



Focus on geopolitics at World Trade Organisation's Ministerial Conference

The 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) concluded on Friday morning. It was the WTO's first major conference in five years. Addressing the enormous challenges that have paralysed world trade – the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the food and energy crisis – was on the agenda.

The final agreement which was adopted during the conference concerns areas such as a dispute settlement mechanism to manage and resolve trade conflicts between countries and regions, regulations for vaccine trade, food security, a prohibition of harmful fishing subsidies and continuing to allow free global eCommerce without tariffs.

“I would go so far as to say that we saved world trade at the eleventh hour. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has caused a global food crisis that is having a major impact on the world's poor and has foreshadowed food export restrictions by a number of states. That's why it is very gratifying that the WTO succeeded in agreeing on a Ministerial Declaration on the importance of keeping trade open. Sweden has been a strong driving force behind this,” says Ms Hallberg.

Together with the EU, Sweden pushed to limit, or preferably eliminate, export restrictions on food. Global food prices have increased dramatically due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a major wheat producer. This, and the fact that Russia is responsible for the situation, were some of the points that Minister for Foreign Trade Anna Hallberg stressed in her speech at the beginning of the Conference.

“That the WTO has reached an agreement is a welcome, positive sign for multilateral cooperation. Now it’s up to us to manage this mandate. As a strong proponent of free trade and inclusive economic development, Sweden will be an important actor in the coming years, starting with our Presidency of the Council of the EU,” says Ms Hallberg.

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Impact of Russian invasion on Swedish companies and foreign trade

In light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the following sanctions, the Government is now strengthening preparedness for the Swedish business sector and foreign trade through close dialogue with relevant actors. The economic effects on Sweden are currently limited, but the situation concerning increased energy and oil prices, as well as the turbulent capital market, may deteriorate. There may be quite extensive and serious consequences for the world economy, which is why the Government is closely monitoring developments and is prepared to act depending on how events unfold.

The Russian invasion has led to the most serious security situation since the Second World War and is creating great uncertainty. This is illustrated by reactions in financial markets and by the fact that the price of raw materials such as oil and gas has risen, which affects the Swedish economy. The relevant Swedish government agencies are working hard to support Swedish companies by gathering information on how the sanctions against Russia may affect these companies. This can then be used to help them to navigate and make strategic assessments in this very complex situation.

“We must be prepared for both the short-term and the long-term effects of the developments we are currently seeing. Sweden has very strong public finances and so good opportunities to act if and when necessary – depending on how the situation develops. Let me emphasise that the Government greatly appreciates the work and the major efforts that companies with a

presence in Ukraine are making for their staff on the ground. I am proud to be part of a Government that, together with the EU and a host of other countries, stands up for democracy and for the right of each country to determine its own future,” says Minister for Business, Industry and Innovation Karl-Petter Thorwaldsson.

As part of the efforts to strengthen Sweden’s preparedness, the Government is now establishing closer dialogue with the business sector, trade unions and relevant government agencies to obtain an overview of the situation.

“We hope for a speedy end and a withdrawal, but we must prepare for a protracted conflict that will test us as a country and as citizens, and that will test our business sector. We are not yet able to get a full overview of the effects of the crisis. That is why the Government – and I, as Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs – see dialogue with the business sector, trade unions and other countries as crucial – we exchange information, pool our strength and work towards a common goal. We are stronger together,” says Ms Hallberg.

Sweden’s trade with Ukraine

Some 90 Swedish companies are active in Ukraine and are now being hit very hard by the war. As a result of the invasion, many of the businesses have ceased their activities. The Government is closely monitoring developments and is regularly in direct contact with Swedish companies operating in Ukraine.

Swedish trade with Ukraine is limited and amounts to less than one per cent of Sweden’s exports and imports. The current assessment is that disruptions will not have a significant impact on society but that individual companies may be affected in the form of restrictions on input products or reduced sales. In general, the impact on Swedish industry is expected to be more indirect rather than direct, i.e. value chains via other countries.

Sweden’s trade with Russia

Russia is no longer an active trading partner of Sweden or of the EU. To date, four massive sanctions packages against Russia have been introduced by the EU and Sweden’s partners. Some 500 Swedish companies are active in Russia, including around 20 large companies and 13 400 employees in Swedish groups in the country (figures from 2019).

Trade with Russia has accounted for 1.3 per cent of Swedish exports. Sweden's dependence on Russian imports is also low. One of the reasons for this is that Sweden's energy sources are largely domestic. Sweden also has the EU's lowest dependence on natural gas and so on Russian energy imports. But Swedish companies and consumers may still be affected by increased energy prices and other indirect trade effects.

Regarding the need for companies to find new supplier routes and trading partners, the Government can provide assistance through Business Sweden and Swedish government agencies. Business Sweden is now redirecting its operations to support Swedish companies to leave Russia. The Nordic Council of Ministers has also decided to suspend all cooperation with Russia and Belarus.

New remit to Swedish Defence Research Agency

The Government has now tasked the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) with identifying Russian investments and economic interests in Sweden. The aim is to obtain a clear picture of Russian economic interests in Sweden. This can help to ensure that there is better compliance with the sanctions system, that law enforcement authorities can obtain information for further action and that the relevant companies are made aware of the sanctions.

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Work from the innovation partnership programme sparked concerted action on climate transition via standardisation

As a result of the Government's innovation partnership programme Climate neutral industry, the National Board of Trade Sweden was recently tasked with establishing an advisory body with key skills to promote innovative and climate-focused standardisation, and Vinnova has been commissioned to support this work.

“The assignment is a real opportunity for Sweden to concentrate efforts and work strategically in areas in which Sweden is strong and highly innovative, such as fossil-free steel, green hydrogen, sustainable batteries, non-toxic and bio-based products and sustainable cities, particularly since standardisation is also a top priority on the European Commission's agenda for 2022,” says Minister for Business, Industry and Innovation Ibrahim Baylan.

“Sweden will continue to be at the forefront and lead the way for global standards. Standardisation is highly significant for Sweden's foreign trade and competitiveness,” says Anna Hallberg, Minister for Foreign Trade with responsibility for Nordic affairs.

The transition to a circular economy is of the utmost importance in achieving environmental and climate objectives. Proposals regarding the role of standardisation in this work have also been submitted in several roadmaps linked to Fossil Free Sweden and by the Circular Economy Delegation.

“This will bolster the transition towards a circular economy. Standardisation can be an important tool in ensuring resource-efficient, circular and non-toxic product design, and it's something we should promote,” says Minister

for Environment and Climate, Per Bolund.

A result of the innovation partnership programme

The National Board of Trade Sweden has today been tasked with working with Swedish stakeholders to monitor the development of EU standardisation policy and with keeping the Government informed of important factors in standardisation that will impact on the Swedish economy. This new assignment is part of the implementation of the Government's strategies on standardisation, the transition to a circular economy and the export and investment strategy, and has emerged from the work of the Government's innovation partnership programme Climate neutral industry.

Viveca Bergstrand is the project manager of the innovation partnership programme Climate neutral industry, and is delighted that their work resulted in an assignment.

“Since it came into being just before Midsummer 2020, the working group has been working tirelessly, drawing on lots of different skills and experiences, in several different areas, all relating to definitions and measurability to improve clarity, in order to increase the pace of the climate transition. All the initiatives and dialogues within the group are directly or indirectly linked to standardisation.”

“Unique opportunity for innovative, climate-focused standardisation”

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Minister for Foreign Trade Anna Hallberg convenes trade policy expert group

Anna Hallberg has launched a trade policy advisory group to discuss how to shape future trade policy in light of the way the pandemic has changed international trade conditions. The members of the group have a wide range of experience from business, public authorities, trade unions, civil society and academia. The aim is to come up with new and different initiatives to enable trade to be an instrument of change.

The topics for the first meeting held in October 2020 were EU trade policy review and Trade for Health. The second meeting in February 2021 discusses trade and sustainability in a broad perspective, encompassing environmental, climate, economic and social sustainability.

Core Members of the group are:

- Carl-Henric Svanberg, Board Chairman of Volvo Group AB, Chair of the European Round Table for Industry and Chair of the Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences
- Frédéric Cho, Vice Chairman of the Sweden-China Trade Council and founder of Frédéric Cho Advisory AB
- Hanne Melin Olbe, Global Competition Counsel at eBay Inc and member of the European Commission's Strategic Policy Forum on Digital Entrepreneurship
- Johan Kuylenstierna, Chair of the Swedish Climate Policy Council and former Executive Director of Stockholm Environment Institute
- Mattias Perjos, President and CEO of Getinge
- Rune Bjerke, Member of Norsk Hydro's board, member of the Norge mot 2025 committee and former CEO of DNB ASA

- Susanna Gideonsson, President of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO)
- Anders Ahnlid, Director General of the National Board of Trade and former Ambassador of Sweden to Finland
- Carin Jämtin, Director General of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)

The international experts connected with the group are:

- Deborah Elms, founder and Executive Director of the Asian Trade Centre and President of the Advisory Board of the Asia Business Trade Association
- Gabriel Zucman, Associate Professor of Economics at the University of California, Berkeley
- Gordon Brown, UN Special Envoy for Education and former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom
- Martin Sandbu, European Economics Commentator at the Financial Times
- Susan Schwab, Strategic Advisor in Mayer Brown's International Trade Practice and Trade Representative under President George W. Bush

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Necessary preparations ahead of UK withdrawal from EU customs union

The United Kingdom's transition period ends at the end of this year and will then have fully withdrawn from the EU. It is still unclear what trade conditions will apply, but trading with the UK will in any case be more difficult. Preparations ahead of next year by both public authorities and businesses in Sweden are of central importance, say Hans Dahlgren and Anna Hallberg during a digital visit to Swedish Customs.

Negotiations between the UK and the EU on a future agreement are now in an intensive final phase. Regardless of whether or not an agreement is reached, it will be a new situation for both Swedish businesses and public authorities. On Friday 6 November, Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren and Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs Anna Hallberg paid a digital visit to Swedish Customs to learn about the agency's preparations ahead of the UK's complete withdrawal from the EU at the end of this year.

“What the exact conditions will be remain to be seen. From Sweden's perspective, our sincere hope is that the negotiators succeed and reach an agreement. This can be resolved – and it would be good for all parties involved,” says Mr Dahlgren.

Swedish Customs is a key actor in the trade chain and one of the public authorities whose work to a great extent will be affected by the UK's withdrawal. Their preparations have long been under way and on Friday, the ministers were informed of this work.

“A major transition can be expected in the new year, regardless of whether

or not an agreement is reached. It is therefore important that our public authorities are well prepared ahead of these changes, no matter the scenario. Swedish Customs is definitely a central authority for dealing with the changed conditions for the flow of goods between Sweden and the UK. And my distinct impression is that Swedish Customs is well prepared for this,” says Mr Dahlgren.

Difficult situation for Swedish businesses

The UK is one of Sweden’s most important trading partners, and the end of the transition period will affect many Swedish businesses.

“It will no longer be possible to take common regulations, standards and freedom of movement for granted. Goods that are currently automatically approved in the entire EU will no longer have this approval,” says Ms Hallberg.

Ms Hallberg points out that companies that do not have experience of trading with countries outside the EU – often small and medium-sized companies – will need to ensure that they apply for the necessary permits and review their delivery chains, etc. Even if an agreement between the UK and the EU is reached, there will still be customs formalities that must be observed.

“My advice is that all companies should set aside time – a whole or half day – to analyse current trade patterns and identify the measures that need to be taken. Good guidance is available on the Swedish Customs and National Board of Trade websites,” says Ms Hallberg.

Published 12 November 2020



Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren and Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs Anna Hallberg ahead of the UK withdrawal from the EU

The UK left the EU on 1 February. What happens now and what does the transition period that begins entail? What form will future relations between the EU and the UK take? Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren and Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs Anna Hallberg discuss some of the details in an interview.

The UK will leave the EU at midnight on 31 January. What is your view on this?

Hans Dahlgren, Minister for EU Affairs:

“They have taken a democratic decision and now it’s a matter of making the best of the situation. We have a great deal of contact with the UK. We buy and sell a lot of goods from one another. There are many Swedes who work and study there, and we have many UK nationals living in Sweden. We need to maintain a good relationship moving ahead, and that’s what we will focus on in the coming year.”

Anna Hallberg, Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs:

“Now we really have to look to the future. The UK is one of our most important trading partners. We have 30 000 companies that trade daily with the UK. This affects jobs and welfare throughout the country. Now we really have to make sure we have a really good basis to maintain good trade relations with the UK in the future.”

After the UK leaves the EU, there will be a transition period until 31

December 2020. What does this entail?

Hans Dahlgren, Minister for EU Affairs:

“Throughout the year, up until 31 December, essentially the same conditions will apply as when the UK was a member. This means that they are still in the single market. They are still in the customs union. The same regulations apply regarding travel and visits. The only difference is that they will no longer have any influence over what we decide in the EU. They cannot be involved with the European Council, the European Court of Justice or the European Parliament. But this only applies this year, and we must make the best possible use of this time to reach a new relationship and new agreements with the UK.”

Anna Hallberg, Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs:

“The Government gives priority to jobs and welfare, and so the UK represents an important partner for us when it comes to creating jobs and welfare among all the 30 000 companies that trade with the UK. For us, it is important to reach a good trade agreement and to prioritise issues such as trade in goods and services, and that we can continue our successful research cooperation with the UK.”

Published 29 January 2020



Drive for Democracy takes shape

Strengthened engagement for democracy was announced in the 2019 Statement of Foreign Policy and in the Swedish Foreign Service's strategic vision for the electoral period. Sweden will stand up for democratic principles and support democracy in all contexts. On 21 November 2019, the Drive for Democracy was presented to the Riksdag Committee on Foreign Affairs by Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde and Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson.

In brief, the Drive for Democracy makes it clear that Sweden will stand up for democratic principles in all contexts, work to help strengthen democracy, and voice criticism against democratic deficits or risks of backsliding. Like the feminist foreign policy, the idea is for the democracy perspective to permeate the work of the Swedish Foreign Service and cover all foreign policy and Ministry for Foreign Affairs areas of activity: foreign and security policy; international development cooperation policy and international trade and promotion.

The term 'democracy'

Sweden bases its work on a broad definition of term 'democracy', which means much more than free and fair elections. This definition and its components guide the work on the Drive for Democracy.

Citizen participation: a vibrant civil society, national and local elections.

Representative governance: free and fair elections, universal suffrage, independent political parties.

Rights: access to justice, enjoyment of human rights – not least freedom of expression, social and economic rights, and equality.

Separation of powers: well-functioning parliaments, independence of judicial systems, free and independent media.

Independent institutions: predictable execution of decisions, absence of corruption.

Framework of strategic objectives

A special framework of strategic objectives has been drafted to set out the direction of the Drive for Democracy.

Examples of concrete activities within the framework of the Drive for Democracy include the levelling up democracy assistance, the creation of a new network for enhanced dialogue with other countries and actors on democracy and the development of the feminist foreign policy through activities that contribute to improving women's enjoyment of human rights, and increased influence of women in democracy.

The Drive for Democracy also has a particular focus on engaging young people. As a part of this, missions abroad have been asked to hold local discussions on democracy, called Democracy Talks, with young people throughout the world. The ambition is for the participants' ideas and reflections to be funnelled into a larger Democracy Talks event to be held in Sweden in 2021 in connection with the centenary of Swedish democracy.

