work to ensure humanitarian

access to all areas in Syria," says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

Ukraine

The EU leaders reached an agreement that will ensure that the Netherlands can sign the EU's cooperation agreement with Ukraine. The statement confirms what the agreement does not deal with; for example, that it does not mean Ukraine becoming a candidate country or that the EU countries are to provide it with military support.

Migration

The heads of state and government confirmed that they still support the EU's refugee agreement with Turkey. Moreover, they welcomed the migration packages with five African countries that will reduce the number of migrants coming to Europe. More similar agreements may be reached with other countries. The Member States' migration ministers are urged to agree on a new asylum policy by June 2017.

Security and defence

The heads of state and government also agreed that the EU must take a greater responsibility for its security. This means that they want to see more cooperation on defence materiel and an annual review of defence in the Member States.

Economic and social issues

The conclusions welcome the extension of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) and the continuing efforts to remove obstacles from the common internal market. The EU's Youth Guarantee should be extended. The banking union should be completed.

Brexit

When the United Kingdom has submitted its application to leave the EU, the European Council will adopt guidelines and standpoints ahead of the negotiations. These will be discussed and updated at regular intervals. Michel Barnier was confirmed as the EU's chief negotiator.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister met Nobel Peace Prize Laureate President Juan Manuel Santos

Published 12 December 2016 Updated 12 December 2016

On Monday 12 December, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received Colombia's President Juan Manuel Santos in Stockholm. The visit took place in connection with President Santos being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to bring about a peace agreement between the Colombian Government and FARC guerrillas. The award should be seen as a tribute to all those involved in the peace process, the Colombian people and the victims of the war.

During his visit to Stockholm, President Santos attended a seminar at the Riksdag. The purpose of the seminar was to discuss the lessons that can be learned from the Colombian peace process and how they can be applied to other conflicts.

Colombia's peace agreement

After 52 years of armed conflict, four years of peace talks and a defeated peace agreement, the two sides have now concluded a new peace agreement, signed on 24 November. This agreement is referred to as the first peace agreement in history to offer equal social rights since a gender perspective permeates the text of the agreement.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

“Digitalisation will spread to all professions and jobs in working life, so there is no reason to waste time”

Published 02 December 2016 Updated 02 December 2016

At the National Innovation Council meeting on 24 November, the Government presented the focus of the new digital strategy, which is intended to benefit citizens and businesses, and support the business sector and social development.

Ola Asplund, member of the National Innovation Council, how are industry and the business sector changed by digitalisation?

The capacity to collect, store and process large quantities of data makes it possible to optimise processes and use of materials on a completely different scale than before. New manufacturing techniques and automated processes are emerging at a rapid pace. This alters the logic of many operations and also creates a basis for entirely new products and services. This affects value chains, and creates new actors that traditional industrial companies must learn to cooperate with.

For many businesses, this is a threat to their existence. If they don't have their own resources to understand and use the possibilities of digital technologies, the rug can quickly be pulled out from under them. Smaller businesses, and probably some medium-sized ones, are at risk, because they react too slowly to technological developments.

Sweden cannot afford to stand back and watch if a large proportion of businesses do not keep pace with developments. For example, smaller enterprises are an important basis for our large, world-leading businesses, including as subcontractors. This is also where job growth takes place.

In your view, what are the responsibilities of central government and of the business sector in the transition?

Interesting and groundbreaking developments are under way in industry, and central government can really play a part there. In particular by facilitating cooperation, and making the research and laboratory resources of institutions and the research world available.

It is extremely important that central government takes the lead for a joint national strategy. Sweden is a small country with limited resources. It is therefore important to be able to set smart priorities. Someone has to take the lead, so that different stakeholders don't all pull in different directions at the same time. Industry is responsible for the focus and innovation, and central government is responsible for joint programmes and skills supply.

Sweden needs to reinforce education and transition systems to make it easier for individuals to adapt to these developments. Otherwise it will be devastating for the person concerned, and highly costly for everyone.

Considerable work is needed in the education system, both in terms of reviewing and supplementing the content of education programmes at all levels, but also to increase accessibility and methodology so that everyone really can benefit from the education boost. This is not just about the right skills for the work, but rather also utilising society's functions and possibilities, which are rapidly changing.

Do you have any good examples from industry of businesses that are taking on the challenge and want to lead the way in applying the possibilities of new technologies?

Sandvik is at the forefront of the development of technological systems to utilise data that can be collected directly from tools when materials are processed. The automotive industry has come a long way in the development

of self-driving vehicles, and is looking increasingly at how transport can be made more efficient. Boliden is working with others, including Ericsson, on how 5G technology can be used for more efficient mining. There are also smaller enterprises developing interesting technologies, for example robots that can be used in smaller-scale industrial production; this is becoming an increasingly interesting niche for Swedish enterprises looking to keep production in Sweden.

How is the labour market affected by the fact that digitalisation is changing jobs, and does it pose a risk to welfare or society?

For people working in industry it is, on the one hand, a 'normal' structural transformation, but on the other hand it is a challenge to acquire the right skills to maintain their employability. Digitalisation will spread to all professions and jobs in working life, so there is no reason to waste time. The pace of technological development and fluctuations in market demand place pressure on people and businesses in a way that is not always compatible with decent working conditions, family life and leisure.

We want new jobs to be developed here in Sweden, but competition with countries where there is not the same focus on people's needs tempts businesses to take liberties with the regulations. We must not undermine the conditions for welfare and our economic prosperity. The way to do this is using creative and joint solutions. Sometimes it can be an advantage to be a small country where we enjoy proximity to each other and can cooperate easily. If you understand the needs of your counterpart, it is easier in the long term to meet your own needs, because you seek more realistic solutions.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Poland's president visited Sweden's prime minister

Published 01 December 2016 Updated 02 December 2016

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received Poland's President Andrzej Duda on Thursday 1 December at a breakfast meeting. The meeting's agenda included issues concerning relations between Sweden and Poland, and in particular how to further develop the countries' strategic partnership.

Among other issues discussed were the security situation in the Baltic Sea region and the countries' involvement in the Eastern Partnership. The meeting was held in connection with President Duda's visit to Sweden on 29 November–1 December.



Government Offices of Sweden

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

A forum for shaping the future of the Baltic Sea region

Published 16 November 2016 Updated 16 November 2016

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

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

From social entrepreneurship to EU-Russian cooperation

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

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

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

Common security

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

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

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

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



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Stefan Löfven received Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko

Published 14 November 2016 Updated 14 November 2016

Today, 14 November, the Prime Minister of Sweden Stefan Löfven welcomed the President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko on his first official visit to Stockholm. Later today, the President will meet the Speaker of the Riksdag Urban Ahlin.

President Poroshenko's visit is part of an intensive series of bilateral meetings and encounters between Sweden and Ukraine.

At a press conference following the talks, the Prime Minister recalled that the EU has agreed on a firm response to Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol, and its aggression in Eastern Ukraine. Sweden follows with grave concern the worsening human rights situation in illegally annexed Crimea. The President emphasized that the security situation in the temporarily occupied territories in certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk must be solved and called for Sweden within the EU to use all means to achieve full implementation of the Minsk agreements. The two leaders discussed the way forward to bring peace to Eastern Ukraine and to secure full Ukrainian control of its border.

The Prime Minister confirmed that in these difficult and challenging times, Sweden continues to stand by Ukraine's side, and to provide all the support it can offer. Sweden recognizes and welcomes the reforms that have already been introduced in Ukraine. Over the last two years, Ukraine has achieved more than in the two decades following the country's independence. The two leaders agreed that important reforms remain to be implemented.

They discussed how Sweden can best continue to support Ukraine in its

reform efforts and in forging closer links with the European Union. They talked about continued efforts to fight corruption, strengthen the rule of law, and pursue the decentralization and energy efficiency reforms already under way. Sweden's considerable support for reforms in these areas will continue.



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 Prime Minister's Office

Meeting between the Prime Minister of Sweden, Stefan Löfven, and the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, Bohuslav Sobotka

Published 03 November 2016 Updated 03 November 2016

At the meeting, both Prime Ministers stressed the importance of effective EU cooperation. Sweden and the Czech Republic are committed to the effective functioning of the EU, which remains the best guarantee for stability, prosperity, economic and social convergence, and security in Europe. To achieve this, the expectations of Europe's citizens must be met and their concerns must be placed at the centre of common efforts. The fact that the UK is set to leave the Union makes cooperation – both bilateral and at EU level – even more important.

The Prime Ministers agreed to strengthen the partnership between the two countries in a number of key areas:

- In fostering sustainable economic growth and the creation of new jobs, there was agreement to increase strategic thinking, show leadership and push for a single market that delivers fairness, jobs and growth. Ambitious and concrete legislative proposals are needed to strengthen the Single Market, in particular the Digital Single Market.

- Furthermore, the Prime Ministers shared the view that open and free trade, in combination with structural reform and strong public finances, is fundamental for jobs and growth in Europe. Efforts will be stepped up to safeguard an open and progressive EU trade policy, free of protectionism and barriers to trade.

- Social and economic progress must go hand in hand to deliver to the fullest potential. Bearing this in mind, the social dimension of the EU agenda, including the development of a social pillar for Europe, is significant for long-term prosperity – delivering jobs and growth for all. In this context, the Prime Ministers agreed to work together towards making a summit to be held on these issues in Sweden in 2017 a success.

- There was consensus that efforts to improve the situation of young people in the EU merit particular focus.

- In addition, the Prime Ministers share the view that the EU enlargement process remains a powerful instrument, driving reforms for democratic and economic development.

- As founders of the Eastern Partnership, Sweden and the Czech Republic will continue working for the further development of the partnership.

Based on the priorities above, Sweden and the Czech Republic will proceed in a close and long-term partnership.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Syria, Russia, migration and trade in focus at European Council

Published 28 October 2016 Updated 28 October 2016

When the EU heads of state and government gathered for the European Council meeting in Brussels on 20 and 21 October, four issues were in focus: migration, the EU's relations with Russia, the escalating humanitarian and security crisis in Syria, and trade. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven participated in the meeting, which incidentally was the first such meeting attended by the new UK prime minister Theresa May.

Syria

The leaders also discussed Syria. Mr Löfven and several others wanted the EU to discuss sanctions against Russia in light of bomb attacks on the Syrian civilian population in pursuit of IS terrorists.

EU relations with Russia

The 28 EU leaders also had a long strategic discussion on the EU's relationship with Russia. They noted that, thanks to purposeful work in recent years, the Member States had successfully formulated and maintained consensus on a clear policy towards Russia. Mr Löfven again raised Russian actions in Ukraine as unacceptable.

Trade

Global and economic issues were also raised in the Council conclusions. The

EU's ratification of the Paris Agreement on climate change was welcomed and previous conclusions on the importance of implementation of initiatives on the single market were reiterated.

Migration

EU progress in managing the migration crisis was discussed on the Thursday. The EU leaders noted that cooperation had moved forward and that the influx of irregular migrants had now reduced. New forms of cooperation between EU and African countries on development in countries of origin and transit, as well as the return of economic migrants, were also in focus during the discussions. The objective of cooperation is that fewer people are ultimately forced to flee.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven met Estonian Prime Minister Taavi Rõivas

Published 12 October 2016 Updated 12 October 2016

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven met Estonian Prime Minister Taavi Rõivas today. The two heads of government noted the very good bilateral and regional cooperation between Sweden and Estonia.

Their discussions concerned EU issues including migration, a social Europe, digitalisation and energy. Security and Baltic issues were also on the agenda, and Prime Minister Rõivas reported on the preparations ahead of the Estonian Presidency of the EU in the second half of 2017.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Meeting with High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini

Published 11 October 2016 Updated 11 October 2016

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven today received High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini.

