



# Extensive Swedish and European initiatives in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine

At a press conference on Wednesday 13 April, Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren and Minister for Public Administration Ida Karkiainen reported on the Government's overall efforts in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The Government's efforts cover three areas: sanctions against Russia, support to Ukraine and a stronger Sweden.

Sweden and the EU have undertaken extensive efforts in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Sweden's Government is pushing for additional sanctions against Russia and has decided on both military and humanitarian support to Ukraine, along with historic initiatives to strengthen Swedish civil and military defence.

## **Sanctions against Russia**

The EU has thus far adopted five sanctions packages against Russia. These sanctions include freezing Russian state assets in the EU and the exclusion of major Russian banks from payment systems. Sanctions targeting specific sectors of Russia's economy have also been imposed. The latest sanctions package includes sanctions against additional banks and individuals with ties to Russian government officials, and a ban on Russian coal.

“The Government is pushing for additional and harsher sanctions against Russia. We want to see a ban on imports of Russian oil, but it is important that they be imposed by a unified EU so that the sanctions have an impact,” said Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren at the press conference.

## **Support to Ukraine**

Sweden was already one of the largest aid donors to Ukraine prior to war. Since the invasion, Sweden has decided to provide military and humanitarian support to Ukraine in excess of SEK 1.8 billion. The EU has also substantially increased its support, with a package amounting to EUR 2.7 billion. Together with Poland, Sweden is now working to organise a donor conference for Ukraine in May.

### **A stronger Sweden**

Initiatives to strengthen Sweden centre around a historic investment in military and civil defence, the economy, food security, energy and migration issues.

To address the ongoing refugee crisis, which is the largest in Europe since the Second World War, the Government has presented a number of proposed measures to secure the orderly reception of refugees from Ukraine. To support the municipalities in this work, SEK 500 million have been allocated in the form of a temporary grant.

“Sweden will assume its responsibility but expects other countries in the EU to do the same. The Government also expects all municipalities in Sweden to contribute, with a much more even distribution of refugees between municipalities than during the 2015 refugee crisis,” says Minister for Public Administration Ida Karkiainen.

The Government has also adopted measures to address price increases and mitigate the effects on Swedish businesses and households, such as temporarily reduced fuel tax, an extension of compensatory payments for electricity in southern and central Sweden, and measures to accelerate the transition to fossil-free fuels. In the Spring Amending Budget for 2022, the Government also presents a support package of SEK 1 billion to maintain Swedish food security.

### **County administrative board status reports**

On 10 March 2022, the Government instructed the country administrative boards to present regular status reports to the Government Offices. These status reports are based on contacts with all the municipalities and regions throughout the country.

“The current overall assessment is that Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is having a moderate impact on Swedish society as a whole,” says Ms Karkiainen.

The latest status report, received on 12 April, indicates that there is still major need for information and cooperation, even if a number of counties report lower intensity in developments. Challenges regarding the reception of unaccompanied minors were also raised.

Finally, the county administrative boards also see an increasing impact on the business sector, where prices for fuel, energy, feedstuffs and building materials are having major consequences in certain sectors.

### **Strong EU unity**

International and European cooperation has been intensive since the invasion of Ukraine. Some 30 or so Council meetings have been held in the EU, and the European Council plans to hold an extra summit on 30–31 May.

“This horrific war is among the worst in Europe since the Second World War. It has torn up the European security order that every leader in our part of the world has backed, in Helsinki in 1975 and in Paris in 1990. At the same time, this has brought about exceptionally strong unity in European cooperation that we now see. Approval of the sanctions against Russia and support to Ukraine have been enormous. I hope, and believe, that we will also continue to see such unity going forward,” says Mr Dahlgren.

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# Efforts to bolster EU energy security need to intensify

The Government considers that concrete changes need to be made to the European energy supply. EU Member States need to reduce their dependence on Russian energy. This was conveyed by Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren and Minister for Energy and Digital Development Khashayar Farmanbar at a press briefing.

In light of the serious security situation, Mr Dahlgren and Mr Farmanbar held a press briefing on Sunday regarding the energy security situation in the EU.

“The security situation clearly shows that we need a more secure and sustainable energy supply in Europe. It’s time to intensify efforts to strengthen the EU’s energy security,” said Mr Dahlgren.

The Swedish Government takes the position that the EU should not be dependent on a few external suppliers to manage its energy supply. In the long term, the EU should, to a large extent, supply its own energy.

Sweden already has a low dependence on imported nuclear fuel, oil and gas from Russia. By contrast, large parts of Europe are highly dependent on Russian energy imports. The consequences of this dependence are now showing on the energy markets, and in Sweden in the form of increased energy prices.

