



Article from Ministry of Employment

Initiatives in the Budget Bill for 2021 relating to Åsa Lindhagen's areas of responsibility

Published 25 September 2020

Read about the initiatives contained in the Budget Bill for 2021 relating to the areas of responsibility of the Minister for Gender Equality, with responsibility for anti-discrimination and anti-segregation. The Government's proposals are based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

Long-term initiatives in the Government's policy response to intimate partner violence (IPV)

The Government proposes that the county administrative boards' regional work to combat men's violence against women, honour-based violence and oppression, prostitution and trafficking in human beings continue on a permanent basis. The Government also proposes reinforcements to the municipalities for measures to prevent IPV reoffending.

Press release: Long-term initiatives in the Government's policy response to intimate partner violence (IPV)

Government strengthens efforts against honour-based violence and oppression

The Government proposes that the national expert team at the Östergötland

County Administrative Board be developed and made permanent in the form of a national centre of expertise on honour-based violence and oppression. The Government also proposes an investment of SEK 180 million in 2021 to enhance professional expertise and for new assignments to relevant government agencies related to honour-based violence and oppression.

SEK 10 million for efforts to fight racism

The Government proposes SEK 10 million to strengthen anti-racism efforts. Fighting racism, intolerance and discrimination requires long-term and organised work. Among other things, experiences of differential treatment in dealings with public authorities need to be taken seriously. It is essential that public authorities and other public services always treat individuals equally and in a legally secure manner; this requires continuous skills enhancement initiatives.

Better information about Swedish society for asylum seekers

In addition to information that the Swedish Migration Agency provides to asylum seekers, there may be a need for more information about Swedish society and language initiatives for asylum seekers waiting for a decision on their asylum applications. The Government therefore proposes an additional SEK 60 million for information about Swedish society for asylum seekers. This entails highlighting important issues related to democracy, rights, obligations and opportunities in society. Gender equality, children's rights, and honour-based violence and oppression are other issues that can be raised.

Increased grants to municipalities with high refugee intake

The Government proposes a one-year targeted government grant of SEK 200 million to municipalities with relatively high refugee intake. This grant was introduced in 2020 and will now be extended for one year and increased from the previous level of SEK 80 million. The aim of the proposal is to make it easier for municipalities to organise effective reception of newly arrived immigrants, which in turn creates conditions for settling in successfully and swiftly into working and community life.

Social measures in socio-economically disadvantaged areas

There are a number of key actors involved in reducing and combating segregation. Additional funds can stimulate activities at local level that complement and strengthen municipalities' current efforts, not least in the area of crime prevention. This may include increased accessibility to social services, community workers or similar support. The proposal is for a reinforced general government grant for anti-segregation efforts of SEK 250 million per year in 2021–2023.

Establishment of a human rights institute proposed

At a time when human rights are increasingly challenged, it is more important than ever to have structures that promote and protect human rights. The Government's proposal is to establish an institute in Sweden whose task will be to promote the protection of human rights. Broad parliamentary support will be sought for the formulation of the legislation and regulations for this new institute ahead of the reform. The proposal is for a SEK 25 million allocation in 2021 followed by yearly allocations to the institute of SEK 50 million per year.



Article from Ministry of Employment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Gender Equality attend meeting on international gender equality work in the wake of COVID-19

Published 01 September 2020

Some 70 participants from civil society organisations, the social partners and government agencies took part in a digital meeting on 26 August hosted by Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde and Minister for Gender Equality Åsa Lindhagen. Discussions covered the international coalition to work for financial gender equality, of which Sweden is one of the leaders, and international gender equality work in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“All over the world and at all levels, the Swedish Foreign Service has consistently stressed the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on gender equality and human rights and worked to ensure a response and building back that lead to improvements, including in the form of more influence for women and girls,” says Ms Linde.

To support advocacy work, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has developed targeted support for the Foreign Service and ensured that important status reports and impact analyses have been disseminated widely, both within the Foreign Service and among external actors and partners.

“Spring 2020 should have marked the start of a ‘super year’ of anniversaries, mobilisation and progress for global gender equality work. Instead, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the risk of women being subjected to men’s violence and to discrimination and marginalisation, and has led to additional challenges in efforts to advance gender equality,” says Ms Lindhagen.

During Wednesday’s meeting, the ministers said that two major international gender equality forums had been postponed until 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and that the focus was now on starting work in six global Action Coalitions to advance gender equality.

