



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Global mobilisation necessary to curb loss of biodiversity

Published 14 November 2018

Declining biodiversity is a global environmental problem. Species are becoming extinct, ecosystems are being damaged and the interplay between organisms is being disturbed. And yet nature is utterly crucial to people's wellbeing and prosperity. On 14–15 November, Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog is meeting ministers from around the world at a UN meeting in Egypt to discuss how to reverse this trend.

The number of pollinating insects is dramatically declining throughout the world, including in Sweden. Several months ago, Sweden joined a coalition of countries with specific ambitions to reverse the negative trend for pollinators. The new coalition will be gathering for a special discussion during the meeting in Egypt on more measures to protect pollinators.

“Biodiversity is under threat from many directions. To stop this trend, international cooperation is necessary”, says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

During the UN meeting, the countries will decide how the work to produce a new post-2020 framework agreement will be designed, once the current strategic plan expires. The EU's common position in the negotiations is that the next framework must be an ambitious one. The meeting will also focus on the link between biodiversity and health, and how the biodiversity issue can be integrated into important sectors such as energy, mining, and the manufacturing and processing industry.

The UN Biodiversity Conference is taking place in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt between 14 and 29 November. The negotiations will begin with a ministerial meeting where over 80 ministers will discuss how to improve efforts to curb the decline of biodiversity and what measures are necessary. Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog will represent Sweden at the ministerial meeting.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment

New UN report highlights Sweden as a global leader in action on chemicals

Published 23 October 2018 Updated 23 October 2018

On Monday 22 October, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and hazardous substances, Mr Baskut Tuncak, presented his first report to the United Nations General Assembly at an event in New York. Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog gave the opening address at the launch and continues to draw international attention to the need for a global agreement on chemicals and waste.

The report, addressed to the UN Human Rights Council, contains an overview of global efforts on chemicals and waste. The report finds that what is currently being done to protect people and the environment from hazardous substances is insufficient, and provides a series of recommendations for future work. In particular, the report calls for a global framework for chemicals and waste, something that Sweden and Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog have been pushing for over the last year.

“It is becoming increasingly clear to me that we need a global agreement on chemicals and waste. This report highlights the disastrous consequences for people around the world today of unsafe management of chemicals and waste. We have to act,” says minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

From the report

The report concludes that there are strong linkages between human rights

and hazardous chemicals, as hazardous substances threaten rights such as the right to life, protection against discrimination and the right to information. The report points to Sweden's work on its environmental quality objective 'A non-toxic environment' as a global forerunner in efforts against hazardous chemicals. The report underlines the need for urgent action to protect people's lives. There is a pressing need for a strong and comprehensive global framework, and as the current voluntary framework expires in 2020, the opportunity now exists to unite the world around new and more ambitious actions on chemicals.

According to the report, one worker dies every 30 seconds from exposure to hazardous chemicals and radiation. An estimated 2.8 million people die every year as a result of an unsafe or harmful work environment. The report also states that many children born today are carrying contaminants in their bodies and that researchers have found more than 200 different hazardous substances in umbilical cords and placentas. This means that millions of children are deprived of the right to equal development opportunities.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Government approves support to Global Environment Facility

Published 12 October 2018

The Government today decided to contribute more than SEK 2 billion to the seventh replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF-7). Sweden will thereby increase its contribution to the GEF by more than 50 per cent for the period 2018–2022, compared with 2014–2018. This makes Sweden the sixth largest donor overall and the largest per capita donor. In total, replenishment pledges total SEK 34 billion (USD 4.1 billion). This decision reflects what was announced by the Government in the Budget Bill for 2018.

“The support to the Global Environment Facility is expected to help double global reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. With this decision, Sweden will remain a leading voice in global environment and climate action,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

The implementation of GEF-7 will increase integration and strengthen synergies in global climate and environment action, and increase action on biodiversity, chemicals and waste and the ocean, and enhance efforts to combat marine littering and plastic pollution. Partnership with the private sector is crucial, and will generate leverage to make more resources available to achieve global climate and environmental goals.

“Global cooperation is crucial if we are to meet the challenges facing us in the area of the environment. This applies not least to chemicals, where we see great opportunities to phase out mercury and other particularly

hazardous substances. Sweden's support for the Global Environment Facility is thus important for the future," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

Over the next four-year period (2018–2022), the agreed GEF-7 replenishment is expected to lead to:

- doubled emissions reductions; better management for almost 50 per cent more environments on land and close to water;
- more than 100 000 tonnes of persistent organic pollutants, mercury and other hazardous chemicals being phased out; and
- almost four tonnes of the world's most overexploited fish stocks approaching more sustainable levels.

The GEF was established in 1991 with the mandate to contribute to global environmental public goods through financial support to environmental and climate action in developing countries. It serves as a joint financial mechanism for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and four global environmental conventions: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), and the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

To date, the GEF has paid out more than USD 14.5 billion in grants and mobilised USD 75 billion in co-financing to more than 4 000 projects in 183 countries.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Alliance for High Ambition on chemicals and waste launched in New York

Published 18 July 2018

Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog has launched an international high-level alliance to mobilise political engagement for more effective global management of chemicals and waste. The aim of the Alliance is to reach a global agreement on chemicals and waste, comparable to the Paris Agreement on climate. The Alliance was launched in connection with the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development in New York.

Chemicals and waste pose a growing threat to both the environment and human health around the world. Sweden therefore wants to see a global chemicals and waste agreement, comparable to the Paris Agreement on climate change. In Stockholm earlier this year, Sweden hosted an international meeting on how the countries of the world should manage hazardous chemicals and waste. During the ongoing HLPF, Ms Skog and the Swedish Government are taking the next step by launching an international alliance that will push for a global agreement. This new high-level alliance will provide a platform for ambitious countries to work together to promote and discuss what such an agreement should look like.

"The spread of chemicals and waste is a global problem requiring global action. Thanks to the Paris Agreement, countries around the world are now working together to reduce climate emissions. Similarly, we need global ambitious cooperation to sustainably manage the world's chemicals and

waste. Through this alliance, I want to promote collective engagement among my ministerial colleagues and other global stakeholders in order to achieve a global agreement," says Minister Skog.

A number of key countries participated in the launch event in New York: Argentina, Germany, the Netherlands, Finland, Switzerland, Norway, Uruguay, Jordan, Canada, USA and Brazil. Erik Solheim, Executive Director of UN Environment, and Karmenu Vella, European Commissioner for the Environment, also participated in the event.

"Now, the process of getting countries to formally join the Alliance begins, and also our work to deliver results. After today's launch, I am overwhelmed by the great support that the Alliance has already received at this early stage, and I am hopeful for our continued work," says Minister Skog.

Uruguay will act as co-chair in the Alliance, next to Sweden. In addition to government representatives, the Alliance will include representatives from key international bodies, the business sector and civil society.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Inquiry to propose ban on spreading sewage sludge on farmland and a phosphorus recycling requirement

Published 13 July 2018

As part of efforts to ensure toxin-free and resource-efficient ecocycles, the Government has decided to appoint an inquiry to propose a ban on spreading sewage sludge and introduce a requirement for phosphorus to be recycled from sewage sludge. The Government has appointed Gunnar Holmgren as Inquiry Chair.