The central point on the agenda was the war in Syria. Discussions focused on the situation in Aleppo and the recent bombings, and how the EU can take a more active role in the Syrian conflict. Other agenda items included regional security and migration.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Visit by Portugal's Prime Minister

Published 03 October 2016 Updated 03 October 2016

On Monday 3 October, Portugal's Prime Minister António Costa visited Sweden at the invitation of Prime Minister Stefan Löfven. The future of the EU and consequences of the UK's decision to leave the EU were on the agenda for the meeting.

Talks focused on migration and increased cooperation concerning decent working conditions and a more social Europe, ahead of the summit Mr Löfven will host in 2017.

The meeting was followed by a joint press conference.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, along with OECD and ILO, launches Global Deal in New York

Published 21 September 2016 Updated 21 September 2016

On Wednesday 21 September 2016, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven is launching the Global Deal, a global initiative for social dialogue and better conditions in the labour market.

The Global Deal was initiated by Mr Löfven and designed in collaboration with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Participating in the launch are OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría, ILO Director-General Guy Ryder, Chilean President Michelle Bachelet, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, World Bank President Jim Yong Kim, International Trade Union Confederation General-Secretary Sharan Burrow and African business leader Bob Collymore.

Improve the dialogue

The aim of the Global Deal is to improve the dialogue between the social partners and countries' governments so as to improve employment conditions and productivity. Effective labour relations and decent work contribute to greater equality and inclusive economic development, benefiting workers, companies and societies (win-win-win).

The Global Deal concept does not aim to develop a new framework or agreement to be implemented in a uniform manner in all countries, or to create a new international organisation. Instead, the Global Deal aims to develop a platform for highlighting the issue of cooperation between parties

and strengthen existing cooperation structures. The Global Deal will build on already established initiatives and projects, but will contribute by providing political direction and impetus to overall development, and by systematising and scaling up existing processes.

Contribution to the 2030 Agenda

The global sustainability agenda, the 2030 Agenda, contains a specific goal on decent working conditions and inclusive growth. The Global Deal is a contribution to this.

"The Global Deal is about ensuring that more people around the world have secure and good jobs, and about a more equal distribution of our economic resources. Globalisation presents opportunities, but requires a more equal distribution. More people need jobs with decent conditions and a salary they can live on. This is a prerequisite for globalisation to be a positive force," says Mr Löfven.

A declaration of support forms the basis of the Global Deal, with which countries, companies, trade unions and other organisations are invited to become associated. A number of partners are already associated. In connection with the launch, a new website will be opened with more information about the initiative.

The Global Deal



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister at the opening of the UN General Assembly

Published 20 September 2016 Updated 20 September 2016

The opening of United Nations General assembly took place on 19 September. The opening session was followed by a summit on the refugee crisis. Tomorrow, President Obama and co-hosts including Sweden will hold the Leaders' Summit on Refugees to increase global commitments to those who are forced to flee.

The challenges are many. While a record number of people sought refuge in Europe last year, most fled to neighbouring areas.

"The message the Government has brought to New York is that more states need to take responsibility to manage the huge refugee flows. This refugee crisis is a global crisis and can only be solved together," says Stefan Löfven.

"The United Nations must become more effective in the area of migration and we must focus on improving conditions for peace and development by giving refugees a future through education and jobs."



Article from Prime Minister's Office

EU leaders agreed on a European roadmap

Published 19 September 2016 Updated 29 September 2016

For the first time, EU heads of state and government met without a UK representative. At the Summit, a joint declaration – the Bratislava Declaration – was adopted, focusing on measures to tackle the major challenges that the EU must deliver on in the near future.

In discussions with the media after the Summit, Mr Löfven emphasised that European cooperation is vital to Sweden.

In the Bratislava Declaration, the 27 heads of state and government endorse the importance of European cooperation and adopt the Bratislava Roadmap, listing the objectives and concrete measures within priority areas. These mainly deal with ensuring full control over external borders, guaranteeing internal security and fighting terrorism, strengthening EU cooperation on external security and defence, and promoting the Single Market and young people's opportunities.

The EU leaders also agreed at the Summit to increase assistance to strengthen the protection of Bulgaria's border with Turkey.

The Summit between the 27 EU leaders was held in Bratislava on 16 September. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven represented Sweden.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister visited Montreal

Published 19 September 2016 Updated 19 September 2016

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven met Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on 17 September in connection with the Global Fund Replenishment Conference in Montreal.

Sweden and Canada enjoy good relations and during their meeting the two heads of government discussed how the countries can cooperate more, particularly on global issues. One such issue is migration. Sweden and Canada are co-hosting President Obama's migration summit in New York next week, and Mr Löfven and Mr Trudeau agreed to continue efforts to get other countries to take greater responsibility for the world's refugees.

Jobs and growth were also on the agenda, and trade issues were of particular interest. It is important to get the CETA free trade agreement between Canada and the EU into place as soon as possible. Gender equality was raised as an important issue for both governments to continue pursuing.

At the Global Fund Replenishment Conference, Mr Löfven spoke about Sweden's engagement in the Global Fund's crucial work to combat illnesses such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Sweden's support to the Global Fund totals SEK 2.5 billion for the period 2017–2019.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven today received Jin Liqun, President of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

Published 12 September 2016 Updated 12 September 2016

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) was established in January this year, and Sweden became a member at its first Annual Meeting in June. Mr Löfven and Mr Jin discussed the bank's strategic focus for the future.

Mr Löfven expressed the hope that the AIIB will be an institution with a clear focus on environmental and climate-resilient investments. Minister for EU Affairs and Trade Ann Linde also took part in the meeting. During his visit to Sweden, Mr Jin will also meet Minister for Finance Magdalena Andersson, representatives of Swedish companies at Business Sweden, and take part in a seminar at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister meets with UN Deputy Secretary-General

Published 02 September 2016 Updated 02 September 2016

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven had a meeting today with Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations Jan Eliasson. Among the topics discussed was the upcoming summits on migration in mid-September in New York, which will be attended by Mr Löfven.

The meeting was an opportunity for Mr Löfven and Mr Eliasson to discuss the UN's work on the right of asylum, refugees and migration issues. The conflict in Syria and Sweden's humanitarian assistance were also on the agenda.

This was also an opportunity to discuss current issues on the Security Council agenda. On 1 January 2017, Sweden will take a seat on the Security Council for a two-year period.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

“Everything that is fossil-based today can be made from wood in the future”

Published 02 September 2016 Updated 05 December 2016

A circular bio-based economy was on the agenda of the National Innovation Council when it met on 1 September 2016. The Government is working on several processes linked to this area. Karl-Henrik Sundström, CEO and Managing Director of Stora Enso, is a member of the Council and spoke at the meeting about how a circular bio-based economy affects Sweden's development and competitiveness.

How would you describe a circular bio-based economy?

The bioeconomy is renewable and fossil-free. It is based on biomass, such as timber, which is refined and turned into bio-based products and commodities. Circular ecocycles are stimulated by bio-based products where there are economic and environmental benefits. Cardboard and paper made from recycled materials are examples of this. All recycling starts with fresh biomass or fibre.

What potential do you see in this area, and above all, how can it be developed?

The potential of the bioeconomy is enormous. It is important, not least for dealing with climate problems. I normally say that everything that is fossil-

based today can be made from wood in the future. Forests grow constantly and are a good basis for innovation. Intensive research is currently under way to devise new areas of use based on renewable materials and long-term sustainable products with less of an environmental impact. The forestry industry can and wants to play an important role. Development of the forest-based part of the bioeconomy is based on the products, material and solid fuels that we are already producing today – this is where the transformation and upscaling begins.

How does a circular bio-based economy affect Sweden's development and competitiveness?

The forest-based part of the bioeconomy is already Sweden's largest net earner of export currency, with a 90 per cent share of exports for the forestry industry and a 70 per cent share of exports for the sawmill industry. This is a cornerstone of prosperity. The bioeconomy is also linked to land area and provides revenue for all of Sweden; forests are everywhere, and the sawmill and pulp/paper industry are often the only industry in small rural municipalities.

In your view, what are currently the biggest obstacles to transitioning to a more circular bio-based economy?

We need greater understanding of the forest's role as an industry. Forests must be used in a sustainable way, applying freedom with responsibility. Regulatory frameworks in Sweden and the EU must not jeopardise this. We also need functioning transport systems throughout Sweden to distribute timber and products. The railway and road networks have to be modernised. We cannot afford to jeopardise the bioeconomy with SEK 2 billion per year in road wear costs, equivalent to more than 20 000 jobs and SEK 20 billion in investments.

How can the Government's National Innovation Council contribute to work on the transition?

It can contribute to a greater understanding of the major importance of forests in the transition to a fossil-free society. But also through a focus on research in biorefining and biomaterial. Research into the construction of

wooden buildings and facilitating the construction of wooden buildings are other key areas.

What was the most important message you communicated at the Council's meeting?

The potential for Stora Enso and the forestry industry to contribute to a green and better future! But also the threats – the most tangible one right now being the costs of road wear.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister met OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría

Published 30 August 2016 Updated 30 August 2016

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven today received Angel Gurría, Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Mr Löfven and Mr Gurría discussed the joint work on the Global Deal initiative, which focuses on cooperation in the labour market for improved working conditions and inclusive growth. They also discussed Sweden's economic development and the OECD's work on the Global Goals and the 2030 Agenda on sustainable development. Mr Gurría is in Stockholm for World Water Week.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Global responsibility on common agenda

Published 25 August 2016 Updated 25 August 2016

When Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received US Vice President Joe Biden on 25 August, their meeting focused on global challenges. Special attention was given to the refugee situation and how to create sustainable conditions for peace and prosperity around the world.

At a press conference at Rosenbad, Mr Löfven and Mr Biden spoke about how close and good the relations between Sweden and the United States are.

“The relations between our countries are stronger than ever. We will continue to deepen our close cooperation and we have many common interests, as well as the ambition to show leadership in global challenges,” said Mr Löfven.

The US Vice President began with a historical retrospective of the good relations enjoyed by Sweden and the US, which go far back in time. He expressed gratitude for the visit to Sweden and spoke about the strong ties that exist between the countries, including when it comes to values. He also said that Sweden was one of the leading countries in the EU.

“Sweden is a close friend and an important partner to the US. Sweden has shown great leadership and human decency in the refugee issue,” said Mr Biden.

Mr Löfven also said that he was pleased that Sweden and the US had reached an agreement on increased cooperation in cancer research.

“This is an area in which the US and Sweden are at the forefront, and there is every reason to cooperate and exchange knowledge,” he said.

Summit on global refugee responsibility

The US Government has invited Sweden to co-host the Leaders’ Summit on the Global Refugee Crisis, along with Canada, Ethiopia, Germany, Jordan and Mexico. The initiative for the Summit, which will be held on 20 September in New York, was taken by President Barack Obama. The aim of the Summit is to get more countries to take greater responsibility for the world’s refugees.

“To help the refugees, more countries must provide increased support. We must of course share the responsibility in the European Union, but also around the world. No country, continent or organisation can deal with this on their own. The global refugee crisis can only be solved with global solutions. We are determined to work together for peace and security, not least as Sweden will soon take a seat on the United Nations Security Council,” said Mr Löfven.

Mr Biden emphasised that Sweden has shown great leadership and human decency in the refugee issue. He brought up Sweden’s assistance to war-torn countries and the importance of other countries also taking responsibility for refugees.

“We hope that more countries will follow your example – Sweden is doing much more than can be expected of a country of your size,” said Mr Biden.

Press release: Stefan Löfven to host refugee summit with President Obama

The Prime Minister stated that both countries are firmly committed to fighting terrorism and extremism, and that they will continue the work in the coalition against Daesh.

During the meeting, they also spoke about energy security, and specifically about the gas pipeline Nord Stream 2 in the Baltic Sea.

“The transatlantic link is more important than ever, not least for addressing the challenges to European and global security,” said Mr Löfven.

Discussion on the Global Deal

During the meeting, Mr Biden and Mr Löfven also spoke about the Global Deal initiative. This is the Government's initiative to spread a model, similar to the Swedish model, for cooperation in the global labour market.