On 1 July, UN Women announced who would be included in the leadership teams of the Action Coalitions; Sweden is part of the leadership of the Action Coalition working on economic justice and rights, together with four other countries and a number of civil society and multilateral organisations. The next stage of this work is for the Action Coalitions to enter into dialogue and consultation with a view to developing concrete action plans to be launched in 2021.



Article from Ministry of Employment

“We will not give up before every LGBTI-person in the world can live their lives freely.”

Published 30 July 2020

"Most people think it is an obvious right to be who you are and to be allowed to love the person or persons you love. "

"But the fact is, in more than sixty countries in the world you can be fired for being gay. Almost seventy countries declare same-sex relationships illegal. And in many countries transpeople are forced to get sterilized.

Too many LGBTI persons are forced to hide who they are. I am bisexual, so I know how that feels. And my own country, Sweden, has a lot more to do.

This summer, we will not meet at Pride events like we usually do. It feels strange and sad. But this does not mean that the struggle for LGBTI persons full enjoyment of human rights should cease, we must continue in other ways. When authoritarian movements want to push back on human rights we have already won, we will respond with strengthening the respect for human rights further.

We will not give up before every LGBTI-person in the world can live their lives freely.

So happy pride everyone and take care."

Transcript from webcast with Åsa Lindhagen, Minister for Gender Equality, with responsibility for anti-discrimination and anti-segregation.

Summer 2020



Article from Ministry of Employment

Measures to address increased vulnerability due to the coronavirus

Published 07 May 2020

The outbreak of the novel coronavirus and the spread of the COVID-19 disease have resulted in a global crisis affecting human life and health. At the same time, the socio-economic consequences and financial impacts on many families are contributing to increased stress and anxiety. Crisis and disaster research shows that the crisis is affecting the population unequally. Those with the least resources and in the most disadvantaged circumstances are generally those who suffer the greatest strain.

The coronavirus crisis threatens to exacerbate the vulnerability of children and young people at risk in their home environment. The same applies to victims of domestic violence and ‘honour’-based violence and oppression, including women, children, young women, older people, LGBTI people and people with disabilities. Greater isolation can increase the incidence of violence and control. Those who are vulnerable might also find it more difficult to receive information and seek support.

In light of the consequences of the COVID-19 virus and its impact on already vulnerable groups, the Government today intends to decide on two assignments:

- an assignment to the Swedish Gender Equality Agency to reach victims of violence

- a new ordinance on government grants that will enable the National Board of Health and Welfare to allocate SEK 100 million to non-profit organisations.

Assignment to the Swedish Gender Equality Agency

The Swedish Gender Equality Agency has been tasked with identifying and developing effective working methods that municipalities can use to spread information about domestic violence and ‘honour’-based violence and oppression, and to establish contact with victims of violence. The work will be based on the specific circumstances and conditions resulting from the outbreak of COVID-19. The working methods should be useful in the municipalities’ activities. The assignment to the Agency also includes disseminating the working methods to the municipalities.

The Agency will receive SEK 1.8 million in 2020 to carry out this assignment. The assignment should be carried out without delay and the report delivered to the Government (Ministry of Employment) by 26 February 2021.

National Board of Health and Welfare to allocate SEK 100 million to non-profit organisations

The Government intends to adopt an ordinance on government grants to allocate SEK 100 million to non-profit organisation activities addressing increased vulnerability resulting from the outbreak of COVID-19. The money will go to organisations that work with children at risk and with women, children and LGBTI people who are victims of violence; it will also go to organisations working to end domestic violence and ‘honour’-based violence and oppression.

Non-profit organisations that have been operating for at least two years will be eligible to apply for the grant. The National Board of Health and Welfare will be allocating the grants and will therefore soon be providing information about the application process. The money must be used in 2020.

The decisions regarding the two assignments are based on an agreement between the Swedish Social Democratic Party, the Green Party, the Centre Party and the Liberals.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Employment

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

Published 08 March 2020 Updated 08 March 2020

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

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

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



Government Offices of Sweden

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

Several Ministers participated in commemorating Holocaust Remembrance Day on 27 January

Published 30 January 2020

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Article from Ministry of Employment

Åsa Lindhagen hosted EU ministerial meeting on gender equality in Stockholm

Published 06 December 2019

At the initiative of Minister for Gender Equality Åsa Lindhagen, an EU ministerial meeting on gender equality – The STHLM Initiative – took place in Stockholm on 3–4 December. Ms Lindhagen invited Finland, which currently holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, and the other EU Member States that will hold the Presidency in the coming years.