Priority areas

The following areas may be seen as starting points and inspiration for how the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and missions abroad are to continue working on the Drive for Democracy:

- Promote and strengthen civil society, including human rights defenders. Trade union organisations also play a crucial role in strengthening people's opportunities to influence their everyday lives and must be supported.

- Strengthen free and independent media and democratic voices (such as cultural workers), including on the internet, to combat disinformation.
- Support democratic processes and election authorities.
- Promote the growth of effective and independent institutions, including the absence of corruption.
- Promote equality.
- Strengthen political systems with competing political parties (including parliaments).
- Support the strengthening of respect for the rule of law.
- Promote and protect the enjoyment of human rights by all.
- Strengthen women's political participation.
- Promote young people's democratic engagement.

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Ministers: Global cooperation should be strengthened

Opinion piece by Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde, Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson and Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs Anna Hallberg. Published in Svenska Dagbladet on 20 April 2020.

The coronavirus crisis is not a time for less cooperation, closed doors or protectionism. Now is the time for more international cooperation, write government ministers Ann Linde, Peter Eriksson and Anna Hallberg.

International cooperation is needed to manage the crisis. The spread and impacts of the coronavirus are posing difficult challenges for all of us. The world is in crisis management mode. Country after country is launching stimulus packages. Borders have been closed and flights have been cancelled. International systems are being challenged. We know that international cooperation is required to beat the pandemic and manage its impacts. International efforts must also be maintained to protect democratic and free societies, and to safeguard trade and jobs in Sweden.

The rapid spread of the coronavirus shows how closely interconnected countries are. It is not strange that the world's countries have initially focused on responding to the emergency at home. It is the primary responsibility of every government to ensure the security and well-being of its citizens. But viruses don't care about national borders. What happens in other countries affects us.

There are forces that want to benefit from the situation. We see a risk of anti-democratic forces filling the vacuum as normal, structured international exchange slows down or is put on hold. Some see an opportunity to weaken international cooperation and redraw the global playing field.

The world is not taking a break. We will push to promote our values and

interests – both during and after the coronavirus crisis. Sweden will continue to push for security, democracy and human rights. We will continue to give one per cent of our GNI to development assistance, and we will be at the forefront of free, fair and sustainable trade. The pandemic brings many issues to a head, exacerbates conflicts and creates additional challenges.

Democracy and women's human rights must be protected. To respond to the crisis, many countries have introduced draconian measures. In certain cases, the fight against the pandemic is being used as a pretext to silence political opposition, journalists, civil society and human rights defenders. This is why our Drive for Democracy is even more important than before. We have taken the initiative to bring together high-level representatives of the UN, the EU, the Council of Europe and the OSCE to contribute to the protection of democratic principles and human rights in this new environment. Our embassies are tasked with monitoring how the pandemic is affecting democracy.

International cooperation is required to combat disinformation. We are working together in the EU to strengthen efforts to counter disinformation, and we have stepped up our efforts to deal with coronavirus-related issues. The Swedish Institute and the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency are working to counter inaccurate information about our response to the pandemic.

The global security situation is impacted by the pandemic. A worldwide ceasefire is needed to enable a focused response to the pandemic. Sweden therefore backs UN Secretary-General António Guterres' appeal for a global ceasefire. We are actively working with the parties to the Yemen conflict, among others, to urge them to heed the UN's call, as now seems to be happening. Security threats during the pandemic must be taken seriously and we are working closely with others to counter increased threats.

The pandemic will hit poor countries and the most vulnerable. Sweden has already contributed SEK 40 million to the WHO Contingency Fund for Emergencies and SEK 100 million to the UN's major humanitarian response plan to support the world's most vulnerable countries. This is crucial for a rapid and coordinated international response to the impacts of the pandemic. In the EU, we have also worked to increase support to our Eastern Partnership neighbours, and for EU coordination of the response to Africa's management of the pandemic. Sweden provides support to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, to ensure that the whole world will benefit from new vaccines. We are now looking at how Swedish development cooperation can increase

efforts in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

According to an Oxfam report, half a billion people could be pushed into poverty as a result of the pandemic. We must ensure that financial support packages benefit everyone and that we build a more sustainable and equitable economy over the long term. The Government's Global Deal work, international development cooperation and better conditions for trade union activities around the world will be even more important.

Cooperation is needed to help those who are stranded abroad. Many Swedes have managed to return to Sweden on their own, which shows that requiring travellers to take personal responsibility works. However, in some situations this has not been possible, and so far more than 4 900 people have been able to return to Sweden thanks to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' cooperation with other countries, airlines and tour operators. Close cooperation between the Nordic foreign ministers means we are helping each other bring back home our Nordic citizens around the world. We are also working cooperatively in the EU to help each other's citizens return home.

The EU must be a strong global actor. Amid global concern, the EU needs to take a leading role in pushing for global action. Sweden supports the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borell. By acting together and collectively, the EU can make a big difference.

Trade needs to work even in emergency situations. We cannot possibly produce all healthcare products and medicines here in Sweden. To protect health and jobs, Sweden is working hard to ensure that both the EU single market and world trade work effectively even during the coronavirus pandemic. To increase the supply of essential goods, Sweden has pushed through the proposal to suspend EU tariffs on medical equipment.

Nordic cooperation should be enhanced. As each country is now making decisions to protect its population, we are tackling the challenges through close dialogue – and we are helping to minimise the adverse impacts for each other and our citizens living in border regions. Nordic cooperation plays a major role in the emergency we are in, and it will be crucial to our long-term efforts to manage the impacts of the pandemic.

The coronavirus is presenting us with major new challenges. We are experiencing something unprecedented in modern times. Our strong conviction is that Sweden's international engagement is important both for

solving the coronavirus crisis and for contributing to security, sustainability and welfare. This is not a time for less cooperation, closed doors or protectionism. Now is the time for more international cooperation.

Ann Linde (Social Democratic Party)
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Peter Eriksson (Green Party)
Minister for International Development Cooperation

Anna Hallberg (Social Democratic Party)
Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs

Published 23 April 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

Nordic Biomarker and Region Norrbotten received Government's export prizes

Life sciences company Nordic Biomarker received the Government's prize Exporter of the Year, and Region Norrbotten received Exporting Region of the Year. The prizes will be awarded on 31 August by Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs Anna Hallberg in the presence of H.R.H. Prince Daniel.

By awarding the prizes, the Government wants to acknowledge Swedish exports, particularly small and medium-sized companies. The Government also wants to inspire regions to successfully support export companies and thus contribute to growth and new jobs.

Umeå-based life sciences company Nordic Biomarker received the prize Exporter of the Year 2022 because it creates unique control products for coagulation diagnostics that are vital when diagnosing blood clots.

“Nordic Biomarker is an excellent example of how Swedish innovation capacity and entrepreneurship can lead to an impressive export journey in which today's leading medical device companies purchase Swedish products that save lives. I'm proud of the internationalisation of small and medium-sized Swedish companies,” says Ms Hallberg.

Region Norrbotten received the prize Exporting Region of the Year 2022.

“Even though it is a sparse area with a relatively small population, Region Norrbotten succeeds exceptionally well when it comes to increasing exports by conducting strategic export cooperation, both locally and across borders,” says Ms Hallberg.

The other nominees for the Government's export prizes were the successful

companies AIM Apparel and Broddson, and Region Skåne and Region Uppsala.

Citation – Exporter of the Year

In recent years, **Nordic Biomarker** has shown an impressive growth rate and strong, genuine Swedish capacity for innovation that saves lives. With its all-Swedish research and production, the company is a role model in its field. The fact that almost all products are exported to leading medical device companies helps Sweden advance in the international life sciences field.

Citation – Exporting Region of the Year

Region Norrbotten

Even though Norrbotten is a large and sparse region with a relatively small population, it has succeeded exceptionally well in promoting exports and is a true role model – companies based in Norrbotten even managed to increase their exports during the pandemic (2019–2021).

In 2016–2021, out of all 21 regions, Norrbotten saw the largest increase in the export value of its products for small and medium-sized companies. Despite being the last region to establish regional export cooperation, it has not only shown strong cooperation between different local actors, but also cooperated across borders with Finland and Norway. Norrbotten is also successful in exporting valuable skills, including in the areas of space and energy.

Published 31 August 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs Anna Hallberg to visit Berlin

On 11 May, Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs Anna Hallberg will travel to Berlin with the aim of strengthening the good trade and investment relations between Sweden and Germany. During her visit, Ms Hallberg will meet with Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Action Robert Habeck. She will also meet with representatives of German business organisations and Swedish businesses active in Germany.

“The major challenges the world is facing, such as the climate and energy crisis, are best solved in cooperation with other countries. Germany and Sweden have a unique bond, not least in the field of industry, and therefore have unique opportunities to create common solutions for the future. Additionally, the green transition and digital transformation will create more jobs in both our countries. Today’s major security policy challenges make it more important than ever to strengthen our relations,” says Ms Hallberg.

Published 10 May 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

ABBA awarded Government's Music Export Prize by Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs Anna Hallberg

The Government's Music Export Prize for extraordinary services to Swedish music exports in 2021 goes to ABBA. The Special Prize for long-standing contributions to Swedish music exports goes to Håkan Hardenberger, while the Honourable Mention for achievements of particular importance to the internationalisation of Swedish music was awarded to Export Music Sweden.

The winner of the Government's Music Export Prize was announced today during a ceremony in the Blue Drawing Room at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The prize is awarded each year to Swedish music creators who have contributed to export success and to spreading a modern and positive image of Sweden abroad.

“For 50 years, ABBA have symbolised globally successful Swedish music, and they have played a huge part in establishing Sweden internationally. Being able to return to the stage after 40 years is an extraordinary and immense feat,” says Ms Hallberg.

The jury's citation:

It is not every day that the BBC reschedules a news broadcast to premiere a new pop song. But that is exactly what happened when ABBA released new songs for the first time in 40 years. Suddenly, some of history's greatest pop artists were back. ABBA's album *Voyage* was not only one of the greatest, most surprising and acclaimed comebacks in pop history, it also broke new records. The LP reached number 1 in 18 countries, the quartet topped the

album chart in the United States, and it was the best-selling album in Germany. They were most successful in the UK. Only the Beatles and six other artists have reached number 1 more than the 10 times that ABBA reached in autumn 2021. Voyage became the fastest-selling album ever in the 21st century in the UK. In just three days, the group's upcoming, much-discussed and spectacular avatar-based show in London sold a quarter of a million tickets. The show will premiere in spring 2022. It has been 50 years since ABBA was founded, and they have sold over 400 million records. What Agnetha, Björn, Benny and Anni-Frid started in 1972 became a massive first step in the success of Swedish music worldwide. Thank you for the music!

The other nominees for the Government's Music Export Prize were A36, Julia Karlsson & Anton Rundberg and NEIKED.

The Special Prize for long-standing contributions to Swedish music exports goes to Håkan Hardenberger. The jury's citation:

For many years, Håkan Hardenberger has been one of the world's most sought-after trumpeters. All classical music lovers have heard him play Haydn's Trumpet Concerto. He's a staple on the great concert stages and has played with, among others, the New York Philharmonic, the London Symphony Orchestra and the Berliner Philharmonic. His curiosity and willingness to innovate make him unique. He constantly explores his instrument's genre and style and takes us on unexpected trips through time and space. Several of the greatest composers of our time have written music for him, and he takes the Swedish repertoire out into the world, which he tours regularly, as both a soloist and a conductor. He celebrated his 60th birthday last year by founding the Hardenberger International Trumpet Competition in Copenhagen and Malmö. It offers young trumpeters from all over the world the opportunity to develop while maintaining Mr Hardenberger's legacy as one of Sweden's best, international soloists.

The Honourable Mention for achievements of particular importance to the internationalisation of Swedish music goes to Export Music Sweden. The jury's citation:

On the outside, the phenomenon that is Swedish music exports seems to run on its own accord, like a self-playing piano. Of course, that is not true. A great many industry actors work hard all year round to enable Sweden to have become the third largest exporter of hits per capita as well as a respected country in a wide variety of genres. Export Music Sweden, ExMS, consistently plays a crucial role. Since the company started in 1993, ExMS has become an increasingly well-oiled machine that plays a direct or indirect

role in Swedish music exports. Among other things, it ensures a strong Swedish presence at trade fairs, seminars, festivals and other global events. It draws attention and spreads interest in Swedish music abroad, often in cooperation with the Swedish Institute, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, embassies and other partners. Over the last ten years, ExMS has also increased its role as a specialist industry educator and guide in Sweden, conducting seminars and lectures relating to all the areas connected to the contemporary global music industry. These include all genres and rightholders: artists, musicians, songwriters and record labels. During the pandemic, things picked up even more with country guides, digital songwriting camps and trade missions. Sweden has a unique global music brand, and ExMS has helped further magnify Swedish music's international charisma.

The following are members of the Government's Music Export Prize jury:

Anna Sjölund, President Live Nation

Anna-Karin Larsson, Head of the Music Department, SR Musik, Swedish Radio P2

Isabel Thomson, Senior Adviser, funding for record producers and cultural organisations, Swedish Arts Council

Jesper Thorsson, CEO Export Music Sweden

Lars Nylin, Editor-in-chief and publisher Musikindustrin

Linda Portnoff, CEO Musiksverige

Ludvig Werner, CEO IFPI Sverige

Per Sinding-Larsen, music journalist, Swedish Television

Robert Sehlberg, Head of Music, Nordic Entertainment Group Sweden

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Government Offices of Sweden

ABBA, A36, NEIKED and Julia Karlsson & Anton Rundberg nominated for the Government's Music Export Prize.

The Government's Music Export Prize was established in 1997 and is awarded every year to an artist who has been internationally successful during the preceding year and has contributed to Swedish musical export success and to a positive image of Sweden. The winner will be announced on 23 March by Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs Anna Hallberg at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

In addition to the Government's Music Export Prize, a Special Prize for long-standing contributions to Swedish music exports and an Honourable Mention for achievements of particular importance to the internationalisation of Swedish music will also be awarded.

“Not only does the music industry contribute to Swedish musical export success – it also puts Sweden on the map as a creative and innovative country. That is why it's important for the Government to annually acknowledge some of the artists who have played their part in the Swedish music phenomenon,” says Ms Hallberg.

The jury have nominated the following (in alphabetical order) for the Government's Music Export Prize 2021:

A36

With his Swedish lyrics, the rapper A36 has, despite his French-inspired hip-hop, a theoretically limited audience. In 2021, he utilised these frameworks

to the max. A36, whose real name is Geivar Hasado Shlaimon, achieved widespread success in the Nordic countries with the song Samma gamla vanliga. The single was released in April, and thanks to, among other things, going viral on TikTok, it was number one in the Swedish charts for six weeks during the summer. After that, it was the rest of the Nordic countries' turn to fall for the Swedish-Assyrian rapper from Partille. Samma gamla vanliga reached number 3 in Norway, number 12 in Denmark and number 4 in Finland. Additionally, a local remix of the song was released in Finland and reached number one. The last artist performing in Swedish to reach top five in our neighbouring country to the east was the band Kent. To emphasise his Nordic-based globalism, A36 also made a Scandinavian remix of the song with Danish rapper Branco and Norwegian hip-hop artist Kamelen.