“We are pleased that the Vice President has assured us that the US will take part in the Global Deal. The Global Deal is a vision for how we can create win-win-win situations in a globalised world by governments, employers, companies and trade unions jointly tackling the problems in the global labour market. Decent work is not just a right. It also encourages productivity and growth,” said Mr Löfven.

Article: Global deal a win-win-win situation



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received the Director-General of the International Labour Organisation

Published 25 August 2016 Updated 25 August 2016

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven today received Director-General of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Guy Ryder.

Mr Löfven and Mr Ryder discussed their joint work on the Global Deal initiative, which focuses on cooperation in the labour market for improved working conditions and inclusive growth. Issues concerning the future of the labour market were also raised. Mr Ryder is in Stockholm for World Water Week in his capacity as Chair of UN Water. During his stay in Sweden, he will also meet Minister for Employment Ylva Johansson and State Secretary Ulrika Modéer.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

US Vice President Joe Biden to visit Sweden

Published 24 August 2016 Updated 24 August 2016

On Thursday 25 August, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will receive Vice President of the United States Joe Biden. Sweden and the United States enjoy close and good relations. Vice President Biden's visit is an expression of this, with a view to continuing to deepen the already broad cooperation with the US. This cooperation was manifested earlier this year in the US-Nordic Leaders' Summit held in Washington in May.

Global responsibility for migration and refugees is another key point on the agenda. The Swedish Government takes the position that the global refugee situation is a global responsibility, not the responsibility of a few individual countries.

Press release: Prime Minister Stefan Löfven to receive US Vice President Joe Biden

Sweden to co-host Leaders' Summit on the Global Refugee Crisis

The US Government has also invited Sweden to co-host the Leaders' Summit on the Global Refugee Crisis, along with Canada, Ethiopia, Germany, Jordan and Mexico. The initiative for the Summit, which will be held on 20 September in New York, was taken by President Obama.

Press release: Stefan Löfven to host refugee summit with President Obama



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven met Serbia's Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić

Published 17 August 2016 Updated 17 August 2016

On Tuesday 16 August Prime Minister Stefan Löfven had talks with Serbia's Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić to discuss issues including Serbia's cooperation with the EU and common security issues.

Mr Vučić, who is currently pursuing a range of reforms aimed at bringing Serbia closer to the EU and promoting jobs and growth, stressed that these measures were important for ensuring security and stability in the region.

"Serbia is engaged in a modernisation programme that is important for its future development. Both Sweden and Serbia are very keen to expand trade between our countries," said Mr Löfven.

The Prime Minister also highlighted the fact that Serbia is one of the countries that has taken responsibility in the refugee crisis, and stressed the need for efficient, sustainable arrangements for the reception of refugees.

During his visit to Belgrade on 15–16 August, Mr Löfven also met a number of Swedish companies operating in Serbia. Representatives of AstraZeneca, Ericsson, Ikea and Securitas discussed opportunities for Swedish investments in the region and in Serbia. The visit concluded with a meeting with President Tomislav Nikolić.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Stefan Löfven visited Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan

Published 15 August 2016 Updated 15 August 2016

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven today visited Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan, a temporary home to 80 000 Syrian refugees. During his visit Mr Löfven met those living in the camp and visited a recreation centre for children and young people. He also met with UNHCR staff and management in Zaatari.

"Whilst it is very distressing to see so many people affected by the war, I am at the same time proud to see how Swedish support is being put to use to provide so many people with security, food, health care and education", says Prime Minister Löfven.

Refugee camps are constantly grappling with the risk of inadequate funding and on this point the Prime Minister had a clear message.

"Most of the refugees are to be found in the regions not far from the war, relocating them all is simply not a realistic option and just as all the countries in the world have to do their bit with taking in asylum seekers, we must also share responsibility for the refugees living in camps. That is both a matter of common humanity and a global security issue. Quite simply, more people must do more", says Prime Minister Löfven.

The Prime Minister's visit to Jordan is part of the preparations ahead of the upcoming refugee summit that US President Barack Obama is staging together with Sweden and Jordan. The purpose of the meeting is to encourage more countries to share responsibility for the international refugee crisis.

On Monday, Prime Minister Löfven also had a meeting with Jordan's King

Abdullah which focused not only on the refugee situation but also on the war in Syria, the Middle East peace process and the international fight against terrorism.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Stefan Löfven met with Jordanian Prime Minister Hani Mulki

Published 15 August 2016 Updated 15 August 2016

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven is in Jordan for a two-day visit focusing on global responsibility-sharing for refugees. On 14 August Stefan Löfven met with Jordanian Prime Minister Hani Mulki for talks on issues including the consequences of the war in Syria, the countries' bilateral relations and the Middle East peace process. They also exchanged experiences on UN Security Council work.

"This is the first visit to Jordan by a Swedish Prime Minister in a very long time and I appreciate that Jordan would like closer cooperation with Sweden on issues that concern our countries. Jordan is an important partner for our Government and wants to contribute to stability in the region and a global solution to the refugee crisis," said Mr Löfven.

Sweden and Jordan are partners within the framework of President Obama's Leaders' Summit on Refugees in September, and both countries will be co-hosts of the US initiative. The aim of the summit is to adopt a global compact on responsibility-sharing for refugees. Talks between the prime ministers therefore revolved very much around the refugee situation.

"We are experiencing the worst refugee crisis since the Second World War, but too few countries are doing their part in refugee reception and support to the millions of refugees in neighbouring conflict areas. I am proud that Sweden is contributing help on the ground and impressed by the huge efforts that Jordan is making to provide protection to Syrian refugees. But Prime Minister Mulki and I are both frustrated about the fact that responsibility

rests so heavily on only a few countries," said Mr Löfven.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister met Italian's Prime Minister Matteo Renzi

Published 07 July 2016 Updated 07 July 2016

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven was in Rome on 6 July for bilateral talks with Prime Minister Matteo Renzi.

The agenda focused on future issues for the EU, including how – in light of the British referendum – the EU can create a citizens' Europe that stands up for European values and solves challenges together.

Two issues were discussed in particular concerning future EU work. The first was migration policy; both Sweden and Italy believe that the EU must work towards a more structured division of responsibility for asylum seekers. The second was working towards a more social Europe. Mr Löfven has taken the initiative to convene a social summit in 2017, where discussions will focus on how more people can find work and how the EU together can create a more equitable labour market.

Current issues related to Russia, Syria and Libya were also discussed.



Article from Ministry of Education and Research

Research facility MAX IV in Lund inaugurated

Published 21 June 2016 Updated 21 June 2016

On 21 June, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven together with HM The King inaugurated synchrotron light source MAX IV in Lund.

MAX IV is a sort of microscope for studying the make-up, qualities and functions of various materials by means of intense X-rays (synchrotron light). The light used has an energy and intensity that is greater than at any other similar facility in the world. The laboratory is currently the world's most modern facility for synchrotron light. It is expected that 2 000 international researchers will come to MAX IV every year to conduct experiments in material and life sciences, which will benefit international research. In the laboratory, you can study atoms and molecules that are only a few tenths of a nanometre in diameter, which will provide completely new knowledge of the make-up and functioning of our world. The facility is expected to be used as a powerful research tool in biology, chemistry, physics, medicine and more. This research can later be used to produce new medicines, new smart materials, etc.

"Research ventures such as MAX IV are very important for Sweden and for the Government's ambition for Sweden to be one of the world's foremost research countries and a leading knowledge nation. Looking ahead, Max IV will provide a unique top-class research environment that can attract international researchers and also benefit Swedish research and innovation," says Minister for Higher Education and Research Helene Hellmark Knutsson.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Latvia's Prime Minister Māris Kučinskis visited Sweden

Published 17 June 2016 Updated 17 June 2016

Today, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received Latvia's Prime Minister Māris Kučinskis for talks. Much of their time was dedicated to current issues on the EU agenda, not least the imminent referendum in the UK, fair conditions in the labour market and proposals for joint EU solutions in the migration area.

The two heads of government also discussed the increasingly close Nordic-Baltic cooperation and security in the Baltic Sea region. During his visit to Sweden, the Latvian Prime Minister also visited the Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences and the KTH Royal Institute of Technology, and took part in a business seminar. This is Mr Kučinskis' first visit to Sweden since taking up his post as Prime Minister on 11 February this year.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister met Samoa's Prime Minister

Published 17 June 2016 Updated 17 June 2016

On 13 June, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received Samoa's Prime Minister Tuila'epa Aiono Sailele Malielegaoi. During the visit, discussions were held on bilateral exchanges and global challenges such as climate change and the new Global Goals.

Climate change poses a concrete threat to small island states such as Samoa, which is why it is important that the United Nations make this issue a priority, not least in the work of the Security Council. Mr Löfven invited Samoa to work together on preparations ahead of next year's UN Conference on Oceans and Seas, which Sweden is co-hosting with Fiji.

During his visit to Sweden, Prime Minister Tuila'epa also took part in the EAT Stockholm Food Forum.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of the Environment

Agreement on Swedish energy policy

Published 16 June 2016 Updated 16 June 2016

The Government, the Moderate Party, the Centre Party and the Christian Democrats have concluded an agreement on Sweden's long-term energy policy. The agreement consists of a common road map for a controlled transition to an entirely renewable electricity system, with a target of 100 per cent renewable electricity production by 2040.

The Government and the parties agree that Sweden must have a robust electricity system with high security of supply and low environmental impact, and offer electricity at competitive prices. This creates a long-term perspective and clarity for actors in the market and helps generate new jobs and investment in Sweden.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs met American Jewish Committee

Published 08 June 2016 Updated 09 June 2016

Today, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström met representatives of the American Jewish Committee (AJC).

The AJC is one of the oldest Jewish organisations in the United States. Aron Verständig, chairman of the Jewish Community in Stockholm, also took part in the meeting. The meeting was an opportunity to discuss antisemitism in Sweden and globally, as well as the Government's work to combat antisemitism and other types of racism, intolerance and discrimination. The Government is currently preparing an action plan to combat racism and hate crime.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received Iran's Foreign Minister

Published 01 June 2016 Updated 01 June 2016

The Prime Minister received a visit today from the Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. The ties between Sweden and Iran are deep, not least thanks to the large Iranian diaspora in Sweden. The Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister discussed bilateral issues such as trade and cooperation between Iran and Sweden. Human rights were also addressed. The Government is confident that international exchange and increased trade will contribute to positive developments in Iran.

Iran is an important country in a region of considerable significance to Sweden. Mr Zarif's personal commitment was an important reason why the nuclear deal between Iran and the rest of the world could be agreed last year. The agreement was a positive step in a region otherwise characterised by extensive challenges. For Sweden, the agreement also means opportunities to develop Sweden's political and economic relations with Iran. Since the agreement was concluded, Ministers Mikael Damberg and Ibrahim Baylan have visited Iran.

Mr Zarif's visit to Sweden is taking place in connection with visits to Poland, Finland and Latvia. He has also recently visited the UK, France and Italy.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven met Namibia's President Hage Geingob

Published 26 May 2016 Updated 27 May 2016

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven held talks today with Namibia's President Hage Geingob. Mr Geingob is visiting Sweden to speak at a conference on education issues.

At the meeting between Mr Löfven and Mr Geingob, discussions included trade and investments, and global issues such as climate change and the United Nations.

Sweden has long enjoyed good relations with Namibia dating back to Sweden's support to Namibia's independence.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

“Global Deal a win-win-win situation”

Published 14 May 2016 Updated 14 May 2016

In an increasingly globalised labour market, a Global Deal between the social partners can benefit everyone. This was the message when Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and Chilean President Michelle Bachelet together hosted a seminar on the Global Deal in Stockholm on 11 May.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister attends summit with President Obama

Published 13 May 2016 Updated 13 May 2016

Today, 13 May, President Obama hosted the US-Nordic Leaders Summit in Washington DC. Talks were held at the White House with the Prime Ministers of Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Iceland, and Finland's President. The talks resulted in a joint declaration that addresses a number of issues that are important for Sweden, ranging from security policy to climate change.

