

# Statement of Government Policy

9 September 2025

Setting the course for  
a more successful Sweden



In the Statement of Government Policy presented on 18 October 2022, the Government laid out its plans for the entire electoral period. This Statement of Government Policy primarily concerns the 2025/26 Riksdag session.

*Statement of Government Policy delivered by Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson*

Your Majesties, Your Royal Highnesses, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of the Riksdag, ladies and gentlemen,

Sweden is fantastic.

All of us who were lucky enough to be born here – or who became part of Sweden later in life – have reason to be grateful that we can call this place our own.

We are the country that believes in equity, gender equality and the unique rights of children, that exports both special steel and pop music to the entire world, where our common welfare is built on millions of individual efforts – and where everyone who wants to can experience the tremendous feeling of freedom offered by our waters, forests and mountains. That is Sweden!

For far too long we took the successes for granted. Social problems grew and shook the very foundations of our welfare society. Not because anyone was out to destroy Sweden, but because we did not protect that which had made Sweden so successful.

At the last election, our four cooperating parties – the Moderate Party, the Christian Democrats, the Liberal Party and the Sweden Democrats – received a clear mandate from the electorate: to get Sweden in order.

We took over a country where gang shootings had become an everyday occurrence; where failed migration and integration policy had led to widespread exclusion; where fossil-free energy production had been shut down for ideological reasons; where inflation was in double figures, school

results were in decline and our national security policy was in limbo pending membership of NATO. Sweden had reached the end of the road.

This Government has charted a new course for Sweden. We all know that there is still a long way to go. But the direction is clear. Step by step, our country is now becoming more secure and more successful.

The paradigm shift that this Government is implementing in key policy areas has produced clear results.

Since 2022, the number of shootings has decreased year on year. Many more serious crimes are being solved. And almost 11 500 police officers are now patrolling our streets: a record level. Asylum applications have more than halved, and Sweden now has its lowest level of asylum immigration since 1985.

We have combated inflation and Swedes' real wages are rising once again. And in the most precarious period since the Second World War, Sweden is now a natural and respected member of NATO. In area after area, Sweden has had a new start – from the revival of knowledge-based education and emergence of preventive social services, to decisions that are paving the way for a historic expansion of new nuclear energy.

But something else has happened too – something that is now taken for granted: political stability has returned to Sweden.

After more than a decade of weak governments, recurring government crises and failed budgets, a stable majority now stands behind the policies being pursued by this Government. And we have managed to gather an even broader majority here in the Riksdag on important issues. I appreciate the fact that we can at times come together in national political unity. It is good for Sweden in these times of international uncertainty.

In the parliamentary year ahead of us, the Government will present a large number of legislative proposals to build a stronger Sweden. The pace of reform will remain high. The time has come to once again dare to believe in the future. To once again dare to believe in Sweden and in everything we can achieve together in this fantastic country.

This is a government that gets things done. So, Mr Speaker and members of the Riksdag – let us roll our sleeves up and get down to an autumn of hard work!

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Mr Speaker,

No task is more crucial to this Government than fighting gang crime. When we took over, lethal gun violence had trebled in a decade. The criminal economy had grown to SEK 100–150 billion annually.

Organised crime threatens the very foundations of our free welfare society, and the Government is in the midst of an unprecedented offensive. The strategy is threefold: striking back against serious gang violence; stopping the recruitment of children and young people; and cutting off the criminal economy.

Huge efforts have been made to equip the judicial system with more police officers and more prison places. Earlier this year, the Government made an agreement with Estonia to rent up to 600 prison places in Tartu. Now it is up to the Riksdag to make a final decision.

At the same time, we have honed law enforcement, providing new tools including secret precautionary coercive measures, exclusion orders, stop-and-search zones and substantially expanded camera surveillance. Later this year we will propose that police be allowed to use AI for facial recognition in real time to prevent and investigate certain serious offences. To get at those

procuring and enabling criminal networks, additional acts will be criminalised along with actual participation in a gang.

