



Press conference in light of Russia's illegal annexation of additional regions in Ukraine

On 30 September, Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson held a press conference in light of Russia's illegal annexation of a further four Ukrainian regions. Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist also took part.

“Illegal annexation has no legal force. Like Crimea, these four regions therefore remain within Ukraine's internationally recognised borders. Sweden condemns Russia's actions in the strongest possible terms,” said Ms Andersson.

An eighth package of sanctions is now being prepared at EU level. Sweden and the EU will continue to provide financial, military and humanitarian support to Ukraine for as long as is necessary. Russia's decision to annex additional areas will also be the focus of next week's informal meeting of the European Council.

Ms Linde announced that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will summon Russia's Ambassador to formally convey Sweden's strong condemnation.

The current caretaker government has full powers to act for the security of Sweden and the Swedish people until the new government takes office. Sweden always has a functioning government in place.



Government Offices of Sweden

Prime Minister comments on Wednesday's security policy council meeting

Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson and Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde gave their comments following the meeting of the Government's security policy council on Wednesday 28 September. Head of the Swedish Coast Guard's Operations Department Johan Norrman was also present.

The Government gathered for an extraordinary meeting of the security policy council in view of the leaks in the Nord Stream 1 and 2 gas pipelines in the Baltic Sea.

“It is likely that a deliberate act – in other words, sabotage – caused the leaks, which are located in the Swedish and Danish economic zones. This is thus not a direct attack on Sweden,” said Ms Andersson.

The Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and representatives of the Swedish Security Service and the Military Intelligence and Security Service attended the meeting, along with representatives of the Swedish Coast Guard, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency and the Swedish Energy Agency. Ms Andersson emphasised that contact with international partners within the EU and NATO and with the United States had been maintained throughout the day.

“The Government and, of course, other countries take a very serious view of this situation, because these explosions must be seen against the backdrop of the security situation. The Government and the relevant authorities are now working flat out to investigate what happened and take necessary measures,” Ms Andersson said.

The Prime Minister also reminded the Swedish people to seek information from credible sources, and not to spread information that does not come from such sources.

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Likely deliberate act behind leaks in Nord Stream 1 and 2 Baltic Sea gas pipelines

On Tuesday 27 September, Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson, Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist outlined the Government's views on the explosions that have caused leaks in the Nord Stream 1 and 2 gas pipelines in the Baltic Sea.

The Government considers that a deliberate act is behind the explosions, and takes a serious view of the incident given the security situation. Ms Andersson stated that Sweden is in close contact with Denmark and Germany in particular, but also with the EU, NATO, Norway, Finland and the United States.

“I will be convening the Government's security policy council, and the relevant Swedish authorities are taking all necessary measures. The Swedish Police Authority has also launched a preliminary investigation into possible sabotage. At the same time, I would like to emphasise that this is not an attack on Sweden. The explosions did not take place on Swedish territory, but rather in our economic zone,” Ms Andersson said.

The Prime Minister also urged the Swedish people to be vigilant, to seek information from credible sources and not to spread information about Swedish Armed Forces activities. The current caretaker government has full powers to act for the security of Sweden and the Swedish people until the new government takes office. Sweden always has a functioning government in place.



Government Offices of Sweden

Joint letter on energy measures

The prime ministers of Sweden, Denmark and Finland have jointly written a letter to President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen on the importance of urgent action to tackle soaring energy prices.

High electricity prices, which are a consequence of Putin's energy war on Europe, are best dealt with jointly in the EU. In the letter, the three prime ministers stress the need to save energy, the importance of minimising the impact of gas prices on electricity prices and the need to continue the green transition.

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SEK 1 billion in additional support for Ukraine

On Monday 29 August, Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson received Ukrainian Minister for Foreign Affairs Dmytro Kuleba to discuss additional Swedish support for Ukraine.

At the joint press conference, Ms Andersson began by welcoming Mr Kuleba back to Stockholm and subsequently reflected on her strong memories from her trip to Kyiv in July.

”It’s heartbreaking to see the atrocities and the destruction of your vast, fertile country.”

[Article: Magdalena Andersson visits Ukraine](#)

“You are defending yourselves and your country, but you are also defending our common European values and international regulations. Borders must never be changed by force and war. This is a massive undertaking, and it’s our duty and honour to support you in every possible way. My Government will therefore approve new economic support to Ukraine in the amount of SEK 1 billion – approximately USD 100 million,” said Ms Andersson.

Two-part support package

Ms Andersson described the support as having two parts:

“The first part is new military support in the amount of SEK 500 million. The content of the new economic support package corresponds to your requests and complements donations from other nations. A decision on the issue will be made in the near future.”

The second part of Sweden’s support consists of SEK 500 million to promote Ukraine’s economy, resilience and recovery. Ms Andersson described the support in several points:

“Sweden will increase its support to aid Ukraine’s recovery and reconstruction, not least through management and reuse of destroyed infrastructure. Recycling destroyed buildings and infrastructure can be dangerous and explosive. Sweden, together with international partners, is well-suited to help Ukraine in this area. We will also buy Ukrainian wheat, which will support Ukraine’s economy and ensure continued food transports from the country.