"I would like to emphasise in particular that the meeting established the importance of working together for global responsibility on the refugee issue. We also agreed to cooperate to increase trade, growth that creates jobs, and equality," says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

The close cooperation between the Nordic countries and the US was the starting point for the talks. The declaration will be followed up and translated into concrete cooperation for future work between the countries.

"President Obama is clearly interested in what we call the 'Nordic model' – in which justice and social security go hand in hand with technological development and growth," says Mr Stefan Löfven.



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

State Visit from Chile under way

Published 12 May 2016 Updated 12 May 2016

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Article from Prime Minister's Office

The Prime Minister received Chile's President

Published 10 May 2016 Updated 10 May 2016

Chilean President Michelle Bachelet is visiting Sweden on 10–12 May at the invitation of His Majesty the King. This is the first State Visit by a Chilean president to Sweden. Talks were held today, on 10 May, between Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and President Michelle Bachelet.

Chile and Sweden have a common view on many foreign policy issues, not least with regard to UN cooperation, gender equality, marine issues and free trade. These questions were at the centre of the talks. During the visit, they also discussed the Prime Minister's Global Deal initiative – an international approach to support dialogue between social partners with the aim of improving working conditions while also increasing productivity and growth.

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 has been developed in various areas, such as mining, forestry, environment and CSR, and through the President's visit, further steps were taken to enhance cooperation.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister in talks with Werner Faymann and Sigmar Gabriel

Published 08 May 2016 Updated 08 May 2016

On 8 May, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received Austria's Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann and Germany's Vice Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel for talks on current European issues.

The agenda included a sustainable and equitable asylum system, decent conditions in the labour market, and jobs and growth. During their meeting, they also discussed in particular the European Commission's new proposal for a reformed asylum system.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Sweden is a role model concerning efforts to protect refugees

Published 31 March 2016 Updated 31 March 2016

On Wednesday 30 March, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at Rosenbad for discussions. The agenda included the conflict in Syria, the refugee situation, the implementation of the Global Goals, gender equality and women's participation in peace processes.

After the talks, Mr Ban and Mr Löfven held a joint press conference at Rosenbad, where they said that they had talked about the need for an asylum and refugee policy based on solidarity in both Europe and the rest of the world. They both stressed the importance of more countries needing to do more to help people in need and maintain the right to asylum. They agreed that the conflict in Syria must come to an end and that this can only be achieved through political means.

– We agree that Syria's women must have more influence in the peace talks. Sweden has taken the lead in enabling this through our support to several women's organisations in Syria, said Mr Löfven.

Global responsibility for refugee reception

Mr Ban pointed out Sweden as a role model in the efforts to protect refugees who have been forced to leave their homes due to war and terrorism. He urged more countries to help ensure a shared and fair reception of refugees. Mr Ban emphasised that responsibility for refugee reception lies not only

with European countries – it is a global responsibility. Mr Ban also highlighted the Swedish Government's feminist commitment.

Later tonight, Mr Ban and Mr Löfven will continue to talk about the important work of implementing the 2030 Agenda and the Global Goals for Sustainable Development.

–The 2030 Agenda is an opportunity to make the world more sustainable, equitable and fair. Sweden wants to lead the way in this respect. For example, we have set a goal to be the world's first fossil-free welfare nation, said Mr Löfven.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

The EU and Turkey agree on cooperation on migration issues

Published 21 March 2016 Updated 21 March 2016

On the first day of the European Council on Thursday 17 March, the EU leaders agreed on a joint position on cooperation with Turkey. Friday's talks with Turkey's Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu resulted in an agreement on migration issues aimed at stopping the irregular flow of refugees and ending human smuggling. Sweden was represented by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

"Managed in the right way with functioning border controls – and as long as the EU Member States manage to put in place a system in which all countries take part and take their share of responsibility in a spirit of solidarity for people who are fleeing – this could be the first step towards a sustainable system for legal routes for refugees into the EU," said Mr Löfven following the meeting of the European Council and the agreement with Turkey.

The agreement includes the return of migrants in Greece to Turkey, increased support to the approximately 2.5 million refugees who are currently in Turkey and increased support to Greece so that it can manage the legally secure reception and return of refugees.

Mr Löfven held a press conference directly after the EU's agreement with Turkey.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Equal pay a means of fighting poverty

Published 16 March 2016 Updated 16 March 2016

Equal pay is an important issue for the Government. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven emphasised this in his message to UN Women in conjunction with the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York.

The Prime Minister pointed out that women and men must have the same opportunities in society and in life. Gender equality and equal pay promote social development and are essential to enable people to lift themselves out of poverty.

"We must fight discrimination and myths claiming that women's work is less advanced, that women's work is of less value, or even that women don't want to have careers. Because this is simply not true," said Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

The Government to commemorate the anniversary of Olof Palme's death

Published 27 February 2016 Updated 27 February 2016

On 28 February, 30 years will have passed since former Prime Minister Olof Palme was murdered on a street in central Stockholm. The Government will commemorate the anniversary in various ways. In the afternoon, a memorial service will be held at Kulturhuset in Stockholm, where Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will deliver a speech.

The memorial day will begin with a wreath-laying ceremony at Adolf Fredrik's Cemetery, in which Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will take part.

"Thirty years have passed since Olof Palme was murdered. During these thirty years, we have continued to discuss his ideas. This shows that he was a very influential politician. In foreign policy, he displayed a degree of energy and self-confidence that continues to inspire us today. In Sweden, he fought for everyone's right to take part in higher education regardless of class background, and his time saw an expansion of preschools and parental insurance. Today, the heritage left by Olof Palme is self-evident in various parts of the Swedish model," says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

In the afternoon, a memorial service will be held at Kulturhuset in Stockholm, which will focus on the future. Mr Löfven will open the service and deliver a speech. Also participating on behalf of the Government will be Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström. Former Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson will participate as well. Others taking part in the memorial service will be Mona Sahlin, national coordinator for protecting democracy

against violent extremism, Pierre Schori, Chairperson of the Olof Palme Memorial Fund, and Philip Botström, Chair of the Swedish Social Democratic Youth League (SSU). The memorial ceremony will be moderated by Jens Orback, Secretary-General of the Olof Palme International Centre. The memorial ceremony is being organised by the Swedish Social Democratic Party in cooperation with Tankesmedjan Tiden, the Olof Palme International Centre and others.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Life sciences and policy innovations in focus at National Innovation Council meeting

Published 26 February 2016 Updated 05 December 2016

The Government's efforts to strengthen Sweden's life sciences and the significance of policy innovations in developing the reception and introduction system for newly arrived immigrants were two of the topics discussed when the National Innovation Council held its first meeting of the year on Thursday 25 February.

The National Innovation Council is tasked with advancing Sweden as a country of innovation and strengthening Sweden's competitiveness. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven chairs the Government's National Innovation Council, which was founded one year ago.

"The National Innovation Council's first year has been very valuable for the Government's efforts to strengthen the innovation climate in Sweden. Innovation is about the 'new' – about how Sweden as a country can become a winner in global competition and how we as a country can jointly tackle the major challenges facing society. Together in the Council we have highlighted major broad themes, such as digitalisation, life sciences, and climate and environmental policy, and we have strengthened our policy in these and other areas as a result. The Council is a clear example of the power of collaboration. I am looking forward to the Council's strong commitment in 2016, too, to ensure a more competitive Sweden," says Mr Löfven.

Life sciences – a priority for the Government

Anders Lönnberg, the Government's national life sciences coordinator, was invited to the meeting to discuss the work on the life sciences action plan that started in 2015. Minister for Health Care, Public Health and Sport Gabriel Wikström attended the meeting and explained why the life sciences are a priority for the Government.

"Modern health and medical care demands that we also invest in innovation and life sciences. These investments also contribute to human health, welfare and quality of life. Through collaboration and development work we can strengthen entrepreneurship, create more jobs and improve health care at the same time. This is why the life sciences are a natural priority for the Government. It is a perspective we have with us in our work, linked to pharmaceutical products, eHealth and much more," says Mr Wikström.

Innovations for developing the system of reception and introduction of newly arrived immigrants was another topic on the agenda. Lisa Lindström, CEO of Doberman and member of the Minister for Enterprise and Innovation's advisory board, was invited to the meeting to talk about how policy innovations can create opportunities for developing the system of reception and introduction of newly arrived immigrants.

Can you explain what policy innovations means?

"There are many definitions of this. As I see it, it is regulatory frameworks, projects and new services that solve societal challenges in new or better ways. I think the quality of policymaking increases when policies are created jointly with citizens, companies, public sector actors, associations and others who are affected by the specific regulatory framework or policy in question," Ms Lindström says.

Can you give a specific example of a policy innovation?

"That Laholm Municipality has now chosen to let users order their own time for using companion services is a fantastic example. They quickly arrived at a good solution through creative and multidisciplinary participation within the framework of the service innovation project Förändra radikalt (Radical change)."

What benefits can policy innovations have in the

reception and establishment of newly arrived immigrants?

"Making use of the capacity and skills of new arrivals and combining these with the resources and the driving force of wanting to join in and contribute that is found in the business and non-profit sectors. And that in this way we are able to more quickly and concretely create new regulatory frameworks, new services and new ways of working. We don't have time to work in a linear fashion. We need ways to quickly understand problems, jointly create new solutions and test them at an early stage in order to more effectively and efficiently tackle the societal challenges we face and with a higher level of quality," Ms Lindström says.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

EU and UK reach deal

Published 18 February 2016 Updated 25 February 2016

The first Summit of the European Council this year was marked by tough negotiations between the EU and the United Kingdom. Late on Friday evening, an agreement was presented on the four overall areas in which the UK had specific demands. Sweden was represented by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

The four overall areas that were the focus of the negotiations were:

- 1) sovereignty;
- 2) economic governance;
- 3) EU competitiveness; and
- 4) the 'emergency brake', whereby the UK wanted to require that non-British nationals work for a number of years before enjoying the same benefits as citizens.

Migration, Syria and Libya were also discussed at the meeting.

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven held a special press briefing once the agreement had been struck.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Stefan Löfven attended World Economic Forum annual meeting in Davos

Published 27 January 2016 Updated 27 January 2016

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven attended the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum on 20–21 January 2016 in Davos, Switzerland.

Mr Löfven took part in seminars, panel debates and high-level meetings, and met a number of other heads of government, as well as heads of international organisations.

He was the keynote speaker at a seminar on working conditions and corporate social responsibility, and at a round-table discussion on the implementation of the new Global Goals for sustainable development.

In a panel debate on migration and integration, Mr Löfven highlighted the need for a new system to deal with the large number of refugees arriving in the EU.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Migration once again focus for European Council

Published 19 December 2015 Updated 25 February 2016

At the last European Council Summit of the year, EU leaders discussed migration issues and the fight against terrorism. Also on the agenda were economic issues and the upcoming UK referendum on EU membership. Sweden was represented by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven. The meeting took place on 17 and 18 December.

The European Council looked at migration and the EU's external borders, and followed up previous summits on these issues.

The EU leaders welcomed the agreement signed at the COP21 climate change conference in Paris.

EMU and measures to strengthen the EU internal market, and the planned referendum in the UK on the country's membership of the EU were also on the agenda.

The EU leaders discussed the need to exchange information in the fight against terrorism and reiterated their support for a peace process in Syria.

The Government recently sent a request to the European Commission to enable asylum seekers in Sweden to be relocated to other countries in the EU. In connection with the European Council Summit, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven was told that the Commission intends to present a proposal on the issue in January.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven met Nobel Peace Prize laureates in Stockholm

Published 14 December 2015 Updated 14 December 2015

This year's Nobel Peace Prize laureates, the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet, will be visiting Stockholm on 12–15 December. The Quartet comprises the Tunisian General Labour Union, the Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts, the Tunisian Order of Lawyers and the Tunisian Human Rights League.