Phosphorus is a vital plant nutrient. Sewage sludge is sometimes used as agricultural plant food because it contains large quantities of phosphorus. This is also a way for sewage treatment plants to get rid of their large quantities of waste. Since sewage sludge – which is a kind of waste – contains substances that are hazardous to the environment and human health, only around 30 per cent can be spread on agricultural land. The rest is used without utilising the nutrients it contains, for example in soil manufacturing or as landfill cover.

The Government wants to create the conditions for a circular economy, in which waste is treated as a resource. The aim of the inquiry is to ensure that phosphorus is recycled from sewage sludge in a non-toxic and safe manner and can be used to a greater extent in agriculture.

"It is important that we use our resources responsibly. Phosphorus is a

valuable resource, and as such we should use the technologies available to utilise it," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

Phosphorus is an important component of mineral fertilisers, and at present it is mined abroad and imported to Sweden. Making better use of the phosphorus in sewage sludge will help increase Sweden's self-sufficiency.

The inquiry is expected to produce proposals for a requirement to recycle phosphorus from sewage sludge. However, since sewage sludge also contains substances that are hazardous to the environment and human health, pharmaceutical residues and microplastics, the inquiry is also expected to propose a ban on spreading sewage sludge on agricultural land.

"Reports show that in addition to metals that are hazardous to the environment and human health, sewage sludge also contains some microplastics. A ban on fertilisation using sewage sludge will reduce the risk of microplastics entering the environment in which our food is grown," says Ms Skog.

A ban on spreading sewage sludge should not be an obstacle to the production of biogas. The aim is for both energy and phosphorus to be extracted from sewage sludge without any risk of emitting substances that are hazardous to the environment or human health into the environment.

The Government has appointed Gunnar Holmgren as Inquiry Chair. Mr Holmgren has formerly been Governor of Västernorrland County and Director-General of the Defence Materiel Administration. He holds a PhD in economics and has extensive experience of leading government inquiries.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Minister for the Environment to attend UN forum on 2030 Agenda in New York

Published 13 July 2018

On 16–17 July, Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog and a Swedish delegation will take part in the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in New York. This year's theme is 'Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies'.

Ms Skog will attend the HLPF along with a broad delegation of representatives from business, research, the public sector and civil society. Alongside the forum's formal programme, Ms Skog will also take part in a number of side events, including the Stockholm International Water Institute seminar on the Source to Sea platform, and the Partnership for Action on a Green Economy event on future generations, the circular economy and sustainable lifestyles. She will also have bilateral meetings with UN representatives and colleagues from various parts of the world.

"I am proud of Sweden's work on the 2030 Agenda. We often top the country rankings in terms of successful implementation of environmental measures. But we still have some way to go. I am looking forward to this year's forum, which has a clear focus on environmental issues and sustainable cities," says Ms Skog.

Sweden to launch high-level alliance for a global agreement on chemicals and waste

During the HLPF, Ms Skog will launch an international high-level alliance on chemicals and waste. The alliance is intended to highlight and mobilise public interest on chemicals and waste, with a view to achieving a global agreement.

"Trade in goods is becoming increasingly global, and this necessitates a global, collective regulatory framework for hazardous substances and waste. Strong and committed leadership from both politicians and the business sector is required to achieve this," says Ms Skog.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Sweden joins Coalition of the Willing on Pollinators

Published 13 July 2018

The number of pollinating insects is dramatically declining throughout the world, including in Sweden. This has adverse impacts on agriculture, horticulture and biodiversity. Sweden is now joining a coalition of countries with specific ambitions to reverse the negative trend for pollinators.

Pollinating insects are crucial to agriculture, horticulture and the natural world, since plants cannot reproduce without them. In Europe, almost 40 per cent of wild bee species and 30 per cent of butterfly species are declining. Sweden is now joining a coalition of countries and organisations seeking to highlight the worrying decline and take action.

"Work is being done to improve the situation of pollinators, but it is not enough. Sweden is now joining with a number of other countries and actors to show that we want to do more," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

The other countries that have signed the declaration and joined the coalition are Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, Slovenia, Spain, the United Kingdom and Uruguay.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Sweden wants tougher EU targets for CO₂ emissions from passenger cars

Published 20 June 2018

The Government welcomes the European Commission's proposal to introduce tougher EU targets for average CO₂ emissions from new light vehicles but believes that the Commission's ambition on emissions targets is far too low.

To achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement, significant emissions reductions in the transport sector will be required. Sweden has adopted a national goal to decrease emissions from domestic transport by at least 70 per cent by 2030, compared with 2010 levels. To achieve this, ambitious EU transport regulations are crucial. At the end of last year, the Commission proposed new binding targets for emissions from new cars and light commercial vehicles.

Among other things, the Commission proposes that:

- by 2025, CO₂ emissions from new light vehicles should be 15 per cent lower than in 2021;
- by 2030, emissions should be 30 per cent lower than in 2021; and
- starting from 2021, emission targets should be based on the new Worldwide Harmonised Light Vehicle Test Procedure (WLTP), which better represents everyday driving profiles than the current method.

The proposal has been reviewed by Swedish agencies and, based on their analysis, the Government has concluded that the targets for 2025 and 2030 need to be considerably higher than those the Commission proposes.

"This proposal is far too weak to enable us to achieve our goals effectively. The Government wants to see a much higher level of ambition," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

The Government considers that the targets should be a 25 per cent reduction by 2025 and a 50 per cent reduction by 2030, compared with 2021 levels. Given the uncertainty regarding how rapidly zero-emission vehicles will gain traction in different parts of Europe, the target for 2030 should be indicative and reconsidered as part of the planned review in 2024.

Tomorrow, 20 June, Ms Skog will hold consultations with the Parliamentary Committee on European Union Affairs on the Government's proposals ahead of the EU environment ministers' discussions on the new targets at the Environment Council in Luxembourg on 25 June.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

One-year anniversary of the UN Ocean Conference – renewed initiatives to save the world's oceans

Published 19 June 2018

In connection with the one-year anniversary of the UN Ocean Conference in New York co-chaired by Sweden and Fiji, the Government has decided to finance a number of new international ocean projects. To continue demonstrating leadership, the Government is allocating a further SEK 80 million to contribute to improving the global marine environment.

"Action for clean and healthy oceans is a government priority. The Ocean Conference was a breakthrough for global ocean action and now it's a matter of implementing the impressive to-do list drawn up by governments, business and other stakeholders. These initiatives will contribute to this action," says Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate.

The Government's global ocean action focuses on four areas: reducing the impact of climate change on the oceans, reducing marine litter, reducing destructive and illegal fishing and strengthening the protection of marine areas.

The SEK 80 million will go to a total of 15 different international projects, related in various ways to the four priorities. Continued efforts to reduce marine litter is a particular focus area the Government is working actively in, both nationally and internationally.