The message to the gangs is crystal clear: the Swedish judicial system will hunt you down across national borders, monitor you, take away your luxury goods, lock you up for a long time – and expel you from Sweden if you are not Swedish citizens. The Government also wants to make it possible to revoke the citizenship of gang members with dual citizenship who have committed offences that seriously harm Sweden's vital interests.

For far too long, Sweden has safeguarded the interests of perpetrators. We are now shifting the perspective and focusing instead on crime victims and protecting society. The scales of penalties must reflect the seriousness of the offences. It will be possible to impose double sentences on gang members. The current reduced sentences for multiple offences will be abolished and it will be possible to impose life sentences for repeat serious sexual offences. The conditional release rules will be stricter, and a new penalty without time limits will be introduced for the most dangerous re-offenders – extended parole ineligibility. Dangerous people must be locked away so that law-abiding people are not afraid to go about their lives.

Children are ruthlessly exploited by criminal networks to commit serious offences. To protect both these children and their potential victims, the Government is taking decisive action against this cynical exploitation. As of 1 October, it will be possible to use secret and precautionary coercive measures against children under the age of 15. The age of criminal responsibility will be lowered, and reduced sentences will be substantially curtailed for young offenders and abolished entirely for young adult offenders. Special prisons for young offenders will be ready by 1 July.

But the aim must be that no child ever ends up in this position. The Government has implemented the largest social services reform in more

than 40 years, enabling early interventions so that at-risk children are identified before offences are committed. At the same time, the barriers of confidentiality between police, schools and social services have been eliminated, enabling municipalities to act concertedly on at-risk young people. I strongly urge municipal commissioners around the country to take advantage of this opportunity to break vicious circles.

Money and status are significant drivers of organised crime. The Government is therefore stepping up the fight against the criminal economy. The new legislation on confiscation has already led to the seizure of exclusive watches, bags and cars worth SEK 86 million. The monetary value is important, but the symbolic value is even greater.

The Swedish Social Insurance Agency and seven other government agencies have been tasked with reviewing all decisions that can be associated with the 62 000 individuals with links to criminal gangs. An expanded trading prohibition will target individuals involved in organised crime. The Government also intends to trial specific legislation against gang members.

To eliminate unscrupulous operators, permit processes will be introduced for more operations, including dental practices and health care centres. The right to conduct background controls will be expanded, along with the possibility to suspend central government employees. There will be more severe consequences for benefit offences. Administrative fines and benefit bans will be introduced in the social insurance system.

But not all serious crime is organised crime. Men's violence against women must be combated robustly. Non-contact orders have already been significantly expanded, and anyone who has been convicted of a serious offence in an intimate relationship, or of honour-based oppression, must now generally be issued with a non-contact order after serving their sentence, to protect the victim. The Government will now go further and

combat psychological and financial abuse too. In one of the most gender-equal countries in the world, women's right to integrity must be a given.

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Mr Speaker,

For decades, Sweden implemented a poorly devised and unsustainable immigration policy in combination with unsuccessful integration policy. The result is widespread exclusion, which has created a breeding ground for gang crime, extremism, 'honour' culture and benefit dependence.

For this reason, it has been a central task for this Government to curtail asylum-related immigration to Sweden. The pace of reform is high, and the results are clear. Since the change of government in 2022, applications for asylum in Sweden have decreased by almost 60 per cent, despite a continued high level of applications across Europe.

At the same time, returns to countries of origin have increased by more than 60 per cent. More people are leaving Sweden after receiving an expulsion order. This is the result of consistent and sustained policy to bring order to the migration system, with special reception centres, return centres, and expanded and more secure detention facilities.

For a long time, Sweden was a cautionary tale in the EU. Not any more. The Government is continuing to adjust the Swedish regulations to the minimum level required under EU law, ahead of the Pact on Migration and Asylum entering into force in mid-2026. The Government also intends to make the maintenance requirement more stringent in family member immigration.

The 'shadow society' must be combated, including through an expanded duty to report migrants without permits, and asylum seekers' right to arrange their own accommodation will be abolished. The focus of Swedish migration policy is now shifting from asylum immigration to highly qualified labour



immigration. Processing times for this group have, on average, been reduced from more than 100 days to less than 20.