On 14 December Stefan Löfven hosted the traditional Peace Prize dinner for laureates Houcine Abassi, Ouided Bouchamaoui, Mohamed Fadhel Mahfoudh and Abdessattar Ben Moussa.

The Quartet played a leading role in Tunisia's democratisation process following the 2011 revolution. Through peaceful means and dialogue, the Quartet helped to unite a Tunisia that was being torn apart by tension and instability in mid-2013. The Quartet was a strong driving force behind the adoption of a new constitution and free and democratic parliamentary and presidential elections. This resulted in the formation of an inclusive coalition government.



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 Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Cooperation on reception of refugees theme for meeting of foreign ambassadors in Stockholm

Published 30 November 2015 Updated 30 November 2015

The EU needs a new system for the reception of refugees. This was the message from Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, as he, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for Finance Magdalena Andersson met the foreign ambassadors in Stockholm on 26 November. He also spoke about the importance of climate change and cited increasing employment as the Government's top priority.

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven began by expressing the Swedish Government's sympathy and solidarity with those affected by terrorist attacks. Mr Löfven stated that the refugee crisis could be handled better by the EU. Sweden, which has taken in 80 000 refugees in the last two months alone, has reached a point where it is necessary for refugees to seek asylum in other European countries. "We should start to discuss a new, sustainable system for refugee reception in the EU, based on a permanent distribution system," he said.

One of the world's first fossil-free welfare countries

There is also a great deal that is positive happening in the world, Mr Löfven pointed out. Extreme poverty has been more than halved worldwide, for example.

"In just four days we will meet in Paris to discuss climate change. Sweden's

aim is a global, fair and legally binding agreement that keeps global warming below two degrees. He stressed that this is a job that begins at home.

“Sweden will be one of the world’s first fossil-free welfare nations. This is morally right, but also economically smart. Countries at the forefront will be the winners – not those who wait until the last moment.” Mr Löfven emphasised Sweden’s continued strong commitment to international cooperation, and the fact that Sweden will continue to be a strong voice for democracy, equality and solidarity.

Increased employment priority goal

The Prime Minister concluded his speech with a few words about the Government’s first year in power.

“We have put more and new jobs at the top of our agenda. The key components are investments in housing and infrastructure, increased cooperation for more and growing companies, and improved job matching and skills. The objective of increased employment becomes even more important in light of the ongoing refugee crisis, Mr Löfven said.

“Everyone who can work should work. Together, we will work Sweden out of the crisis and into the future.” Looking back at the Government’s first year, the Prime Minister also said that he sees greater willingness to cooperate across party lines.

“The Government has been clear from the start in our desire to gather cross-party majorities. I welcome a new era in Swedish politics – guided by responsibility and determination,” he said.

Sweden will continue to take responsibility, but cannot stand alone

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström took the floor after the Prime Minister. She began by quoting writer Stig Dagerman.

“He wrote: ‘In times of no hope there is no worse prison than the future’. We must therefore not lose hope.” She noted that the world is facing a range of challenges and that, as the world’s sixth largest aid donor in absolute terms and the largest per capita recipient of refugees, Sweden is continuing to take great responsibility for global development.

“Our objective of giving one per cent of our GNI in aid remains in place.” Regarding the reception of refugees, she echoed Mr Löfven’s view that Sweden cannot stand alone. She also emphasised that Sweden’s reception of refugees must enable children seeking asylum to have the same opportunities as Swedish children.

“The Government has now agreed that no more than thirty per cent of the aid budget will go to migration costs. “Sweden will continue to be an active and generous member of the international community,” she said.

Minister for Finance Magdalena Andersson also attended the meeting.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Stefan Löfven met UN Special Envoy for Syria

Published 27 November 2015 Updated 27 November 2015

On 27 November, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven met UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura. During their meeting they discussed the serious situation in Syria and efforts to support a political solution.

The discussions between Mr Löfven and Mr de Mistura focused on the talks held recently between key international and regional actors in Vienna and efforts to reach a political solution to the conflict in Syria.

They also talked about what Sweden can do to support the work of the UN and Mr de Mistura. They both agreed that a political solution in Syria is necessary to effectively combat terrorism and also give the Syrian people hope for the rebuilding of their country.

Today, Friday, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström is also welcoming Mr de Mistura for a meeting at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Government proposes measures to create respite for Swedish refugee reception

Published 24 November 2015 Updated 24 November 2015

In the worst refugee situation since the Second World War, Sweden has taken greater responsibility than any other country in the west. We are a small country that is making an enormous contribution and the Swedish people are showing great solidarity in a difficult time. We stand up for the international right of asylum.

Since the summer, the number of refugees arriving in Sweden has increased dramatically and in the last two months alone, 80 000 people have sought asylum in Sweden. Of these, there are so many children and young people that it is equivalent to more than 100 new school classes each week. Public authorities and municipalities are now finding it difficult to cope with the pressure. Municipalities report themselves for irregularities (Lex Sarah reports) since they can no longer manage reception in a secure manner. The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency has raised the alarm that important public services cannot cope with the strain. Sweden can no longer guarantee a roof over the head of those who make their way to our country and in the last week people have had to sleep outdoors.

Therefore, the Government now proposes measures to create a respite for Swedish refugee reception. This requires a dramatic reduction in the number of people who seek asylum and are granted a residence permit in Sweden. The Government therefore wants to temporarily adjust the asylum regulations to the minimum level in the EU so that more people choose to seek asylum in other EU countries.

At the same time, capacity in reception must be improved. Many municipal services are under severe strain or face major challenges. These include social services, schools and trauma care. Another major challenge is to meet the rapidly growing population's need for housing. There is still much to do in this regard.

The measures that the Government now proposes are necessary in the current acute situation, but are not in themselves a long-term way forward. The refugee situation must be handled in a concerted manner within the EU. The Government will therefore continue to advocate a system where all countries, without compromising on individual asylum examination, take a shared responsibility for refugee reception. The Government wants the Dublin Regulation to be revised and replaced by a new, permanent relocation scheme in the EU.

Measures proposed by the Government

The Swedish legislation will be temporarily brought into line with the minimum requirements in international conventions and EU law.

With the exceptions indicated below, the legislation will apply to asylum decisions taken in the period during which the legislation is in force. It is temporary legislation, which will be in force for three years and will entail the following temporary exceptions to the provisions of the Aliens Act.

Temporary residence permits for all persons in need of protection except quota refugees.

Refugees and persons eligible for subsidiary protection who are granted protection in Sweden will be granted temporary residence permits. Refugees will be granted a residence permit for three years when their case is first examined, and persons eligible for subsidiary protection for one year. These permits will be renewable. In the case of extension, the general rule will also be that a temporary permit will be granted.

Exceptions will apply for children and their families who registered their applications before the agreement was presented and who are still in Sweden. The current rules will apply in their case, provided that the child is still under the age of 18 when the decision is taken. In addition, a permanent residence permit may be granted when the first temporary residence permit expires if the applicant can show that they have an assessed income that is sufficient to support themselves.

Quota refugees will continue to receive permanent residence permits.

Limited right to family member immigration for persons in need of protection with temporary residence permits.

Refugees with temporary residence permits will only have the right to be reunited with immediate family members. In the case of married couples, both parties will have to be at least 21 years of age to be granted the right to family reunification. Persons eligible for subsidiary protection who have temporary residence permits will not have a right to family reunification.

Tougher maintenance requirements.

A maintenance requirement will apply to all family member immigration except when refugees apply for family reunification during the first three months after having been granted refugee status.

The maintenance requirement will be broadened to include a requirement that the sponsor must be able to support family members who come to Sweden.

Persons otherwise in need of protection will not be entitled to a residence permit.

Persons in the category 'otherwise in need of protection' will not be entitled to a residence permit.

The provision on residence permits on grounds of exceptionally/particularly distressing circumstances will be replaced by a provision allowing a residence permit to be granted on humanitarian grounds in certain very limited exceptional cases.

There will not be any special provision on residence permits for children, but the fundamental provision on the best interests of the child will continue to apply.

The Government wants to introduce medical age determination of asylum seekers

The question of whether an asylum seeker is under the age of 18 is important for housing and care as well as for the issue of a residence permit. It is important to find a system that allows medical age determination of asylum seekers to be used in cases where there is a lack of reliable documents that

can verify a person's exact age and when doubts remain about the age that has been given.

Sweden will soon introduce ID checks on all modes of public transport to Sweden

This will mean the ID checks already in place will be supplemented by ID checks on the ferry between Helsingör and Helsingborg as well as on trains and bus traffic across the Öresund Bridge.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

More measures to combat terrorism

Published 19 November 2015 Updated 19 November 2015

On 19 November, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven presented more measures to combat terrorism in Sweden. These measures focus on giving government agencies a new tool for information gathering, biometric passport controls and considering camera surveillance for buildings where there is a general threat and for particularly vulnerable places.

Secret data interception

The Government will task an inquiry with producing proposals for how the Swedish Prosecution Authority, the Swedish Security Service and the Swedish Police Authority can be given a new tool for information gathering that is adapted to modern communications technology.

The tool referred to is known as secret data interception and involves the possibility of also intercepting information that is sent via encrypted channels.

Encrypted communications are currently being used to an ever greater extent in the form of various internet-based services, such as Skype or Viber. Law enforcement authorities already have legal support following a decision by a court to intercept these conversations, but as the communications are often encrypted the content cannot be accessed through interception. This shortcoming will be remedied with the tool the Government is proposing.

Biometric passport control

Ahead of tomorrow's meeting of EU interior ministers, Sweden will push for the introduction of biometric passport controls at the borders to the Schengen area.

The new national counter-terrorism strategy states that the Government is to work to combat the misuse of Swedish passports.

The Passport Inquiry, which was referred for consultation until September this year, proposes several measures to address passport misuse.

One of the most effective measures proposed is the introduction of biometric information controls at the external borders to the Schengen area. This information is contained in the passports of all EU citizens and those of most other countries.

Camera surveillance

In today's society, there are places and buildings where there is a general threat, even though they are not often subjected to crime.

Such places can include editorial offices, premises used by religious communities and asylum centres. Camera surveillance can be one way of protecting these places and buildings. It therefore needs to be guaranteed that there are no unnecessary obstacles to this kind of technology use.

There is reason, therefore, to investigate whether there are adequate opportunities for camera surveillance in places that are particularly vulnerable to crime and other places with an increased need for protection.

From a personal privacy perspective it is important to ensure that camera surveillance is not used as a matter of routine. The Government has appointed an inquiry to consider how a greater degree of overall personal privacy protection can be brought together at one agency.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Stefan Löfven welcomed the Chairperson of the Ukrainian Parliament

Published 19 November 2015 Updated 19 November 2015

On 17 November, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven welcomed the Chairperson of the Ukrainian Parliament, Volodymyr Groysman, who is in Stockholm on the invitation of the Speaker of the Riksdag. Discussions during the meeting covered bilateral relations and Ukrainian reform efforts.

Sweden is the fourth largest donor to Ukraine and reform efforts are the focus of this support. Sweden has also led the way in condemning Russia's aggression against Ukraine and its unlawful annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol, and in providing support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as the country's right to make its own foreign policy choices.



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 for Foreign Affairs

Successful State Visit from Tunisia

Published 06 November 2015 Updated 09 November 2015

Tunisia's President Béji Caïd Essebsi concluded his three-day State Visit to Sweden today. The President and his wife were here at the invitation of the King and Queen. Tunisia's Minister for Foreign Affairs also took part in the visit and was received by Margot Wallström at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. It was announced during the visit that Sweden would open an embassy in Tunisia, and a number of bilateral cooperation agreements were signed.

Following a welcoming ceremony for the President and his delegation at the Royal Palace on the first day of the State Visit, the two foreign ministers met to discuss Swedish–Tunisian relations. Democratic development in the country, anti-terrorism efforts, gender issues and trade were the topics discussed between the two ministers.