ABBA

It is not every day that the BBC reschedules a news broadcast to premiere a new pop song. But that is exactly what happened when ABBA released new songs for the first time in 40 years. Suddenly, some of history's greatest pop artists were back. ABBA's album Voyage was not only one of the greatest, most surprising and acclaimed comebacks in pop history, it also broke new records. The LP reached number 1 in 18 countries, the quartet topped the album chart in the United States, and it was the best-selling album in Germany. They were most successful in the UK. Only the Beatles and six other artists have reached number 1 more than the 10 times that ABBA reached in autumn 2021. Voyage became the fastest-selling album ever in the 21st century in the UK. In just three days, the group's upcoming, much-discussed and spectacular avatar-based show in London sold a quarter of a million tickets. The show will premiere in spring 2022. It has been 50 years since ABBA was founded, and they have sold over 400 million albums. What Agnetha, Björn, Benny and Anni-Frid started in 1972 became a massive first step in the success of Swedish music worldwide.

Julia Karlsson & Anton Rundberg

The songwriting duo Julia Karlsson and Anton Rundberg released one of the biggest hits of 2021: The Business with Dutch DJ and artist Tiësto. The song was nominated for a Grammy and has been streamed close to 800 million times on Spotify alone. The song underlines how the duo from Vimmerby (Julia) and Lidköping (Anton) have gone straight to the top since they began collaborating while studying on the Musikmakarna songwriting programme in Örnsköldsvik. In 2015, Karlsson and Rundberg were recognised by the industry for the first time when they won the Rookie Songwriter/Producer

award at the Denniz Pop Awards, primarily due to them having co-composed Swedish artist Galantis's Grammy-nominated international hit Runaway (U&I) the year before. After that, Karlsson & Rundberg who are based in Stockholm and Los Angeles respectively, have reached a global audience by producing the song On My Way by Alan Walker and Sabrina Carpenter and Party for One by Carly Rae Jepsen. In 2021, the American music magazine Billboard listed the Swedish duo as the third best songwriters in the world within the genre dance/electronic.

NEIKED

The Swedish music collective NEIKED have achieved global success with the song Sexual, and their latest catchy dance hit from 2021, Better Days with British pop artist Mae Muller and Polo G, a rapper from Chicago. Together, they have created a sound that is perfect for TikTok, dancefloors, radio and streaming platforms alike. In addition to their personal success, they have worked with artists including Maroon 5, Macklemore, Zedd, Jess Glynne and Rudimental. In Sweden, they have produced Miriam Bryant for many years. Victor Rådström and Mikael Rabus from NEIKED studied on the Musikmakarna programme in Örnsköldsvik and are showing the world how contemporary hit music should sound.

The following are members of the Government's Music Export Prize jury:

- Anna Sjölund, President Live Nation
- Anna-Karin Larsson, Head of the Music Department, SR Musik, Swedish Radio P2
- Isabel Thomson, Senior Adviser, funding for record producers and cultural organisations, Swedish Arts Council
- Jesper Thorsson, CEO Export Music Sweden
- Lars Nylin, Editor-in-chief and publisher Musikindustrin
- Linda Portnoff, CEO Musiksverige
- Ludvig Werner, CEO IFPI Sverige
- Per Sinding-Larsen, music journalist, Swedish Television
- Robert Sehlberg, Head of Music, Nordic Entertainment Group Sweden

Published 14 March 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

Ann Linde to present the 2022 Statement of Foreign Policy

Today, Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde will present the Government's Statement of Foreign Policy in the Riksdag. This year's Statement of Foreign Policy is Ms Linde's third as Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The Statement, which summarises the Government's foreign policy priorities for 2022, contains a number of focus areas.

“The security situation has deteriorated. Russia's increasingly confrontational rhetoric and military activities are unacceptable. Standing up for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity is essential for the security of Europe as a whole,” says Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde.

During Sweden's term as Chair of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe last year, important results were achieved, including through the decision concerning the climate and security.

“The climate is of critical importance to our security. We must take climate-related security threats extremely seriously,” says Ann Linde.

Ms Linde will deliver the Statement of Foreign Policy in the Riksdag at 09.00 on 16 February, and she will be available to the media in the Riksdag at 13.30. Please contact her press secretary for further information.

Published 16 February 2022



Sweden to lift ban on entry from EU/EEA countries

The Government decided to lift the entry ban to Sweden from the Nordic countries and other EU and EEA countries at an extraordinary government meeting today. The decision will come into effect on 9 February.

As part of the continuing work to phase out the infection control measures against COVID-19, the Government today decided to lift all restrictions on entry to Sweden from the Nordic countries and other EU and EEA countries. The decision follows an assessment by the Public Health Agency of Sweden that the entry restrictions are no longer a proportionate infection control measure. The decision enters into force on 9 February.

The lifting of the entry restrictions is a great relief for many travellers, not least for those living and working in the Nordic border regions. Today's decision also reduces the burden on the Swedish Police Authority, which no longer needs to set aside staff to check COVID-19 certificates at the border.

The Government's decision today does not affect entry to Sweden from countries outside the EU/EEA. An entry ban continues to apply to these travellers (which currently applies until 31 March 2022), in accordance with EU recommendations regarding entry from third countries.

For more information on how to interpret the ordinances on temporary bans on entry into Sweden and which exemptions apply, please visit the Swedish Police Authority website. See the adjacent links.



Government Offices of Sweden

Change of government, 30 November 2021

Today in the Riksdag, Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson announced the ministers who will serve in the Government. The change of government takes place at a Council of State at the Royal Palace presided over by His Majesty the King. The Council of State begins at 13.00.

Sweden's new Government consists of the Prime Minister and 22 ministers.

Prime Minister's Office

Magdalena Andersson, Prime Minister

Hans Dahlgren, Minister for EU Affairs

Ministry of Employment

Eva Nordmark, Minister for Employment and Gender Equality

Johan Danielsson, Minister for Housing and Deputy Minister for Employment

Ministry of Finance

Mikael Damberg, Minister for Finance

Max Elger, Minister for Financial Markets

Ida Karkiainen, Minister for Public Administration

Ministry of Defence

Peter Hultqvist, Minister for Defence

Ministry of Infrastructure

Tomas Eneroth, Minister for Infrastructure

Khashayar Farmanbar, Minister for Energy and Digital Development

Ministry of Justice

Morgan Johansson, Minister for Justice and Home Affairs

Anders Ygeman, Minister for Integration and Migration

Ministry of Culture

Jeanette Gustafsdotter, Minister for Culture

Ministry of the Environment

Annika Strandhäll, Minister for Climate and the Environment

Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

Karl-Petter Thorwaldsson, Minister for Business, Industry and Innovation

Anna-Caren Säterberg, Minister for Rural Affairs

Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Lena Hallengren, Minister for Health and Social Affairs

Ardalan Shekarabi, Minister for Social Security

Ministry of Education and Research

Anna Ekström, Minister for Education

Lina Axelsson Kihlblom, Minister for Schools

Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Ann Linde, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Anna Hallberg, Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs

Matilda Ernkrans, Minister for International Development Cooperation

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Published 30 November 2021



Government intends to open embassy in Dublin and consulate-general in San Francisco

The Government today decided to strengthen Sweden's presence in Ireland and the US, and intends to open an embassy in Dublin and a consulate-general in San Francisco. The Government has also strengthened Sweden's presence in Ouagadougou and La Paz. As part of a regular review of Sweden's missions abroad, the Government will also close the embassies in Angola and Peru.

Ireland is an important partner for Sweden in the EU, bilaterally and multilaterally. Sweden will therefore strengthen its presence in Ireland for political agency and increased trade and investment exchange.

“A stronger Swedish presence in both Ireland and the US will create new opportunities for Swedish foreign policy and our promotion activities to make an impact. Reopening an Embassy in Dublin has been eagerly awaited – Ireland is an important partner for Sweden, not least in light of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU,” says Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde.

Establishing a consulate-general in San Francisco will create new opportunities for trade promotion and promotion of Sweden on the US west coast and will support Swedish companies with matchmaking activities in tomorrow's technologies and the cultural and creative industries.

“A consulate-general in San Francisco will strengthen Sweden's presence on the US west coast and improve our opportunities to conduct active trade promotion and promotion of Sweden. The business sector in particular has looked forward to the opening the consulate-general as it will facilitate new

partnerships for Swedish companies in the area of green technologies and new innovations,” says Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs Anna Hallberg.

The Government has already upgraded two missions abroad – one in Africa and one in Latin America – to full embassies under the leadership of an ambassador. These are the missions in Ouagadougou and La Paz, whose positions have now been reinforced.

“I am pleased that we have been able to strengthen our diplomatic relations in Africa and Latin America. Our embassies provide us with important tools to help combat poverty and support climate transition, and to push demands on democracy, human rights and women’s rights,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Per Olsson Fridh.

The changes are one step in the continuous adaptation made by the organisation abroad in relation to changes around the world, altered requirements and needs, and the budgetary situation, to create the best possible conditions to implement Sweden’s foreign policy and promote Swedish interests abroad. This is a constant process of change in which Sweden sometimes opens or closes embassies and consulates.

Sweden has good bilateral relations with both Angola and Peru, which include close cooperation in areas such as trade. These relations will continue to be safeguarded, preserved and developed. In the future, this will take place in other forms, as the embassies themselves will be closed.

The missions abroad affected by today’s decision may open or close at different times, depending on the situation of each mission. All changes are planned to take place in the second half of 2022.

Published 03 November 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Oscar Holter receives the Government's Music Export Prize from Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs Anna Hallberg

The Government's Music Export Prize for extraordinary services to Swedish music exports in 2020 goes to Oscar Holter. The Government's 2020 Special Prize for long-standing contributions to Swedish music exports goes to Ale Möller. The Government's 2020 Honourable Mention for achievements of particular importance to the internationalisation of Swedish music goes to the duo Sunshine.

The winner of the Government's Music Export Prize was announced today during a ceremony in the Blue Drawing Room at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The prize is awarded each year to Swedish music creators who have contributed to export success and to spreading a modern and positive image of Sweden abroad.

“This year's winner of the Government's Music Export Prize, Oscar Holter, is one of pop world's most successful composers and is an excellent example of the outstanding international successes that have made Sweden one of the world's leading music nations. From an export and investment perspective, the cultural industries play a particularly important role for Sweden as a creative and innovative country. Oscar Holter's name has long been well established, and in 2020 he broke records on several playlists,” says Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs Anna Hallberg.

Oscar Holter is the 23rd winner of the Government's Music Export Prize, with the following citation:

Värmland's Oscar Holter became a songwriter at a particularly young age and was already a producer of established artists by the 2000s. Then as now, he skilfully creates a meeting between classic pop harmonies and synth-based 'hooks'. Holter once said: "I think that Kraftwerk are just as catchy as ABBA." This is something that he's demonstrated together with artists such as Christina Aguilera, Katy Perry, Justin Timberlake, Taylor Swift and Swedish Tove Lo, but the concept has never been as successful as when Holter, together with guru Max Martin, wrote and produced 'Blinding Lights' together with Canadian superstar The Weeknd. In short, 'Blinding Lights' is already one of the biggest pop hits of all time. In 2020, it topped the charts in 34 countries and has also broken records for the most number of weeks in the top 5 and 20 on the Billboard chart in the US. It has been played more than two billion times on Spotify alone. For Max Martin, it was the 23rd time he had reached number one in the US charts. For Oscar Holter, it was a confirmation that he is also up there among the most successful composers in the pop world.

The other nominees for the Government's Music Export Prize were: Dafina Zeqiri, Garmarna, Ludwig Göransson and Nea.

The Special Prize for long-standing contributions to Swedish music exports went to Ale Möller, with the following citation:

Who is as comfortable in a polska from Dalarna as in a Greek rebetiko or on a stage in Senegal? Who else has brought Sweden to the world and the world to Sweden the way he has? The answer is obviously Ale Möller! The Scandinavian multi-instrumentalist who has often found global acclaim and been accorded innumerable awards. But is all this success the result of his being declared unmusical at a young age? That this forced him to discover music entirely through his own senses and ear? Ale Möller played jazz and The Threepenny Opera on many different instruments before he found his own place at the heart of music – folk music. Perhaps Professor (he can also claim that title) Möller is a reminder that all music – rock, blues, opera, tango and much more – is in some way just updated folk music. And as we know, folk music never stands still. Boundless and unstoppable, it examines the present day to grow into new forms in the same way as one of the realm's foremost music ambassadors himself does – one week we see him lead a peace concert in Chinese Chengdu with 14 musicians from around the world, and the next he receives the same Special Prize as Bob Dylan, Joan Baez and Harry Belafonte – Ale Möller!

The Honourable Mention for achievements of particular importance to

the internationalisation of Swedish music was awarded to the duo Sunshine, with the following citation:

When pop music from South Korea – often simply called K-Pop – became one of the most successful genres around the world, many Swedes were involved as songwriters, producers and music labels. Among the first was the duo Sunshine – Moa ‘Cazzi Opeia’ Carlebecker and Ellen Berg. Since 2017, the duo have been involved in dozens of number one hits in the K-Pop genre, topping the charts in South Korea and around the world. In 2020, Sunshine were involved in the song ‘We are Bulletproof’: The Eternal’, on the album ‘Map Of The Soul: 7’ by the giants of the genre, South Korean BTS. The album was one of the major factors of BTS becoming top-selling artists in the world in 2020 according to IFPI, the recording industry organisation. Since 2017, Sunshine have collaborated production duo Moonshine, Jonatan Gusmark and Ludvig Evers. This is also an important component in a Swedish pop export phenomenon that is decades old and is now beginning to receive broad attention and respect. The Swedish music companies that have had key roles in setting the Swedish stamp on the K-Pop scene include The Kennel, Cosmos and the Swedish office of South Korean EKKO Music Rights. The Music Export Prize puts the spotlight on Sunshine, but the prize is also an acknowledgement of the part of the music industry that chose a different focus to the mainstream.

Published 23 September 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Nominees for the Government's 2020 Music Export Prize

The Government's Music Export Prize is awarded every year to an artist who has been internationally successful during the preceding year and has contributed to Swedish musical export success and to a positive image of Sweden. The winner will be announced by Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic affairs Anna Hallberg.

In addition to the Government's Music Export Prize, a Special Prize for long-standing contributions to Swedish music exports and an Honourable Mention for achievements of particular importance to the internationalisation of Swedish music will also be awarded.

The Government's Music Export Prize is a way for the Government to draw attention to Swedish performers and practitioners in the music industry who contribute to increased export success for Swedish music and help point the spotlight on Sweden.

“Swedish musicians help point the spotlight on Sweden and I am very pleased and proud today to be able to present the nominees to the Government's 2020 Music Export Prize. All of the nominees are very good examples of the Swedish music wonder and so have both promoted Swedish exports and helped put Sweden on the global musical map,” says Ms Hallberg.