“We will continue to give funding to the UN World Food Programme to purchase, transfer and deliver wheat that is currently stuck in Ukraine to countries that are threatened by famine. Sweden’s contribution will enable fully loaded ships to transport 30 000 tonnes of Ukrainian wheat to millions of recipients who are at risk of starvation. Since this increases the country’s self-sufficiency, it’s also critical for Ukraine’s independence.”

Ms Andersson concluded the press conference by emphasising that Ukraine is a part of Europe:

“Ukraine is a part of the European family, and this family will help you win the war.”

During his visit, Mr Kuleba will also meet with his colleague, Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde, and Minister for International Development Cooperation Matilda Ernkrans.

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Magdalena Andersson visits Ukraine

Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson met with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Monday in Kyiv. She also paid a visit to the cities Borodyanka and Bucha.

“It was very important to me to come here in person to show Sweden's and the Swedish people's support for Ukraine in their fight for freedom and democracy. Now I've been able to see the destruction suffered by Ukraine with my own eyes,” said Ms Andersson during a press conference via video link from the presidential palace in Kyiv.

Ms Andersson also visited Borodyanka and Bucha on Monday. In Bucha she met with the local priest and visited the location of mass graves where hundreds of civilians were buried.

“I am convinced now more than ever of the importance of the humanitarian, financial and military support we give to Ukraine. It is essential that this support be long-term so that Ukraine can continue exercising its legal right to defend itself,” said Ms Andersson.

Together with partners from the EU and beyond, Sweden has consistently condemned Russia's brutal, unprovoked and illegal invasion of Ukraine, a peaceful and democratic neighbour. Sweden has also strongly condemned Russia's attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, and its indiscriminate violence.

“It is critical that this violence not produce political gains for Moscow. Together with other EU countries, Sweden will therefore continue to work tirelessly to demand accountability for the crimes committed and to bring the perpetrators and those responsible to justice,” said Ms Andersson.



Sweden invited to join NATO at Madrid Summit

On 29–30 June, Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson took part in NATO's Madrid Summit. During the Summit, NATO members decided to invite Sweden and Finland to join.

After the Summit, Ms Andersson said that it had been three important days for Sweden's security, but she began with a few words about Ukraine.

“We must not forget the Ukrainian people who continue to fight not only for their country, but also for the fundamental right to self-determination. That's why we must continue to support the defence of Ukraine,” said Ms Andersson.

She announced the Government's decision to send additional weapons and materiel valued at SEK 500 million to Ukraine. The support requested by Ukraine includes mine clearance equipment and anti-tank weapons.

Signing of accession protocol planned for next Tuesday

Ms Andersson said that the Madrid Summit was a milestone not only for Sweden and Finland, but for NATO as a whole, and that support for Sweden and Finland has been “almost deafening”.

“The plan is to sign the accession protocol next Tuesday. I will send Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde to Brussels. After that, we will be able to participate with very few restrictions as an observer. Technical discussions with NATO are also planned for next week.”

“Sweden will be more secure as a NATO member – and NATO will be stronger with Sweden as a member country,” concluded Ms Andersson.



Government Offices of Sweden

Stockholm IHRA plenary 20-23 June

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) has successfully concluded its first plenary meetings under the Swedish Presidency. Guided by the motto, “Together for impact,” more than 200 experts, political representatives, and representatives of international organizations and civil society met in Stockholm over four days to advance education, remembrance, and research of the Holocaust and the genocide of the Roma.

In her address to the IHRA Plenary, Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson said: “We must remain steadfast in our efforts to counter violence, hatred and ignorance, which are increasingly undermining peace and democracy. Holocaust denial and distortion are gaining ground – we cannot allow this to happen.”

[Watch the address by Prime Minister on the opening of IHRA Plenary](#)

“We mustn’t forget that we are bound together in this work not only by choice, but also by the facts of history,” IHRA Chair Ambassador Ann Bernes underlined in her welcome address. “Our meetings are critical reminders of how important it is to face this history and protect the facts, so that we can develop policies and foster societies that can move forward together.”

The Stockholm plenary meetings were held four months into Russia’s unjustified military aggression against Ukraine and gave considerable focus to the issue, with statements in keeping with the IHRA Chair’s statement on Ukraine and Babyn Yar made on 3 March 2022, deploring the extensive loss of life and rejecting the gross Holocaust distortion being used to justify it. Member Countries reaffirmed their commitment to democratic principles

and efforts to counter Holocaust distortion, antisemitism, and antigypsyism, and engaged in extensive discussions on possible initiatives to address the situation and assist Ukraine within the areas of expertise of the IHRA, and in dialogue and collaboration with its Permanent International Partners, as well as with the wider international community.

The IHRA's expert Working Groups and Committees made several concrete proposals that will be brought forward and put into action, in keeping with continued discussions between Member Countries.