On day two of the visit, President Essebsi met Prime Minister Stefan Löfven. It was announced following the meeting that Sweden would open an embassy in Tunisia. A broad cooperation agreement was signed between Sweden and Tunisia. The President, the King and Minister for Infrastructure Anna Johansson also took part during the day in a trade forum organised by the Tunisian Embassy and Business Sweden.

On Friday, the President visited Ericsson in Kista. The visit then continued to Uppsala, where the President laid a wreath on Dag Hammarskjöld's grave in the presence of the King, Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Information Technology Mehmet Kaplan and Minister for Public Administration Ardalan Shekarabi. A cooperation agreement concerning decentralisation was also signed during the day between the Swedish

Association of Local Authorities and Regions and their Tunisian counterparts.

Press release: Sweden to open Embassy in Tunisia



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Continued discussions on migration issues in the European Council

Published 20 October 2015 Updated 20 October 2015

Migration issues were once again in focus when EU heads of state and government met for the European Council meeting in Brussels on 15 October.

Discussions concerned both the reception centres (hotspots) to be established in the EU and EU common return policy. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven took part in the meeting.

EU heads of state and government adopted conclusions on increased cooperation in the area of migration, including cooperation with third countries, external border control and ensuring returns. Political and military developments in Syria and Libya were discussed, including their impact on migration flows.

In addition to migration issues, the European Council also addressed the EMU and the UK's plans for an in-out referendum.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Implementing the 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development, A call to action

Published 26 September 2015 Updated 14 October 2016

The world must get off to a flying start in realizing the new ambitious and transformative sustainable development agenda.

We, the presidents and prime ministers of Brazil, Colombia, Germany, Liberia, South Africa, Sweden, Tanzania, Timor-Leste and Tunisia, have come together today in an initiative aimed at supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We believe that the effective and universal implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires efforts at all levels, and across all sectors. Government's efforts alone will not suffice. But we are committed to lead by example and we pledge to do our share.

We will work actively during the coming months to rally support for the implementation of the Agenda. We will promote the sharing of experiences and best practices and a continuous engagement at the highest political level around the world.

The 2030 Agenda is an agenda of the people, by the people and for the people. We therefore invite all stakeholders, governments, parliamentarians, civil society, business sector, labor unions and academia to join us in calling for action. We need sustained engagement, dedication and leadership at all levels to achieve poverty eradication and sustainable development in all its dimensions by 2030.

We will make it our joint mission to ensure that no one is left behind!



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Meeting with African Union Commission

Published 25 September 2015 Updated 25 September 2015

On 20–23 September, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven hosted a visit by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma. The purpose of the visit was to further strengthen Sweden's relations with Africa and confirm support for the African Union as a central regional actor and strategic partner for the EU.

Mr Löfven and Dr Dlamini-Zuma discussed migration issues as part of the preparations for the EU-Africa summit on migration in Malta on 11–12 November.

The visit comes at a time when the Government is intending to instruct the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the Folke Bernadotte Academy to submit material for a new regional strategy for support to sub-Saharan Africa.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

EU leaders agreed on further measures to help resolve the migration crisis

Published 25 September 2015 Updated 25 September 2015

At the informal meeting of the European Council in Brussels on 23 September, the EU heads of state and government agreed on further measures to help bring about a resolution to the acute migration crisis in Europe and its neighbourhood. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven attended the meeting.

The EU leaders agreed to respond to the urgent needs of refugees in the region by helping the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Food Programme and other agencies with at least an additional EUR 1 billion. Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and other countries will receive increasing support for dealing with the Syrian crisis.

Reinforced EU dialogue with Turkey and further support to the Western Balkan countries were further measures that were discussed at the meeting.

Member States requesting assistance to ensure identification and registration of migrants will receive help from the EU institutions and other Member States no later than November 2015. This will be done in front-line 'hotspots'.

The EU heads of state and government also reiterated their support for the UN-led international efforts to bring an end to the war in Syria that has forced an estimated 12 million people to leave their homes.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden taking responsibility to implement the UN global goals for sustainability

Published 25 September 2015 Updated 25 September 2015

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, Minister for Climate and the Environment Åsa Romson and Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin are attending the UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York. On 25–27 September, the new global Sustainable Development Goals will be adopted by all UN Member States.

“Sweden will take a leading role also in implementing the new UN Sustainable Development Goals. Poverty reduction, environmental and climate action, and peacebuilding go hand-in-hand. Sweden will lead the way with a coherent policy that takes into account the perspective of poor people, human rights and planetary boundaries. Efforts to achieve the global Sustainable Development Goals in Sweden are starting now,” says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

During the summit, the Prime Minister will deliver a speech, attend meetings, seminars and roundtable discussions, and have bilateral talks with the heads of government of other countries.

“These global goals are needed for the countries of the world to work together to stop and prevent conflicts and refugee crises. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without peace, security and respect for

human rights. The global goals give us fifteen years of opportunities for a better world,” says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

“It is extremely positive that the world is now agreed on the importance of sustainable development. An ambitious climate agreement in Paris this December is our first opportunity to show what this means in practice. All countries have a responsibility to contribute to climate change adaptation. By taking responsibility at home, Sweden is taking the lead and showing that adaptation is both possible and profitable,” says Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Climate and the Environment Åsa Romson.

From a Swedish perspective, it is important to underline three dimensions of sustainability – economic, social and environmental. The rights perspective, including freedom from discrimination, and gender equality in particular, is a top priority, as are employment and the goal of decent work for all.

“In unsettled times in which the challenges faced by the world can sometimes seem insurmountable, the fact that the countries of the world have now come together and shown that change in a positive direction is possible inspires hope and confidence, as does the fact that we stand united in the battle against poverty, repression and climate change,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

In connection with the summit, a large number of charity events and a music gala – the Global Citizen Festival – will take place in Central Park in New York. The festival will focus on inequalities in the world and access to clean water and sanitation.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Deepened cooperation between France and Sweden following meeting with Prime Minister Manuel Valls

Published 18 September 2015 Updated 18 September 2015

On Thursday 17 September, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received French Prime Minister Manuel Valls.

The agenda included several current issues. The migration crisis, the growing refugee flows in Europe, job and growth promoting measures, decent conditions in the labour market and climate change were particularly important.

“In these areas, Sweden and France face similar challenges. The declaration which we have agreed on today marks the beginning of deepened cooperation between France and Sweden on these issues,” said Mr Löfven.

Joint France-Sweden statement



Article from Prime Minister's Office

The Government's ten standpoints to reform the EU's refugee policy

Published 08 September 2015 Updated 08 September 2015

In September 2015, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven presented the Government's policy for reforming the EU's refugee system. The most important thing now is that all countries take responsibility, that we create an orderly reception system and that we tackle the causes of the international refugee crisis. Sweden will pursue these ten standpoints to reform the EU's refugee policy:

1. The EU must establish a permanent and obligatory redistribution mechanism in the event of disasters.
2. The EU must continue to prioritise the saving of lives.
3. All EU Member States must take their responsibility to maintain the EU's external border and live up to the asylum rules.
4. The EU's asylum and border agencies must be strengthened.
5. The EU must continue to combat the people smugglers.
6. The EU must ensure the efficient and humane return of refugees and agree on a returnee programme.
7. The EU must quickly agree on a system of safe countries of origin.
8. The EU must drastically increase the number of quota refugees to approximately 100 000.
9. The European Commission must propose more legal routes into the EU.
10. The EU needs a more active foreign and aid policy to help people on the ground.

Today, Mr Löfven will meet Germany's Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel and Austria's Federal Chancellor Walter Faymann to discuss these issues. Reforming the EU's migration policy has been high on the Government's agenda since it entered office.

In the same way that all countries in the EU should share the responsibility, Sweden's reception of refugees is a responsibility for all of Sweden. For this reason, all municipalities must receive refugees. The Government is now preparing a legislative proposal on the elimination of the municipal veto in refugee policy. For this reason, we will increase support to the municipalities that receive refugees.

The Government will shortly be presenting more measures in the budget for next year to improve the establishment of refugees coming to Sweden.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister speaks with Ukrainian President

Published 26 August 2015 Updated 26 August 2015

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven spoke by telephone today with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko to congratulate him on his country's independence day, which was on Monday, and to get Mr Poroshenko's views on the recent increased violence in eastern Ukraine.

During the call, Mr Löfven encouraged Mr Poroshenko to continue the ambitious reform measures that Ukraine has initiated and emphasised how important it is that the process can demonstrate tangible results to the public, not least as regards the fight against corruption. Continued reforms are also an important signal to Russia that it cannot influence the political choices of its neighbours.

Mr Löfven and Mr Poroshenko also discussed the local elections that will be held in Ukraine on 25 October and the importance of being able to conduct them throughout the country, in true democratic fashion and in accordance with Ukrainian law. Mr Löfven assured Mr Poroshenko of Sweden's continued political support in the implementation of the Minsk agreements and in achieving a peaceful solution to the conflict.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received the President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands

Published 25 August 2015 Updated 25 August 2015

On 25 August, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Mr Christopher J. Loeak.

Prime Minister Löfven and President Loeak discussed issues related to climate change and sustainable development and how to deal with the challenges ahead, with a particular focus on the situation of small island states. Prime Minister Löfven and President Loeak also had the opportunity to discuss developments in Sweden and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

During his visit to Sweden, President Loeak participated in the World Water Week, organized by the Stockholm International Water Institute, where he delivered a keynote speech and participated in several high-level events.

Article: Stefan Löfven opened the World Water Week



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven met the Jordanian Prime Minister

Published 25 August 2015 Updated 25 August 2015

On 25 August, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven met Jordanian Prime Minister Abdalla Ensour for bilateral talks on Palestine and the peace process in the Middle East, Syria and the fight against violent extremism and terrorism.

Jordan is in the midst of protracted conflicts in the region and the country is under particularly severe pressure from the consequences of the Syrian crisis. The ministers discussed Sweden's support and the support of the international community.

Mr Ensour is taking part in World Water Week in Stockholm. Jordan is one of the countries in the world with the greatest water scarcity per capita. Mr Ensour will also meet Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

Article: Stefan Löfven opened the World Water Week



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office

Stefan Löfven opened the World Water Week

Published 24 August 2015 Updated 24 August 2015

Today Prime Minister Stefan Löfven opened the World Water Week, the world's most important annual meeting for water and development issues, taking place in Stockholm. This year's theme "Water for Development – Charting a Water Wise Path" raise awareness to the importance of the implementation of the new Development Agenda.

Together with the Mr. Christopher J. Loeak, President Marshall Islands, and Dr. Abdulla Ensour, Prime Minister, Jordan, Stefan Löfven will showcase the highest level of political commitment to push ahead a global agenda for water and development.

The impact of global climate change will also add to the water scarcity. The Swedish Governments continue to support the global development of water management. Nationally, Sweden foster policy coherence and encourage cooperation between ministries and stakeholders.

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at World Water Week



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 Prime Minister's Office

HeForShe launched in Sweden

Published 18 June 2015 Updated 18 June 2015

On 18 June, the United Nations global HeForShe campaign for gender equality was launched in Sweden. The objective is to show that gender equality is not a women's issue, but an issue for women and men alike. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven's message was that more men need to take a stand for gender equality and that he will personally take the lead and implement a broad agenda for greater gender equality in Sweden.

The Government is now focusing on three measures in gender equality work: gender-equal working conditions, more women at the top in business and the public sector, and gender-equal health.

“Few areas in society have such great potential for development as gender equality. A vital part of Sweden's success story, its growing economy and Swedes' personal freedom has been that regardless of gender, people can increasingly work, get an education and make their voices heard. Now it is important for this success story to continue,” says Mr Löfven.

Leading representatives of the UN, the business sector, trade unions, civil society and responsible ministers discussed the topic ‘What responsibility do men have in promoting greater equality between women and men?’.

Those participating in the launch included Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Executive Director of UN Women Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Åsa Regnér and Dr Denis Mukwege.