The aim of The STHLM Initiative was to help the EU sharpen its tools for sustainable gender mainstreaming, with a focus on economic equality, and to examine how Member States can best lead this work during their presidencies. The meeting discussed a number of key issues for the EU's future gender equality work, including the upcoming gender equality strategy, gender-equal economies, implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, and the work to end men's violence against women and honour-based violence and oppression.

The meeting was attended by representatives of nine other EU countries and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).

“Now that the EU has a new Commission and a new parliament, we have a window of opportunity to put gender equality at the top of the European agenda. It is extremely important that Sweden pushes for greater gender equality throughout the EU,” says Ms Lindhagen.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Employment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice

Sweden's national UPR report submitted to UN

Published 15 October 2019

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a unique mechanism of the United Nations Human Rights Council that involves a periodic review of the human rights situation in all UN Member States. It is now time for Sweden to be reviewed within the framework of the third cycle of the UPR.

The UPR is a well-established instrument in the work to promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The review, which takes place in Geneva, is conducted by other States and all issues related to human rights can be raised. On 14 October, Sweden therefore submitted a national report to the UN on the follow-up of the recommendations to Sweden from the previous review stage in January 2015. The review stage will take place on 27 January 2020 when Sweden participates in a dialogue in the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

The Government considers the UPR process to be of major importance in the work to protect and promote human rights, both at home and abroad. Through constructive dialogue, and in close cooperation with relevant stakeholders, including civil society organisations, Sweden is working through the UPR to attain greater transparency on the situation for human rights.

“We are living in a time that, for the first time in a very long time, requires the international agreements on human rights to be respected and taken very seriously. The Government is aware that challenges remain in the work to protect and promote human rights in Sweden, and is determined to prioritise

the work to overcome them,” says Minister Åsa Lindhagen.

The objective of human rights policy is to ensure full respect for Sweden’s international human rights commitments. The objective underscores that it is a central task for the Government to ensure that Sweden’s international commitments are complied with in all parts of the country and in all public sector areas – nationally, regionally and locally.



Article from Ministry of Employment

exchange of experiences regarding violence prevention work

Published 02 October 2019

On 16 and 17 September the Ministry of Employment and the European Commission hosted a seminar on violence prevention with a focus on men, boys and masculine norms. Representatives from 15 EU countries took part. Participants visited Botkyrka municipality, where they received information on the joint efforts by social services, police and schools to prevent violence.

Domestic violence against women is estimated to cost society several billion kronor a year in Sweden. A few years ago, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) calculated the corresponding cost for the entire EU as more than two trillion kronor. Counteracting violence against women is a priority issue for the Government and the EU. In 2016 the Government adopted a ten-year national strategy for the period 2017–2026 with the principal objective of developing society's work on violence prevention. Research and experiences show that violence needs to be prevented at an early stage and that this work needs to include boys and men to achieve a change.

“Men's violence against women must cease. This requires political engagement and effective violence prevention work with the focus on men and boys in Sweden and the world. I hope that this seminar was an important first step in developing cooperation on these issues within the EU,” says Minister for Gender Equality Åsa Lindhagen.

The Government is investing SEK 1.5 billion to implement the national strategy during the period 2017–2020, which includes:

- Assignments and funds to the county councils so they can support the municipalities in their work.
- A gender policy agreement with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), which covers financing the support to the municipalities.
- Grants to non-profit organisations.

The European seminar participants made a study visit to Botkyrka, a municipality that has succeeded in establishing permanent violence prevention work in compulsory schools and upper secondary schools with social services and the police. In Botkyrka, the violence prevention work starts very early, in antenatal care. Then the work continues in preschool, school and through non-profit organisations such as sports associations. The violence prevention work also aims to involve parents at an early stage, to build up mutual trust.

Seminar participants heard how the county administrative board in Västerbotten is working with the organisation MÄN to support violence prevention work with young people in four of the county's sparsely populated municipalities.