"Plastics in the oceans is a huge problem. But since the Ocean Conference, things have begun to happen. More and more countries are addressing the unsustainable use of single-use plastic, the use of intentionally added microplastics in a range of products, and the need to rid beaches and coastal areas of plastic waste. A great deal remains to be done, but there is hope," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of the Environment

Government makes announcement on low emission zones

Published 04 April 2018

Minister for Infrastructure Tomas Eneroth and Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog have announced how the new provisions on low emission zones would be designed. The Government will give municipalities the possibility of introducing three different kinds of low emission zones as of 1 January 2020.

Air pollution causes cancer as well as lung disease, cardiovascular disease and premature death. Not least children's health is adversely affected. The absolutely dominant source of nitrogen oxides in the urban environment is road traffic. Municipalities are therefore being given a powerful tool with which to tackle air pollution. Municipalities will decide themselves whether and where low emission zones should be applied.

"We're seeing the introduction of low emission zones throughout Europe. It is important that we make the air cleaner and the urban environment better in our cities. At the same time, people and businesses need to know what the rules are and have time to adapt to green technology," says Minister for Infrastructure Tomas Eneroth.

"Children's right to breathe clean air takes priority over the right to drive all kinds of cars on every single street. We are now giving the municipalities the powerful tool they have long been requesting so that they can tackle hazardous air pollution," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

The Government will give municipalities the possibility of introducing three different kinds of low emission zones as of 1 January 2020:

The first type of low emission zone regulates heavy duty vehicles. Municipalities can already implement low emission zones for certain heavy vehicles (lorries and buses). Low emission zones already exist in eight municipalities.

The second type of low emission zone sets standards for cars.

- Initially, diesel cars that meet the emission standards Euro 5 and Euro 6 may drive here. But on 1 July 2022, the standards will be made stricter, allowing only Euro 6 diesel cars to drive here. The same applies to hybrid electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids with diesel engines.
- Cars with petrol engines will have access if they meet emission standard Euro 5, or better . This also applies to hybrid electric vehicles, plug-in hybrids, natural gas vehicles and E85 vehicles.
- Cars with higher environmental performance, such as electric cars and fuel cell vehicles, may also drive here.

The third type of low emission zone sets the highest standard. This zone only allows purely electric cars, fuel cell cars and gas cars that meet the emission standard Euro 6. High standards are also set for heavy vehicles. This zone only allows electric vehicles, fuel cell vehicles, plug-in hybrids and gas vehicles that meet emission standard Euro 6.

What will happen now?

As soon as possible – taking account of the need to notify the European Commission – the Government will adopt the necessary legislative amendments in the Road Traffic Ordinance making it possible for municipalities to introduce the new low emission zones. The Government will also instruct the Swedish Transport Agency to draw up proposals for how the municipalities can ensure compliance with the low emission zone provisions and other traffic rules.

Vehicles permitted in various types of low emission zone

Low emission zones	Light vehicles (cars, light lorries and light buses up to 3.5 tonnes)	Heavy vehicles
---------------------------	--	-----------------------

Class 1	<p>As of 1 January 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cars with compression ignition engines (diesel, hybrid electric, plug-in hybrid) in Euro 5 or better • Cars with spark-ignition engines (petrol, hybrid electric, plug-in hybrid, natural gas, E85) in Euro 5 or better • Electric cars • Fuel cell cars 	As in the current low emission zones
Class 2	<p>As of 1 July 2022:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cars with compression ignition engines (diesel, hybrid electric, plug-in hybrid) in Euro 6 • Cars with spark-ignition engines (petrol, hybrid electric, plug-in hybrid, natural gas, E85) in Euro 5 or better • Electric cars • Fuel cell cars 	Class 2 does not include heavy vehicles
Class 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric cars • Fuel cell cars • Cars that can run on natural gas in Euro 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric vehicles • Fuel cell vehicles • Plug-in hybrid vehicles in Euro 6 • Vehicles that can run on natural gas in Euro 6

What are Euro 5 and Euro 6?

The EU's emission standards for air pollution for new vehicles are regulated in Euro standards. These regulate nitrogen oxides (NOx), particulates (PM) and carbon monoxide (CO), among other things. Carbon dioxide (CO2) is regulated separately.

Euro 5 became the standard on 1 September 2009 and Euro 6 on 1 September 2014.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Government wants to investigate cocktail effects of chemicals

Published 29 March 2018

The 'cocktail effect' is when the negative sum of two chemicals is greater than their individual parts. The Government is now taking a holistic approach to address the risks of groups or combinations of chemicals by appointing an inquiry.

Research has given society a great deal of information about the hazardous qualities of certain chemicals. Within the EU, these substances are often regulated one at a time, but it is not common for similar substances to be regulated in groups. The Government wants to change this and also considers that a system is needed that takes account of the fact that chemical substances can aggravate each other's hazardous effects – this is known as 'combination effects' or 'cocktail effects'. The Government will therefore take a decision tomorrow to appoint an inquiry that will propose strategies for how to deal with substances in groups and how to take account of the cocktail effect in legislation regulating chemicals. The Government will then also appoint Christina Rudén, Professor of Regulatory Toxicology and Ecotoxicology at Stockholm University, as Inquiry Chair.

"It is high time we take a holistic approach to the large amounts of chemicals we are all exposed to in our everyday lives and produce a strategy for managing the risks. I am pleased that Christina Rudén, with her unique experience and expertise, has taken on this important assignment," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

Since 2010 the Government has been pursuing a special initiative to follow an action plan for a toxin-free everyday environment. The action plan will continue until 2020.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Successful meeting on chemicals and waste

Published 15 March 2018

In the past few days, Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog and Sweden hosted an international meeting on how the countries of the world can handle chemicals and waste. The spread of dangerous chemicals constitutes a major health risk at global level. Sweden wants to see a global agreement for chemicals, comparable to the Paris Agreement for the climate.

Current global cooperation in the area of chemicals consists of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), which applies until 2020. On 12–15 March, the countries of the world met in Stockholm to discuss what is to follow after 2020.

The meeting opened with a high-level dialogue to which Ms Skog had invited a smaller group of countries, researchers and stakeholders. Ms Skog said that she would now like to form a coalition of like-minded countries to pursue an ambitious global deal. This was supported by all those who participated.

"We all agree that the world needs to act now, that the ambition level must be raised and that a global deal is needed. Strong and committed leadership from both the political area and the business sector is required to achieve this. The cost of inaction is enormous and many lives can be saved through global measures in the area," says Ms Skog.

Several participants of the high-level dialogue noted that a future framework for chemicals and waste must be decided at the highest political level to have the desired effect. Many also pointed out that the sustainable handling of

chemicals and waste is associated with sustainable development on several fronts, such as poverty reduction, human rights, health, the climate, water and agriculture. It is important to arouse interest in the issue and bring about cooperation between actors in industry, the waste sector and civil society, not least among young people.

Sweden also hosted the working group meeting on the 'Second meeting of the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020,' which was held on 13–15 March. It gathered some 400 delegates from across the world for discussions on the future framework. The meeting discussed possible proposals for a vision that clearly and simply captures the importance of action in the chemicals and waste sector globally, such as which goals should be set to address the future challenges that exist for chemicals and waste. Another important issue was how the framework should be designed.