“The Government wants to see two concrete changes to the European energy supply. Firstly, the EU needs to stop depending on Russian gas. Secondly, the EU Member States need to stop importing nuclear fuel from Russia. I believe there is a broad consensus in the EU that it’s not sustainable to depend on Russia for our energy supply. Given the current situation, it’s more important than ever to increase our own production of renewable energy to accelerate the transition and break the dependence on imported

energy,” said Mr Farmanbar.

About two per cent of the total Swedish energy supply consists of natural gas, and an estimated half of this come from Russia. However, several EU countries are dependent on Russian gas to manage their energy supply.

“That’s unsustainable from both a security and a climate perspective. The shift away from Russian gas will not happen overnight, and the entire EU needs to help with these efforts,” stated Mr Farmanbar.

At the press briefing, Mr Dahlgren also presented a third initiative.

“Climate transition must be accelerated. We must replace our dependence on fossil fuels – not just Russian gas – with fossil-free alternatives. Making the EU self-sufficient in energy would be a very important reform, in terms of both energy policy and security policy. We need to do this to improve both our climate and our security,” concluded Mr Dahlgren.

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# Hans Dahlgren: “Tougher sanctions and even greater support are what’s needed now”

Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren today presented six areas in which Sweden is pushing for the EU to take further decisions in response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. These would entail additional and tougher sanctions against the Russian leadership and increased direct support to Ukraine.

The Government is working intensively to ensure that the EU takes new measures in response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. At a press briefing on Tuesday 1 March, Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren presented six areas in which Sweden wants the EU to take joint decisions without delay.

“Europe is in an extraordinary situation that requires extraordinary measures. So far, the EU’s response to Russia’s aggression has been powerful and united. Historic, large-scale sanctions have been imposed and now both financial support and defence materiel are being provided to Ukraine. But even more is needed,” says Mr Dahlgren.

In the EU, Sweden is now pushing for the following six measures:

1. Tougher and broader sanctions against Russia’s top leaders. This would include sanctions targeting even more oligarchs who prop up Putin’s regime, and even more people with ties to the ‘Wagner Group’, a Russian mercenary organisation that commits violations and abuses in conflicts around the world.
2. The sale of EU passports to Russian citizens must stop. These so-called golden passports enable Russian oligarchs to become citizens of, and gain access to, the European Union from certain Member States.

3. A joint EU position on excluding all elite athletes from the Russian Federation from all international exchanges.
4. Long-term support to Ukraine to strengthen the country over time. The Government therefore wants the EU to reprioritise existing funds in the EU budget to increase support to Ukraine.
5. Isolate Russia further by restricting its participation in international organisations as done, for example, by the Council of Europe. The EU should now move forward and take another look at what can be done to further isolate Russia within international organisations. A similar inventory will also be taken in Sweden.
6. Initiate investigations into the very serious reports now emerging from Ukraine of widespread violations of international law. The Government will initiate the establishment of an international mechanism to collect facts and investigate alleged crimes so that those responsible can be held accountable.

At the press briefing, Mr Dahlgren emphasised the importance of the EU as Sweden's most important arena for foreign and security policy cooperation. The scale of sanctions so far adopted by both Sweden and the EU is historic.

“Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine is a new dark chapter in the history of Europe. But the attack on Ukraine has clearly demonstrated the unity of the EU's 27 Member States against Russian aggression and for solidarity with the Ukrainian people. Now is the time for even tougher sanctions and even greater support,” said Mr Dahlgren.

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# Priority policy areas in Statement of Government EU Policy

On Wednesday 26 January, Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren presented the 2022 Statement of Government Policy in the Parliamentary Debate on EU Policy. The Statement, outlining how work on the Government's priorities will be pursued at EU level, was followed by a debate on EU policy in the Riksdag.

[Statement of Government Policy in the Parliamentary Debate on EU Policy, 2022](#)

In this year's Statement of Government EU Policy, Mr Dahlgren highlighted the Government's three priorities, and how it intends to work on them at EU level.

[Sweden can do better: the Government's policy priorities](#)

The first of the Government's priorities is breaking down segregation and putting a stop to violence and criminality.

“Through the EU, Sweden has the opportunity to combat criminal gangs with considerably greater force. Over the past year, cooperation between police authorities across Europe has time and time again delivered concrete results in the fight against crime,” said Mr Dahlgren.

The second priority is advancing the climate transition and creating jobs throughout the country.

“We have to end the climate crisis. And the EU must lead the way with an ambitious climate policy. All around Europe, attention is being directed to what is happening in Sweden. Green reindustrialisation, with carbon dioxide-free steel production and large-scale battery production, is showing the way towards a sustainable society,” said Mr Dahlgren.