IHRA Honorary Chairman Professor Yehuda Bauer stressed the importance of all IHRA Member Countries showing their support for Ukraine. "The IHRA has an important voice, the voice of 35 countries. We should say what we think, and we must inform the world that we stand behind the Ukrainian efforts to resist an unprovoked aggression by a major power," he said.

The meetings' impact-oriented approach was also highlighted during discussions on progress made in relation to the concrete pledges presented at the Malmö International Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism – Remember-ReAct, as well as various IHRA tools, including the IHRA Toolkit Against Holocaust Distortion and the Protect the Facts campaign, the working definition of antigypsyism/anti-Roma discrimination and the Guidelines for Identifying Relevant Documentation for Holocaust Research, Education and Remembrance.

Furthermore, and importantly, the IHRA secured the long-term sustainability of its work by adopting a new financial model for membership contributions.

The Plenary also welcomed Aotearoa New Zealand as a new Observer Country. The IHRA now consists of 35 Member Countries, 9 Observer Countries, and 8 Permanent International Partners.

In addition, the Plenary confirmed that Israel will take on the Presidency of the IHRA in 2025, 80 years after the end of the Holocaust and 15 years after last holding the Presidency in 2010.

Special events included both an exclusive seminar by the Living History Forum and the new Swedish Holocaust Museum, which featured an address by Swedish Minister of Culture Jeanette Gustafsdotter, and a reception at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which featured an address by the Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs Ann Linde.

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Government Offices of Sweden

Address by Prime Minister on the opening of IHRA Plenary

The first plenary of the Swedish IHRA Presidency has been held in Stockholm the 20–23 June. The plenary provided an opportunity for the delegates to finally meet again after some time of digital meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The plenary session with the Heads of Delegations was opened by Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson.

– We must remain steadfast in our national and international efforts to counter incitement to violence, hatred and ignorance, which is increasingly undermining peace and democracy, said Magdalena Andersson.

– Holocaust denial and distortion is gaining traction. We cannot allow this to happen, she continued.

Watch the entire address [here](#).

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NATO membership and Russia's invasion of Ukraine on the agenda as Prime Minister receives NATO Secretary General

Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson received NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg Monday 13 June. During their meeting, Ms Andersson and Mr Stoltenberg discussed Sweden's and Finland's applications for NATO membership, Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the security situation in Sweden's neighbourhood.

At the press conference following her meeting with Mr Stoltenberg, Ms Andersson said that Russia's invasion of Ukraine was a watershed for Europe and Sweden that has changed Sweden's security situation.

“After careful consideration with the parties represented in the Riksdag, my Government decided, with broad support from the public and in the Riksdag, to apply for NATO membership,” she said.

Ms Andersson stressed that because Sweden and Finland applied together, security will improve for both countries, as well as for the Baltic Sea region, Europe and NATO. She also said that Sweden takes Turkey's views on Sweden's and Finland's applications very seriously and that she warmly welcomes Mr Stoltenberg's work to facilitate dialogue between the countries.

“We have a lot to offer NATO and its members. Both Sweden and Finland will contribute to security in the region and for the whole of NATO, including Turkey,” said Ms Andersson.



Special meeting of the European Council, 30–31 May

The European Council is holding a special meeting in Brussels on 30–31 May. A number of issues related to Russia's invasion of Ukraine are expected to be discussed. These include continued EU support to Ukraine, energy and food security. Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson is representing Sweden.

The situation in Ukraine

The meeting will begin with a discussion on the situation in Ukraine, where questions concerning the country's liquidity problem and EU support for the country's reconstruction will also be discussed. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will take part in the beginning of the discussion via video link.

Energy

At its meeting in March, EU leaders called on the European Commission to develop an action plan to phase out the EU's dependence on Russian energy imports and thereby also reduce its dependence on fossil fuels. The European Commission presented the action plan, REPowerEU, on 18 May. It has three main components – more diversified energy imports, faster expansion of renewables and saving energy.

EU leaders are expected to discuss matters such as electricity market initiatives to hold back rising electricity prices and achieving targets that have been set for energy efficiency and renewables.

Food

EU leaders are expected to highlight the food security situation and price trends in light of the fact that Ukraine, a major supplier of agricultural

products, is being stopped by Russia from exporting to the world market. The discussion will focus on what help the EU can provide using European infrastructure and coordination.

Chair of the African Union Macky Sall will take part in the discussion via video link.

Security and defence

EU leaders will discuss how EU countries can jointly continue working on better coordination and development of defence industries and defence-related technologies in the EU.

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Government Offices of Sweden

The Government has decided today that Sweden will apply for NATO membership.

This decision is based on a security analysis that the Government invited the other Riksdag parties to take part in and its conclusions that were presented in a report on 13 May.

The Government's assessment is that NATO membership is the best way to protect Sweden's security in light of the fundamentally changed security environment following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Sweden's security policy choices today were also the subject of a special debate in the Riksdag.

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Government Offices of Sweden

Sweden and Poland mobilised humanitarian support for Ukraine

On 5 May more than SEK 60 billion in support was announced at a donor conference for Ukraine in Warsaw co-organised by Sweden and Poland together with the EU.