"The safe handling of chemicals and waste is a prerequisite for sustainable development. Everyone should feel confident that the toys we give to our children, the water we drink and the electronics we use are safe and free from dangerous chemicals. When the products can no longer be used, the waste must also be handled in a way that is sustainable for human health and the environment," says Ms Skog.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Sweden to host strategy meeting ahead of negotiations on a global chemicals agreement

Published 01 March 2018 Updated 01 March 2018

On 12–15 March Sweden will host an international strategy meeting on chemicals and waste. Current global cooperation in the area of chemicals consists of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), which extends to 2020. Intensive discussions are now under way on what will happen beyond 2020. Sweden wants to form a coalition of ambitious countries to bring about a global framework for chemicals and waste, along the same lines as the Paris Agreement for the climate.

The session in Stockholm will begin on 12 March with an informal high-level segment hosted by Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog. Government representatives from a number of key countries, among them Finland, Germany, and France, will take part in the meeting. The aim is to contribute political input and direction to the expert discussions that will take place from 13 to 15 March. These will be attended by around 400 officials from around the world, who will discuss what form a new framework should take. Sweden, via the Swedish Chemicals Agency, will host the expert meeting together with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

“Historically, Sweden has always pushed for stricter regulations on chemicals and waste, both in the EU and internationally. We now have our sights set on a global framework with binding commitments. Through this

meeting, we want to initiate a broad dialogue between a number of key countries and create a consensus around the ideal form of a new, ambitious global agreement on chemicals and waste. One possible way forward would be for the countries of the world to make commitments on chemicals and waste in the same way as they made climate commitments in the Paris Agreement,” says Ms Skog.

In Sweden’s view, the sustainable handling of chemicals and waste is a prerequisite for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda. It is an issue that has to be dealt with at global level, through a global commitment.

“Hazardous chemicals and waste are directly linked to health, equality, climate and poverty reduction. Initiatives to limit hazardous chemicals can have positive effects in a number of other areas. We cannot achieve the Sustainable Development Goals without tackling issues to do with chemicals,” says Ms Skog.

Increasing private imports of goods risk increasing the spread of hazardous chemicals. A number of countries that are currently major producers of goods partially or wholly lack chemicals controls and regulations. This affects the possibilities to impose health and environmental requirements on production, and to obtain information on the composition of goods. A product ordered online directly from a supplier outside the EU is not covered by the same legal requirements and may, in the worst case scenario, contain substances that are prohibited in the EU because they are harmful to human health or the environment, such as lead or plasticisers (phthalates).

The current international goals for chemicals and waste management under the SAICM apply until 2020. UNEP is the UN body behind the strategy. In the ongoing process on what should happen beyond 2020, Sweden is working for a new and more stringent agreement that can better protect the environment, human health and particularly vulnerable groups such as children. In Sweden’s view, a framework should contain a simple and long-term vision, supplemented by goals, such as reduced risk from the most hazardous chemicals. Sweden also wants to discuss the possibilities of legally binding measures to restrict substances with global impact and global spread, without hindering trade.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

More steps to reduce plastics and microplastics in the oceans

Published 02 February 2018

Plastic in the oceans is one of our most serious global environmental problems. To tackle both the sources and effects of the problem, the Government has decided on a ban on the use of microplastic in certain cosmetic products, and on a grant to municipalities to clean up plastic from Sweden's beaches.

Plastic pollution and microplastics are present in all bodies of waters on the planet. If no action is taken, there will be more plastic than fish in the oceans by 2050. Researchers have found microplastics in Swedish blue mussels, Norway lobster, cod, haddock and prawns.

The Government has decided to ban cosmetic products that are intended to be rinsed off or spat out and contain plastic particles that have been added to cleanse, exfoliate or polish. The ban applies to products such as toothpaste, body exfoliators, face scrubs, shower gels, shampoos and conditioners containing microplastics.

Products consisting solely of natural polymers, long molecules that have not been synthesised, and that have not been chemically modified are excluded from the ban. Rice grains and coconut shell are examples of ingredients that have an exfoliating effect and are less harmful to the environment.

"Adding microplastics to rinse-off cosmetic products is completely unnecessary. It's not the largest source of plastic in our oceans but it is a 'low-hanging fruit', and the ban is a necessary step towards reducing microplastics in water," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

The ban will apply from 1 July 2018. Stock purchased before the ban comes into effect may continue to be sold in shops until 1 January 2019. The Swedish Chemicals Agency will be responsible for supervision of manufacturing and imports and municipalities will be responsible for the supervision of distributors and retailers.

Support to municipalities for beach clean-ups

Much of the plastic found in the oceans is washed up on our beaches by ocean currents. In parts of Sweden, this is a serious problem that affects outdoor activities, tourism and more. The Government has decided on a grant to municipalities to clean up plastic from their beaches. The initiative was announced in the Budget Bill for 2018 and is worth SEK 17 million per year in 2018–2020.

From 1 March 2018 municipalities, individually or together, can apply to the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency for the grant, which may cover up to 90 per cent of the costs.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Karolina Skog to attend UN Environment Assembly in Nairobi

Published 05 December 2017

The world's environment ministers will meet at the third international UN Environment Assembly (UNEA 3) on 4–6 December in Nairobi, Kenya. They are expected to take decisions on measures to reduce air, marine, and land and soil pollution. Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog will take part in a number of dialogues and meetings focusing on marine litter, chemicals and air pollution.

This time, the UN Environment Assembly is focusing on pollutants, and the theme is 'Towards a pollution-free planet'. More than 100 environmental and climate ministers will gather to reach agreement on some 20 resolutions that will guide the way for future UN environmental efforts and for the member states' priorities. The global climate agreement from Paris and the global 2030 Agenda with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals are the points of departure.

"Pollution is the most common cause of death around the world. Each year, it kills more people than war, famine, malaria, AIDS and tuberculosis combined. We cannot turn a blind eye to the enormous environmental and health problems it causes. Now all countries and actors must raise their level of ambition," says Ms Skog.

Sweden is primarily pursuing three issues ahead of the Assembly:

- Tangible commitments and measures to reduce emissions of air pollutants and so improve people's quality of life and health.

- Marine issues and follow-up of the UN Ocean Conference that took place in June this year: primarily implementation of the countries' voluntary commitments concerning plastic in the oceans and other marine pollutants, including measures on land (a source-to-sea approach).
- Sustainable management of chemicals and waste, focusing on preventive measures and gender equality.

Sweden wants the Assembly to lead to a ministerial declaration that clearly demonstrates the countries' determination to take forceful measures against the global challenges associated with pollution.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Still no decision on glyphosate in the EU

Published 10 November 2017

On 9 November, a vote was held in the European standing committee responsible for deciding whether glyphosate should be reauthorised in the EU. The EU Member States voted on a renewed approval for five years, but failed to reach a decision, which means that the process will continue. The European Commission is yet to announce what the next step will be.

Sweden would like to see a broad compromise, and was open during the meeting to various alternatives concerning the number of years of reauthorisation. To further push for a compromise on which many countries could agree, Sweden put forward a proposal that the investigations already conducted on glyphosate should be supplemented by an investigation of glyphosate's impact on ecosystems.