The Government's third priority is taking back control over the welfare

system and ensuring that everyone who works has secure social insurance and pensions.

“The pandemic is the greatest threat our welfare has faced for a very long time. But in the midst of this health crisis, there is reason to highlight the success of the EU countries’ joint procurement of vaccines against COVID-19. It has contributed to the unprecedentedly rapid development of safe and effective vaccines, which has saved many lives,” Mr Dahlgren emphasised.

Safeguarding the EU’s fundamental values is also important to the Minister for EU Affairs and the Government:

“Cooperation in the EU builds on the Member States’ pledge to respect our fundamental values. This is why it is a matter of very serious concern when, in several Member States, respect for these values is lacking. The Government will push for the European Commission to continue to take action to reverse this trend.”

Mr Dahlgren also touched on the security situation in the EU’s neighbourhood and emphasised that the EU is Sweden’s most important foreign and security policy arena:

“Russia’s recent unacceptable demands and ultimatums have met with European and transatlantic unity and steadfastness. This includes preparedness to impose extensive and severe sanctions if Russia further aggravates the situation. Such sanctions are most effective if they are implemented jointly, at EU level.”

It is now less than a year until Sweden takes over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, and in this context, Mr Dahlgren said:

“It is an important undertaking that involves moving the Council’s agenda forward and helping ensure that the EU can take decisions that benefit Europe’s citizens.”

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# Overall political direction for Sweden's Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2023

At the EU's General Affairs Council meeting on 14 December, the ministers for EU affairs approved the overall political direction for the French, Czech and Swedish Presidencies of the Council – known as the 18-month programme. The trio Presidency took over in January 2022, and Sweden will lead the work of the Council between 1 January and 30 June 2023.

“I look forward to working closely with France and the Czech Republic, which will hold the Presidency in 2022. This is how we will lay the foundations for a successful Swedish Presidency in spring 2023,” says Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren.

The presidencies, which rotate every six months, are to work in the interests of the Union as a whole and have to deal with the issues of the day in the Council. The joint [18-month programme](#) will help ensure continuity in the Council's work and facilitate support and assistance between the countries of the trio. The programme is a document setting out the overall political direction and containing the issues that will be addressed in the Council by the incoming trio. The structure follows the four main priorities of the strategic agenda adopted by the European Council in 2019, which will guide the work of the institutions during the current legislative period, which runs until 2024.

## **One year until Sweden's Presidency**

“On 1 January 2023, Sweden will take over the Presidency of the Council of

the European Union. The most important task is to drive the EU agenda forward and deliver decisions that benefit EU citizens,” says Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren.

Sweden is to lead the negotiations in a professional, efficient and impartial manner in the common interest of the EU.

“How a Presidency conducts negotiations is important. Everyone should have their say, and we should listen to all Member States equally,” says Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren.

There is also some scope for influencing the agenda as an individual nation, including through the priorities and the six-month programme that each country holding the Presidency produces. These will be presented shortly before the start of the Swedish Presidency.

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# Work ahead of Sweden's Presidency in 2023

The Presidency of the Council rotates between EU Member States every six months. During a six-month period, the Presidency will drive forward the Council's work on EU legislation, ensure continuity of the EU agenda and ensure that legislative processes are carried out in an orderly manner and that Member States cooperate. The two main tasks of the Presidency are to plan and chair the meetings of the Council and its preparatory bodies and to represent the Council in its relations with other EU institutions.

## **Sweden will lead more than 2 000 meetings**

During Sweden's six-month Presidency, the Government and the Government Offices of Sweden will chair most of the meetings of the Council of the European Union. This applies to both ministerial and preparatory meetings. In total, there will be about 2 000 meetings in Brussels and Luxembourg and about 150 informal meetings and conferences in Sweden. This is around the same number of meetings as Sweden organised during its last Presidency in 2009.

## **Priorities during the Presidency**

Member States holding the Presidency work closely together in a group of three Member States, known as a trio. The three Member States set long-term goals and draw up a joint agenda for an 18-month period. On the basis of this programme, each of the three countries develops its own more detailed six-month programme.

Sweden is part of a trio Presidency along with France and the Czech Republic. The countries' [18-month programme](#) was presented in December

2021. Sweden's six-month programme and its priorities will be presented at a later date.

“The focus of the Presidency is to ensure that the work of the Council of the European Union takes place in the best possible way so that the EU can deliver good decisions for its citizens. The Presidency is also an opportunity to show Sweden and Swedish conditions to our European colleagues,” says Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren.