To meet the increasing humanitarian needs and support Ukrainian society, Sweden is allocating an additional SEK 230 million. Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson and Prime Minister of Poland Mateusz Morawiecki co-hosted the donor conference.

“In total, we raised SEK 60 billion, which shows that the rest of the world’s great support for Ukraine remains strong and sustainable,” said Ms Andersson.

In connection with the conference, Minister for International Development Cooperation Matilda Ernkrans led a roundtable discussion on the economic impact of the war.

Following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, humanitarian needs in the country are immense and expected to increase further. Approximately 16 million people are in need of help. Roughly eight million people are internally displaced within Ukraine, while over five million people are estimated to have fled the country. The UN’s humanitarian appeal to provide people in Ukraine with life-saving support and protection will amount to USD 2.5 billion by the end of August. To meet the increasing humanitarian needs and to support the Ukrainian people, Sweden has announced an additional SEK 230 million for humanitarian efforts in Ukraine.

“The war is ongoing and humanitarian needs are increasing. Sweden will therefore contribute an additional SEK 230 million. The Ukrainian people need our support and since the war started, we have contributed SEK 775 million to humanitarian efforts in Ukraine and its neighbourhood,” said Ms

Andersson.

In connection with the donor conference, Sweden and Poland also arranged a roundtable discussion on the economic impact of the war. Sweden was represented by Minister for International Development Cooperation Matilda Ernkrans.

“While we focus on the acute humanitarian efforts in Ukraine, we also need to manage the long-term economic impact of the war. The rest of the world must support early recovery and, in the long-term, reconstruction,” said Ms Ernkrans.

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Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson in talks with German Government and Finnish Prime Minister

On Tuesday 3 May, Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson was at Schloss Meseberg in Germany by invitation of Chancellor Olaf Scholz to take part in talks with the German Government together with Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin.

In her speech to the media after the meeting, Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson stressed the value of the opportunity to jointly discuss the new security situation in Europe and its consequences.

“This meeting is an important signal to the world of our solidarity,” emphasised Ms Andersson.

Ms Andersson also explained that during the meeting she said that Sweden is now facing decisive security policy decisions and that the Swedish Government is conducting a supplementary security policy analysis together with the parties in the Swedish Riksdag.

During the meeting, the situation in Ukraine and the brutal war that has now been going on for more than two months were also discussed, said Ms Andersson.

The joint statements can be viewed on the German Government’s website (in German and English).

[German Government website](#)



Norway and Sweden agree to intensify cooperation on carbon capture and storage

Prime ministers Jonas Gahr Støre and Magdalena Andersson met on 5 April for talks in Stockholm. The prime ministers agreed to conclude as soon as possible an agreement between Norway and Sweden on the export/import of carbon dioxide to enable cooperation between Norwegian and Swedish companies on the permanent storage of carbon dioxide in the Norwegian continental shelf.

“I am pleased that we are working together to further develop the close cooperation between Norway and Sweden. As part of this, we have agreed to strengthen cooperation on energy and climate issues in order to succeed in the green transition and the capture, transport and storage of carbon dioxide, which is a key element of this,” says Mr Støre.

An agreement between the countries is required under the London Protocol to allow carbon dioxide to be transported across their land border. When carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology is employed at facilities with biogenic emissions, called bio-CCS, it results in negative emissions to the atmosphere.

The countries have a solid foundation to build on in the form of Nordic energy and climate cooperation and the EEA Agreement. Both Norway and Sweden want to be the driving force for achieving national climate goals and carbon neutrality in the Nordic region and contribute to the achievement of the goals in the Paris Agreement by the whole world.

“Our countries have everything to gain from working together to speed up the green industrial revolution. Together with the other Nordic countries, we

can show the world how the green transition can create more jobs and secure our welfare. We need to reduce emissions, but in order to achieve our goals we also need carbon capture and storage,” says Ms Andersson.

Norway and Sweden also want to intensify their cooperation on technology development, energy infrastructure and the green transition in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the countries of the North Sea region.

Background:

Norway and Sweden are pursuing an ambitious climate and energy policy based on the Paris Agreement. In order to achieve the climate goals, substantial emission reductions will be required. In addition, CCS is likely to be a necessary complement to the emission reduction efforts, as a measure where no reasonable alternatives to fossil emissions exist or as a complementary measure in the form of bio-CCS.

Norway and Sweden cooperate closely on energy and the climate, particularly through Nordic energy and climate cooperation and the EEA Agreement. Norway and Sweden were the first countries in the world to establish a cross-border certificate market to stimulate the development of renewable energy. The Norwegian and Swedish electricity markets are closely linked through a number of connections. Norway and Sweden are parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR) and the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter 1972 (London Protocol) under the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and have both ratified the amendments to the London Protocol which are required for the transport of carbon dioxide from Sweden for offshore storage in Norway.

There is an increased interest in CCS in Sweden, both from industry and public agencies. The Swedish Government has instructed the Swedish Energy Agency to be the national centre ([länk till Energimyndigheten](#)) for carbon capture and storage. Sweden will also introduce operating support for bio-CCS through reverse auctions. The ambition is for an initial auction to take place at the end of 2022 in order to allow for the start of storage in 2026.