The nominees for the Government's 2020 Music Export Prize are:

Dafina Zeqiri

One of Sweden's major international stars is relatively unknown here at home. She was born in Varberg and lives in Malmö, and even though she has four times as many followers on Instagram as artists such as ABBA, Robyn or Lykke Li, Swedish media has probably never covered her. But it's a

different story around the world, and particularly in Kosovo, where she has her roots. There this outstanding pop star has reached millions of people with both her videos and music since her debut at the end of the 2000s. Zeqiri's music has also attracted attention in the US with guest performances by and with French Montana. Her proud mix of pop and R&B, often enveloped in Albanian tones, also embodies her engagement for the equal value of all people and her eternal gratitude to a singing fighter of a mother. She was particularly active in 2020, with ten tracks released under her own name and in collaboration with other artists that often achieved chart successes around Europe.

Garmarna

Folk rock band Garmarna represents the unique accomplishment of successfully exporting music sung in Swedish and with deep Swedish roots. Following an initial breakthrough in the 1990s that included a Grammy award and some export success, the group returned in the mid-2010s after an extended break. This time, the band's music is beginning to make a real impact around the world. A video from 2015 featuring the song 'Herr Mannelig' has been viewed more than 24 million times on YouTube, with the vast majority of viewings by an international audience. In 2020, Garmarna released their first album on a foreign label. The album, 'Förbundet' was released on the French 'Season of Mist' label, which otherwise only produces music in various metal genres. This can be seen as an illustration of Garmarna's unique position and export success.

Ludwig Göransson

Ludwig Göransson won the Government's 2018 Music Export Prize, and is nominated once again this year. Göransson has an ear for images, and his signature has become writing boundless music for films that builds atmosphere and becomes an indispensable part of the film it illustrates. He comes from Linköping and is a musical chameleon who is as much at home among Senegalese drums as on distant planets. His music encompasses everything from electronic minimalism to sweeping orchestral music reminiscent of the great symphonies. And he is also named after the great Ludwig van Beethoven. Göransson has already won many awards, including an Oscar and three Grammys. In 2020, he attracted particular attention for his work on the Star Wars spinoff 'The Mandalorian', for which he was awarded an Emmy.

Nea

In recent years, Linnea 'Nea' Södahl has become established as one of Sweden's most interesting songwriters following collaborations with Zara Larsson, Tove Styrke, Loreen, Sabina Ddumba, Tinie Tempah and Axwell. Now Nea is making her debut as an artist with her most personal songs. Success came quickly with her first single 'Some Say', which was a hit in many places around the world and one of the most played songs on the radio in Europe in 2020.

Oscar Holter

Värmland's Oscar Holter became a songwriter at a particularly young age and was already a producer of established artists by the 2000s. Then as now, he skilfully creates a meeting between classic pop harmonies and synth-based 'hooks'. Holter once said: "I think that Kraftwerk are just as catchy as ABBA." This is something that he's demonstrated together with artists such as Christina Aguilera, Katy Perry, Justin Timberlake, Taylor Swift and Swedish Tove Lo, but the concept has never been as successful as when Holter, together with guru Max Martin, wrote and produced 'Blinding Lights' together with Canadian superstar The Weeknd. In short, 'Blinding Lights' is already one of the biggest pop hits of all time. In 2020, it topped the charts in 34 countries and has also broken records for most weeks in the top 5 and 20 on the Billboard chart in the US. It has been played more than two billion times on Spotify alone. For Max Martin, it was the 23rd time he had reached number one in the US charts. For Oscar Holter, it was a confirmation that he is also up there among the most successful composers in the pop world.

The following are members of the Government's 2020 Music Export Prize jury:

- Isabel Thomson, Swedish Arts Council, Chair of the jury
- Anna Sjölund, CEO, Live Nation
- Anna-Karin Larsson, Music Director, SR Musik, Swedish Radio P2
- Jesper Thorsson, CEO Export Music Sweden
- Lars Nylin, Editor-in-chief and publisher, Musikindustrin
- Linda Portnoff, CEO, Riteband
- Ludvig Werner, CEO IFPI Sverige
- Per Sinding-Larsen, music journalist, Swedish Television
- Robert Sehlberg, Head of Music, MTG Radio

Published 16 September 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Sweden's new Government

Today in the Riksdag, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven announced the ministers who will serve in the Government. The change of government will take place at a Council of State at the Royal Palace presided over by His Majesty The King. The Council of State will begin at 14.15.

Sweden's new Government consists of the Prime Minister and 21 ministers.

Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister

Stefan Löfven

Minister for EU Affairs

Hans Dahlgren

Ministry of Employment

Minister for Employment

Eva Nordmark

Minister for Gender Equality and Housing, with responsibility for urban development, anti-segregation and anti-discrimination

Märta Stenevi

Ministry of Finance

Minister for Finance

Magdalena Andersson

Minister for Public Administration

Lena Micko

Minister for Financial Markets and Deputy Minister for Finance

Åsa Lindhagen

Ministry of Defence

Minister for Defence

Peter Hultqvist

Ministry of Infrastructure

Minister for Infrastructure

Tomas Eneroth

Minister for Energy and Digital Development

Anders Ygeman

Ministry of Justice

Minister for Justice and Migration

Morgan Johansson

Minister for Home Affairs

Mikael Damberg

Ministry of Culture

Minister for Culture and Democracy, with responsibility for sport

Amanda Lind

Ministry of the Environment

Minister for Environment and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister

Per Bolund

Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

Minister for Business, Industry and Innovation

Ibrahim Baylan

Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Minister for Health and Social Affairs

Lena Hallengren

Minister for Social Security

Ardalan Shekarabi

Ministry of Education and Research

Minister for Education

Anna Ekström

Minister for Higher Education and Research

Matilda Ernkrans

Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Ann Linde

Minister for International Development Cooperation

Per Olsson Fridh

Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs

Anna Hallberg

Published 09 July 2021



Nordic ministerial meeting on vaccine production cooperation

At the Government's initiative, Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Ibrahim Baylan and Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs Anna Hallberg met with colleagues from Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Norway on 9 June to discuss opportunities to strengthen and create synergies in Nordic vaccine production.

The global crisis caused by the pandemic has made it clear that international cooperation is needed to be able to quickly tackle future pandemics. Sweden has therefore invited Nordic ministers to a dialogue to find synergies and utilise the existing capacity of Sweden and its Nordic neighbours – which can be further developed jointly in the region.

“Through deeper Nordic cooperation, the Government sees great opportunities to improve pandemic preparedness and at the same time strengthen the Nordic region as a global leader in life sciences,” says Mr Baylan.

Last year, the Government instructed Vinnova to analyse Sweden's innovation and production capacity for vaccines and other biopharmaceuticals. Vinnova's recent report on the assignment highlighted the possibility of examining the conditions for deeper partnership with our Nordic neighbours.

“Nordic cooperation stretches far back in time and is a strength we should always build on. When we work together, we create solutions, increase our Nordic competitiveness and become a more attractive region,” says Ms Hallberg.

At Wednesday's meeting, the Government raised Sweden's proposal for a joint pilot study in the form of Nordic government cooperation. The cooperation is proposed to show how the countries' available resources and

planned investments can be coordinated and congregated into a pan-Nordic pool of resources that strengthens preparedness, capacity and expertise for the production of vaccines and biopharmaceuticals.

Published 10 June 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Rock band Ghost receives the Government's Music Export Prize from Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs Anna Hallberg

The Government's prize for extraordinary services to Swedish music exports in 2019 has been awarded to the rock band Ghost. The Government's 2019 Special Prize for long-standing contributions to Swedish music exports has gone to Marie Dimberg.

The winner of the Government's Music Export Prize was presented during a ceremony in the Blue Drawing Room at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The prize is awarded each year to Swedish music creators who have contributed to export success and to spreading a modern and positive image of Sweden abroad.

“This year's winner of the Music Export Prize, the rock band Ghost, is an excellent example of the Swedish music industry's international successes. The industry has laid the foundation for unparalleled Swedish export successes, which in turn have helped spread a positive image of Sweden abroad. Ghost started off locally in Linköping and is today a global band, with fans all over the world,” says Ms Hallberg.

The rock band group Ghost has been declared the 23rd winner of the Music Export Prize, and the jury issued the following statement:

“Ghost has challenged audiences and created headlines ever since the band was formed in Linköping in 2006. Today it has fans all over the world. With its mythical and occult lyrics, cloaked in melodic metal, Ghost has gone from primarily being for the initiated audience – starting with debut album Opus Eponymous from 2011 – to today being one of the rock and metal bands with the broadest audience, regardless of category. In 2019, Ghost

highlighted its position as world leader when it continued its world tour, ‘A Pale Tour Named Death’. When the tour concluded in Mexico City in March this year, it had reached a total of 137 stages all over the world.”

Other nominees for the Government’s Music Export Prize were: Robyn, Håkan Hardenberger, Smith & Thell and Snoh Aalegra.

The Special Prize for long-standing contributions to Swedish music exports has gone to Marie Dimberg, and the jury issued the following statement:

“Marie Dimberg likes to describe her role as that of an enabler, and to a great extent she has contributed to enabling some of Sweden’s most remarkable pop and stage exports. She began her career at EMI Records. At first she worked with public relations and later held the position of Vice President International at EMI’s London office, after which she became marketing manager at EMI in Sweden. In 1997 she started her own company, with the trio Per Gessle, Marie Fredriksson and Peter Jöback as regular clients. Early on, she expanded her activities by working with director Jonas Åkerlund and others. In 2013, she topped industry magazine Musikindustrin’s first published list of the most influential women in the Swedish music industry.”

Published 07 October 2020



Competitiveness and reboot for research, innovation and investments

Research and innovation are crucial to Sweden's competitiveness and to rebooting the economy after the COVID-19 pandemic. In the autumn budget, the Government is therefore proposing increased funding to Vinnova, RISE and Business Sweden for measures that help reboot Sweden. The proposal is based on an agreement between the Government, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

The ongoing changes in society require continued investments in research and innovation in order to contribute to Swedish competitiveness in the long term. In the autumn budget, the Government is proposing a number of investments in research and innovation that develop Sweden as a prominent knowledge nation and make use of people's creativity. The purpose is to address society's challenges, increase adaptability and utilise research results.

Increased central government funding of research and innovation through Vinnova

As private investment in research and innovation temporarily declines as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, central government is increasing its funding to secure research, innovation and the supply of skills. It is therefore proposed that Vinnova receive an increase in its appropriation for 2021 of SEK 545 million to mainly make systemic innovation investments. The proposal is part of the Research and Innovation Bill which will be presented during the autumn.

Reinforcement of needs-driven research through RISE

Industrial research institutes conduct needs-driven research and development in global collaboration with universities, the business sector and the public sector. The institutes play an important role in the utilisation and commercialisation of research and innovation. The focus is on developing sustainable solutions, which are the pillars of the business community's climate transition, competitiveness and growth. It is therefore proposed that RISE AB receive an increase of its appropriation for 2021 of SEK 95 million to implement initiatives that contribute to system solutions where many actors collaborate. The proposal is part of the Research and Innovation Bill which will be presented during the autumn.

Investment promotion measures through Business Sweden

Sweden is a small export-dependent country where there are many jobs with exporting companies. Foreign investment therefore plays an important role in the economic recovery. In order to strengthen investment promotion initiatives, funding of SEK 25 million is proposed for 2021, through Business Sweden.

Published 22 September 2020



Government to take action against foreign direct investments in sensitive areas

At the government meeting on 4 June, the Government decided to refer a proposal to the Council on Legislation with the aim of strengthening efforts against foreign direct investments that threaten Swedish security and public order. At the same time, the Inspectorate of Strategic Products (ISP) and the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) have been given assignments to further develop these efforts.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic could increase the risk of foreign actors making investments in the Swedish business sector and strategic infrastructure with the aim of gaining access to valuable technology and information in a way that threatens Sweden's security. The ISP and FOI have therefore been given assignments to further strengthen efforts against foreign direct investments in sensitive areas.

In 2019, the EU adopted a regulation on screening of foreign direct investments into the European Union. The aim of the regulation is to create a legal framework for how the Member States can screen foreign direct investments into the Union with regard to security or public order. The EU regulation outlines how cooperation in the Union regarding the screening of foreign direct investment is to be carried out, including through the Member States designating authorities to act as contact points. The regulation enters into force on 11 October 2020, which requires adjustments in Swedish legislation. In the proposal referred to the Council on Legislation, the Government, proposes a new act with provisions to supplement the EU regulation. It is proposed that the act enter into force on 1 December 2020.

To meet the requirements of the EU regulation and to strengthen efforts against foreign direct investments that threaten security and public order, the Government has decided the following:

- The ISP will be designated as Sweden's contact point in accordance with the EU regulation on foreign direct investments.
- Through this, the ISP will have the authority to collect certain information on foreign investors and the relevant Swedish companies, since direct investments risk affecting security and public order in the EU.
- Together with the Swedish Armed Forces, the Swedish Security Service, the Swedish Defence Research Agency and the Defence Materiel Administration (FMV), the ISP will also strengthen efforts against foreign direct investments that threaten security. A report on this assignment is to be presented on 1 October 2020.

Assignment to FOI

FOI, in consultation with the ISP, the Swedish Armed Forces, FMV and the Swedish Security Service, is tasked with conducting a study on foreign investments [JG1] in sensitive activities. FOI will also cooperate with the Direct Investment Inquiry (Ju 2019:06) and the National Board of Trade. Under the decision, FOI is instructed to:

- Outline the risks associated with foreign direct investments in sensitive activities.
- Specify general qualities and circumstances among investors whose investments may entail a security risk.
- Identify the areas and sectors where foreign direct investments could have adverse security consequences.

A report on this assignment is to be presented to the Government Offices by 30 November 2020

Published 08 June 2020



Postponed: Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs Anna Hallberg to visit South Africa

The Prime Minister's visit to South Africa on 8–10 March has been postponed because he needs to remain in Sweden to effectively and closely lead the Government's work concerning COVID-19. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will visit South Africa on 8–10 March. Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs Anna Hallberg and a Swedish business delegation will also take part in the visit.

During the visit, Mr Löfven will meet South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa for bilateral talks. Mr Löfven and Mr Ramaphosa will take part in the tenth Binational Commission (BNC) between South Africa and Sweden. The BNC was established in 1999 as a forum for dialogue on common issues within politics, the economy, education, research, the environment, the climate and water, as well as human rights and culture.

Sweden and South Africa have a close relationship and the country is Sweden's largest trade partner in southern Africa. South Africa is a key regional actor and an important partner in the work to address global challenges, not least in the United Nations and this year when the country is Chair of the African Union. Topics for discussion during the visit include cooperation in trade and investment, global challenges, the labour market, the environment and climate, energy, research and culture.

For more information about the programme, please contact Press Secretary Gösta Brunnander.

Please send the mandatory notification of attendance to Press Assistant
Frédérique Claise.

Published 26 February 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

Ann Linde presents the 2020 Statement of Foreign Policy

Today, Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde is presenting the Government's Statement of Foreign Policy to the Riksdag. The Statement, which summarises the Government's foreign policy priorities for 2020, includes a new announcement on strengthened efforts to combat organised crime. Also notable in the Statement is a stronger focus on security in Europe ahead of Sweden assuming the role of Chair of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe in 2021.

“My principal duty is to work for security in Sweden. International developments affect us, regardless of whether they involve security in our neighbourhood, climate change or the pushback against democracy. Organised crime is a good example of this, because it has clear international links,” says Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde.

Another new announcement is that the Government is strengthening its focus on trade union rights abroad as part of its Drive for Democracy, launched last year in the Statement of Foreign Policy.