"We can see there is a need for deeper knowledge of how glyphosate affects ecosystems. There is great concern among citizens on this issue," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

In the Government's view it is important to respect scientific assessments and comply with the rules. The Government also believes it important that an approval gains broad acceptance among Member States and citizens. It is essential that we take the concerns about the environmental risks linked to glyphosate seriously. At the same time, farmers must have time to transition to alternative methods.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven presented the Swedish programme for the 2018 Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers

Published 01 November 2017

The 69th Session of the Nordic Council is taking place in Helsinki between 31 October and 2 November. Sweden is represented by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Nordic Cooperation Margot Wallström, Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog and Minister for Culture and Democracy Alice Bah Kuhnke.

At the opening of the Nordic Council's session in Helsinki on 31 October, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven presented the priorities of the 2018 Swedish Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers. Sweden's Presidency programme, entitled 'An inclusive, innovative and secure Nordic region' is based on three themes.

The first theme, 'An inclusive Nordic region', focuses on the Nordic social model whose hallmarks are trust, equality, gender equality and openness. The starting point is a number of challenges that the Nordic countries share in these areas.

The second theme, 'A sustainable and innovative Nordic region', focuses on Nordic innovation as a driving force for sustainable social transformation. Engagement in environmental issues is, and historically has been, strong in

the Nordic countries, but considerable efforts are needed if we are to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda both in the Nordic region and globally.

The third theme is 'A secure and open Nordic region'. Here, the focus is on cooperation on broad security issues, with security and openness as the watchwords.

In 2018, Sweden will also lead the work of the Council of the Baltic Sea States and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, and coordinate informal Nordic and Nordic-Baltic foreign and security policy cooperation (N5 and NB8). The ambition is to find points of contact between these forms of cooperation and all countries in the Baltic Sea region to strengthen regional cooperation horizontally.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Minister for the Environment to visit Monaco for international conference on the seas

Published 11 October 2017

Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog will deliver an opening address at the conference in Monaco to be held on 12–13 October. This high-level conference is a follow-up to the United Nations Ocean Conference in June, where the countries of the world gathered to save the oceans. Swedish participants will also include H.R.H. Prince Carl Philip and Mattias Landgren, State Secretary to Minister for Infrastructure Tomas Eneroth.

"The Ocean Conference in New York was a success and generated an extensive to-do list for achieving the global goal concerning the world's oceans. We witnessed enormous engagement on marine issues from around the world. Now it's a question of moving from words to action and implementing the measures on the list," says Ms Skog.

The high-level conference is being organised by the Embassy of Sweden in Paris together with Monaco. Arranging the conference was a voluntary commitment that Sweden and Monaco jointly presented during The Ocean Conference in New York. Monaco will be represented by H.S.H. Prince Albert II and Minister of Public Works, the Environment and Urban Development Marie-Pierre Gramaglia.

The theme of the conference is 'Connecting and Protecting Our Seas: Initiatives in the Baltic and the Mediterranean'. This means there will be particular focus on the Baltic and Mediterranean Seas and the voluntary

commitments presented by these regions. Part of the conference particularly focuses on the transition towards a more sustainable shipping industry.

In Monaco, Sweden will highlight the source-to-sea approach as an important aspect of efforts to save our oceans. At national level, the Government's commitments to clean seas and the protection of biological diversity ahead of 2018 will be part of the Swedish follow-up to The Ocean Conference.

In addition, a Swedish-Monegasque Cooperation Agreement will be signed on this occasion. The Agreement shows that the two countries are united in their efforts to keep our oceans healthy and flourishing, in support of the implementation of sustainable development goal on oceans, seas and marine resources.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Government initiates commission of inquiry with the aim of banning private use of chemical plant protection products

Published 03 October 2017

The Government is concerned about the widespread use of chemical plant protection products in private gardens. To protect people's health and the environment, the Government aims to introduce a ban on the private use of chemical plant protection products. The Government has also stated that it respects the European Chemicals Agency's assessment of the active substance glyphosate in the upcoming EU discussions on the plant protection product.

Chemical plant protection products are pesticides used to protect plants from weeds and pests. The use of chemical plant protection products may pose risks to human health and the environment, particularly when used carelessly. There is a risk of ground and surface water contamination and harm to pollinating insects such as bees and bumble bees. It is therefore crucial that they are used correctly.

The professional use of plant protection products is carefully regulated. For example, farmers receive special training to handle these substances. But when it comes to private use, the situation is different. Careless use may also expose children to the dangerous substances in these products. To reduce such risks, the Government is now taking action to decrease the use of chemical plant protection products in private gardens and homes. This is why

the Government is initiating a commission of inquiry with the aim of banning the private use of chemical plant protection products.

"Our goal is to introduce a national ban on the private use of chemical plant protection products. This is an important step towards a toxin-free everyday environment," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

It is also important that the professional use of plant protection products takes place with concern for people's health and the environment. For this reason, Sweden respects the expert agencies' conclusions.

EU Member States will consider a proposal from the European Commission this autumn on the renewal of approval for glyphosate – one of the most widely used plant protection products in the world. The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) has carefully reviewed all available studies on glyphosate and concluded that glyphosate should not be classified as carcinogenic. ECHA's conclusions complement the earlier work of the European Food Safety Authority. Sweden respects these conclusions and will actively participate in discussions between the Member States.

"It is important to respect scientific assessments and comply with the rules. The EU's expert agency has now carefully examined this and we respect its conclusions," says Ms Skog.

Renewed approval at EU level and a Swedish ban on the private use of chemical plant protection products would mean that glyphosate products could only be used professionally in Sweden. Sweden also believes that the professional use of glyphosate should be carefully regulated, and is actively pursuing tighter controls.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Minister for the Environment participates in international meeting on mercury

Published 27 September 2017

Mercury is one of the most dangerous environmental toxins. Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog is participating in the first Meeting of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury and is representing strong Swedish engagement on the issue.

"Mercury has long been a priority issue for Sweden, and we were one of the initiators behind the Minamata Convention. It is very positive that the Convention on Mercury is in place," says Ms Skog.

Most of the mercury that falls on Swedish soil comes from other countries. To reduce environmental pollution it is important that measures are taken at global level.

"Mercury is dangerous for both the environment and people's health. Strong action is needed throughout the life cycle, such as reducing emissions to air and water, phasing out of amalgam and clear rules on taking care of waste. This is a challenge for all countries," says Ms Skog.

Poor people are particularly vulnerable to dangerous substances, partly because access to information is lacking. The use of mercury in the small-scale extraction of gold, for example, leads to enormous health and environmental problems in many developing countries. Often whole families, including young children, are involved in this work. The issue is particularly highlighted in the Minamata Convention and will be discussed during the Meeting of the Parties.

Swedish ban on mercury since 2009

Mercury is a volatile metal that can be transported long distances in the air. Mercury is not degradable; instead, it accumulates in soil, water and living organisms. High levels can occur in fish, for example.

Since 2009, Sweden has had a comprehensive ban on mercury. The ban means that the use of dental amalgam in fillings is not permitted and products containing mercury may no longer be released on the Swedish market.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Sweden and China sign Memorandum of Understanding on urban development

Published 29 June 2017

Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on sustainable urban development with China's Minister for Housing and Urban-Rural Development.