Several actors in Sweden have the potential to conduct CCS, and the Norwegian Northern Lights partnership and several Swedish companies have entered into a statement of intent. In Sweden, actors have the opportunity to

apply for central government investment support through the Green Industry Leap ([länk](#)) and a Swedish bio-CCS project has been granted funds through the EU Innovation Fund.

In 2021, the Norwegian parliament approved the Longship project, a full-scale CCS demonstration project ([länk](#)). The Norwegian Government will cover two thirds of the total costs during the first phase of the project. Northern Lights ([länk](#)) is part of Langskips infrastruktur and has status as one of the Important Projects of Common European Interest (IPCEI). The project has been funded by the EU's Connecting Europe Facility (CEF). The storage capacity of Northern Lights will be approximately five million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year in phase 2. Norway has significant geological potential for storing carbon dioxide in addition to this.

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EU and US stood united for Ukraine at the European Council meeting

The European Council meeting of 24–25 March, one month after Russia began its aggression against Ukraine, focused on the conflict and consequences for the EU. The US President attended the meeting for talks on Thursday evening. On Friday the focus was on Europe's strategic dependence on Russian fossil fuels, the high energy prices in the EU and the green transition.

Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson emphasised that she welcomes the US and the EU presenting a united front to bring Russia's aggression to an end.

“President Biden's message to European leaders yesterday was crystal clear. It is through unity and close cooperation that we can act vigorously against Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine,” said Ms Andersson at a press conference in connection with the Council meeting. She also said that she had the opportunity to participate in talks with President Biden, which was not possible for all EU leaders.

“I stressed the importance of continuing to cooperate effectively on the sanctions and continuing to support Ukraine. We also need to prepare for the reconstruction of Ukraine and, not least, we need to collectively step up our efforts to break Europe's dependence on Russian oil and gas,” she said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky also addressed the Council meeting via video link. He thanked the EU for supporting Ukraine against Russia's aggression and also appealed for further sanctions against Russia and more support to Ukraine.

Discussions on the second day of the Council meeting focused on how the EU should deal with the rising energy and food prices caused by the conflict. The Council also discussed how the EU can promote the green transition while reducing Member States' dependence on fossil fuels from Russia and other parts of the world.

“Sweden has been pushing these issues for a long time and now we can see growing enthusiasm from the other Member States,” said Ms Andersson. “Our future lies in the green transition and the investments we make can also create a significant number of jobs here and now.”

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Defence appropriation to increase to two per cent of GDP

Sweden's military defence funding is to increase to two per cent of GDP. This was conveyed by Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson at a press briefing with Minister for Finance Mikael Damberg and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

The Prime Minister said that the Government has a three-track approach in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The first track involves supporting Ukraine and the Ukrainian people by providing financial and humanitarian support, but also support to strengthen Ukraine's resilience. The second track involves the Government, together with other countries, imposing sanctions against the Russian regime, and the third track involves taking measures to strengthen Sweden.

“Tensions are high in our neighbourhood – the situation is worse than for several decades and we need to keep strengthening our defence capabilities,” said Ms Andersson.

Further military defence reinforcements

The Prime Minister noted that Sweden's ongoing military scale-up is the largest since the 1950s, and reinstating national military service is one of the measures.

“Including the current defence resolution, expenditure on defence will have increased by 85 per cent between 2014 and 2025,” said Ms Andersson.

She also stated that there will be further reinforcements. Even before Russia's aggression against Ukraine, following talks with the Defence Commission, Mr Hultqvist had decided to strengthen national defence capabilities in the short term. In addition to this, the Government will decide on additional resources.

“Military defence funding will increase to two per cent of GDP. We will meet this objective as soon as it is practically possible. That is, when it’s possible to translate these increases into strengthened defence capabilities.

“We must also establish stable, long-term and solidarity-based financing for the scale-up that the majority of the Riksdag will support. It must have a stable basis if we’re to have a strong and secure defence,” she concluded.

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Government Offices of Sweden

Sweden further increases humanitarian support to Ukraine

On Sunday 27 February, Minister for International Development Cooperation Matilda Ernkrans held a press briefing on Sweden's support to Ukraine together with Göran Holmqvist, Director of Humanitarian Support at Sida.

Sweden has long been one of the biggest donors of development assistance to Ukraine, comprising both reform-oriented development cooperation and humanitarian support. In response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Government has decided to provide additional funds to alleviate the suffering of the Ukrainian people.

“In light of the horrendous developments in recent days, the Government has now decided to donate an additional SEK 20 million to support the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Ukraine. Sweden has thus increased its humanitarian response to Ukraine to SEK 55 million,” said Ms Ernkrans.

Each year, Sweden provides substantial development aid to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which is operating on the ground at the border between Ukraine and Moldova, where many Ukrainians are fleeing. The support can be used for swift action to help refugees, where the needs are greatest.