### **Preparatory work**

The preparatory work of the Government and the Government Offices of Sweden is underway and will gradually be intensified. Preparations include recruiting staff, planning training activities and planning meetings. The ambition is a climate-smart, digital, cost-effective, communicative and transparent Presidency.

To enable preparation for and implementation of the EU Presidency, the appropriation to the Government Offices of Sweden will be temporarily increased. The total budget, as set out in the Budget Bill for 2021, is estimated at SEK 1 250 million, divided into SEK 40 million in 2021, SEK 350 million in 2022 and SEK 860 million in 2023.

This will be the third time that Sweden has held the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Sweden held the Presidency for the first time in 2001 and, most recently, in the second half of 2009. The situation in 2023 looks a little different due to the changes following from the Treaty of Lisbon.

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# Minimum wages discussed during French ministerial visit

On Monday, Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren and Minister for Employment Eva Nordmark met with French Minister of Labour, Employment and Economic Inclusion Élisabeth Borne and French Minister of State for European Affairs Clément Beaune. The aim of the meeting was to discuss various current issues, with a focus on the EU minimum wage proposal.

In October 2020, the European Commission adopted a proposal for a directive on adequate minimum wages in the EU. The Swedish Government, in close dialogue with the social partners, has worked to ensure that the European Commission's proposal on minimum wages does not become legally binding.

During Tuesday's meeting with Ms Borne and Mr Beaune, talks centred on topics such as minimum wages ahead of France taking over the Presidency of the EU in January 2022.

“I am highly critical of the EU wanting to interfere in Swedish wage formation. For Sweden, it is about making clear that the social partners must be in charge of wage formation. Research has repeatedly shown that our approach to wage formation has served Swedish wage earners well for several decades, and we cannot jeopardise this,” says Ms Nordmark.

The discussion also touched on joint efforts ahead of France's and Sweden's upcoming EU Presidencies in the trio programme. Other important issues addressed at the meeting were climate change and respect for the rule of law among EU Member States, including human rights of LGBTIQ people.

“France is a strong voice in the EU that is closely aligned with Sweden on a number of issues – particularly with respect to the importance of all EU

Member States respecting the rule of law. I look forward to our continued collaboration on this and other issues ahead of our upcoming Presidencies,” says Mr Dahlgren.

Job training, the agreement between the social partners, and public funding for the unemployed were also discussed during the meeting.

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# Hans Dahlgren: The EU leads the way on climate action

On Wednesday, the European Commission presented ‘Fit for 55’, the EU’s new climate package. The package contains the Commission’s proposals for reducing emissions by at least 55 per cent by 2030, compared with 1990 levels. Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren welcomes the package, which represents a major and important step for the EU’s climate action.

The ‘Fit for 55’ climate package was presented on Wednesday by the European Commission. It contains proposals for more ambitious emissions targets across the energy and transport sectors and an extended emissions trading system. This would contribute to the EU reaching the new 2030 climate target of reducing emissions by at least 55 per cent, compared with 1990 levels.

“The climate crisis is urgent and that’s why the proposal presented by the Commission today is important. The EU is now moving from targets to action and at the same time it’s showing the rest of the world what can be done, because the EU is leading the way on this,” says Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren.

The climate package also includes a clearer energy taxation system and proposals for a carbon border adjustment mechanism – a carbon border tax – to equalise the price on greenhouse gas emissions. It also entails stricter rules on carbon dioxide emissions from the maritime and aviation sectors and vehicles.

“This is a first important step towards the EU’s target of climate neutrality by 2050. Now we need to take a close look at the details of the proposal and then take part in the negotiations with other Member States to ensure that this will be as good as possible. But the approach to an overall transition to

more sustainable production and consumption is totally right, both in the EU and the EU's trading partners," says Mr Dahlgren.

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Government Offices of Sweden

# Conference on the Future of Europe – a public dialogue on the future of Europe

The Conference on the Future of Europe will be launched on 9 May, Europe Day, and will run for a year. It will conclude in spring 2022 during the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

On 10 March, European Parliament President David Sassoli, Prime Minister of Portugal António Costa, on behalf of the Presidency of the Council, and Commission President Ursula von der Leyen signed the Joint Declaration on the Conference on the Future of Europe. The Declaration establishes the framework of the Conference, which aims to strengthen democracy in Europe and increase the opportunity for people to express their views and discuss EU issues and thereby influence Europe's future.

## **The Conference will be carried out at a local, national and EU level**

At European level, the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union will organise European citizens' dialogues. Member States and other European and national actors can organise events, such as public citizens debates, discussions on different policy areas and different types of seminars.