But to boost our competitiveness, Sweden must become better at attracting international talent. The Government will therefore present proposals that make switching between jobs easier, while still ensuring that action is taken against work permit fraud. The Government is also working to make it easier for researchers and doctoral students to remain in Sweden.

Sweden must send a clear signal: if you are a highly qualified talent in your area of expertise and want to build a future here together with us – you are welcome in Sweden!

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Mr Speaker,

It is clear that many of the people who have come to Sweden have settled well into Swedish society and make an important contribution every day. We see you, we appreciate you, and we want you and your children to succeed in Sweden.

But at the same time, it is equally obvious that the previously high intake of asylum seekers, combined with a permissive integration policy, has made this kind of success story more difficult. We all know that far too many become mired in intergenerational social exclusion.

We are turning that around now, and have greatly reduced the intake of asylum seekers to give us a chance of succeeding at our next major task – making a success of integration.

This Government believes in social mobility, not social heredity. So point by point, we are doing away with Sweden's old, permissive integration policy, where even murderers could be granted citizenship.

Sweden's 180 vulnerable areas will be revitalised, and we will make sure that children growing up in an environment of language paucity get a real chance to do well in school in Sweden. Successful integration implies both obligations and opportunities. And the key to Swedish society is language.

The majority of those studying Swedish as a second language are now born in Sweden. This is not reasonable. This underscores the need for intensive Swedish training, catch-up schools for early school years and mandatory language preschool for children who otherwise do not learn proper Swedish at home. With a shared language, we can build society together.

The requirements for becoming a Swedish citizen are being tightened significantly. Your knowledge must include Swedish language skills and an understanding of Swedish society. We are introducing requirements whereby to become a Swedish citizen, you must be able to support yourself, conduct yourself properly, and have lived here for a long time. Those who become citizens must be fully interwoven in the fabric of society.

At the same time, there will be a significant increase in expulsions of foreign citizens who have committed offences in Sweden. This reform is expected to result in a six-fold increase in the number of expulsions on account of criminal offences. Foreign citizens who do not live up to the requirement to lead an honourable way of life in other aspects may have their residence permit revoked.

To make demands is to care. It creates clarity on what is expected of those coming to our country. You learn Swedish, support yourself and become part of the Swedish community of values.

And there will be zero tolerance for honour-based oppression. Because gender equality is a fundamental Swedish value. From 1 December, 'virginity tests' will be criminalised. The Government is moving forward with

proposals for tougher penalties for honour-based offences, and an end to the recognition of polygamous marriages.

A ban on marriage between cousins, a fundamental part of clan and ‘honour’ culture, will be introduced. Let us be frank in this Chamber: It is a betrayal – and an expression of political cowardice – that Sweden has not done more in the past to stop the systematic oppression of women and girls.

Voluntary repatriation should be heavily stimulated and increase. From the beginning of next year, those who feel that they have not become part of Swedish society – or who for other reasons wish to return to their country of origin – will have the opportunity to apply for a significantly increased repatriation grant.

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Mr Speaker,

The Nordic welfare model is unique. It gladly embraces all who succeed, and offers a second chance to those who do not. But it requires that we all make the best effort possible. This is what the true social contract between citizens and the public sector looks like. Rights and obligations.

Defending this welfare model is important to the Government. When inflation threatened to lead to mass layoffs in the health care system, our four parties provided the extra resources required. But it is equally important to protect our welfare against fraud, crime and over-exploitation, and to stand up for the work-first principle that creates tax revenue and prosperity.

Swedish health and medical care is world class, but for over a decade, patients have been forced to wait for an indefensibly long time for care. The Government has acted to increase health care capacity and cut queues through measures that include a billion-kronor initiative to increase the number of cataract, prolapse and hip operations. The work to establish a

national health care referral service is ongoing and has already led to patients in a pilot project receiving care more quickly.

Sweden will continue to be at the forefront of cancer care. Everyone should have the right to the best cancer care possible – regardless of where in the country they live. The goal to eradicate cervical cancer by 2027 remains unchanged.