“We have ensured that the Government Offices is gender-equal in terms of the politically appointed positions and we are now moving forward to build

the world's first gender-equal government administration," says Mr Löfven.

The Prime Minister emphasised that gender equality is first and foremost a matter of the equal worth and rights of all people. But it is also a means of increasing growth, productivity and employment.

“Increased gender equality is a tool in the Government's employment agenda to achieve the lowest unemployment rate in the EU. Gender equality is as ethically right as it is economically smart. For this reason it is the way forward for Sweden,” says Mr Löfven.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Summit with Latin America and the Caribbean

Published 16 June 2015 Updated 16 June 2015

Heads of state and government from the EU Member States and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) met in Brussels on 10-11 June. The EU-CELAC Summit is the major forum for cooperation between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven represented Sweden.

Both regional and global issues were discussed at the Summit. Mr Löfven emphasised that Latin America and the Caribbean are stable, growth-friendly regions, and that relations between the EU and CELAC are constantly growing. The heads of state and government agreed, among other things, to maintain a high level of ambition ahead of the Climate Summit in Paris.

Appreciation for Swedish engagement

Mr Löfven observed after the Summit that there was firm appreciation for Sweden's engagement in the region, and that use is being made of the opportunities offered by relations between the regions.

This was the second EU-CELAC Summit, and the eighth between the EU and Latin America/the Caribbean.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received the President of Tanzania

Published 04 June 2015 Updated 04 June 2015

On 4 June, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received President of the United Republic of Tanzania Jakaya Kikwete at Rosenbad. The agenda included issues such as bilateral cooperation, development aid and the growing trade relations between Sweden and Tanzania, and cooperation between the African Union and the European Union.

Prime Minister Löfven and President Kikwete also had the opportunity to discuss developments in Sweden and Tanzania, with a view to the events in the African Great Lakes region.

The Prime Minister hosted a reception where representatives from the Swedish business community, civil society and authorities had been invited to meet the Tanzanian delegation and the African ambassadors based in Stockholm.

President Kikwete took office in 2005. He currently chairs the East African Community (EAC) and was recently elected Chair of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Global Response to Health Crises, tasked with making recommendations to manage future health crises, on the basis of lessons learned from the Ebola crisis.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Indian State Visit concluded

Published 04 June 2015 Updated 04 June 2015

On the evening of 2 June, India's President Shri Pranab Mukherjee left Sweden following a State Visit of three days. The President was in Sweden at the invitation of HM the King. The Government was represented, with the majority of ministers participating. The main themes of the visit were innovations and sustainable development, with a focus on urban development, science and research.

India is one of the leading countries in Asia, the world's fourth largest economy and an emerging global actor. The State Visit by the Indian President – the first ever – was therefore an important milestone in our bilateral relations.

The State Visit began on Sunday with the traditional welcoming ceremony at the Inner Courtyard of the Royal Palace. The King and the President inspected a guard of honour from the Life Guards and many members of the Government, as well as other Swedish public representatives, were present to welcome the President.

Monday began with a visit to the Riksdag, where the President was received by the Speaker of the Riksdag and met with Members of the Riksdag.

In the morning, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven also received the President for talks at Rosenbad. Mr Mukherjee and Mr Löfven discussed issues such as growing trade between Sweden and India and broad bilateral cooperation covering such areas as the environment, renewable energy and health. Minister for Climate and the Environment Åsa Romson, Minister for Foreign

Affairs Margot Wallström, Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist and Minister for Housing and Urban Development Mehmet Kaplan also took part in the talks.

In connection with the meeting at Rosenbad, a number of agreements between India and Sweden were signed, including a memorandum of understanding on sustainable urban development. The aim of the memorandum of understanding is to promote cooperation on matters concerning sustainable and integrated urban planning and land use, waste management, sustainable transport systems, water and sanitation.

Minister for Housing and Urban Development Mehmet Kaplan joined the President and the King later in the afternoon for a boat tour of Hammarby Sjöstad. During the boat tour, a roundtable discussion was held with business representatives on how cities can be built in more sustainable and environmentally friendly ways.

Sustainable cities in focus during the Indian State Visit

Helene Hellmark Knutsson, Minister for Higher Education and Research, was present at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, when a number of cooperation agreements were signed between Indian and Swedish higher education institutions.

On Monday evening, the King and Queen hosted a gala dinner for the President.

Visit to Karolinska Institutet and Uppsala University

The theme on Tuesday, the final day of the visit, was mainly research and science. Minister Helene Hellmark Knutsson was in attendance when the President and the King and Queen visited Karolinska Institutet. The focus lay on scientific cooperation, and included visits to Nobel Forum and Aula Medica. The President was also given a presentation of Nya Karolinska Solna (NKS) and Hagastaden.

Before lunch, Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg took part in a roundtable discussion between representatives of the Swedish and Indian business sectors. The President and the King were also present.

Mr Damberg gave a speech entitled *India-Sweden Partnership – Co-creating a Brighter Future*.

In connection with the business forum, the President announced that Swedish passport holders will now be granted an 'eTourist visa' when visiting India, leading to more expedient visa handling for Swedish citizens.

In the afternoon, the President visited Uppsala University together with Crown Princess Victoria, Prince Daniel and Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström. Ms Wallström gave the opening address and the President held a lecture on the theme 'Tagore and Gandhi: Do they have contemporary relevance for Global Peace?'

Speech by Margot Wallström at Uppsala University

On Tuesday evening, Ms Wallström was in attendance when Crown Princess Victoria and Prince Daniel bid farewell to the President at Arlanda airport.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sustainable cities in focus during the Indian State Visit

Published 02 June 2015 Updated 02 June 2015

India's President Shri Pranab Mukherjee continued his State Visit in Sweden on Monday. The day's agenda included a meeting with the Prime Minister at Rosenbad.

On Monday morning, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received the President for official talks at Rosenbad. Mr Mukherjee and Mr Löfven discussed issues such as growing trade between Sweden and India and broad bilateral cooperation covering such areas as the environment, renewable energy and health.

In connection with the meeting at Rosenbad, a number of agreements between India and Sweden were signed, including a memorandum of understanding on sustainable urban development. The aim of the memorandum of understanding is to promote cooperation on matters concerning sustainable and integrated urban planning and land use, waste management, sustainable transport systems, water and sanitation.

Visit to Stockholm City Hall and tour of Hammarby Sjöstad

During the afternoon, the President was received by representatives of Stockholm City at Stockholm City Hall. Together with the King and Queen, Crown Princess Victoria and Prince Daniel, the President attended a presentation there on the topic of sustainable urban development.

Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Information Technology

Mehmet Kaplan joined the President and the King later in the afternoon for a boat tour of Hammarby Sjöstad. During the boat tour, a roundtable discussion was held on how homes can be built in more sustainable and environmentally friendly ways.

The second day of the State Visit concluded with the King and Queen hosting a traditional gala dinner for the President at the Royal Palace.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Historic State Visit from India

Published 28 May 2015 Updated 28 May 2015

The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, will pay a State Visit to Sweden from 31 May to 2 June 2015 at the invitation of His Majesty the King. The Government will be represented, with the majority of ministers participating. The main themes of the visit are innovations and sustainable development, with a focus on urban development, science and research.

India is one of the leading countries in Asia, the world's fourth largest economy and an emerging global actor. The State Visit by the Indian President – the first ever – is an important milestone in our bilateral relations.

Focus of the State Visit

The focus of the State Visit will be on creating conditions for greater exchange in the areas of trade and science, and strengthening Sweden's presence in the Indian market.

There is growing demand in India concerning issues such as innovation, urban development and sustainable development. The State Visit will provide the opportunity to promote potential business opportunities in these areas in both directions.

Sweden already has broad cooperation with India in a number of areas: environment, renewable energy, research, health, etc. This cooperation will be deepened further in connection with the visit, which will include the signing of a number of cooperation agreements.

Programme points

India's President will land in Stockholm on Sunday afternoon and will be welcomed at Arlanda Airport by Crown Princess Victoria and Prince Daniel. The King and Queen will receive the President at the Royal Mews for a horse-drawn cortège to the Royal Palace, where the traditional welcoming ceremony will take place. Representatives of the Riksdag and the Government will be present.

Monday's programme will begin with a visit to the Riksdag and a meeting with Speaker of the Riksdag Urban Ahlin. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will then welcome the President at Rosenbad. Stockholm City will host a lunch at Stockholm City Hall, during which sustainable urban development will be the focus of discussions. The afternoon programme will continue along the same theme with a visit to Hammarby Sjöstad. Minister for Housing and Urban Development Mehmet Kaplan will take part. In the evening, the King and Queen will host a banquet at the Palace.

The theme for Tuesday will be research and science, with a visit to Karolinska Institutet, with Minister for Higher Education and Research Helène Hellmark Knutsson in attendance. This will be followed by seminars and meetings with Swedish and Indian business representatives. Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg will also take part in the programme.

The programme will continue in the afternoon in Uppsala, where the President will deliver a speech at Uppsala University. Crown Princess Victoria, Prince Daniel and Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will be present.

The State Visit will conclude late on Tuesday afternoon.

Follow the visit on social media: use #sweindia2015



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Visit by Syrian Orthodox Patriarch

Published 27 May 2015 Updated 27 May 2015

On 26 May, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven met a delegation from the Damascus-based Syriac Orthodox Church under the leadership of His Holiness Patriarch Moran Mor Ignatius Aphrem II.

The Prime Minister congratulated His Holiness, who will complete his first year as Patriarch in a few days.

The meeting agenda included the issue of residence permits for refugees from Syria.

His Holiness stated that Sweden plays an important proactive role in a political resolution of the internal conflict in Syria. He also emphasised the need for continued support to civil society's humanitarian work in Syria and Iraq.

On 27 May, His Holiness met Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström. He will conclude his visit to Sweden on 30 May.

His Holiness Patriarch Moran Mor Ignatius Aphrem II has visited Sweden and Södertälje once before, when he came in his role as Archbishop of the Syriac Orthodox Church 18 years ago.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister met ambassadors from Latin America and the Caribbean

Published 07 April 2015 Updated 18 May 2015

On 7 April, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven invited all the ambassadors from Latin America and the Caribbean to a lunch at Rosenbad. The lunch was a way to confirm the Government's prioritisation of Latin America and the Caribbean in foreign policy, and an opportunity for Mr Löfven to hear the ambassadors' views of the region's relations with Sweden and how they can be strengthened.

Mr Löfven highlighted the historical ties between Sweden and Latin America/the Caribbean. The Swedish business sector has had a presence in the region for over a century. During the 1970s and 1980s, many people from Latin America fled from military dictatorships to Sweden, and today they represent a dynamic and well-integrated group that contributes to our multicultural society. Through political commitment and development cooperation, Sweden has endeavoured to support peace, democracy, gender equality and human rights in the region.

Today, democracy and economic stability is the norm in the region, which affects Sweden's relations with the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, according to Mr Löfven. The free trade agenda is now of greater relevance and Sweden supports the EU's vision of a free trade agreement with the entire region.

Mr Löfven also highlighted common interests in the multilateral arena, such

as the climate negotiations, the post-2015 development agenda, disarmament issues and human rights.

On behalf of all the ambassadors, Bolivia's Ambassador Milton Soto expressed great appreciation for the opportunity to exchange ideas on relations between Sweden and the region. This was the first time in over ten years that the ambassadors from Latin America and the Caribbean were given the opportunity to meet with a Swedish Prime Minister, and it was Ambassador Soto's hope that it will not be quite so long until the next occasion.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Stefan Löfven to visit New York and Washington

Published 31 March 2015 Updated 18 May 2015

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven is to visit the United States on 29-31 March. The visit will begin in New York and will focus on issues concerning decent working conditions as part of the work on the global sustainable development goals. In Washington, the Prime Minister will meet US Vice President Joe Biden and give an address at the Brookings Institution think tank on the challenges and opportunities presented by globalisation.