Input from all the events will be collected, analysed and published throughout the Conference via a multilingual digital platform. This will also be a space for citizens to share their ideas and submit suggestions online.

[Conference on the Future of Europe \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu)

A Conference Plenary organized by the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union will discuss the ideas from these without a predetermined outcome.

## **Broad participation**

An important aim of the Conference on the Future of Europe is to engage citizens throughout society in a dialogue on EU issues, and to target young people, in particular. The Minister for EU Affairs plans, for example, to continue his discussions with young people, through different channels.

The Government considers itself as one of several actors in Sweden that has a leading role in organising and participating in the dialogue on Europe's future. Participation by civil society, the Riksdag, political parties, the social partners and regional and local representatives creates favourable conditions to reach to and engage citizens from all walks of life.

An important ambition is that participation in the activities that are organised will incorporate a gender perspective.

## **Government will contribute to an active and interactive dialogue on the EU**

In Sweden, the discussion on the EU's future has taken place through various initiatives in recent years. The aim is to increase citizens' insight into decision-making processes at EU level to a comparable level as at the municipal, regional and national level. Spreading information and knowledge about EU policy and listening to citizens are essential to achieving this objective.

The Swedish Government works actively and resolutely to encourage more people and organisations to take an interest and engage in EU issues. During 2020, school visits carried out by the Minister for EU Affairs have been an important arena for citizens' dialogues with young people. The 'EU Handshake' initiative, launched in December 2016, aims to boost participation, knowledge and engagement in EU-related issues in Sweden.

The Minister for EU Affairs is leading and is responsible for the Government's work with the Conference on the Future of Europe.

## **Vision of a more resilient EU for its citizens**

The hope is that the conference will be able to contribute to a lively discussion among citizens about EU policy and the cross-border challenges facing Europe. The Government's EU priorities focus on five areas: democracy and the rule of law, climate, jobs, immigration and security. These will guide the Government's participation in the Conference on the

future of Europe.

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# Social Summit: Non-paper by Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands and Sweden

Given the COVID-19 pandemic with large socioeconomic consequences for all Member States and the upcoming twin digital and green transitions, the Social Summit comes at a timely moment. The Action Plan on the Pillar of Social Rights by the Commission is a welcome contribution to the discussions at the Social Summit. This non-paper by Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands and Sweden contains input for the declaration of the Summit.

The Pillar of Social Rights and its principles contribute to a deeper and fairer single market. The Social Pillar serves as a compass for effective social and labour market policies, and promotes the exchange of good practices between Member States. In this way, it supports reforms in the Member States and encourages the process of upward socioeconomic convergence.

As also emphasized in the Action Plan, the effective implementation of the Social Pillar greatly depends on the action of Member States, who primarily hold responsibility for employment, education and skills and social policies. Targeted EU-level action can complement national action, but – as underlined in the Strategic Agenda by the European Council and in the European Pillar of Social Rights – any action on EU-level should fully respect the division of competences of the Union, its Member States and the

social partners. Any EU initiative in these areas should be in line with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality and needs careful consideration of different national starting points, challenges and institutional set ups. Setting EU-level headline targets could help to steer national debates, policies and reforms.

The three proposed new EU headline targets provide important political guidance and can contribute to fostering convergence and wellbeing. Considering the challenges ahead the closely interlinked areas of employment, skills, and poverty/social exclusion are well chosen. Monitoring mechanisms at EU-level need to adequately reflect the situation and starting points within Member States.

Creating quality jobs to boost employment is instrumental to support the economic recovery, reverse the negative social impacts of the crisis and accelerate the green and digital transitions, in a sustainable and inclusive way. Specific attention should be paid to the digital and green transitions. In the coming decade jobs will be created in green and digital companies and sectors. The recovery phase offers a unique opportunity to accelerate these transitions, create these jobs in Europe and hence make our labour markets future proof. Small and medium-sized enterprises play a key role in job creation. Equal opportunities, inclusiveness, an innovative economy, good and fair working conditions and creating quality jobs should be our goal, while taking gender equality aspects into account.

The recovery and green and digital transitions should be supported by providing people with the needed skills and qualifications. The transitions will significantly change labour markets and create opportunities as well as challenges. These developments underscore the importance of ensuring adaptability, flexibility and resilience of workers and job seekers. Basic skills, such as literacy, math and digital skills are essential for people to participate in the labour market. Once active on the inclusive labour market, lifelong learning will support people to get and stay in the driving seat of their own careers, while at the same time boosting the competitiveness of the EU in the global context.