“In view of rapidly increasing refugee flows, the Government has also decided to bring forward a payment of SEK 50 million to UNHCR to address the humanitarian needs caused by the developments in Ukraine,” said Ms Ernkrans.

Ms Ernkrans presented disbursements and support measures worth a total of SEK 100 million. This consists of SEK 50 million to UNHCR, SEK 30 million to the UN's humanitarian country-level pooled fund and

SEK 20 million to the ICRC.

Sweden has thus contributed a total of SEK 391 million in humanitarian aid to Ukraine since 2014.

Sida's Director of Humanitarian Support Göran Holmqvist stressed the seriousness of the humanitarian situation and that the greatest needs will be among those who are unable to flee. Sida can quickly approve the transfer of resources to where they are most needed. Sida is currently awaiting needs analyses from UN bodies such as OCHA and UNHCR so as to be able to respond to the situation effectively.

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The harshest package of sanctions the EU has ever imposed

On 24 February, Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson took part in a special meeting of the European Council in Brussels in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the very serious security situation in Europe.

“Tonight we gave the green light to the harshest package of sanctions the EU has ever imposed,” said Ms Andersson at a press conference after the meeting.

According to Ms Andersson, the mood at the meeting was fateful, and she described the situation in Europe as the worst since the Second World War.

“The EU has responded swiftly – by Tuesday we had already agreed on a tough package of sanctions. The EU is united in its stance that Russia's actions must be met forcefully and resolutely.

The EU's sanctions target the financial sector, the energy sector and the transport sector, and will stop the export of key technology,” Ms Andersson explained.

“We have agreed to begin preparing the next steps without delay. And we will include Belarus due to its active role on Russia's side.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky participated in the first part of the meeting via video link.

“He described the situation in Ukraine. And when we said goodbye, we all knew there was a chance we might not see each other again,” said Ms Andersson.

Sanctions against Russia

The sanctions officially adopted by the EU's foreign ministers on 25 February include:

- Measures against loans to other private banks
- Measures against the new listing of Russian state-owned entities and against the financing of certain state-owned companies
- Prohibition on new deposits exceeding EUR 100 000 in EU banks from Russian nationals or residents
- Prohibition on the holding of accounts of Russian clients by the EU Central Securities Depositories
- Prohibition on the selling of euro-denominated securities to Russian clients
- Prohibition on exports of specific technologies to the oil sector
- Prohibition on the sale or provision of goods and services in the aviation and space industry
- Further restrictions on the export of dual-use goods from the EU to Russia
- Restrictions on the export of certain goods and technology which might contribute to Russia's technological enhancement of its defence and security sector.

The sanctions also include listings of additional individuals in the existing sanctions regime. The listings include all the members of the Russian State Duma not previously on the sanctions list, additional members of the Russian Security Council and Belarusian individuals who facilitated the invasion of Ukraine. President Putin and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov are also sanctioned and any assets they have in the EU have been frozen. New criteria for listing individuals have also been proposed.

On 23 February, the EU foreign ministers decided on the following sanctions:

- Prohibition to finance the Russian Federation, its government and Central Bank.
- An import ban on goods from the non-government controlled areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, and prohibition on financing or financial assistance as well as insurance and reinsurance related to the import of goods from the two regions.
- Prohibition on providing financial services to and financing of entities in the regions.
- Prohibition on the export of goods, technology or services in the transport, telecommunications and energy sectors or the prospecting of oil, gas and mineral resources to entities in the regions or for use in the regions.

- Prohibition on services related to tourism activities in the regions.

Published 28 February 2022



Sweden to provide direct support and defence materiel to Ukraine

On Sunday 27 February, Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist held a press conference on Sweden's support to Ukraine.

The Government announced at the press conference that it would present proposals for direct support to Ukraine's armed forces totalling SEK 500 million. Sweden plans to provide 5 000 anti-tank weapons of the model 'Pansarskott 86', 5 000 body shields, 5 000 helmets and 135 000 field rations with a total value of SEK 400 million.

"Europe, and even Sweden, now finds itself in an exceptional situation, which means that exceptional decisions must be taken," said Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson and continued:

"It is not Swedish practice to send military equipment to conflict zones. The last time Sweden did so to any great extent was when the Soviet Union attacked Finland in 1939."

Ms Andersson stated that Sweden's security is best served by Sweden supporting Ukraine's ability to defend itself against Russia. The extensive support to Ukraine's armed forces that the Government is moving forward with is taking place in close coordination with other countries.

In addition, Sweden will increase its humanitarian aid to Ukraine by SEK 500 million.

Published 28 February 2022



Strengthened partnership between EU and African Union

Heads of state and government from the EU and the African Union (AU) will meet in Brussels on 17–18 February. It is the seventh time the EU and AU leaders will meet. The aim is to establish foundations for a renewed and deepened partnership between the two unions. The leaders are expected to adopt a joint declaration on closer cooperation in a range of areas. Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson will represent Sweden.