The largest dental care reform in 20 years is now being implemented. From the beginning of next year, the high-cost protection insurance in dental care for those aged 67 and over will be enhanced, to better match the protection offered for other forms of health care.

Older people deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. The Government is making broad investments to raise the status, increase the expertise and improve the work environment of those working in the care of older people. Our older people must be able to understand what staff are saying. For this reason, the Government wants to introduce a language requirement from 1 July 2026. Last year's special initiative to counteract loneliness among older people meant that 70 000 people living in service accommodation or receiving home care service took part in dancing and courses.

Children are literally the future of Sweden. That is why the warning signs pointing to declining mental health in many children are alarming. The number of children diagnosed with ADHD has increased dramatically. Screens are taking up more and more of children's waking hours, which affects sleep, social interaction, school results and physical activity.

But it does not have to be that way. The Government has taken up the fight against screens in both preschools and schools, where the poorly devised digitalisation policy has been rolled back and mobile phones will be banned throughout the school day from 1 July 2026.

With screens put aside, football boots and dance shoes can be taken out. The Public Health Agency of Sweden has been tasked with developing proposals for the 2026 Year of Activity. A leisure-time card giving all children between the ages of 8 and 16 better access to leisure activities has recently been introduced.

Without the lively laughter of children, Sweden's society would be worse off. We must take the historically low birth rate seriously. The current average of 1.43 children per woman is the lowest ever recorded. The Government has appointed an inquiry to map the causes and investigate how more people who would like to have children can also take the step of starting a family.

What happens in the classroom today determines what Sweden will look like tomorrow. Not only should schools equip children for life, they are also the most important investment we can make to secure Sweden's future competitiveness.

Therefore, the Government is implementing the largest school system reform package in 30 years. Schools will go back to basics: they should be responsible for providing education of the highest class – not be trend-driven experimental workshops.

At the beginning of next year, a large number of government bills will be presented to the Riksdag. Teachers will be able to concentrate on teaching, and the focus will be on the duty of schools to promote knowledge. The independent school system will be totally overhauled, with increased transparency and stricter rules to exclude unscrupulous actors from the school sector. Safer and quieter study environments will be restored. It is high time we treat schools like the fundamental societal institution they are. It is time to treat the teaching profession with the respect it deserves. Because Sweden must have a world-class school system.

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Mr Speaker,

The Government inherited an inflation level of more than ten per cent. The soaring cost of living hit families, businesses and social welfare hard. For this reason, the Government focused on fighting inflation.

Nonetheless, the recession has been more protracted than expected. At the start of the year, the global economy entered a new, historically uncertain phase, characterised by tariff threats, trade wars and unpredictability. This has led to households and businesses holding back on consumption and investment decisions.

For a small country that is a big trade nation, this is dangerous. This underscores the importance of the EU concluding new free trade agreements with more countries. But it also demonstrates how important it is to have a responsible economic policy at home to ensure Sweden's prosperity in an increasingly tough global environment.

The Government's economic policy has three clear objectives: strengthening household finances after years of inflation, reinstating the work-first principle so that more people contribute, and accelerating growth so that everyone's piece of the pie gets bigger.

We have lowered taxes for pensioners, motorists, investment savings account holders and for those who pay the highest marginal taxes.

We have lowered taxes for low- and middle-income earners. With our budgets, an ordinary family consisting of a police officer and a nurse will see over SEK 43 000 in income tax cuts during our electoral period.

This year's budget puts more money in the pockets of hard-working people who are building a stronger Swedish economy. Next year, that same family with two children and an ordinary detached house will have SEK 1 800 more

in their pockets per month as a result of the reforms in the autumn budget. Those who are working and toiling away should feel that it pays to work and that their efforts matter. Those who have been affected by these costly years should feel their burden lighten. I want more people to enjoy a sense of financial security and belief in the future.