Stefan Löfven will be one of the keynote speakers when the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) discusses decent working conditions on 30 March. The Prime Minister will particularly highlight the importance of the right to decent work as part of the work on the global sustainable development goals. The right to decent work is one of the Government's priority issues in the work to develop new global sustainable development goals, to which the ECOSOC meeting is to contribute.

The Prime Minister will also meet with UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson in New York. The purpose is to discuss and present Sweden's view of the new development goals and UN reforms, and to discuss current conflicts and crises such as those in Ukraine, Syria, Mali and the Middle East.

In Washington, the Prime Minister will have talks with Vice President Joe Biden. They will discuss Swedish-US cooperation on the climate and energy, the economy and trade, and gender equality. Mr Löfven and Mr Biden will

also discuss current foreign policy issues such as Ukraine/Russia and the Middle East, as well as the negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the EU and the US.

The challenges and opportunities presented by globalisation are the themes of an address by the Prime Minister at the Brookings Institution think tank. How can the challenges of globalisation be transformed into opportunities - for everyone? The importance of sustainable and inclusive growth that is based on free and fair trade, encompasses green transition and systematically works on gender equality and social equality, is one issue that the Prime Minister will raise in his address.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

Focus on trade, human rights and diplomatic relations

Published 27 March 2015 Updated 18 May 2015

On 27-28 March, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven is visiting China. Mr Löfven has been invited to participate in Boao Forum for Asia in Hainan and he will also visit Beijing. Talks with President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang are important elements of the visit.

Bilateral relations between Sweden and China stretch far back in time. Sweden was the first Western country to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, in 1950. During his visit Mr Löfven will take up all aspects of our countries' bilateral relations, including trade, cooperation in research and development, and human rights. Mr Löfven will take part in a ceremony to mark 65 years of diplomatic relations between China and Sweden.

Human rights will be an important theme during the visit. Mr Löfven will meet professors and students from the Human Rights Master Programme at Peking University at the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law.

In addition, Mr Löfven will meet representatives of Swedish companies to learn about their experience of the Chinese market.

On the second day of his visit, Mr Löfven will attend the opening ceremony of Boao Forum for Asia, in Hainan. Boao Forum for Asia is an annual conference that attracts a large number of heads of government, ministers, business representatives, researchers and journalists from all around the world. Numerous topics will be discussed, such as economic reforms, trade issues, security policy and social issues. Only a few countries from outside

the region are invited to attend, and Mr Löfven's participation this year is a unique opportunity to turn the spotlight on Sweden and Swedish business, but also an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing the emerging Asian economies.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

European Council meeting on energy union and external relations

Published 20 March 2015 Updated 30 April 2015

EU heads of state and government met in Brussels on 19-20 March. They agreed to align the sanctions against Russia to the implementation of the Minsk agreements and approved the proposal to establish an energy union. They also discussed the crisis in Libya. Sweden was represented by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

EU heads of state and government agreed to align the sanctions against Russia to the implementation of the Minsk agreements on a ceasefire in Ukraine. If the agreements are not fully implemented by 31 December 2015, the sanctions will be extended.

EU leaders approved the proposal to create an energy union with a forward-looking climate policy. The proposal covers five mutually reinforcing areas: energy security, a fully integrated European energy market, energy efficiency, decarbonising the economy, and research and innovation. The Council of Ministers will report on its work on the energy union to the European Council before December.

The Council also discussed the situation in Libya and called for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire.



Article

"We will never allow hatred to rule our lives"

Published 11 March 2015 Updated 11 March 2015

Stefan Löfven was one of the many participants who created a human ring around the Great Synagogue of Stockholm on 27 February at Raoul Wallenbergs torg. In his speech, the Prime Minister expressed deep sympathy for the victims of the Paris and Copenhagen attacks and their families. "Today we stand up for a righteous cause, for freedom of religion, for democracy - and we will never capitulate!" declared Mr Löfven.

Mr Löfven said that the Government is introducing major initiatives to create security for everyone in Sweden. The Government has instructed the police to focus on hate crimes, and is strengthening educational measures in school and society as a whole. The Government is also working with the faith communities to increase security.

In his speech, Mr Löfven stressed the importance of everyone in Sweden standing up for democratic principles.

"Now it is up to us to choose which society we want to have. Now it is up to us to stand up for freedom of religion and freedom of expression. Now it is up to us to show that Sweden is the strongest bastion of solidarity; we will never allow hatred to rule our lives here!" asserted Mr Löfven.

The demonstration for the equal worth of all people attracted hundreds of supporters. The event was organised by the network Gränslöst mänskligt (Boundlessly human), with other organisations including Young Muslims against Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia, and Young Roma.



Article

Climate change in focus when President Tong visited Sweden

Published 11 March 2015 Updated 11 March 2015

On 9 March, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received Kiribati's President Anote Tong at Rosenbad. It was President Tong's first visit to Sweden, and the first ever by a head of state from Kiribati. Mr Tong has an international reputation as a strong voice in the fight against climate change and has won a number of awards and accolades for his contributions and leadership regarding climate and marine issues.

Mr Löfven and Mr Tong discussed climate change and preparations ahead of the climate negotiations in Paris in December 2015. Mr Tong spoke about the existential threat that climate change poses to Kiribati and stated that it is absolutely crucial that the negotiations in Paris result in a universal and legally binding climate agreement.

Mr Löfven emphasised that Sweden and Kiribati hold similar positions regarding climate change and that Sweden attaches great importance to close dialogue with Small Island Developing States (SIDS) ahead of and during the negotiations, as well as in other international forums. Mr Löfven and Mr Tong also agreed to examine the possibilities of closer cooperation between their two countries. Access to climate finance was discussed as a possible cooperation area.

During his visit to Sweden, Mr Tong also met Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin and Crown Princess Victoria.



Article

Jobs in focus at summit between Merkel and Löfven

Published 26 February 2015 Updated 02 March 2015

How would you describe relations between Germany and Sweden?

"Very good. Germany is Sweden's largest trading partner, a close friend and a strategic partner for Sweden."

What was said at the summit about jobs and developments in the EU?

"We spoke about the fact that Europe must return to growth. We agreed that Europe must sign free trade agreements with large and growing economies, and that innovation and knowledge are the key to strengthened competitiveness. We also discussed how we can help more young people to find work, and the importance of good working conditions in the internal market."

One important issue was the situation in Ukraine at the moment. How would you describe it and Russia's actions?

"Our meeting dealt with the challenges we are facing, one of which is the security situation in Europe. Russian aggression in Ukraine is the gravest security situation since the Cold War. What we are seeing in Ukraine is a major problem. It is obvious that the Russians are supporting the separatists and destabilising Ukraine. We welcome the fact that Chancellor Merkel and Germany have shouldered a leading role to resolve this problem using diplomacy."

You and Chancellor Merkel also discussed our countries' reception of refugees, and stated at the press conference that more EU countries should take responsibility for displaced people. Why did you address this issue?

"For many years it has been discussed that all EU countries should take responsibility for displaced people. But despite this, it is not happening. When people are fleeing for their lives and are need of a safe refuge, they must be able to find one throughout the EU. Germany and Sweden will work together to take concrete steps in this direction."



Article

Major educational project against racism

Published 27 January 2015 Updated 27 February 2015

Holocaust Remembrance Day was 27 January. In cities in Europe and around the world, the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau was commemorated. Throughout Sweden, demonstrations and seminars were arranged to commemorate one of the darkest chapters of human history.

At the same time, we must acknowledge that anti-Semitism, racism and intolerance still exist today. There are representatives of Sweden's Riksdag who question whether it is possible to be both a Jew and Swedish. Around Sweden and Europe, the Jewish minority often lives in fear of putting on a yarmulke or in some other way showing their religious affiliation. At the Government's meeting with the Jewish minority, Jewish representatives spoke about parents who choose not to allow their children to take part in Jewish school activities out of fear for their safety.

"We see how racism and intolerance are increasing in society, and the dire consequences this has. For this reason, the Government will carry out a national education campaign, targeted towards pupils in compulsory school and upper secondary school, about different forms of racism and intolerance throughout history and today," says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

This Thursday, the Government will instruct the Living History Forum to carry out an educational project called *Detta behöver vi förstå* (This we must understand) during the period 2015-2017.

To carry out this task, an additional SEK 5 million will be allocated to the Living History Forum in 2015. In 2016 and 2017, the Forum will receive an

additional SEK 10 million annually.

"Anti-Semitism spreads hate and fear, and limits people's personal freedom and their opportunities to express their beliefs and their opinions. The fact that it exists in our society today is nothing less than a failure, but also a reminder that we must step up our efforts against racism and intolerance," says Minister for Culture and Democracy Alice Bah Kuhnke.



Article from Prime Minister's Office

HeForShe Ambassador Stefan Löfven

Published 26 January 2015 Updated 26 May 2015

On 23 January at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven was appointed an IMPACT World Champion Leader for the United Nations HeForShe solidarity movement. Its campaign aims to get men involved in the fight for gender equality. Now all of Sweden's male ministers have joined the movement, making the Swedish Government the first government in the world to get involved collectively in HeForShe.

"Gender equality benefits us all. It is morally right because it creates freedom for both women and men to decide for themselves how they want to live their lives, and gender equality also contributes to growth and increased prosperity," says Stefan Löfven.

There is still a difference of SEK 3.5 million in lifetime earnings between women and men in Sweden. The business elite is dominated by men, and women still do the majority of unpaid work and bear the main responsibility for children and family.

As Prime Minister, Stefan Löfven wants to do his bit in the drive for greater gender equality. He is the head of the world's first feminist government. This means that gender equality is an integral part of all of the Government's work, at both national and international level.

The Government is working to ensure that employment levels are as high among women as among men. Women should be in gainful employment to the same extent as men, with a good working environment and career

opportunities. The pay gap between the sexes must be reduced, full-time work must be the norm, abuse of fixed-term contracts must be stopped - everyone must have the right to economic independence. As a step towards an equal take-up of parental insurance, the Government wants to reserve a third month for each parent.

Sweden's aid to other countries must help combat the subordination of women and girls in society. The absence of all forms of violence against women and girls is key to this. The Government is prioritising work to promote sexual and reproductive health.

"For a long time the fight for gender equality has primarily been driven by women. It is time for more men to step forward and get involved in moving efforts for gender equality forward. I therefore want to urge all men to join in and take their share of responsibility - at work, in their home life and among their friends. All of us who live in Sweden shape our country together. Together we can create a gender-equal society," says Stefan Löfven.



Article

EU climate and energy framework successfully concluded

Published 23 October 2014 Updated 27 February 2015

On 23 October, EU heads of state and government agreed on a climate and energy framework up to 2030. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven took part in the EU summit in Brussels.

The agreement means that the EU has a unified position ahead of the coming international climate negotiations in Paris in 2015, when a global climate agreement is to be reached.

The targets in the agreement mean that the EU is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40 per cent by 2030 compared with 1990 levels. The targets also mean that energy efficiency measures are to total 27 per cent and that the percentage of renewable energy is to be 27 per cent by 2030. The target for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions is binding.

"This is historic. It also means that the countries are making a commitment, not just expressing a general intention; this is a clear commitment," said Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at a press conference after the negotiations.

Additional resources to fight Ebola

The European Council welcomed the fact that Member States have made commitments to increase economic support to stop the ongoing Ebola epidemic in western Africa. Total funding now amounts to EUR 1 billion.

The European Council appointed Christos Stylianides, incoming Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, as the EU Ebola coordinator. His task will be to work and coordinate with EU

institutions, Member States, the UN and other international organisations in the fight against the epidemic.

New Commission approved

The European Council approved the new European Commission under the leadership of President-elect Jean-Claude Juncker. Cecilia Malmström, the Swedish Commissioner, was given responsibility for trade issues.

Economic situation and employment

The Council expressed its approval of the incoming Commission's plans to launch an initiative to mobilise EUR 300 billion in extra investments between 2015 and 2017.