The leaders are expected to discuss how the two unions can work together to address common challenges and create greater prosperity. Part of the focus will be on an ambitious investment package based on opportunities and challenges in a number of areas, not least climate change and the ongoing health crisis. The summit will also deal with tools and solutions aimed at promoting peace and security.

The Government considers that human rights, gender equality and women's rights, like all other aspects of the rule of law and democracy, should be in focus when a stronger partnership with Africa is built. This establishes the actual foundations for achieving success in both peace and security, and in investments and growth. The Government also attaches great importance to a green transition focused on the climate and to the health package to be adopted at the summit.

Together with leading experts, the heads of state and government will participate in two thematic roundtable talks.

These roundtable talks cover the following themes:

- growth financing

- health systems and vaccine production
- agriculture and sustainable development
- education, culture and vocational training, migration and mobility
- private sector support and economic integration
- peace, security and governance
- climate change and energy transition, digital and transport

Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson will participate in roundtable discussions on growth funding and on education, culture, migration and mobility.

The declaration will guide the partnership between the EU and AU in the coming years. The declaration will include a number of annexes reflecting the themes of the roundtable discussions.

The most recent EU–AU summit took place in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire in 2017.

Published 16 February 2022



More infection control measures to be introduced on 23 December 2021

On 23 December, more infection control measures will be introduced in accordance with the Government's action plan for introducing infection control measures. This is due to the increased community transmission of COVID-19 and the increased burden on health and medical care services.

Measures being introduced on 23 December 2021

- Indoor public gatherings and events with more than 20 participants may only have a seated audience regardless of whether or not vaccination certificates are used. Without vaccination certificates, the size of groups is limited to a maximum of 8 people, with a distance of one metre between groups. There is an exemption for religious gatherings.
- Indoor public gatherings and events with more than 500 participants require vaccination certificates and the size of groups is limited to a maximum of 8 people, with a distance of one metre between groups. This means that indoor public gatherings and events with more than 500 participants cannot be organised without vaccination certificates.
- The requirements for eating and drinking establishments are that guests must be seated and that there is a distance of one metre between groups. This also applies for night clubs.
- The requirement for indoor trade fairs and shopping centres is that there must be at least 10 square metres per person.
- The requirement for indoor cultural and recreational activities, such as museums, art galleries and gyms, is that there must be at least 10 square metres per person, except for activities such as training, competitions, etc. intended for children and young people born in 2002 or later.
- Between 23 December 2021 and 16 January 2022, cultural, sport and

recreation associations are advised not to organise or take part in camps, sports cups or other larger indoor activities that involve participants who do not normally meet. Individual activities, matches and one-day competitions such as league matches or the equivalent may be conducted. This advice does not apply to professional sport.

- General advice on working from home will be reintroduced.
- Infection control measures are recommended for adult education in order to avoid crowding and large gatherings. The general rule is for education to be conducted on an in-person basis, but higher education institutions may use distance learning as a tool to prevent crowding at teaching premises.

These infection control measures will be introduced by the Public Health Agency of Sweden on 23 December 2021. For more information about the Public Health Agency of Sweden's recommendations – see [Folkhälsomyndigheten.se](https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se).

Instructions to government agencies on working from home

Workplaces are a major source of infection. At its meeting on 22 December 2021, the Government will adopt stricter instructions to government agencies. Government agencies must ensure that only employees whose physical presence is necessary to conduct business are present in their premises. These stricter instructions on working from home will apply until 31 January 2022.

Possible further measures

The Public Health Agency of Sweden has also submitted requests to the Government that a limit of 50 participants should be introduced for indoor premises that can be used or made available for private gatherings, that a requirement on infection control measures should be introduced for long-distance public transport, and that a negative COVID-19 test not older than 48 hours should be required for foreign nationals to enter Sweden. The Government intends to consider these requests speedily.

Background

Recent weeks have seen a rapid increase in the spread of COVID-19 and also a greater burden on health and medical services. This is occurring at the same time as the circulation of other respiratory infections such as influenza and RS viruses is greater than in many years.

On 7 December, the Government presented an action plan for introducing infection control measures. Through the plan, the Government hopes to create increased transparency and clarity before other possible measures are introduced.

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EU and the Eastern Partnership to further deepen cooperation

The leaders of the EU Member States and the Eastern Partnership countries will meet for the sixth Eastern Partnership summit in Brussels on 15 December. Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson will represent Sweden.

The Eastern Partnership was initiated by Sweden and Poland in 2009 with the aim of deepening relations between the EU and six countries in eastern Europe and the southern Caucasus. Heads of state and government of partner countries Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine will take part in the summit together with the leaders of the EU Member States.

The aim of the Eastern Partnership is to promote democracy, prosperity, peaceful and resilient societies, and responsible institutions that have citizens' confidence. The Partnership also has a special role to play in times of security policy challenges in the region and is thus a strategically important community. It is also an arena for deepened cooperation, trade agreements and visa exemptions for Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova.

Heads of state and government of the EU Member States and Eastern Partnership countries are expected to back the Partnership's priorities for the coming five years. These include socio-economic investments to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and support for democratic reforms.