Finally, more and better quality jobs across Europe will reduce the risk of poverty and social exclusion. We should pay specific attention to vulnerable groups who have been hit hard by the COVID-19 crisis. The EU strives to be inclusive and sustainable for all. Against this background, addressing poverty and social exclusion of the most vulnerable, the overall wellbeing of

children, active ageing, as well as the inclusion of persons with disabilities is of the utmost importance. Social dialogue and constructive cooperation of employers and employees is indispensable

Published 23 April 2021



# Draft agreement between the EU and the UK

The Swedish Government welcomes the fact that EU and UK negotiators have now agreed a draft agreement on the future relationship between the EU and the UK.

“It is very gratifying that the negotiators have now reached an agreement. This is something that we in the EU have worked together on for a long time. The agreement will be an important basis for the continued relationship with the UK,” says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

The fact that the draft agreement is now in place creates predictability for Swedish citizens and companies. A no-deal scenario between the EU and the UK has thus been avoided.

“This is good for Sweden, good for the EU, and good for the UK. The agreement is broad and spans many areas. In addition to a free trade agreement and rules for a level playing field, the agreement also covers important areas such as internal security, fisheries, transport, climate and environment. It provides the conditions for long-term cooperation and good relations between the EU and the UK in the future,” says Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren.

The agreement has been negotiated on the basis of the negotiating mandate given by the Member States to the European Commission. The text is currently being analysed and will be reviewed by EU Member States in the Council in the coming days. To enter into application from 1 January, the agreement needs to be approved by the UK parliament. The Council must also adopt a decision to apply it provisionally, as the European Parliament will not be able to consider it until after the turn of the year.

“The fact that the negotiators from the EU and the UK were finally able to present a draft agreement demonstrates the taking of shared responsibility and the great value of regulated and deep cooperation,” adds Mr Dahlgren.

Published 24 December 2020



# Turkey and Belarus at EU Summit

The EU's relations with Turkey and the situation in the Eastern Mediterranean were on the agenda when EU leaders met in Brussels on 1–2 October. Heads of state and government also received a short update on the negotiations with the United Kingdom.

## **Turkey and Belarus**

“Late last night, agreement was reached on a text about the Eastern Mediterranean and Turkey. There were several interruptions in the discussions and a number of bilateral talks were held before the texts were sufficiently sharply worded for Cyprus to agree to lift its veto on the Belarus sanctions. Among other things, the conclusions now state that if there is any more unilateral action on the part of Turkey or provocations in contravention of international law, the EU will use all the instruments and paths of action at its disposal. There is also special reference to the sections of the Treaty about how sanctions are agreed,” said Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren after the summit.

“Once that issue was resolved, we were quickly able to agree on sanctions against those responsible in Belarus. It has now been almost two months since the election, which was deemed illegitimate, and it is most certainly high time that the EU takes action,” added Mr Dahlgren.

Heads of state and government also discussed the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh and the nerve agent attack against Alexei Navalny.

The summit concluded with the European Commission updating EU leaders on the negotiations over the future relationship with the UK.

Sweden was represented by Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin.

Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren followed the summit closely on site

in Brussels.

Published 05 October 2020



# Belarus, Turkey, China and single market on EU Summit agenda

The situation in Belarus and that in Turkey are two of the foreign policy issues that EU leaders will discuss when they meet in Brussels on 1–2 October. The heads of state and government will also discuss the European single market and relations with China.

## **Foreign policy issues**

The EU heads of state and government will begin the summit with a discussion of the EU's relationship with China. They will then discuss the unstable situation in Belarus following the presidential election on 9 August and the nerve agent attack against Alexei Navalny.

In the evening, EU leaders will focus on the EU's relations with Turkey. They will also discuss the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh.

## **Single market, industrial policy and digitalisation**

On Friday, discussions will focus on the European single market. The point of departure for discussions will be how to improve industrial policy in the EU and what opportunities digitalisation offers.

At the end of the summit, EU leaders are expected to receive an update on the negotiations over the United Kingdom's future relationship with the EU from chief negotiator Michel Barnier.

Sweden will be represented by Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin at the summit.

Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren will follow the summit closely on site in Brussels.

Published 02 October 2020



# Joint Statement by Ministers Dahlgren and Tuppurainen: functioning single market key to recovery

COVID-19 pandemic has presented the European Union with unprecedented challenges. The social and economic impact of the pandemic is significant. An ambitious action is needed to safeguard the well-being of citizens and to put Europe on a recovery path.

The well-functioning single market is a guarantee of EU's prosperity, and the value of it for citizens and businesses has been proved during the recent crisis months. Securing and strengthening the single market should be at the heart of EU's recovery and long-term growth.