Article from Ministry of Employment

Major investment for increased gender equality and reduced violence and oppression

Published 20 September 2019

The Government has previously planned SEK 290 million for the implementation of gender equality policy in 2020, of which the majority will go to measures to prevent and combat men's violence against women and honour-related violence and oppression. The Government is now proposing an extra SEK 155 million. The investment is part of an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

Of the new investment of SEK 155 million, SEK 45 million is earmarked for the work to combat honour-related violence and oppression. SEK 10 million will go to the work to combat men's violence against women and SEK 100 million to non-profit women's and girls' shelters. The funds will strengthen initiatives within the framework of the Government's national strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women and honour-related violence and oppression.

It is important that the work to combat men's violence against women and honour-related violence and oppression, and the support provided to victims of sexual offences continue and are developed. The violence prevention work needs to continue to be developed, not least measures for young men and boys. The same applies to relapse prevention work to stop violence being repeated. Government agencies, municipalities and health and medical care need better access to methods and support to increase the detection of

exposure to violence.

The funds are expected to contribute to effective measures to counter the occurrence and reoccurrence of violence, with the aim of stopping men's violence against women and honour-related violence and oppression. SEK 100 million of the Government's investment will go to non-profit women's and girls' shelters. Non-profit women's and girls' shelters do important work for very vulnerable groups. The Government wants to support civil society while also contributing to functioning support to victims of crime in municipalities' and regions' areas of responsibility.

“Stopping men's violence against women is a priority objective for the Government. We will redouble our efforts to combat honour-related violence and oppression, through increased knowledge, better support measures and tougher sentences. Women and men and girls and boys must have the same rights and opportunities to bodily integrity. It is unacceptable that a large proportion of women and girls are subjected to sexual or physical violence or psychological abuse. With the Government's investment, we are now redoubling our efforts against violence and oppression,” says Minister for Gender Equality Åsa Lindhagen.



Article from Ministry of Employment

Historic investment to combat racism and strengthen equal rights for LGBTI people

Published 19 September 2019

The Government is making several investments to combat racism and strengthen the rights of LGBTI people. The Government is strengthening the national plan to combat racism and hate crime with SEK 10 million per year from 2020. At the same time, the work to strengthen the rights of LGBTI people will receive SEK 14 million per year from 2020, and temporary additional funds of SEK 10 million per year are planned for 2021 and 2022. It is the biggest ever investment in the area by any government.

Investments to combat racism

The Swedish Security Service 2018 Yearbook states: “A xenophobic and radical nationalist current, most evident online, is on the rise in Sweden. This contributes to a picture of a growing broad radical nationalism including radical and violent groups.” It is the Government’s view that these currents and racist organisations spread, for example, antisemitic, Islamophobic and Afrophobic messages.

Increased awareness and knowledge are required in order to address and handle racism’s breeding grounds. Hate crime will be prevented and combated. Crime victims must see that society takes these crimes – and the vulnerability of victims – very seriously.

The Government therefore wants to strengthen the national plan to combat racism, similar forms of hostility and hate crime. This will provide scope for continued and new measures within the framework of the plan's five strategic areas:

- More knowledge, education and research.
- Improved coordination and monitoring.
- Civil society: greater support and more in-depth dialogue.
- Strengthening preventive measures online.
- A more active legal system.
- The Government intends to allocate SEK 10 million to the national plan per year from 2020 onwards.

The rights of LGBTQ people will be strengthened

In recent years, several reforms have been made that have strengthened the rights of LGBTI people. Despite this, there are still major challenges throughout the world, including in Sweden. Same-sex couples risk difficulties when they become parents because of legislation that is not tailored to the needs of rainbow families. LGBTI people have poorer mental health than the general population, and the situation for transgender people is particularly worrying.

The reform efforts must therefore continue so that LGBTI people can live in freedom, with full respect for their rights and identities.

The Government intends to strengthen the efforts through an action plan for equal rights and opportunities for LGBTI people, which will complement other measures and act as a focal point for efforts in the future. SEK 14 million is to be allocated for the action plan per year from 2020, and time-limited additional funds of SEK 10 million per year are planned for 2021 and 2022.

The action plan will focus on current challenges and concrete measures. The action plan will reinforce and complement the strategy for equal rights and opportunities irrespective of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression and will focus on current challenges and concrete measures. Organisations that represent LGBTI people's equal rights will be invited to take part in dialogue on the content of the action plan.

The investment clearly shows that the situation for LGBTI people is a priority issue for the Government and that it is work that needs to be long-

term.