Building sustainable and liveable cities will be crucial in the transition to a fossil-free society worldwide. Sweden and China have agreed to share and develop knowledge on solutions and methods for sustainable construction and urban development.

Cooperation will centre on urban development and smart solutions that will help to create liveable and healthy cities. The MoU also highlights energy-efficient, green and sustainable building, including wood construction, as a special field of cooperation. A joint working group will be set up to develop work plans for implementation of the MoU.

"China's long-running urbanisation has led to major environmental problems. There is now a growing interest in developing cities in a more sustainable direction, and a number of Swedish cities are seen as pioneers in this field," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

The MoU was signed during an extensive visit to China currently under way and headed by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven. The Swedish delegation comprises representatives of many Swedish enterprises and several key environment-related agencies.

"If we want to succeed in building attractive, healthy and sustainable cities,

different interests and perspectives need to be included in the discussions. This is why Sweden will involve a range of social actors in this new collaboration," says Ms Skog.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven to visit China

Published 12 June 2017

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will be in China on 26–28 June. He will be joined on the trip by several ministers and a business delegation with a focus on green innovation and sustainability. Mr Löfven will also have talks with China's Premier Li Keqiang and speak at the World Economic Forum.

China is one of the world's largest economies and accounts for a large proportion of global growth. There is also a great deal of demand in China for green innovation to move society in a more sustainable direction.

Sweden is a world leader in this area, and Mr Löfven is therefore heading a delegation within the framework of the Government's Team Sweden initiative, with companies and agencies that have the expertise in demand in China. Mr Löfven will also be accompanied by Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg, Minister for EU Affairs and Trade Ann Linde and Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

Mr Löfven has also been invited to speak at the World Economic Forum in Dalian and will have talks with China's Premier Li Keqiang. In addition, Mr Löfven will meet Chinese business representatives and civil society actors.

A press briefing will be held ahead of the visit. The date and a more detailed programme will be published later.

Questions about visas should be put to the Swedish Embassy in Beijing.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Sweden supports Clean Seas Campaign to reduce marine litter

Published 07 June 2017 Updated 07 June 2017

Litter in the seas is a major global environmental problem. In connection with the Ocean Conference in New York, Sweden is joining the Clean Seas Campaign, a global UN Environment initiative to reduce marine litter. Sweden will also provide financial support to UN Environment's work on the issue.

"Oceans are the lifeblood of humanity, but they are being turned into rubbish dumps. We have a collective responsibility to act, and to act now. We need to turn the tide on plastic waste, protect biodiversity and keep the oceans rich and clean. It's an investment in our own survival," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

The Clean Seas Campaign was launched in January 2017. It aims to increase global awareness of the need to reduce marine litter. The need for measures differs in different parts of the world. Proper waste management infrastructure is lacking in some areas, while in others the challenge involves the general public's awareness of the impact litter has on the environment.

"Sweden's generosity and strong support will help us intensify our work and translate the science into global awareness and concrete action," said Erik Solheim, Head of UN Environment.

Financial support

Joining the Clean Seas Campaign means that Sweden will provide SEK 9 million in support, which is also support to UN Environment's global efforts

in the area.

Much of marine litter originates on land. It is therefore necessary to not focus solely on litter that has already ended up in the sea, but also on land-based pollution 'from source to ocean'. Sweden is also investing a further SEK 5 million to support UN Environment in its efforts to tackle pollution from land-based sources.

Sweden's measures to reduce marine litter

Sweden is already doing a great deal to tackle the problem of marine litter, including a national collection system, waste management technologies and a deposit-refund system for PET bottles. From 31 May, shops will be required to inform customers about the negative environmental impact of plastic carrier bags, and Sweden will soon introduce a ban on microplastics in cosmetic products intended to be rinsed off. The Swedish Government has recently announced new financial support for domestic actions, as well as appointed a state investigation on plastics.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Bonus–malus system for new vehicles

Published 02 May 2017

The Government is further gearing up climate efforts. New green vehicles with low emissions of carbon dioxide will qualify for a bonus at purchase, while new vehicles with high emissions of carbon dioxide will be taxed at a higher rate for the first three years. This is proposed in a memorandum referred for comment by the Ministry of Finance today. The proposal is part of an agreement between the government parties and the Left Party ahead of the Budget Bill for 2018.

The transport sector is responsible for one third of emissions in Sweden. The Government has recently submitted a proposal to the Riksdag to reduce transport emissions by 70 per cent by 2030, compared with 2010. To reach that goal, ambitious measures are required. The aim of the bonus–malus system is to increase the proportion of green vehicles and help achieve the objective of a fossil-free vehicle fleet. The vehicles that will be affected by the new system are cars, vans and light buses.

“Last week we presented a proposal called ‘fuel exchange’, to move towards more renewable fuels. We are now moving forward with this bonus–malus system to achieve a change in the sale of new vehicles. This system is important for increasing the number of green vehicles in Sweden,” says Minister for Finance Magdalena Andersson.

“The proposal is part of the Government’s proactive policy to reduce emissions in the transport sector. Now that we have a high level of new vehicle sales, it is important to have powerful policy instruments to steer in

the right direction. The bonus–malus system will ensure that it is easy to make the right choice when buying a vehicle,” says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

The memorandum includes the following proposals:

- Vehicles that emit zero carbon dioxide will qualify for the maximum bonus of SEK 60 000. Vehicles that emit a maximum of 60 grams of carbon dioxide will qualify for the minimum bonus of SEK 7 500. Vehicles that run on gas will qualify for a minimum bonus of SEK 7 500.
- An increase in vehicle tax (malus) is proposed during the first three years for light vehicles that run on petrol or diesel. There will be no increase in vehicle tax for vehicles that can run on ethanol or gases other than liquefied petroleum gas.
- For vehicles not covered by the bonus–malus system, the limit for when the carbon dioxide component of vehicle tax is charged is reduced to what a vehicle emits in carbon dioxide per kilometre in mixed driving above 95 grams, which means a vehicle tax increase for the vast majority.
- It is proposed that the environmental supplement for vehicles that run on diesel and meet the Euro 6 emission requirements be retained and the five-year vehicle tax exemption abolished.
- Vehicle tax for motorcycles will increase from SEK 180 to SEK 360 per tax year.
- Vehicle tax for cars, vans and light buses in the weight-based system is to be adjusted as a consequence of vehicle tax being raised in the carbon dioxide based system.

Development in the area is rapid and it will therefore be important to conduct an early evaluation of the proposal. The final date for comment is 19 April 2017. The Ministry of Finance will shortly present a proposal to amend the calculation of car benefit in light of the bonus–malus system.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Minister for the Environment: The Baltic Sea region should take the lead and ban microplastics in cosmetics

Published 06 March 2017

Microplastics from cosmetics are being spread to the marine environment and are causing significant problems for animals and people. Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog is now urging countries and municipalities in the Baltic Sea region to take the lead and ban microplastics in cosmetics.

It is estimated that approximately 40 tonnes of microplastics from cosmetics reach the Baltic Sea each year. Microplastics are thought to be able to damage marine organisms both physically and toxicologically. They are also suspected of being able to carry environmental toxins.