The Statement of Foreign Policy will be delivered in the Riksdag on 12 February at 9.00.

Published 12 February 2020



Presentation of the new updated Trade and Investment Strategy for more jobs throughout the country

More people than ever before are now employed in exporting companies in Sweden. Exports drive the Swedish economy and keep around 1.5 million people in employment. To continue to strengthen Swedish exports, on Friday 13 December the Government launched an updated Trade and Investment Strategy to create jobs and growth throughout the country.

Since the previous export strategy was presented, the international context has changed. Threats to free trade have amplified, along with the competition for major procurements and investments.

At the same time, the previously weak export development in Sweden has turned around. In the last two years, exports from all Swedish counties have increased, and more people than ever work for exporting companies.

The 2030 Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement have in turn created new opportunities for Swedish companies to contribute to climate transition. To address these challenges and opportunities, the Export Strategy has been updated with an enhanced focus on sustainability and regional growth.

“I am proud to be able to present a strategy that so clearly involves the regions in ensuring that the whole of Sweden exports more. When we trade with the rest of the world, jobs and growth are created that strengthen welfare throughout the country,” says Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs Anna Hallberg.

“Sweden will be the world's first fossil-free welfare nation, and we will

export solutions that lead the world to freedom from fossil fuels. We have world-leading companies in climate-smart solutions, and this will strengthen Sweden's competitiveness as all countries are now required to adapt their economies," says Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin.

"The Export Strategy has served Sweden well. By updating and adapting the strategy to a changing world, we are ensuring that it will continue to contribute to more jobs throughout the country," says Minister for Business, Industry and Innovation Ibrahim Baylan.

The five strategic goals of the new strategy:

1. Increase Sweden's exports, both in absolute figures and as a proportion of GDP
2. Ensure that more small and medium-sized enterprises export
3. Ensure that Sweden is a driving force for free, sustainable and equitable international trade
4. Use Sweden's innovation leadership to enhance the export capabilities and international competitiveness of Swedish business
5. Increase Sweden's attractiveness to foreign investors, skills, talent and visitors

Sweden's new Trade and Investment Strategy will help ensure that we meet the 2030 Agenda's global goals for sustainable development and live up to the Paris Agreement. The decision is part of the January Agreement, which is based on an agreement between the Social Democratic Party, the Green Party, the Centre Party and the Liberals.

Published 16 December 2019



The Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Trade to visit South Korea

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will visit the Republic of Korea (South Korea) on 18–20 December. Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs Anna Hallberg and a large Swedish business delegation will also take part in the visit.

During the visit, Mr Löfven will meet President of the Republic of Korea Moon Jae-in and Prime Minister Lee Nak-yeon. During their talks, they will discuss issues including trade and investment, social dialogue and gender equality, and nuclear disarmament. They will also discuss how efforts to promote a peaceful solution to the situation on the Korean Peninsula can be moved forward.

Sweden has a long-standing engagement on the Korean Peninsula, and discussions will also focus on how ties between Sweden and the Republic of Korea can be further strengthened. The Republic of Korea is Asia's fourth largest economy and Sweden's third largest trading partner in Asia. Increased trade and investments in both directions will strengthen jobs and growth in Sweden.

On 18 December, Mr Löfven will take part in the Sweden-Korea Business Summit. He will also speak at the National Assembly and meet National Assembly Speaker Moon Hee-sang. In addition, Mr Löfven will highlight Sweden's humanitarian support during the Korean War.



Government Offices of Sweden

Norstedts Agency wins 2018 Cultural and Creative Industries Export Prize

The Government's 2018 Cultural and Creative Industries Prize was presented Wednesday, 2 October, by Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs Anna Hallberg. The Prize was awarded to Norstedts Agency for the Millennium series.

“The fact that we have national knowledge capital means that we help create new jobs and also offer innovation capacity and digitalisation. This is a sector that is at the heart of our future trade,” said Minister for Foreign Trade Anna Hallberg during the prize ceremony.

The prize aims to highlight successes across the whole spectrum of the cultural and creative industries and strengthen their internationalisation. The sectors included in the prize are architecture, computer games, design, film and television production, photography, art, literature, media and marketing communications, fashion and the performing arts.

Norstedts Agency won this year's Prize with the following citation:

From its beginnings in 2005 with Stieg Larsson's first tale of Lisbeth Salander, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, to the present day, the rights to the five novels have been sold to more than 50 countries. The novels, more than 100 million copies of which have been sold so far, have led to major international films and an increased interest in Sweden and Swedish values. Yet another Millennium film had its global premiere in 2018, and new translations and formats continue to be published throughout the world. Literary agents are one of the most important actors in making Swedish writing accessible to an international market. Behind the Millennium phenomenon are Norstedts Agency, who made the biggest Scandinavian literary export success story of all time possible.

“It feels really great! Sometime there have been ups and sometimes there have been downs. But now we’ve reached the top! We couldn’t have done better and, as I said, this is the result of a lot of great cooperation,” said Linda Altrov Berg, Director at Norstedts Agency, during the ceremony.

The other nominees were: The Hilma af Klint Foundation for the Hilma af Klint exhibitions, Josef Fares, Chimney and Mikael Jansson.

Published 03 October 2019



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement of Foreign Policy

On 10 June, Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde presented a new 2022 Statement of Foreign Policy in the Riksdag. Check against delivery.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

A dark new chapter has begun in the history of Europe. On 24 February, Russia launched an unprovoked, illegal and unjustifiable war against its neighbour – the democratic state of Ukraine.

The Russian threat to the European security order will persist for a long time to come.

We have all seen the images of the brutal atrocities committed by Russian forces.

Civilians murdered and entire cities bombed. Missiles targeting children fleeing. Mothers with newborn babies hiding in cellars, seeking safety from the shelling.

During my visit to the Korczowa refugee reception centre in Poland, I was told about the Russian atrocities; about the mass graves, torture, attacks on children at a railway station, and about sexual abuse.

This invasion shows how far Russia is prepared to go. Russia's war has created a new and more dangerous reality for Europe and Sweden. It is in our security interest that Russia's war does not result in political gains, for reasons including preventing further aggression in the future.

At the same time, a number of global challenges we faced before Russia's invasion of Ukraine still need to be tackled: the climate crisis, growing geopolitical competition, the threat of famine, democratic backsliding and repeated human rights abuses.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Sweden's political, humanitarian, economic and military support to Ukraine is of historic proportions. Not since Stalin's war against Finland in 1939 has Sweden provided weapons during an ongoing conflict in our neighbourhood.

Last week, the Government presented its fourth support package to Ukraine amounting to SEK 1 billion. Ukraine's legal right to self-defence is, in practice, the defence of the territory of all countries. And that includes Sweden.

The EU sanctions were adopted unanimously and at an unprecedented speed and scale. The EU's sixth sanctions package, which our Government has been pushing for, means that 90 per cent of Russian oil imports to the EU will be phased out by the end of the year. Transatlantic cooperation has been crucial regarding support to Ukraine and the sanctions adopted against Russia.

Continued support to Ukraine and continued sanctions against Russia and Belarus are our most important contributions to bringing an end to this ruthless war.

Sweden's national defence capabilities will continue to be strengthened. We will reach two per cent of GDP as soon as practicable and by 2028 at the latest. The re-establishment of regiments, reinforcements on Gotland, reactivation of national military service, defence equipment procurements, and enhanced cyber defence and intelligence capabilities have been necessary. The significant deterioration of the security environment has also highlighted the importance of continuing to deepen Sweden's defence and security cooperation. This will strengthen Sweden's security both now and in the future.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

On 13 May, the Government presented a security policy report after two months of deliberations involving all the parties of the Riksdag. It is a strength for Sweden that all parties have supported the report's analysis sections, especially on Russia.

Russia's war of aggression has led to a fundamental deterioration of the security environment in our neighbourhood. NATO's response to the war has also brought to the fore that Article 5 of the NATO treaty, the collective defence clause, applies to NATO members only.

It is the Government's assessment that the best way for Sweden to protect its security is for Sweden to join NATO. With Sweden and Finland as NATO members, the security of all NATO countries would be strengthened.

As a member of NATO, Sweden would commit to the Washington Treaty in its entirety, including NATO doctrines. NATO membership may also change the conditions for the export of defence equipment in our national regulatory framework.

We have taken the step to apply for NATO membership hand in hand with Finland, our closest partner. The crisis we are now experiencing has shown how close our two countries are and how interdependent our security is.

Consensus within NATO is required to proceed with Sweden and Finland's applications. Our applications have received broad support from NATO members.

Sweden will contribute to the security of NATO as a whole, including Turkey, in the spirit of solidarity. Our ambition is to make constructive progress on the issues that Turkey has raised.

Sweden condemns terrorism in the strongest possible terms. A new and tougher Terrorist Offences Act enters into force on 1 July and the Government is preparing further tightening of terrorist legislation.

There should be no doubt that Sweden will continue to stand firm alongside other like-minded countries in the fight against terrorism.

Our vulnerability to external threats and attempts to influence will increase until the Accession Agreement enters into force.

In response to this uncertainty, several NATO countries – including the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Spain, Norway and Denmark – have offered the Swedish Government clear assurances of support during the application period. The EU's mutual defence clause, Article 42.7, also plays a significant role in Sweden's security.

The bilateral declaration of solidarity signed by the Prime Minister of Sweden and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom also aims to enhance security in northern Europe.

Sweden's security policy is based on cooperation with NATO, the EU, the UN and through the strong transatlantic link.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Sweden will not lose its global voice if it joins NATO. We have a long history of standing up for international law, solidarity, disarmament, democracy and gender equality. This will be our future too.

We will continue to promote greater respect for human rights, a rules-based world order and global security, with mediation as a tool and against terrorism.

This is also part of building a safer and more secure Sweden. Diplomacy will remain our first line of defence and national defence capabilities are of fundamental importance.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

We have a number of security policy tools we can use to respond to the deteriorating security situation in Europe. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is one of them.

When Sweden chaired the OSCE last year, we saw accelerating negative developments in Russia and Belarus regarding their willingness to live up to fundamental commitments.

We worked to strengthen the OSCE's role as a platform for dialogue and accountability. One result of this was the Ministerial Council meeting in Stockholm, where 48 foreign ministers held political discussions and made decisions. Sweden will continue to assist the OSCE as part of the Troika until the end of 2022.

The conditions for dialogue and conflict resolution have changed profoundly since 24 February, but the need for dialogue remains. And the OSCE is an important forum for this when circumstances allow.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

We are in the midst of an accelerating climate and environmental crisis. Sweden will lead the climate transition. But the global level of ambition is far from sufficient. Climate change and environmental degradation contribute to increased tensions and conflicts. The climate is of critical importance to our security. We must take climate-related security threats extremely seriously and have therefore appointed an ambassador for climate and security.

Intensive negotiations are currently under way in the EU on the

comprehensive package of legislative proposals called 'Fit for 55'. In this context, the Government is pushing for ambitious solutions to reduce the EU's net emissions by at least 55 per cent by 2030 in comparison with 1990 levels.

Last week, Sweden hosted Stockholm+50, the international UN meeting on the environment, climate change and sustainable development. The meeting highlighted concrete solutions and financing models to speed up adaptation and transition, including in developing countries. Politicians from all around the world agreed to move from words to action.

During our term as Chair, the OSCE took a landmark decision concerning the challenges posed by climate change. The OSCE now has a mandate to work on this crucial security issue. Sweden is also helping to strengthen the OSCE Secretariat to enable a greater focus on these issues.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The EU is Sweden's most important foreign and security policy arena. In uncertain times, the Member States stand stronger together. We will continue to build increasingly closer cooperation within the EU and with our Nordic and Baltic neighbours. Efforts to realise the vision of the Nordic region as the world's most sustainable and integrated region continue.

Next year, Sweden will hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union for the third time, and at a time of fundamental challenges to Europe's security.

As the Minister for EU Affairs outlined for this chamber, our agenda is ambitious. The Government wants to see an EU that can assume greater responsibility for its own security. Work on the Strategic Compass will continue with the aim of deepening security and defence cooperation. At the same time, it is important for the EU to deepen its cooperation with strategic partners outside the EU and that the transatlantic link be safeguarded.

We need to continue to deal with the consequences of the war, deepen our support to Ukraine and work to gradually integrate Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia into the EU. The EU's ability to manage its own neighbourhood is critical to its credibility as a global actor.

The EU's fundamental values must also be upheld. Europe is currently experiencing the greatest refugee crisis since the Second World War. This

situation demonstrates how important it is that EU Member States act with solidarity and shared responsibility for refugees.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Feminist foreign policy is needed. Sweden was first. And it is gratifying that a growing number of countries are now following our lead – most recently Germany, Chile and the Netherlands which, like Canada, France, Luxembourg, Spain and Mexico, are also pursuing feminist foreign policy.

Our efforts must be intensified, not least given the backlash against gender equality that we have seen in the wake of the pandemic. Violence against women and girls has increased all over the world.

The pandemic, the climate crisis and the shrinking democratic space are putting us at risk of a global gender equality recession. Feminist foreign policy is needed now more than ever.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

For the fifth consecutive year, we are seeing more countries moving in an authoritarian direction than in a democratic direction. Not only is Russia's aggression against Ukraine a flagrant violation of international law, it is also a clear example of an authoritarian state's attack on a democratic state.

The Government's Drive for Democracy therefore continues with full force. More attention must be paid to the lack of democracy and respect for human rights in the world of work globally.

This year, Sweden holds the Presidency of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, where we will continue to promote Holocaust remembrance and do our utmost to combat antisemitism and antigypsyism.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The nuclear threat is an increasingly worrying reality. Sweden will remain a strong voice for disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control even as a future NATO member. The common goal is a world free of nuclear weapons.

Within the Stockholm Initiative, Sweden and 15 other countries have proposed 22 concrete and constructive steps for nuclear disarmament and a package of measures to reduce the risk of nuclear weapons use – an area of growing importance.

An increasing number of countries back our proposals. Russia's aggression against Ukraine has made our work more difficult, but all the more important.

We have also directly appealed to the five nuclear-weapons states. A number of the initiative's proposals for steps forward have been accepted. In a joint statement in January, the five affirmed that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought". Russia's threat to use nuclear weapons is unacceptable and in glaring contrast to this statement.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Humanitarian needs in the world are increasing dramatically. The pandemic has pushed more than 100 million people back into extreme poverty. Inequality and global gaps are growing.

More than 300 million people need humanitarian aid to survive. Almost 50 million women, men and children are on the verge of starvation. Roughly 100 million people have now been forcibly displaced.

Sweden's development assistance policy is world-leading in terms of both scale and quality. Setting aside funds for people in need of protection in Sweden due to war on our continent does not change this. Sweden's development assistance will continue to be equivalent to one per cent of our gross national income.

Sweden will step up its climate and environmental action. The target of doubling climate aid remains unchanged.

When anti-democratic forces gain ground, Sweden's development assistance will, with unwavering ambition, remain a counterweight. More democratic societies make the world a better place – and increase security in Sweden.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Sweden's foreign policy continues to be global, multilateral and based on international law. The European security order that we defend rests on the United Nations Charter and its principles.

This is also part of building security with others. A solidary world view goes hand in hand with the understanding that Sweden's security is furthered by a more secure and prosperous world.