It is vital that the EU can harness the full potential of the single market. This includes a stronger focus on implementation and enforcement of already existing EU legislation – in other words: we must carry out what we have agreed upon in the Council. Making full use of our strengths in the digital economy, climate-neutral technologies and circular economy helps build lasting sustainable growth and boosts competitiveness and renewal of European economy.

The free movement of services is at the core of the single market, and could provide significant economic gains, provided there is adequate and active enforcement by local, regional and national authorities and the Commission. On our road to recovery, new impetus must therefore be given to the internal market for services and the eliminating of barriers. A recovery plan should include the implementation of the Commissions' March communication.

A fair, open and competitive home market needs to remain a starting point in promoting the level playing field globally and within the EU. This goes hand in hand with maintaining a strict and independent competition policy. Any distortions of competition weaken our competitiveness in the longer run.

The temporary regime for state aid during the crisis is of utmost importance. However, for the further development of the European economy, it is vital that competition and state aid rules remain strict and efficient. They must allow effective interventions against anti-competitive practices and ensure the level playing field between Member States

International trade will play a major role in overcoming the COVID 19-crisis and supporting the recovery process in the EU and worldwide. EU's role as a defender of multilateral cooperation and rules based free trade is crucial in the times of protectionist tendencies. The discussion on European strategic autonomy must not lead to protectionism.

A need to evaluate EU's trade policy after COVID-19 is something that should be looked at with patience and care, without jumping into conclusions. We must be pragmatic and not forget the vast benefits that have been brought by decades of free trade. The EU should always be a champion of free trade, not an instigator of trade wars.

Tytti Tuppurainen  
Minister for European Affairs and Ownership Steering  
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Hans Dahlgren  
Minister for European Affairs  
Sweden

Published 05 June 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

# Joint Statement – Rule of Law in the context of the Covid-19 crisis

Joint Statement by Sweden, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain.

In this unprecedented situation, it is legitimate that Member States adopt extraordinary measures to protect their citizens and overcome the crisis. We are however deeply concerned about the risk of violations of the principles of rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights arising from the adoption of certain emergency measures. Emergency measures should be limited to what is strictly necessary, should be proportionate and temporary in nature, subject to regular scrutiny, and respect the aforementioned principles and international law obligations.

They should not restrict the freedom of expression or the freedom of the press. We need to jointly overcome this crisis and to jointly uphold our European principles and values on this path. We therefore support the European Commission initiative to monitor the emergency measures and their application to ensure the fundamental values of the Union are upheld, and invite the General Affairs Council to take up the matter when appropriate.

**After the publication of the joint Statement, Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary announced that they have joined the Statement.**

Published 01 April 2020



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

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

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

**Hans Dahlgren, Minister for EU Affairs:**

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

**Anna Hallberg, Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs:**

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

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

## **December 2020. What does this entail?**

### **Hans Dahlgren, Minister for EU Affairs:**

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

### **Anna Hallberg, Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs:**

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

Published 29 January 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

# The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region ten years

This month, October 2019, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region will turn officially ten years. What has this strategy entailed for Sweden, and what are the challenges facing the Baltic Sea Region today? We asked Hans Dahlgren, Swedish Minister for EU Affairs.

Published 25 October 2019



# The pandemic requires a new industrial strategy

Hans Dahlgren, Minister for EU Affairs and Ibrahim Baylan, Minister for Business, Industry and Innovation, Dagens Industry, March 30 2021

Strong action is needed to jumpstart our economy after the pandemic and secure long-term competitiveness. The pending update of the EU's industrial strategy is therefore a good initiative. We want the strategy to contribute to the green and digital transition – strengthening the EU single market – a continued strong competition policy and openness to the rest of the world.

The ravages of the pandemic have impacted us all, and the human suffering is immense. The European economy has also been hard hit. Production has been wholly or partly shut down. Many have lost their jobs. Great effort must be put into restarting our economy. At the same time, the major challenges facing society must be managed. Together, we have the opportunity to build a resilient economy that is green, digital and competitive.

The European Commission has announced an update of the EU's industrial strategy. This is welcome news. We need a plan for how to make European industry sustainable and contribute to economic recovery.

The updated strategy must respond to the challenges facing the EU: climate change, digital structural change and increased competition from countries outside the EU. This requires a policy that builds on the EU's strengths and responds to new challenges without discarding tried and tested principles and effective policies. The cornerstones of the EU single market must be safeguarded. Competition, innovation and openness to the rest of the world – not introversion and new trade barriers – are what makes the EU's enterprises strong.