"Plastics in the oceans is one of the most serious global environmental problems we have. Microplastics in cosmetics are entirely unnecessary and alternatives are available. Right now, I'm working on a Swedish ban on microplastics in cosmetics. I see this as an area where Sweden together with other countries and municipalities around the Baltic Sea can demonstrate global leadership," says Ms Skog.

Baltic Sea conference highlights the role of municipalities in saving the Baltic Sea

On Monday 6 March, Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog

participated in the opening of the Baltic Sea Future Congress in Stockholm. The Congress is the first of its kind and focuses on strengthening innovation and leadership for sustainable development in the Baltic Sea region.

"The Baltic Sea region has strong regional cooperation, innovative companies and active municipalities. There are great opportunities for concrete cooperation projects and I believe that the region can lead the way in implementing the 2030 Agenda," said Ms Skog at the Baltic Sea Future Congress.

The Congress highlights the special significance of strong municipal commitment to saving the Baltic Sea. There are several examples of municipalities now taking concrete steps to get rid of unnecessary microplastics. The City of Gothenburg has already decided to ban the procurement of products containing microplastics. The municipal Procurement Company, in cooperation with the Environmental and Climate Committee, has been tasked with ensuring that City activities cease procuring, using and spreading products containing microplastics.

The Government is working on several fronts to reduce plastics in the oceans

In autumn 2015, the UN adopted 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development. One of the Goals concerns the oceans and says that the discharge of marine debris and microplastics at sea must be reduced. On 5–9 June, Sweden will host a global conference on the oceans goal, during which marine plastics will be an important focus area.

The Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) is a regional body for environmental cooperation around the Baltic Sea. The contracting parties met last week to discuss how the region is to implement the Global Goals for Sustainable Development and the 2030 Agenda. The Commission has previously adopted an action plan against marine litter. At the meeting, Sweden proposed a common initiative to ban microplastics in cosmetics, in which several countries expressed an interest.

Sweden also leads the work on dangerous substances and plastics in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Through concrete cooperation projects around the Baltic Sea, sources of emission and measures are identified.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Government takes European Commission to court over lead chromates decision

Published 28 November 2016 Updated 28 November 2016

The Swedish Government considers that the European Commission broke the rules when it authorised the continued use of lead chromates in the EU. The decision is bad for people's health and distorts competition for responsible businesses that have stopped using these hazardous substances. The Government therefore decided today to refer the Commission's decision to the Court of Justice of the European Union for a preliminary ruling.

In September, the European Commission decided to authorise a business to sell pigments containing lead chromates for use within the EU, despite the fact that adequate alternatives are available. By referring the Commission to the Court, the Government is defending common EU regulations, people's health and those businesses that live up to their environmental responsibilities.

Because lead pigments are often cheaper than the alternatives, businesses that choose to sell these paints will gain a competitive advantage over businesses that have chosen to remove hazardous lead chromates. The Commission's decision thus sends a signal that it is not worthwhile for businesses to phase out particularly hazardous substances. By referring the decision for a preliminary ruling, the Government is also standing up for healthy competition in the European Single Market.

Lead is one of the most poisonous substances known to humankind. The chemicals regulations in the EU clearly state that authorisations for this kind of hazardous substances may only be granted where there are no available alternatives. Such alternatives are available in the case of lead chromates, a fact demonstrated by Swedish businesses and others that have phased out their use.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Isabella Lövin to attend UN climate summit

Published 14 November 2016 Updated 14 November 2016

Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin will travel to the COP22 UN climate summit in Marrakech today to lead the Swedish delegation. Negotiations are already under way on how the Paris Agreement should be implemented in practice, and since the Agreement has now entered into force, the first Meeting of the Parties will be held this week.

"There is no time to lose. Now we have to gather all positive forces and use the current global impetus to implement the Paris Agreement. Following the US elections, Sweden and the EU have an increased responsibility to push the work forwards," says Ms Lövin.

As well as leading the delegation's negotiating activities, Ms Lövin will also take part in a number of ministerial meetings, side events and new initiatives to accelerate countries' emissions reductions and secure financing for mitigation and adaptation in developing countries. She will also take part in the first official Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement, to be held on Tuesday. Leaders from all countries that have so far ratified the Agreement will be in attendance.

The major issue at COP22 is developing the Paris rule book.

Sweden's three priorities are ensuring that:

- **the review mechanism** contributes in the best possible way to the parties increasing their ambitions over time;
- a transparent **strengthened reporting system** is developed in a way that

makes it possible to monitor and compare all parties' commitments over time, globally and individually;

- **and a good balance is struck between investments in renewable energy and investments in climate change adaptation in developing countries.**

Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog is also a member of the Swedish negotiating delegation. COP22 in Marrakech runs from 7 to 18 November.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Inspirational figures from around the world to inspire young Swedes in Stockholm

Published 05 October 2016 Updated 05 October 2016

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) have invited some twenty inspirational figures from around the world to Stockholm. At the #FirstGeneration Global Goals Forum on 5 October they will receive an award for their engagement in issues concerning fair and sustainable development, peace and climate change. Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Åsa Regnér and Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog will attend the forum.

Through the United Nations, world leaders have taken on the challenge of creating a sustainable and fair future through 17 common goals. The Global Goals are to be achieved by 2030. The Government has a clear ambition to achieve the goals both in Sweden and internationally. This is the background to the #FirstGeneration Global Goals Forum, which will take place on 5 October.

The Forum, co-organised by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Sida, will give the leaders of tomorrow an opportunity to build global networks to exchange knowledge and experience, and recognition for their engagement for a sustainable world. The awards will be presented by State Secretary at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs Ulrika Modéer. The inspirational figures come from countries including the Marshall Islands, France, Angola, Brazil,

Rwanda and Sweden. Some 300 young Swedes are also invited to be enthused by and learn more about the Global Goals and the inspirers' work.

The Forum will be opened by Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Åsa Regnér, and Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog will take part in a 'sustainability grill'. The event will be moderated by presenter and YouTube star Clara Henry. She is Sweden's first youth ambassador for the Global Goals.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Harmful chemicals must be removed from children's environment

Published 13 September 2016 Updated 13 September 2016

The Government is strengthening efforts to achieve a toxin-free everyday environment. In the Budget Bill for 2017, the Government proposes chemicals investments amounting to SEK 375 million up to 2020. Hazardous substances can cause cancer, allergies or affect the prospects of conceiving children. Children are particularly sensitive and this is why the Government is focusing on measures to protect children and young people. The Budget Bill for 2017 is based on an agreement between the Government and the Left Party.

"Creating a toxin-free environment is one of the most important and challenging tasks in environment policy. The investments the Government is now making will help to further reduce the risks of chemicals in our everyday environment," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

The Government is strengthening environmental monitoring of hazardous chemicals. A special initiative is now under way to obtain a comprehensive picture of the pollution caused by persistent per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFASs) that have been found in several drinking water catchments in Sweden.

Funding has been set aside for support to companies that want to substitute hazardous substances in chemical products and goods. The county administrative boards' supervision of polluted areas will receive increased

resources. The Swedish Chemicals Agency will also receive additional funds to more quickly process matters concerning pesticides.