“When parts of society become unsympathetic to the concept of the equal value of all people, we must protect the steps that have been made, but more importantly, take new steps forward. This is why we are now making a historic investment to combat racism and strengthen equal rights for LGBTI people,” says Minister for Gender Equality Åsa Lindhagen.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Employment

All people must have control over their own lives

Published 14 May 2019

Listen to Åsa Lindhagen, Minister for Gender Equality with responsibility for anti-discrimination and anti-segregation, talk about what changes she wants to see and which issue she will be addressing first.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Minister for Gender Equality to highlight Consent Act at summit on girls' and women's rights

Published 11 March 2019

Åsa Lindhagen will be heading the Swedish delegation at the 63rd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York on 11–22 March. This year's theme – social protection systems – is intended to highlight global challenges for gender equality.

Global gender equality challenges

CSW is the foremost intergovernmental body working to strengthen the situation of women. Through negotiations, the member countries agree on joint conclusions to strengthen women's rights in a number of areas. The delegation includes politicians and officials from the Government Offices and the Riksdag, as well as representatives of several government agencies and civil society organisations.

“Gender equality is a fundamental matter of human rights, democracy and social justice. Women and men must have the same power to shape society and their own lives,” says Åsa Lindhagen.

Seminar on the Consent Act and family planning

Minister for Gender Equality Åsa Lindhagen will speak in the UN General Assembly and will also host a seminar in collaboration with the She Decides movement on the subject of sexual and reproductive health and rights.

“We will continue our extensive support for sexual and reproductive health

and rights, at the normative level as well as financially. For example, Sweden is funding initiatives for safe and legal abortions, contraceptives and comprehensive sexuality education,” says Åsa Lindhagen.

Sweden will also host a seminar about sexual offences legislation and provide information about Sweden’s new Consent Act.

“We will share information on our new sexual offences legislation and an information campaign linked to this. This legislation is based on consent and states the obvious: if sex is not voluntary, it is illegal. Stopping men’s violence against women is a priority issue for my Government,” says Åsa Lindhagen.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Employment

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

Published 07 March 2019

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

A more gender-equal society

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

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

A matter of human rights

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

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

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

All ministers are pursuing feminist policy

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

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



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Review of Sweden's action to combat violence against women and domestic violence

Published 01 February 2019

The Council of Europe has published its first review of how Sweden is fulfilling its commitments under the organisation's convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention). The Convention, to which Sweden acceded in 2014, is the most comprehensive and detailed instrument for human rights in this area.

In September 2017, the Government submitted a report on Swedish conditions and initiatives to comply with the Istanbul Convention to the Council of Europe's expert group GREVIO. In February 2018, GREVIO held a dialogue on this work with a Swedish delegation in Strasbourg and, the following month, GREVIO visited Sweden for meetings with representatives of the Government, public authorities, municipalities, county councils and civil society. On Friday 25 January 2019, the Council of Europe adopted GREVIO's recommendations to Sweden.

A fundamental challenge for gender equality

The Istanbul Convention concerns measures against all forms of violence against women and girls, including honour-related violence and oppression. It also aims to combat all forms of domestic violence, including against children.

In its review report, GREVIO appreciates that Sweden considers violence against women to be a fundamental challenge for gender equality and holds

Sweden up as a leading country in gender equality policy. In particular, GREVIO highlights the Violence against Women Reform of 1998, the introduction of the gross violation of a woman's integrity as an offence and the new consent-based sexual offences legislation of 2018. Furthermore, GREVIO praises Sweden for its work on an evidence-based approach to the areas covered by the Convention.

Recommendations from GREVIO

GREVIO also makes a total of 41 recommendations to Sweden. Eight of these recommendations are particularly strong, which is to say that, according to GREVIO, Sweden should immediately remedy these shortcomings. Sweden has also submitted explanatory comments to GREVIO's report which are published separately on the Council of Europe website. By January 2022 at the latest, the Government is expected to deliver a report on how the Council of Europe's recommendations on the implementation of the Istanbul Convention have been managed in Sweden.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Åsa Lindhagen

Published 30 January 2019

On Monday 21 January, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven presented the Statement of Government Policy in the Riksdag and announced the ministers that make up the Government. Åsa Lindhagen is Minister for Gender Equality, with responsibility for anti-discrimination and anti-segregation.

“We are a feminist government. The Swedish Gender Equality Agency will remain,” announced Stefan Löfven in the Statement of Government Policy on 21 January.