Sweden continues to invest politically and financially in the multilateral

system with the UN at the core. This means support for peacebuilding and conciliation, deep commitment to human rights, democracy and the rule of law, gender equality and broad environmental and climate action.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Russia's aggression also cast the world into a deep food crisis that is hitting those who were already most vulnerable the hardest. Sweden is part of the global response to alleviate its effects. We are a large donor to the World Food Programme and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, which together save lives and improve livelihoods.

Russia must immediately cease blocking Ukrainian grain exports. This blockade is a major cause of the rising global food prices.

The EU is accelerating its initiatives for global food security. Free trade must be protected, and the root causes of hunger and starvation must be addressed. Sweden's efforts for sustainable development and peacebuilding are also critical in this context.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The COVID-19 pandemic has hindered implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Some of the global progress achieved in recent years, such as improvements in maternal and child health and gender equality, has been undone.

Global hunger and extreme poverty are on the rise for the first time in 20 years. The 2030 Agenda is our roadmap for reversing this trend.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Global challenges require global solutions. The pandemic, the climate transition and harsh sanctions against Russia require more trade, sustainable value chains, new sources of key raw materials, new output markets and strategic partnerships.

It is more important than ever to stand up for free, fair and sustainable trade and its significance for welfare in Sweden and Europe. This is needed at the same time as historically severe sanctions are imposed on Russia.

EU trade agreements with partners around the globe enable us to diversify trade and strengthen resilience ahead of future crises. The multilateral trade system, based on the World Trade Organization, is fundamental to growth

and welfare.

Innovation capacity and expertise is prevalent throughout Sweden, building the future's sustainable goods and services for the global market. By giving the green transition an export boost, we contribute to reducing climate impact globally. We also create the jobs of the future here in Sweden – thereby strengthening Sweden and Europe's competitiveness.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

A war is raging in Europe, and many feel a deep sense of global gloom. Yet, I want to say this: our joint efforts are important.

It may feel like an endless undertaking, but there is hope: through hard work and a clear direction, change is possible. We must not lose hope for peace and a better future. Or as a 14-year-old Ukrainian girl, Daria Chebotariova, wrote in a poem:

“We still believe in a happy future,
Where we will live in harmony and peace.
We'll not forget those who have fallen,
That's why we need to hurry up.”

Published 10 June 2022



Statement of Foreign Policy

On 16 February, Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde presented the 2022 Statement of Foreign Policy in the Riksdag. Check against delivery.

Mr Speaker,

Our security situation is serious. Russia's increasingly confrontational rhetoric and military activities, both visible and covert, are unacceptable. The heightened Russian military presence at Ukraine's borders and Russian demands for security guarantees threaten the core of the European security order.

The European security order is not negotiable. Standing up for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity is essential for the security of Europe as a whole.

Ukraine, like Sweden, has the right to make its own security policy choices. It is not Russia's place to dictate these through threats and violence. The rules of international law on state sovereignty and political independence are part of the European security order.

The way forward in terms of reducing tensions is continued dialogue and diplomacy, but at the same time we must prepare for the possibility of Russia choosing a different path.

Mr Speaker,

The right to make our own security policy choices is central to our security. The Government does not intend to apply for NATO membership. Our security policy remains firmly in place. Our non-participation in military alliances serves us well and contributes to stability and security in northern Europe.

We combine this with a defence policy that rests on two pillars: strengthened national capability and deepened international defence cooperation. Our

cooperation with Finland has a special status in this. Since 2014 we have built up a functioning defence and security network, and have concluded more than 30 agreements and around 20 cooperation agreements, not least with our Nordic and Baltic neighbours. We are building up our military capability both bilaterally and with NATO. And we are building up credible national defence capability through the largest investment in Swedish defence since the 1950s.

Sweden will not remain passive if another EU Member State or Nordic country suffers a disaster or an attack. We expect these countries to act in the same way if Sweden is affected. An armed attack against Sweden cannot be ruled out. We must therefore be able to both give and receive support, civilian as well as military. But we alone decide with whom we cooperate and in what forms – in times of peace, crisis and war.

Sweden's foreign and security policy builds on cohesion in the EU and increased cooperation on a broad front: in the Nordic region, in the Baltic Sea region, through the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and through deepened partnership with NATO. The UN and international law remain cornerstones of Swedish foreign policy. A strong transatlantic link is vital for Europe's security.

Mr Speaker,

We have a number of security policy tools with which to address the deteriorating security situation in Europe. The OSCE is one important tool. Sweden recently concluded its term as Chair of the OSCE, during which we made an impact that will endure.

We strengthened the platform for dialogue. The need for dialogue is greater now than at any time since the end of the Cold War. This was exemplified during the Council of Ministers in Stockholm, where some 50 foreign ministers held important political discussions and made decisions.

We also strengthened the platform for conflict resolution. As Chair, we focused on conflict resolution in Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and the South Caucasus.

Meetings with civil society are always a priority, and Sweden's term as OSCE Chair was no exception. In Russia, the human rights situation has progressively deteriorated. An increasingly repressive society has made it impossible for human rights defenders to carry out their important work. The

closure of the human rights group Memorial is one of many alarming examples of this.

In Belarus, we have seen how the regime has cynically exploited migrants for political objectives. Belarus must release all political prisoners and hold democratic elections.

As Chair, Sweden also worked to ensure that Russia's aggression against Ukraine and Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea have remained high on the OSCE agenda. Eight years will have soon passed since the situation arose, and more than 14 000 people have lost their lives. But the passing of time does not make these violations of international law more acceptable. We now carry this work forward as a member of the OSCE Troika.

Mr Speaker,

We are living in the midst of an accelerating climate and environmental crisis. Sweden will take the lead in the climate transition. But the global level of ambition is far from adequate. Climate change and environmental degradation contribute to increased tensions and conflicts. The climate is of critical importance to our security. We must take climate-related security threats extremely seriously.

During our term as Chair, the OSCE took a decision to address the challenges brought about by climate change. Thanks to Sweden's catalytic role, the OSCE now has a mandate to take preventive action against the effects of climate change on security in the region.

We will appoint an ambassador for climate and security. We will incorporate new expertise into our international crisis management operations, peacebuilding, international development cooperation and climate diplomacy. We will continue to strengthen the Swedish-initiated UN mechanism for climate and security. In just a few years, this mechanism has become a mainstay in countries and regions affected by climate-related conflicts.

In June, Sweden will host Stockholm+50, an international UN meeting aimed at advancing an equitable and global green transition.

Mr Speaker,

The COVID-19 pandemic has hindered implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Some of the global progress that was achieved in recent years, such as

improvements in maternal and child health and gender equality, has been undone. Global hunger and extreme poverty are on the rise for the first time in 20 years.

The 2030 Agenda is our roadmap for reversing this trend.

Mr Speaker,

The need for a better global health system and the realisation that the pandemic's consequences have hit women and children the hardest are painful lessons.

The Government pursued the issue of more equitable COVID-19 vaccine distribution from an early stage. The COVAX global vaccine initiative has now delivered 1 billion vaccine doses to 144 countries around the world. Sweden is the world's largest per capita donor to COVAX and the fifth largest donor overall.

Efforts to strengthen global health security, not least efforts to combat antibiotic resistance and to develop a robust new global pandemic treaty, are a priority. The Government will therefore appoint an ambassador at the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs to work on global health security.

Mr Speaker,

The EU is Sweden's most important foreign and security policy arena. In uncertain times, the Member States stand stronger together. We will continue to strengthen our close ties with our partners within the EU and with our Nordic and Baltic neighbours. Efforts to realise the vision of the Nordic region as the world's most sustainable, integrated and digitally advanced region will be intensified.

The Government wants to see a strong EU that can take greater responsibility for its own security, but we also stress that this is not incompatible with openness to developing partnerships or a strong transatlantic link.

Next year, Sweden will hold the Presidency of the Council of the EU for the third time. The Minister for EU Affairs recently outlined how work on the Government's priorities will be pursued at EU level. It is an ambitious agenda.

The situation of refugees and migrants demands our continued attention. The

EU must establish a common asylum system that provides legal certainty and is humane and sustainable, in which everyone takes their share of responsibility.

We continue to maintain close cooperation with the United Kingdom, not least on security and defence policy, trade, and education and research.

The United States is once again a constructive partner in the global arena. This is encouraging for continued and enhanced cooperation, not least in the areas of climate change, democracy and gender equality. Cooperation with the US is central to security and defence policy, trade and technology.

Mr Speaker,

Feminist foreign policy continues to grow. Sweden was first. And it is gratifying that Germany is now following that lead, like Canada, France, Luxembourg, Spain and Mexico, who are also pursuing feminist foreign policies.

Our efforts must be intensified, not least given the backlash against gender equality that we have seen in the wake of the pandemic. Violence against women and girls has increased all over the world. The pandemic, the climate crisis and shrinking democratic space are putting us at risk of a global gender equality recession. Feminist foreign policy is needed more than ever.

In 2022, we will produce a new national action plan for women, peace and security, and we will also produce a new global strategy for gender equality in aid. Sweden is leading the action for women's economic empowerment within the UN Generation Equality Forum.

Mr Speaker,

For the fifth consecutive year, we are seeing more countries moving in an authoritarian direction than in a democratic direction. Military coups in Myanmar, Sudan, Mali and Burkina Faso, the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan, a deterioration in the situation in Belarus and the conflict in Ethiopia are dramatic examples of democratic backsliding.

At the Summit for Democracy hosted by US President Joe Biden, Sweden was an active partner in several activities in which both the Prime Minister and I took part. Sweden's message was that the rise of right-wing populism and nationalism undermines democracy, and that human rights, the rule of law and women's political and economic participation are crucial to

democracy. LGBTIQ people's rights must be fully respected internationally.

This year, Sweden holds the Presidency of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, where we will continue to promote Holocaust remembrance and do our utmost to combat antisemitism and antigypsyism.

More attention must be directed at the lack of democracy and human rights in working life globally. Workers are harassed, lose their jobs and are even killed for their trade union activities. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs will continue its efforts in these areas, including within the Global Deal.

Mr Speaker,

The nuclear threat is a reality, and we must continue our disarmament efforts. The aim is a world free of nuclear weapons. Within the framework of the Stockholm Initiative, we have proposed 22 specific steps that provide a constructive and pragmatic approach to nuclear disarmament. An increasing number of countries now back Sweden's proposals.

We have actively addressed the five nuclear-weapon states. Gratifyingly, the Stockholm Initiative's message on the need for progress has been heard. On 3 January, the five affirmed in a joint statement that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought".

Mr Speaker,

Humanitarian needs in the world are increasing dramatically. Inequality is growing. Almost 275 million people need humanitarian aid to survive. Some 45 million women, men and children in 43 countries are on the verge of famine.

Sweden's aid policy will maintain a high level of ambition in terms of both scale and quality. Sweden's official development assistance will continue to be equivalent to one per cent of gross national income. And it will be used to reduce poverty and injustice around the world. It is a matter of solidarity – and also of the conviction that a better world makes for a more secure Sweden.

Sweden will step up its efforts to prevent climate change and its effects on food security and the environment, and promote sustainable living conditions. In 2022, we will increase climate aid by a further SEK 1 billion.

When anti-democratic forces gain ground, Sweden's aid will, with

unwavering ambition, remain a counterweight. More democratic societies make the world a better place – and increase security in Sweden.

Mr Speaker,

My visit to Israel was the first by a Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs in ten years. It is important that the Government has improved our relations with Israel. At the same time, we continue to recognise Palestine. Sweden continues to act for a two-state solution based on international law.

Terrorist groups have dramatically increased their activities in Mali. It is unacceptable that the Malian junta has postponed democratic elections and engaged in cooperation with Russian mercenaries. Sweden's military and civilian engagement in Mali aims to promote security, counteract terrorism and build sustainable development with respect for human rights.

The war in Yemen is now in its eighth year. It is one of the world's greatest humanitarian disasters. Sweden will continue to emphasise the need for peace talks in the UN. The inclusion of women in these talks is a prerequisite for a lasting peace.

Syria is a deeply ravaged country. The conflict is in its twelfth year. Millions of people are living in acute humanitarian need. Sweden is and will remain one of the largest humanitarian donors.

The conflict and humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia undermine stability throughout the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia is heading towards famine. Thousands have been killed in the conflict, including 24 UN aid workers. We will continue to work through the EU and the UN for an immediate ceasefire.

Mr Speaker,

As the Prime Minister has said: "We will leave no stone unturned in breaking segregation and cracking down on gangs." The underlying criminal structures are almost always transnational. The digital transformation of our societies brings an increase in international cybercrime. Shootings and explosions, often using smuggled weapons, remain a considerable security challenge. Far too often, the young men involved are tools used by more heavyweight international criminal actors.

Eighteen months ago, I appointed a special envoy on organised crime to identify how the Swedish Foreign Service can best support law enforcement authorities. A number of embassies have received special assignments to

work to combat organised crime. In the next stage, several embassies will be equipped to contribute more effectively to crime prevention. Cooperation between law enforcement authorities and embassies will be strengthened.

Mr Speaker,

We must stand up for free trade, particularly at a time when the winds of protectionism are blowing stronger. The multilateral trade system, based on the World Trade Organization, is fundamental to growth and welfare. A threat to the rules-based trade system is a threat to Sweden's economy and our trade relations. While cooperation is important, not least in trade, we will take action against any security-threatening activity directed at Sweden and Swedish companies.

Sweden and the EU need to work even more closely with likeminded partners to safeguard and develop global trade, focusing on the green transition to a fossil-free society. Our trade policy will contribute to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda.

Through Sweden's participation in Expo 2020, we are showcasing how Swedish solutions enable a transition in a green and sustainable direction.

China's international significance also affects Sweden and Swedish interests, not least in trade. We engage in a frank and open dialogue with China in which human rights and freedom of expression are key. Sweden and the EU see global challenges that we can only address together with China – such as climate change, health and a functioning and fair free trade order.

Mr Speaker,

Last year, Sweden evacuated around 2 000 people from Afghanistan. In August, the situation at Kabul airport was at times chaotic and very difficult. Swedish Armed Forces personnel were just seconds away when a bomb exploded close to the airport.

On behalf of the Government, I would like to reiterate our thanks to everyone in the Swedish Foreign Service, government agencies and municipalities who worked day and night on the evacuations. I am proud of the collective operation that Sweden implemented.

Despite the grave sense of global darkness that many are undoubtedly feeling right now, and although the need for our joint efforts may seem never-ending, I would like to conclude by saying that there is hope that,

through hard work and clear lines, change is possible. Or as Archbishop Desmond Tutu said: “Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.”

Published 16 February 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement of Foreign Policy

On 24 February, Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde presented the 2021 Statement of Foreign Policy in the Riksdag. Check against delivery.

Mr Speaker,

I want to begin this year's Statement of Foreign Policy by saying something that is obvious to us all.

Politics matters.

This year marks 100 years since women were first able to exercise their right to vote in a parliamentary election. This was the milestone that made Sweden a democracy. Democracy is something we take for granted, but it is still denied to the majority of the world's population.

The Government is working for an international order based on international law, with rules and agreements rather than 'might is right'. With our clear security policy line, solidarity-based aid, climate and environment investments, feminist foreign policy and strong trade policy, we not only safeguard our own country, but also contribute to peace, security and development, and democracy globally.