A survey will be carried out on the existence of hazardous substances that have not yet been regulated by the EU. This survey will focus on hazardous substances in consumer products in people's everyday lives, and the results can be used to limit their use.

Government taking action against harmful pesticides

In parallel with the budget investments, the Government is tasking the Swedish Chemicals Agency with analysing the need and opportunities to limit Swedish consumers' non-professional use of chemical pesticides on lawns and flowerbeds, for example.

Toxin-free everyday environment, MSEK	2017	2018	2019	2020
Enhanced environmental monitoring	12	42	52	52
Greater knowledge about PFASs/pesticides	10	20	10	10
Increased supervision at county administrative boards of polluted areas	10	20	20	20
Survey of hazardous substances	5	5	5	5
Support to substitution centres	5	5	5	
Grant to Swetox – platform for nanosafety	2	2	2	2
Shorter processing times for pesticides at the Swedish Chemicals Agency	13	13	14	14
Total	57	107	108	103



Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Finance, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Government presents historic climate and environment budget

Published 13 September 2016 Updated 13 September 2016

The Government wants to further strengthen Sweden's position as a climate leader. The Budget Bill for 2017 proposes the largest investment budget in the area of climate and the environment in Sweden's history.

The Government's efforts to build our society are accelerating the transition to a more sustainable society. In the budget for 2017, the Government is proposing SEK 12.9 billion in new investments in climate action, fossil-free travel and renewable energy sources for the period 2017–2020. These investments will primarily be made in four areas: the transition to renewable energy, fossil-free travel, the 'Involving all of Sweden' initiative and international climate investments.

Climate Leap and urban environment agreements

Through the Climate Leap, the Government is investing a total of SEK 3.5 billion in regional and local initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This is being matched by at least 50 per cent co-financing by businesses, municipalities, county councils and tenant-owner associations, thus enabling SEK 7–9 billion in climate investments in Sweden during the period 2015–2020.

The Government proposes increased investment in urban environment agreements. These agreements were launched to contribute to sustainable urban environments through support for public transport investments. This support will now be expanded to include investments in cycling infrastructure as well. The SEK 500 million per year in 2015–2018 that

previously applied will be increased by SEK 250 million in 2017 and SEK 500 million in 2018.

Fossil-free travel

As a step in breaking free from fossil fuels, the Government is continuing to strengthen the railways to improve the possibilities for more journeys and transports to take place by train. The Government is allocating SEK 5.9 billion to augment resources for the operation and maintenance of railways during the period 2019–2020, and intends to present an infrastructure bill to the Riksdag proposing an economic framework for a national plan during the period 2018–2020.

A special investment of SEK 200 million will be implemented in 2017 to increase railway capacity and make the system more robust.

International investments

The Government is also introducing a programme for purchasing and cancelling emission allowances in the EU. The intention is to invest SEK 300 million each year in the programme during the period 2018–2040. The initiative is a concrete measure to reduce the total amount of carbon dioxide that may be emitted within the EU Emissions Trading System. SEK 500 million will be added to the development cooperation framework during the period 2017–2020. The proposed increase will improve opportunities for climate financing in low and middle income countries.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Proposals for new goals and measures for climate and air policy

Published 23 June 2016 Updated 23 June 2016

The Cross-Party Committee on Environmental Objectives has submitted its report to the Government. It contains proposals for several new goals for climate and air policy. In a previous interim report from February, a new climate policy framework and a climate act were proposed.

One of the new proposed climate goals is that emissions from domestic transport is to be reduced by 70 per cent by 2030 compared with the level in 2010. Previously, no quantified emissions targets for the transport sector had been set.

The Committee also proposes goals for emissions reductions in other areas: emissions outside the EU Emissions Trading System must be reduced by at least 75 per cent by 2040 compared with 1990.

The Cross-Party Committee on Environmental Objectives proposes a strategy for a cohesive and long-term climate policy. The strategy covers transports, machinery, industry, housing, agriculture, forestry and other areas. Sweden's ambition to be a leader in climate adaptation should be an overarching objective for industrial and innovation policy.

"I am pleased that a broad majority of the Riksdag supports the report. Sweden is to be a leader in the work to realise the ambitious goals of the Paris climate agreement, and this requires a strategy with clear goals," says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

The Cross-Party Committee on Environmental Objectives also includes a strategy for a coordinated clean air policy. In its report, the Committee proposes four new intermediate targets. The targets cover road traffic, small-scale wood burning, the import of air pollution from other countries and the commitments that follow from the NEC Directive. The Committee also provides concrete proposals for policy instruments and measures in each area.

"Air pollution in Sweden contributes to some 5 500 premature deaths each year and entails significant socioeconomic costs. The Cross-Party Committee on Environmental Objectives' proposals can help manage specific challenges in the area of air quality and also reduce our climate impact," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Karolina Skog and Isabella Lövin take part in Environment Council meeting in Luxembourg

Published 21 June 2016 Updated 21 June 2016

20 June 2016: EU climate and environment ministers are meeting today in Luxembourg. The agenda includes negotiations on the EU's emissions trading system, the National Emission Ceilings Directive and ratification of the Paris climate agreement. Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog and Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin are taking part in their first Environment Council meeting.

The ministers will discuss the ongoing negotiations on new targets for the National Emission Ceilings Directive (NEC Directive). The NEC Directive regulates emissions of various air pollutants such as nitrogen oxides and sulphur dioxide in the Member States. The Council and the Parliament have for some time been engaged in difficult negotiations. At the Environment Council meeting, the ministers are expected to receive information on the Presidency's plan regarding continued negotiations.

"Sweden wants to see an ambitious agreement on how air pollution in the EU is to be reduced. We hope for a speedy resolution to this drawn-out process," says Ms Skog.

The negotiations on how to reform the EU's emissions trading system have been ongoing for nearly a year. The ministers will receive a status report at the Environment Council meeting and provide input for the continued

negotiations. The European Commission will also present two additional legislative proposals this summer: one on a division of responsibilities for emission reductions in the non-ETS sectors, and one on emissions and removals of emissions from land use and forestry. Together, the three negotiations will show how the EU intends to achieve its climate objectives by 2030.

"Sweden takes a positive view of the fact that the EU is now seriously considering how to achieve the objectives, and is pushing for a higher level of ambition in all matters," says Ms Lövin.

The issue of how the EU should regulate endocrine disruptors remains relevant. Last week, the European Commission presented a proposal on how to develop criteria for identifying these substances. The Government considers that the European Commission's proposal is insufficient and will not provide the strong effect necessary to eliminate endocrine disruptors from products. Sweden wants to see a more incisive proposal that applies the precautionary principle, i.e. that a substance suspected of having an endocrine-disrupting effect is to be completely prohibited even if research has not completely proven these suspicions.

The ministers are also expected to adopt a statement on the EU's ratification of the Paris climate agreement. They will also agree on Council conclusions on two different action plans presented by the European Commission – one on a circular economy and one on trade in endangered species of animals and plants.

The meeting is the last Environment Council meeting during the Netherlands Presidency. On 1 July, Slovakia will take over the Presidency of the EU.