For the Swedish Government, it is essential to continue to strengthen the partner countries' resilience, contribute to a green transition and support digital development. The Government attaches importance to reforms that strengthen democratic principles, human rights, the rule of law, good governance and gender equality.

Belarus has decided to suspend its participation in the Partnership, but the EU maintains its support for civil society in Belarus, and its support for free and fair elections there.

Video below about the EU Eastern Partnership with Ambassador Anna Westerholm.

Published 15 December 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

EU and the Eastern Partnership to further deepen cooperation



Government Offices of Sweden

European Council meeting on COVID-19, energy prices and foreign affairs

Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson will take part in the European Council meeting in Brussels on Thursday 16 December.

The EU leaders will discuss continued coordination measures to address the COVID-19 pandemic, crisis preparedness and energy prices. The Strategic Compass for security and defence policy cooperation is also on the agenda.

Migration and developments at the Belarusian border will also be discussed. Other foreign affairs include the summit between the EU and the African Union in February and the current situation concerning Russia and Ukraine.

This will be the first time Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson has taken part in the European Council.

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Government presents action plan for introducing more infection control measures as of 8 December 2021

The Government has introduced further COVID-19 infection control measures due to increased transmission rates and somewhat growing pressure on health care services. The Government also wants to reintroduce further support and compensation to reduce community transmission. Furthermore, the Government is presenting a plan for business support that may be reintroduced if stricter social restrictions need to be reimposed. Vaccinations remain the key to reducing the risk of infection, disease and death, and to avoiding the introduction of further measures.

New measures to reduce transmission rates

Infection control measures will be introduced in three stages. As of 8 December 2021, when the first stage begins, a number of infection control measures will be added to the recommendations that already apply. The assessment of the Government and the Public Health Agency of Sweden is that Sweden is experiencing increased transmission rates and somewhat growing pressure on health care services. Additional infection control measures are therefore needed in the first stage of response.

The recommendations aim to reduce contact between people, and they are directed at a range of actors as outlined below.

- Employers should, if possible, avoid holding large indoor gatherings,

enable employees to maintain a safe distance from each other and, when appropriate, to work from home to a certain extent. The Government intends to take a decision on tasking government agencies in this regard.

- Higher education institutions, including universities, university colleges, folk high schools, vocational higher education institutions and municipal adult education institutions should continue face-to-face teaching but take infection control measures, including social distancing, at large indoor gatherings.
- Schools should take preventive measures, for example, by ensuring a safe distance between people at concerts and end-of-term events in indoor settings.
- Eating and drinking establishments should prevent crowding and take other appropriate infection protection measures.
- Everyone should maintain a safe distance in public spaces, especially indoor spaces. Everyone should avoid crowded areas. This recommendation is directed at both children and adults.
- Adults should avoid crowding on public transport, if possible, by travelling at off-peak times or choosing other transport modes.
- Adults should use face masks in crowded areas or when it is not possible to maintain a safe distance on public transport, whether travelling short or long distances and regardless of transport mode (bus, train, taxi, ferry).
- Public transport should run as frequently as required to prevent crowding, and service frequency should not be reduced.

Further measures included in the action plan may be introduced in subsequent stages if the situation deteriorates. A substantial increase in transmission rates and increased pressure on health services could lead to a second stage of additional measures. Very high transmission rates and heavily burdened health services could lead to a third stage of additional measures. Read more in the Government's action plan for introducing infection control measures.

Financial support to reduce transmission

Additional financial measures will be reintroduced to make it easier for people to stay home if they feel unwell.

Most of the measures will apply from 8 December. It is proposed that they all apply until 31 March.

- The requirement of a medical certificate to receive disease carrier's

allowance will be removed. (The Government will announce the date of entry in due course.)

- Compensation to at-risk groups and certain relatives of people who are in at-risk groups will be reintroduced, and temporary parental benefit for parents of seriously ill children will be extended.
- The possibility for parents to receive temporary parental benefit if schools or preschools close will be extended.
- Compensation for the standard deduction for sick days for employees and self-employed individuals will be reintroduced to make it easier for people to stay home when they are unwell.
- The State will compensate employers for higher sick pay costs than what is considered normal (retroactively from 1 December).
- The exemption from taxation for benefits of free parking will be extended to reduce crowding in public transport.

The measures will be included in the additional amending budget that the Government intends to present to the Riksdag early next year.

Preparedness to support businesses

The Government wants preparedness to enable the swift reintroduction of support to Swedish jobs and businesses if new social restrictions become necessary and affect businesses' ability to carry out their activities.

The Government is therefore budgeting with a view to being able to reintroduce both the ordinary reorientation support and the turnover-based support for sole traders and trading partnerships. These forms of support would be designed along the lines of earlier support.

The Government will also announce an extension of event support until 31 March 2022. This is to eliminate uncertainty and enable organisers to continue planning their events.

The Government is also preparing a legislative amendment to remove the waiting period for aid in the event of short-time work so that employers that have received aid during the COVID-19 pandemic can apply, if necessary, for ordinary support for short-time work.