Behind Swedish prosperity lies work. That is why the work-first principle must be reinstated. This autumn will see the biggest change to unemployment insurance in 40 years. The Government will also conduct its major benefit reform so that more people who are capable of working make the shift from benefits to work. Early next year, the Government will present three bills: an activity requirement for those living on income support, a benefit cap so that it is more worthwhile to work than live on benefits, and a gradual qualification process to become eligible for Swedish welfare. Both the major benefit reform and the significantly increased repatriation grant will, individually and in combination, lead to reduced social exclusion in the long term.

However, more requirements alone are not enough. Many unemployed people lack relevant education and training, especially in jobs that are in great demand. That is why the Government is making a major push for vocational education and training, and to increase the number of participants in employment training programmes.

Internationally, Sweden is lauded for its innovation capacity, competitiveness and innovative capital markets. But that is no reason to be complacent. On the contrary, what is needed is major investment in the future to also secure tomorrow's growth.

That is why the Government is making massive investments in infrastructure to upgrade roads and railways. We are also making the largest investment ever in research and innovation, focusing on cutting-edge technology,

excellence and practice-based research. In these times of global uncertainty, Sweden must be a knowledge-based society and forerunner in research.

And this applies not least in regard to AI. Several world-leading AI companies have chosen to place their new investments in Sweden and one of the EU's AI factories is now being established in Linköping. The Government would also like to see the EU establish one of its five planned AI gigafactories in Sweden. Early next year, a new AI strategy will be developed to ensure that Sweden rapidly capitalises on the wealth of opportunities that the AI revolution offers.

It has to be easy to start, run and develop a business in Sweden. The Government is pursuing a determined red-tape-cutting agenda to minimise the regulatory burden and administrative costs for Swedish companies.

Housing construction has also long been hampered by an unreasonable regulatory burden. The Government has developed a broad reform agenda to make it easier and cheaper to build. This includes everything from facilitating type-approved single-family houses – that we refer to as ‘Sweden homes’ – to significantly reducing red tape and simplifying building permit processes, and reforming shore protection. In addition, the Government intends to abolish the stricter amortisation requirement and raise the loan-to-value cap for mortgages. The dream of owning a home or apartment will become a reality for more people.

Sweden needs to become a freer and simpler country to live in, in both urban and rural areas. Following the success of permitting small-scale producers to sell their own alcoholic beverages, the Government will continue with an accelerated process to abolish the outdated requirement to serve food, as well as the requirement of indoor seating in order to be allowed to serve a glass of wine outdoors.



Sweden is a rich country – including in natural resources, water, forest and earth. The Government will develop a new minerals strategy to promote the Swedish mineral industry in a time of increasing geopolitical tensions over strategic resources. Agricultural conditions are being improved through regulatory simplification at both national and EU level. The Government is reforming its forestry policy, enhancing property rights with the aim of harnessing the forest's enormous potential for the economy, climate and environment.

For Sweden, the EU and the world to navigate the green transition successfully, the energy issue is absolutely central. For Sweden, it is also about securing our future as an advanced industrial nation. The Government has laid the groundwork for a new nuclear energy programme in Sweden – just over a decade after the fatal decision to close down four reactors in Ringhals and Oskarshamn. Concrete steps are now being taken to enable a historic expansion of nuclear energy on the Värö Peninsula in Halland.

With the expansion of electricity production, new, fossil-free base load energy will be key to a stable electricity system. However, the Government welcomes all fossil-free forms of energy. A wind power package will be presented with enhanced incentives for municipalities and compensation for local residents.

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Mr Speaker,

Urgent action is needed to reduce global climate emissions. Sweden is a forerunner in this respect, having started phasing out oil dependency early on with hydropower and nuclear energy, and replacing oil boilers with heat pumps. Since 1990, Sweden has reduced its territorial emissions levels by a third while our GDP has almost doubled.

But more needs to be done – nationally, in Europe and globally. The Government is actively pushing to expedite the electrification of industry and the vehicle fleet. Sweden was an early adopter and welcomed the EU's new objective of a 90 per cent reduction by 2040. It is through the EU that Swedish climate policy is conducted most effectively. It is through the EU that we can influence the world.