Mr Speaker,

The COVID-19 pandemic has claimed more than two million lives worldwide.

Sweden has pushed for global equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines. Through the EU, we are part of the COVAX global vaccine cooperation initiative. The EU has mobilised EUR 853 million for COVAX, making it the largest donor. Sweden has contributed SEK 200 million and is participating in the efforts to strengthen COVAX's access to vaccine supplies.

To secure vaccine supplies for the European Economic Area countries,

Sweden has undertaken to sell vaccines on to Norway, Iceland and Switzerland.

Mr Speaker,

As Chair of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 2021, Sweden is standing up for the European security order based on international law and the UN Charter. We want to highlight the relationship that the OSCE identifies between respect for democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and security within and between states.

The unresolved conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, Ukraine, Georgia and Transnistria are examples of the consequences of disregarding the European security order. These challenges also affect Sweden.

Mr Speaker,

The EU is Sweden's most important foreign and security policy arena. In an uncertain world, the EU must be a strong voice for peace, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

A well-functioning EU is a prerequisite for Sweden's welfare. The majority of our trade is with other EU Member States, and at EU level we can strengthen the green transition and safeguard jobs.

The EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement lays the foundations for an important future partnership. The Government intends to deepen Sweden's and the EU's relations with the UK, including in the area of foreign and security policy.

Nordic cooperation is important, but is facing severe trials during the COVID-19 pandemic. Cooperation with the Baltic States is also of great importance to our region and our common security. The Government has presented a new strategy for the Arctic region.

The countries of the Western Balkans are an important part of the EU's neighbourhood.

Turkey plays a key role for the EU. We will support the democratic forces in Turkey and be clear in our criticism of human rights violations in the country and Turkey's actions in its neighbourhood.

The UN remains a cornerstone of Swedish foreign policy, and we remain an

influential voice in the UN.

In the follow-up to the declaration commemorating the 75th anniversary of the UN – which was adopted following negotiations led by Sweden and Qatar – we showed that it is possible to agree on an ambitious way forward to strengthen the UN.

The value of the UN's actions to alleviate suffering and prevent hunger cannot be overestimated. As one of the world's largest donors, Sweden supports the UN's work in a number of humanitarian crises. Last year's Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the World Food Programme – proof that the UN's work makes a difference.

Mr Speaker,

Sweden's foreign and security policy builds on cohesion in the EU and cooperation on a broad front: in the Nordic and Baltic Sea regions, in the UN and the OSCE, and with NATO. A strong transatlantic link is important for the security of Europe and the United States.

Sweden will not remain passive if another EU Member State or a Nordic country suffers a disaster or an attack. We expect these countries to act in the same way if Sweden is affected. We must therefore be able to both give and receive support, civilian as well as military.

Sweden's security policy remains firmly in place. Our non-participation in military alliances serves us well and contributes to stability and security in northern Europe. It requires an active, broad and responsible foreign and security policy combined with enhanced defence cooperation – particularly with Finland – and credible national defence capabilities. We will contribute to long-term stability and security in our part of Europe.

The security situation in Sweden's neighbourhood and in Europe has deteriorated over time. In response to this trend, a historic investment in total defence is under way, and we are continuing to reinforce our international defence and security policy cooperation.

Through our participation in civilian and military operations in countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Mali and Ukraine, Sweden is contributing to security, preventing conflicts and creating the conditions for sustainable development. This engagement is an important part of our solidarity-based security policy and contributes to common security.

Mr Speaker,

It is currently more important than it has been for some time to pursue a feminist foreign policy to promote women's and girls' rights. Several countries have now followed Sweden's example.

The Government has given additional support totalling more than SEK 260 million globally to counteract the effects of the pandemic on activities linked to sexual and reproductive health and rights, for example.

Sweden has taken on a leading role in the global Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights. Sweden will work for women's and girls' economic empowerment, including through the introduction of social and economic reforms and gender equality in the labour market.

The women, peace and security agenda is an important priority of Sweden's term as Chair of the OSCE.

Mr Speaker,

The ongoing pandemic affects our consular work. In the spring of 2020, the consular efforts of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs helped bring around 9 000 stranded Swedes home on 400 transports.

The Swedish Foreign Service works constantly and intensively on the most difficult consular cases. We always have the best interests of the individual in mind, and we will never give up our efforts.

Mr Speaker,

The United States has elected a new president, and his statements on cooperation with allies and partners are important for us in Sweden and the EU.

There are many areas in which we can renew and deepen our cooperation, including security policy and multilateralism, trade, the green transition and new technologies, democracy, and gender equality, including sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The Government plans to adopt new strategies for development cooperation in Latin America in the first half of 2021.

The Government is monitoring the consequences of the demonstrations in

Chile and the work to draw up a new constitution.

Sweden is working, through both the EU and the UN, to support a negotiated political solution in Venezuela.

Mr Speaker,

The Government supports Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and every country's right to choose its security policy path. Russia's aggression against Ukraine and its illegal annexation of Crimea are unacceptable. These violations of international law undermine the European security order and are grounds for continued sanctions against Russia.

Where we have common interests we can and should cooperate with Russia. One example of this is the Council of the Baltic Sea States, in which cooperation with Russia works well. At the same time, we are concerned at the negative trends in terms of human rights and civil society space in Russia, and we condemn violations of international law and poisonings.

The fraudulent election and the brutal abuses committed by the regime in Belarus are unacceptable. Along with the other EU Member States, we have introduced targeted sanctions against those responsible.

The challenges that have marked the EU's eastern neighbourhood over the last year make EU engagement in the region through the Eastern Partnership more important than it has been for some time.

Mr Speaker,

A year ago, I visited Yemen. It was clear how much Sweden's engagement is appreciated. Sweden continues to provide comprehensive humanitarian aid to Yemen's long-suffering population and support to the UN-led peace process.

The conflict in Syria remains one of the world's most serious crises. The only way to achieve peace in Syria is through a political solution.

The Government values relations with both Israel and Palestine. Sweden is working with the EU for the resumption of meaningful negotiations between Israel and Palestine and a resolution based on international law in which two states can coexist in peace and security.

Preserving the nuclear deal with Iran is essential to non-proliferation and the

security situation in the Middle East. Iran must resume full compliance and the United States must rejoin. We also underscore the serious human rights situation in Iran.

Sweden has a comprehensive and longstanding commitment to peace, democracy and development in Africa. In Ethiopia, the conflict in Tigray threatens to undermine the country's democratic development, with far-reaching regional consequences. In Sudan, the political transition continues under a civilian-led transitional government after 30 years of authoritarian rule.

The security situation in the Sahel is cause for great concern. In August, a military coup took place in Mali. A transitional government is now in place and general elections are due to be held in 2022. Sweden contributes to security and development in the Sahel.

Mr Speaker,

Asia's growing importance means opportunities for trade and investment, green technology and innovation. The Government is developing its cooperation with countries such as India, Japan and South Korea. Sweden also has a role to play in conflict resolution and disarmament on the Korean Peninsula. The coup in Myanmar is unacceptable and the Government condemns it.

China's international significance affects Sweden and Swedish interests to a growing extent. Sweden and the EU see global challenges that we can only address together with China – such as climate change, health and a functioning and fair free trade order. While cooperation is important, we will take action against security-threatening activity directed at Sweden and Swedish companies. We engage in a frank and open dialogue with China in which human rights and freedom of expression are key aspects.

The Government is particularly concerned about the shrinking democratic space in Hong Kong. Hong Kong residents' human rights must be respected.

Sweden must increase its knowledge of China. The national knowledge centre on China began its activities in January this year.

The Government looks positively on increased trade cooperation with China and welcomes the EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment.

Mr Speaker,

It is concerning that democracy is being challenged in many parts of the world. Growing authoritarian forces are often linked to economic and social disparities.

Through the Drive for Democracy initiative, 600 activities have reached 1.7 million people. We have held 70 Democracy Talks, providing a platform for civil society, trade union members, LGBTIQ people and women's rights activists. Swedish democracy assistance has increased in recent years.

The internet has opened up new possibilities to participate in democracy, but it has also lowered thresholds for those seeking to curtail democracy and freedom of expression. For this reason, the Government will initiate a dialogue with platform providers to discuss how they can work with civil society to combat threats and hate, strengthen democracy and protect human rights on the internet.

Antisemitism on social media is one of several important themes that will be covered at the Malmö International Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism.

To address the shrinking space for trade union organisations, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs intends to implement continuing professional development initiatives in this area. The Swedish Global Deal initiative promotes good labour market relations.

Organised crime is a major challenge for our society. The violence expressed in shootings and explosions is only one aspect of organised crime. This type of crime often has clear international connections.

Work is now under way to determine how our missions abroad can assist law enforcement authorities. Five embassies have been specially tasked with developing the capacity of the Swedish Foreign Service.

Mr Speaker,

The threat of nuclear weapons is a critical issue. The Stockholm Initiative is one of the leading political initiatives for nuclear disarmament.

The decision of the United States and Russia to extend the New START disarmament treaty is especially welcome. The world cannot afford another nuclear arms race.

Just over a month ago, the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear

Weapons entered into force. I have written to the UN to reaffirm Sweden's intention to participate as an observer.

Sweden's disarmament policy should continue to be informed by a strong knowledge base in the future. For this reason, a national knowledge centre for research on nuclear disarmament is now being established at Uppsala University at the Government's initiative.

A future scenario of lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) that do not comply with international law must be avoided. With the objective of an effective international ban, Sweden is actively participating in the important work within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

Sweden will take the lead in implementing the 2030 Agenda. It is our roadmap towards a stronger, more resilient and sustainable world. The Government is continuing its efforts to promote international corporate social responsibility.

Sweden's development assistance is effective and world-class, and the Government remains committed to the target of one per cent of GNI.

Mr Speaker,

The climate crisis, loss of biodiversity, and depletion and pollution of the world's oceans are global and cross-border issues that affect us all. They threaten to irreversibly alter the conditions for humankind, exacerbate famine and increase the number of conflicts and pandemics around the world.

Next year, Sweden will host the global high-level meeting Stockholm+50.

We will continue to lead the way through our own transition to a fossil-free society and via our climate diplomacy.

The Government has tasked the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) with enhancing efforts to promote the sustainable use of biodiversity.

Mr Speaker,

The Government is strengthening the promotion of strategic investment in Sweden to improve our competitiveness. Sweden should work for a stronger

link between the Paris Agreement and trade. Sweden's trade policy should contribute to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement, and to sustainable development and the green transition. The Government wants to see more ambitious sustainability chapters in EU free trade agreements.

With their worldwide presence, Swedish companies have not only great opportunities, but also a responsibility to strengthen respect for human rights. We will highlight ways in which international regulatory frameworks for export credits should contribute to achieving the global sustainable development goals and the Paris Agreement.

A key factor in responding to the pandemic has been to secure access to staff, equipment and medicines. For this reason, a well-functioning single market with freedom of movement and free trade is critical.

Mr Speaker,

I began this year's Statement of Foreign Policy by looking to the past, so let me conclude by looking to the future. We face a decade of possibilities.

Technological advances are apparent in the green transition and in vaccines being developed at record speed. Social progress has resulted in a global increase in prosperity in which millions of people have been lifted out of poverty. What must now follow is political transformation, because without politics and without democracy and freedom for people, technological advances and social progress are to no avail.

Let me therefore conclude with a passage from American poet Amanda Gorman's reading at Joe Biden's presidential inauguration in the United States.

“But while democracy can be periodically delayed, it can never be permanently defeated. In this truth, in this faith, we trust, for while we have our eyes on the future, history has its eyes on us.”

Published 24 February 2021



2020 Statement of Foreign Policy

On 12 February, Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde presented the 2020 Statement of Foreign Policy in the Riksdag. Check against delivery.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members, Representatives of the Diplomatic Corps, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sweden's foreign policy is conducted with the aim of creating security in our country and around the world.

The conflicts, climate emergency and refugee flows of recent years show that events far from our national borders also affect us in Sweden.

The world is becoming increasingly unpredictable – and it's getting closer. The ongoing coronavirus outbreak shows how interconnected the world is.

There are those who think we should close the door to cooperation. As if the problems would disappear if we just shut our eyes. I am convinced that we must respond to a troubled world by increasing cooperation and solidarity. International problems require international responses.

People around the world are demonstrating for freedom and justice. The climate movement brings millions of people together on the streets. We have a responsibility to listen to their urgent calls.

Well-functioning international cooperation and international law are the foundation of an international order in which rules and agreements take precedence over the concept of 'might is right'. This order is necessary for Sweden to be safe and secure.

We stand up for diplomacy, dialogue and cooperation. This is how we defend our interests, values and security. This is how we make the world safer.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The EU is our most important foreign and security policy arena. No other actor is a greater guarantor of Sweden's economy, security and peace. Sweden will participate fully in EU cooperation and in shaping it in a way that safeguards Sweden's interests.

The United Kingdom has now left the EU and the time has come to look to the future. Sweden will continue to maintain as close and comprehensive a relationship as possible with the United Kingdom.

We are also strengthening relations with leading Member States, such as Germany and France, and enhancing Nordic cooperation. This makes our region more secure and sustainable. In the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Government is pushing for implementation of the common vision that the Nordic region will become the most sustainable and integrated region in the world by 2030.

A renewed Arctic Strategy will be presented during the year.

For several years, the rule of law and respect for the EU's fundamental values have been undermined in some Member States. Together with the European Commission and other Member States, Sweden takes a clear stand against this trend.

Many people today are concerned that EU enlargement is moving too fast. We take this seriously. At the same time, close relations with the countries of the Western Balkans are important to our common security and economy. We want to find a way forward that unites the EU and that clearly contributes to reform efforts in the Western Balkans. Here, the prospect of eventually becoming a member is important.

The European Commission has previously proposed that negotiations be started with Albania and North Macedonia. Sweden has been prepared to support this.

Sweden supports the proposal for a review of the enlargement process, and it is important that all essential requirements are met before a country can become a member.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Diplomacy is our primary line of defence.

The Defence Commission emphasises the importance of safeguarding our sovereignty and Swedish interests. This means being able to use all the instruments we have at our disposal – political, diplomatic, economic and military – in a coherent manner. This is how we build common security.

I would like to express special thanks to the Swedes taking part in our civilian and military operations in areas such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Mali and Ukraine. You are making an invaluable contribution to peace and security – internationally and in Sweden.

Europe must take greater responsibility for its own security.

The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy must be strengthened so as to defend the EU's interests and values around the world.

Our security is strengthened by stability and economic growth in the EU's neighbourhood. We stand by our commitments to support reform processes in Ukraine and other countries in the EU's eastern neighbourhood.

The Eastern Partnership recently reached its 10-year milestone. Sweden will continue to promote the Partnership in the EU.

We also want to show that a southern partnership is possible. Close cooperation with the countries of North Africa is already in place. But this must be enhanced and the EU must provide support for the stability and development of these states.

Sweden's security policy remains firmly in place. Our non-participation in military alliances serves us well and contributes to stability and security in northern Europe. It requires an active, broad and responsible foreign and security policy combined with enhanced defence cooperation – particularly with Finland – and credible national defence capabilities. We will contribute to long-term stability and security in our part of Europe.