The Government has appointed Karin Strandås as State Secretary to Åsa Lindhagen, Minister for Gender Equality, with responsibility for anti-discrimination and anti-segregation.

Statement of Government Policy 21 January 2019

State Secretary to Åsa Lindhagen

The Swedish Gender Equality Agency



Article from Ministry of Employment

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

Published 17 April 2018 Updated 16 January 2020

On 1st of January 2020 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Act (2018:1197) entered into force.

Why does the Government want to incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) into Swedish law?

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

The Government considers that it needs to be made clearer that Sweden's commitments under the CRC must be ensured at all levels in public sector activities and that a child rights-based approach should permeate all activities concerning children and young people.

Incorporation of the CRC gives it the status of Swedish law, entailing a clearer obligation on courts and legal practitioners to consider the rights that follow from the CRC in deliberations and assessments that are part of decision-making processes in cases and matters concerning children.

Giving the CRC the status of Swedish law, and with support and knowledge-enhancing measures, it is considered that a child rights-based approach will have an impact in practice.

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

The Inquiry on the rights of the child found in its surveys that the impact of children's rights and of a child rights-based approach has been insufficient in many ways, including when it comes to the principle of the best interests of the child and the child's right to express their views.

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

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

Incorporation of the CRC gives it the status of Swedish law, entailing a clearer obligation on courts and legal practitioners to consider the rights that follow from the CRC in deliberations and assessments that are part of decision-making processes in cases and matters concerning children.

Incorporation means that the child's role as a legal entity with specific rights of their own is made clearer and can therefore be expected to contribute to greater focus on the child in situations concerning the child.

In the Government's view, incorporation of the CRC will help give visibility to the rights of the child and is a way of creating a foundation for a more child rights-based approach in all public sector activities, in which these rights are seen from a holistic perspective.

All of the measures presented by the Government in the bill (prop. 2017/18:186) in the form of an act on the UN Convention on the Rights of

the Child, the guidance document, the knowledge boost and continued systematic transformation work should be seen as a single package to ensure that the Convention gains traction.

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

Incorporation will make the provisions of the CRC applicable as law and may – with the reservation that all the provisions are not directly applicable in each individual case – form the basis of decisions by public authorities in cases and matters in which the CRC's provisions are not explicitly stated in other legislation.

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

Incorporation will make the Convention as a whole more visible and it will be clear that the rights contained in the Convention are interlinked and should be interpreted in relation to each other, and that they are brought together in one and the same act. The Convention will be a cohesive regulatory framework to relate to.

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

All of the measures presented by the Government in the bill (prop. 2017/18:186) in the form of an act on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the guidance document, the knowledge boost and continued systematic transformation work should be seen as a single package to ensure that the Convention has an impact.

For the CRC to have an impact, continued transformation of the CRC's provisions into national law is necessary, alongside incorporation. Moreover, a combination of various measures is necessary, such as guidance, education and coordination between different actors at different levels in society.

In its bill, the Government therefore states that a guidance document should

be produced to support the methodical interpretation and application of the CRC. The Government also lists the measures under way to increase knowledge about the CRC among children and young people, and in municipalities, county councils and government agencies through a knowledge boost. Further, the Government describes the need for continued and systematic transformation work to enable the CRC to continue having an impact on legislation and to be made visible in the preparatory work for legislation, where the Convention may be relevant.

The Government has also decided to task an Inquiry Chair with conducting a survey to shed light on how compatible Swedish legislation and practice are with the CRC. The aim of the survey is to provide support in future work on the transformation of the CRC's provisions in various areas of law. The Government also describes measures to better coordinate the dialogue with civil society organisations on issues concerning children's rights.

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

Incorporation of the CRC entails a clearer obligation on legal practitioners to consider the rights that follow from the CRC in deliberations and assessments that are part of decision-making processes in cases and matters concerning children.

In addition, incorporation means that the child's role as a legal entity with specific rights of their own is made clearer and can therefore be expected to contribute to greater focus on the child in situations concerning the child.

How do other acts relate to the CRC?

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

Incorporation of the CRC makes clear that other legislation concerning children, such as the provisions of the Children and Parents Code, the Aliens

Act, the Education Act, the Act concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments and the Social Services Act, must be interpreted on the basis of the CRC in its entirety and not only on the basis of the provisions transformed into each act.

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