Environmental toxins are stored in humans, even from the embryonic stage. Within the EU, Sweden has taken a leading role in the fight against environmental toxins and is pushing to raise the level of ambition when the revision of the EU's REACH chemicals regulation begins later this year. The Government is also developing a national plan to prevent PFAS 'forever chemicals' from spreading in our waters and nature.

Our seas must become healthier. We are working to stop the eutrophication of the Baltic Sea, restore healthy fish stocks and protect more of our important ocean areas. In the next few days, Sweden's 31st national park, the Nämndö Archipelago – the first marine national park in the Baltic Sea – will be inaugurated. We will reduce toxic emissions by introducing bans on marine scrubbers.

Fish stocks in the Baltic Sea must be given a chance to recover. Sweden continues to push for the lowest possible fishing quotas within the EU. At the same time, we have, of our own accord, banned bottom trawling in marine protected areas within the trawl limit. We have also moved the trawl limit on a trial basis to protect spawning herring. A permanent regulation will be introduced in the future.

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Mr Speaker,

We live in serious times. The rules-based international order, which was created after the Second World War, is in turmoil. The free world is under pressure from authoritarian powers, while the ideals that have united democracies for decades are no longer self-evident.

This places new demands on Sweden. We are reinforcing our total defence and securing enduring resilience. We continue to support Ukraine. We are nurturing and strengthening Sweden's alliances with like-minded countries.

It is good for Sweden that we have been able to come together in such broad political unity on these existential issues. Completely united in our support to Ukraine, completely united in our vigorous rearmament of the Swedish defence. And almost united on the new security policy approach and NATO membership – six of eight parties. All of this lends us strength internationally.

European cooperation and the European community of values are more important than ever – for Sweden's security, competitiveness, climate action and global influence. The Government's four priorities for EU policy remain unchanged: the war in Ukraine, crime, competitiveness and climate. Point by point the Government has gained traction for these priorities, not least regarding the issue of Europe's dwindling competitiveness.

For more than three and a half years, Ukraine has been heroically fighting for its freedom and sovereignty. No foreign policy task is more important for Sweden than to support Ukraine and secure peace on Ukraine's terms. We do not yet know when or how the war will end, but we know that *how* the war ends will be decisive for our security for at least a generation to come.

Sweden is one of the world's largest donors to Ukraine. Since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Sweden has sent 19 military support packages and assistance with a total value of SEK 96.5 billion.

Sweden also takes a leading role in shaping the sanctions against Russia – against the shadow fleet, and for a lowered oil price cap and a total import ban on all Russian liquefied natural gas. The Government is a driving force for Ukraine's future as an EU Member. Sweden will support Ukraine for as long as it takes. Ukraine's cause is our cause.

The conflicts in the Middle East continue to lead to grave suffering. Sweden stands up for Israel's right to defence itself against the existential threat directed at the country, of which Hamas's heinous terrorist attack on 7 October 2023 was a shocking reminder. At the same time, Israel must conform to the law of war and minimise civilian suffering in Gaza, where a humanitarian disaster is affecting innocent children in particular. Together with other EU countries, the Government is demanding that sufficient food and medicine be allowed into Gaza and that the expansion and settler violence in the West Bank stop. At the same time, Hamas must release the hostages and hand over full control of Gaza. This is the only way to lay the groundwork for a long-term two-state solution.

Sweden has a tradition of strong international engagement, and we must take our share of the responsibility to contribute to a better world. But we bear the full responsibility for what happens here in Sweden. We cannot have the whole world's conflicts spilling over onto our streets. Anyone can think whatever they like about the situation in the Middle East, but they cannot spread hate, threats and antisemitism in Sweden.

Sweden's development assistance must continue to aim high, but the money must never fall into the wrong pockets or disappear into the ether. The Government's reforms are addressing well-documented problems to create

more effective development assistance, with clear expectations on the recipient countries to implement their own political reforms. In the long run, poverty can only be fought with democracy, trade and growth.