Rapid technological advances, not least within cyber security and AI, are creating new challenges in the grey area between competitiveness, trade and security policy.

Sweden's foreign and security policy builds on cohesion in the EU and

increased cooperation on a broad front: in the Nordic and Baltic Sea regions, in the UN and the OSCE, and through partnership with NATO. A strong transatlantic link is important for the security of Europe and the United States.

The UN plays an important role for peace and security, development and human rights, and is a central arena for Sweden's response to global challenges. The UN will remain a cornerstone of our foreign and security policy. We support Norway's candidacy for a seat on the United Nations Security Council.

Sweden will not remain passive if another EU Member State or a Nordic country suffers a disaster or an attack. We expect these countries to act in the same way if Sweden is affected. We must therefore be able to both give and receive support, civilian as well as military.

Sweden's role as Chair of the OSCE in 2021 will be based on our strong engagement for the European security order. Upholding the OSCE's jointly agreed principles and commitments is a major security interest for Sweden.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Everyone has the right to live in safety regardless of where they live. This applies both here at home and in other countries. No one should need to look anxiously over their shoulder on their way home from school or work.

Since autumn 2014, the Government has implemented a range of measures against organised crime, including stricter penalties and more police officers, and has also conducted important crime prevention activities.

But we know that this kind of crime also has links abroad.

We are therefore introducing new initiatives to reinforce law enforcement via our embassies and international cooperation.

We will appoint an ambassador at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs tasked with coordinating the MFA's work against organised crime and supporting Swedish law enforcement authorities.

Our embassies will be instructed to monitor the issue of crime with links to Sweden. Our embassies in places such as the Western Balkans, the South Caucasus and Latin America will be specially tasked with prioritising this

issue.

The Government will continue the successful efforts against organised crime in the Council of the Baltic Sea States and within the framework of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, the EU Eastern Partnership and the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Sweden will enhance efforts to stop the flow of weapons and drugs, and take new steps against cross-border crime and terrorism. Europol and Eurojust are central to this work.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Global warming is affecting us here and now.

It is not just a matter of direct consequences of more extreme weather – an unstable climate also disrupts the economy, food security and our welfare and security.

Climate change exacerbates tensions and conflicts. Sweden will continue to show leadership through climate diplomacy that encourages other countries to raise their ambitions.

The EU is a necessary force in global climate action. Sweden will continue to show leadership both in and outside the EU and will be the world's first fossil-free welfare nation. Our climate efforts are ranked the highest in the world. We have doubled our contribution to the Green Climate Fund. We are working at home and internationally for a just transition.

Functioning ecosystems are essential for all life. Forests, wetlands and oceans are home to a rich biodiversity. The marine environment is under enormous pressure from climate change, overexploitation, pollution and eutrophication. The Government wants to see a global target of 30 per cent of oceans designated as marine protection areas.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Democracy around the world continues to be challenged and questioned.

This trend is threatening the foundation of our safety and security. Sweden is therefore increasing its efforts to defend and promote democracy around the

world through the Drive For Democracy initiative.

We are building alliances with like-minded countries and organisations that want to help strengthen democracy. The appropriation to democracy aid has been increased.

We are increasing support to ensure open societies, particularly for free and independent media and freedom of the press.

We are defending and promoting the rights of LGBTI people.

We are strengthening our measures to combat corruption, which is one of the worst obstacles to development. All suspicions of corruption in aid are followed up and addressed.

We are boosting the significance of trade as a platform for dialogue on human rights and democracy. Swedish export credits for investment in exploration and exploitation of fossil fuels must cease by 2022.

Increasing antisemitism is a growing concern all over the world and a threat to democracy. The Prime Minister has therefore taken the initiative to hold an international conference in Malmö in October 2020 for Holocaust remembrance and combating antisemitism.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The rights of women and girls are under attack. Conservative forces are trying to restrict the right of women and girls to decide over their own bodies and lives.

Issues relating to women, peace and security, as well as women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, are especially important to stand up for.

To reverse this trend, courageous action is needed at all levels. This is why we are pursuing a feminist foreign policy.

It is gratifying that we have been joined by countries such as Canada, France, Luxembourg and Mexico.

Within the EU, Sweden and France have taken the initiative to improve the effectiveness of the EU's gender equality work, and we are establishing a

feminist trade policy.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Around the world, more than 165 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. The 2030 Agenda provides a roadmap for sustainable development that permeates Sweden's work. Sweden's development assistance is effective and world-class. The Government remains committed to the 1 per cent goal.

War is a catastrophe for people and societies. Children are often the worst affected. Here at home, in the UN and in the EU, Sweden is working to safeguard rights and strengthen the protection of children.

It is important that the EU has a common asylum system that provides legal certainty, is humane and sustainable, and in which all countries take their responsibility. The right to asylum must be protected.

Extreme poverty has been falling since 1990, but inequality is rising.

Inequality is not only unjust and a barrier to economic development – it also creates a breeding ground for tensions and conflict. We have seen examples of this in several major demonstrations around the world, not least in Chile. Greater equality is part of Sweden's foreign policy.

The Global Deal initiative promotes social dialogue and sustainable growth globally. In certain countries, standing up for trade unions and decent working conditions means risking your life. Trade union rights are part of our Drive for Democracy and will be raised in all Ministry for Foreign Affairs country reports on human rights.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

World trade contributes to lifting entire countries out of poverty and to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

As a member of the EU, Sweden is pursuing a policy for free and fair trade that contributes to sustainable development and creates jobs throughout the country. Every third job in Sweden depends on our trade with the rest of the

world.

We are mobilising our efforts with an updated export and investment strategy for the whole of Sweden.

Expo 2020 in Dubai will showcase Swedish companies' competitiveness in innovation and sustainability.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

We cannot take a passive stance on the nuclear threat.

Developments are alarming: arms control agreements are being abandoned. Nuclear weapons arsenals are being expanded and modernised.

Disarmament and non-proliferation are central foreign and security policy priorities for the Government.

Through the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament, the Government is contributing to the upcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This work is now being advanced at a new ministerial meeting in Germany.

As Chair of the International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors, Sweden is taking responsibility for non-proliferation. Compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action nuclear deal is central.

Within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, Sweden is pushing for an effective international ban on lethal autonomous weapons systems that are incompatible with the requirements of international law.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Our close relationship with the United States is of central importance to Sweden's security and prosperity.

A functioning international community presupposes an engaged United States. It is troubling that the United States is withdrawing from some forms

of multilateral cooperation. The Government is working to ensure that trade relations with the United States work well, and that threats of new trade barriers are not carried out.

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The Government's Russia policy remains unchanged.

Where we have common interests we, like the EU, can and should cooperate with Russia. This benefits our security, and stability in our neighbourhood.

We condemn Russia's aggression against Ukraine and its illegal annexation of Crimea. These breaches of international law challenge the European security order. Sweden supports Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and every country's right to choose its own security policy path.

We are working to ensure that the EU sanctions against Russia are maintained for as long as the reasons for their introduction remain.

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Sweden stands ready to contribute to the easing of regional tensions and to dialogue in the Middle East.

We are continuing our engagement in the global coalition against Daesh. Kurds, Christians and other minorities in the region must be protected.

The Government is keen to have good relations with both Israel and Palestine. Sweden – like the rest of the EU – is working for a solution based on international law in which two states can coexist in peace and security.

The Government has condemned Iran for the shooting down of a civilian aircraft which claimed the lives of 17 people who were resident in Sweden. We demand an independent and transparent investigation.

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We both cooperate and engage in critical dialogue with Turkey. The EU has condemned Turkey's offensive in north-eastern Syria. At the same time, the Syrian regime has ruthlessly bombed its own country to rubble for almost nine years. All licences for Sweden's exports of military equipment to Turkey have been withdrawn.

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The humanitarian, political and economic crisis in Venezuela is worsening day by day. Together with the international community, we are working for a peaceful solution.

Increasing polarisation in Bolivia is serious and has led to escalating violence and vandalism.

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China's increasingly active role in the global arena presents opportunities and challenges. We welcome the Riksdag's consensus on the written communication on our China policy.

We are conducting a frank and open dialogue with China based on our own interests and those of the EU. Human rights and freedom of expression are important aspects of this.

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India is an important global actor and partner for Sweden. It is a significant market that will play an increasingly important role for growth and employment in our country.

At the UN Climate Action Summit in New York, Sweden and India launched the Leadership Group for Industry Transition to ensure a fossil-free future for heavy industry.

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The African continent has a young population. If the many young people there receive access to education and employment, a number of African countries could develop at a rapid pace. But the challenges are also great.

Human rights, democracy and gender equality are priorities in Sweden's Africa policy, along with migration and trade. It is important to support sustainable development in Africa. This can involve girls' schooling and increased access to electricity.

The security situation in the Sahel continues to be very troubling, not least in Mali. The region is characterised by weak states. The situation is a breeding ground for radicalisation.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs handles many consular cases. These can involve anything from crises and disasters to deprivation of liberty. Most people are helped without publicity, but some cases receive a lot of attention.

The work to help Swedes in distress abroad is always conducted with the best interests of those affected in mind.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

In troubled times, with a harsh tone from world leaders and aggressive big-power behaviour, Sweden is showing that another path is possible.

With an open and democratic environment, with tough debates but also a striving for consensus, we are showing that freedom, equality and openness are not yesterday's solutions.

Sweden is, and will continue to be, one of the world's best countries to live in, and we are making a difference around the world. This is something we Swedes should be proud of.

Published 12 February 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

Joint letter to Executive Vice-President Dombrovskis

Dear Executive Vice- President Dombrovskis,

There is war in Europe. Russia's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine grossly violates international law and is inflicting unspeakable suffering on the Ukrainian people. In this situation, the European Union (EU) has shown unity and strength. Together with our partners, we have responded quickly and decisively with strict and comprehensive sanctions against Russia and the Russian central government. Europe is supporting Ukraine in words and action.

The current security situation, as well as the pandemic, underscores the need for resilient supply chains, strategic partnerships, exchange of knowledge and open trade. On 25 March, the European Council tasked us with helping to build a more open and robust economic base. The EU Single Market is one of our greatest achievements – for peace, jobs and prosperity. However, we can do more to draw upon the economic size and geopolitical strength of the EU. We should make better use of our potential to shape the global trade agenda and its rules. Besides a strong and reformed World Trade Organisation (WTO), which is the foundation and guarantee for global rules-based trade, we also need strong bilateral and regional trade deals. We need to shore up our alliances through trade.

With respect to the vital transatlantic relationship, the progress that has been made with President Biden's administration is very welcome. We look forward to constructive cooperation and concrete progress in the new Trade and Technology Council (TTC). The TTC will play a central role in strengthening the transatlantic trade relationship. We hope that a common rulebook can be developed that will boost the green and digital transition on both sides of the Atlantic and set out the path forward for others.

If we could accelerate our work to conclude and implement negotiated trade agreements, we would bolster our economic and trade interests and increase the EU's overall credibility as a serious trade partner. This would ensure our

access to key foreign markets, our long-term economic growth, and our geopolitical standing in the world.

Russia's war on Ukraine shows that the EU's strategic choices do not take place in a vacuum, but in a global context where different powers and economic blocks are vying for leadership and new partnerships. This year, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) between ASEAN and Japan, China, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand enters into force. It is the world's largest trade agreement and follows hot on the heels of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). This should be a wake-up call for Europe. With RCEP in place, Japan will have free trade agreements covering 80 per cent of its trade. The EU's trade agreements cover only about a third of our external trade. With 85 per cent of the world's future growth projected to occur outside the EU, we need to do better than this.

The EU has successfully negotiated a string of trade agreements with countries such as Singapore, Canada, Vietnam, Japan and the United Kingdom. And we are reaping the benefits in the form of jobs and growth. One out of seven EU jobs depends on exports – two thirds more than in 2000. But there is no time for complacency. The EU's process with regard to trade agreements – negotiating, signing and entering into force – is too long. Contrast this with the RCEP, which was signed in late 2020 and entered into force this year for most members. We should accelerate the negotiation of trade agreements with partners such as New Zealand, Australia, India, and Indonesia and seek to adopt and begin implementing trade agreements negotiated with Chile, Mexico, and Mercosur, with robust and enforceable sustainability commitments, reflecting the specific circumstances of our partners.

We need to take advantage of windows of opportunity when they open, otherwise others will. Trade agreements are central to bringing jobs, innovation, and prosperity to EU Member States, and to our trading partners and promote international social, ecological and human rights standards. They open markets, enable access to critical supplies and secure important value chains. They improve the EU's resilience and make us less dependent and vulnerable. The COVID-19 pandemic has underlined the importance of this, while the new world order in the wake of the Russian invasion has made it even more pressing.

Thus, we welcome the Communication from the European Commission last year that laid the foundation for a modern and ambitious trade policy. It

strikes a good balance. With its free trade agreements, this trade policy contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the aims of the Paris Agreement. Through free trade agreements, we create partners in these challenging times. Through dialogue and cooperation, we gain leverage on vital topics. This is necessary for geostrategic reasons and for sustainable development, for the climate agenda and for promoting and protecting labour rights and decent work for men and women. By the same token, investment protection agreements should contribute to climate policy objectives and be formulated in a manner that safeguards the right to regulate.

In conclusion, the EU needs to urgently continue to pursue an open and fair international trade policy. This forward-leaning trade agenda would be in the spirit of the EU Single Market – our greatest achievement. It would be the right response to the current security crisis and other global challenges.

Mr Gordan Grlić Radman, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs
(Croatia)

Mr Jozef Síkela, Minister of Industry and Trade (Czechia)

Mr. Jeppe Kofod, Minister for Foreign Affairs (Denmark)

Mr Andres Sutt, Minister of Entrepreneurship and Information Technology
(Estonia)

Mr Ville Skinnari, Minister for Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade
(Finland)

Mr Robert Habeck, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate
Action (Germany)

Mr Luigi Di Maio, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
(Italy)

Ms Zanda Kalniņa-Lukaševica Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Foreign
Affairs (Latvia)

Mr Gabrielius Landsbergis, Minister for Foreign Affairs (Lithuania)

Dr Ian Borg, Minister for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade (Malta)

Ms Liesje Schreinemacher, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development

Cooperation (Netherlands)

Mr João Gomes Cravinho, Minister of Foreign Affairs (Portugal)

Mr Matjaž HAN, Minister of Economic Development and Technology
(Slovenia)

Ms Reyes Maroto Illera, Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism (Spain)

Ms Anna Hallberg, Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs (Sweden)

Published 21 June 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

Joint statement by Minister for Foreign Trade Anna Hallberg

Today, 15 March, Minister for Foreign Trade Anna Hallberg received Irish Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail Damien English.

-The Ministers met to discuss the positive dynamic in bilateral trade between Ireland and Sweden; EU-UK relations including the Ireland/Northern Ireland protocol and sanctions on Russia and implications.

- The potential for growth in bilateral trade in areas such as the green and digital transition was noted and the commitments outlined in the Irish government Nordic Strategy were welcomed.

- The Ministers noted the continued importance of the single market, open trade to Europe's competitiveness and the need to avoid protectionist tendencies.

- The Ministers agreed to a high-level bilateral meeting on trade-related issues and a climate of innovation, which could take place at the time of the re-opening of the Embassy of Sweden in Ireland.

Published 15 March 2022