On 7 March 2024, Sweden joined NATO, ushering in a new era in Swedish security policy. Our country has become more secure and NATO has become stronger. Sweden has already made significant contributions within NATO – everything from the mechanised battalion in Latvia and the deployment of Swedish Gripen aircraft in NATO's air policing in Poland, to Sweden being given framework responsibility for the NATO presence in Finland.

To achieve NATO's new target of 3.5 per cent of GDP plus an additional 1.5 per cent for broader defence and security investments, Sweden is implementing the single most robust reinforcement of its defence since the Cold War. We are also carrying out a major expansion of Sweden's civil defence. The country's 64 000 protective shelters will be modernised, more people will be obliged to undertake civil defence service, and supply preparedness will be strengthened.

This broad rearmament of Sweden's total defence will be noticeable far beyond army barracks, in the form of thousands of new jobs – not least in the successful Swedish defence industry. But also in research environments and innovation, space initiatives and in upgraded physical infrastructure. Ultimately, we are all part of the defence of Sweden. It is when each and every one of us plays our part, that it really becomes ours. Together we are strong.

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Mr Speaker,

Sweden is an open and tolerant society. We want to be a country where we care less about where you come from, what colour skin you have, who you choose to love and which God you may worship – and more about who you are and where you are heading.

The Government stands up for the rights of LGBTIQ people, regardless of who tries to violate or restrict them.

This year marks the 250th anniversary of Jewish life in Sweden. The Jewish minority and culture are an integral part of Swedish society, and the Government is doing its utmost to increase security and improve conditions for Jewish life in our country. The antisemitism that has once again reared its head in Sweden is a stain on our country's character. It must be condemned and defeated, wherever it comes from – by everyone, without excuses or exceptions.

Free speech is the heartbeat of a liberal democracy – freedom of the press, a vibrant cultural scene and robust public debate are invaluable facets of a pluralistic society. The Government believes in safeguarding strong, independent public service broadcasting. At the same time, the freedom of culture needs to be enhanced by increasing opportunities for the cultural sector to derive income from other sources beyond the public sector. Free speech must be defended, even beyond Sweden's borders. The work to secure the release of journalist Dawit Isaak and publisher and poet Gui Minhai continues unabated.

Civil society plays a strong and unique role in Sweden. I would like to extend a warm thank you to all of you who, through voluntary efforts, hold our society together – who, come rain or shine, train girls and boys in football, who pore over Swedish nouns at a language café, or take part in search

operations for a missing fellow human being. You prove that society is bigger than the State.

A cultural canon that has mined the gold from Sweden's common cultural treasure chest was recently unveiled. The Government's ambition is for it to become a living canon, something we can get behind in our country. In times of division and polarisation, it is more important than ever to nurture all that unites us. And to be astounded by everything that has made Sweden such a fantastic country to live in.

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Mr Speaker,

I can understand that many despair of a global situation more precarious than it has been for a very long time. Of children stuffed to the gills with tramadol murdering for money, and of bags of shopping that have become so financially heavy that there is no longer room for any treats.

But let us not forget that Sweden is a country with huge potential, and a country that has overcome difficulties before. Sweden was recently ranked the most innovative country in the entire EU. We have one of the EU's most qualified labour forces, leading companies, extremely strong public finances and Europe's cleanest electricity, and we rank among the world's leading democracies.

None of this comes for free. It is the result of hard work, where everyone's efforts count – not least those of past generations. Together we can create one of the world's best societies to live in.

Let us build further on these unique strengths. This Government has embarked on a journey of change, from a Sweden that had become more dangerous and poorer to a Sweden that is becoming more secure and more successful. And that journey extends far beyond a single electoral period.

We go into an election year ready to continue this journey.

So that the fight against organised crime can be seen through to completion and no mother need be scared to let her children play in the playground.

So that we restore a sense of community in Sweden and unite around the values that built our country.

So that we can afford to invest in the future and lay new railways, build new nuclear energy plants and see the Swedish start-ups of today become the global export successes of tomorrow.

And so that more people can realise their dreams and allow themselves a few everyday luxuries.

All of this is possible if we are determined.

A better tomorrow awaits.



**Government of Sweden**

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