A European industrial strategy must improve our ability to respond to future

crises. The pandemic has made clear to us all that certain flows of goods are not reliable in crisis situations. Stockpiling medical supplies, for example, may be part of the solution, but it is impossible to know what the next crisis will be and what resources will be needed when the time comes. Large emergency supplies alone are therefore not enough.

The EU must also improve its resilience to shocks to the world economy by diversifying value chains both in the EU and globally. Access to a broader supplier base will limit the negative impact on our societies if some suppliers are cut off in times of crisis. This can be achieved through an ambitious trade agenda that prioritises free trade agreements, and a well-functioning single market that keeps pace with technological progress.

At the same time, we must continue to create favourable conditions for the production of goods and services in the EU. A strong industrial base is important for a viable, innovative and resilient economy in Sweden and in Europe. European companies and subcontractors – particularly small and medium-sized enterprises – must be attractive business partners able to be part of global production chains. We must also seek to ensure level playing field requiring foreign enterprises in the single market to follow the same rules as European enterprises.

The green and digital transition must be at the heart of the updated strategy. The EU's continued global leadership in the green transition will create competitive advantages for European enterprises as customers around the world demand more sustainable solutions. To support this development, we must reform the State aid rules to enable necessary and ambitious climate action and phase out aid that is harmful to the climate.

A prerequisite for the EU's success in leading the green transition is securing access to innovation-critical metals and minerals for use in climate technology innovation. These are raw materials such as lithium and cobalt that are often concentrated in only a few countries outside of Europe.

The digital transition is key to achieving the green transition. To hold its own in increasingly tough international competition, the EU must make the most of its data assets and invest in digital infrastructure such as broadband expansion and connected systems. The EU must also ensure that digital technology is widely adopted by enterprises large and small. Research, innovation and policy development within strategic technological areas need to be prioritised.

The EU's industrial policy should first and foremost focus on improving framework conditions in Europe and ensuring that all enterprises can grow and adapt to a circular and sustainable economy. In special cases, when the market is unable to take the extra step towards the green or digital transition on its own, it may be necessary to inject targeted state aid for strategically identified industrial ecosystems.

The Important Projects of Common European Interest (IPCEI) are among several tools the EU uses to strengthen industry by overcoming market failures. These projects should contribute to the green and digital transition. Sweden participates in two projects thus far, one with the Swedish Electric Transport Laboratory, for transport electrification (SEEL), and the other with Northvolt, for development of battery cells and the expansion of an electrification campus for battery research in the city of Västerås.

Sweden needs to harness the opportunities provided by these collaborative projects. However, Sweden's basic view remains the same – it is within the business sector and research community that innovation should grow and flourish. Support from the public sector must be used restrictively. We must therefore ensure that collaborative projects at EU level funded by state aid are not overused at the risk of harming competition. It is not the role of politics to identify successes, and it is not trade barriers that strengthen enterprises, but rather competition, knowledge, innovation and access to the global market.

European success translates into Swedish success. We cannot tackle future challenges on our own – whether they involve crises or the shaping of our industries. For this reason, the Swedish government strongly supports European cooperation. And this is why we are working with renewed strength for a modern and forward-looking European industrial strategy.

Published 27 April 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

# Opinion piece by Hans Dahlgren, Minister for EU Affairs

On 29 March 2021 the Swedish newspaper Dagens Nyheter published an opinion piece by Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren. In the article Hans Dahlgren writes about the ongoing discussion within the EU regarding strategic autonomy – which in simple terms is about attempting to reduce Europe’s dependence on the rest of the world.

From the Swedish Government’s point of view, there are five primary areas in which initiatives can be taken to build a stronger EU that remains open to the rest of the world: the green transition, digital development, enhanced crisis preparedness, fair competition, and a stronger European voice regarding foreign and security policy.

Hans Dahlgren writes that the Swedish Government will work actively to strengthen EU cooperation without jeopardising the single market’s fundamental principles of openness, innovation and free trade.

[Read full article at Dagens Nyheter’s web page.](#)

Published 07 April 2021



# Hans Dahlgren presents the general political direction of Sweden's Presidency of the Council of the EU

Today, Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren has informed the Riksdag of the political direction of Sweden's Presidency of the Council of the European Union

“The EU is facing major challenges, including a war in a neighbouring European country, widespread organised crime, an acute climate crisis, widespread unemployment and Member States backsliding on the EU's fundamental values. These are some of the issues that the Swedish Presidency has to address,” says Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren.

The general political direction of the Swedish Presidency is expressed under five headings agreed on following discussions with party representatives in the Riksdag:

- Provide security for EU citizens and strengthen the EU's role in the world
- Stop organised crime
- Speed up the green transition
- Strengthen the EU's competitiveness for the jobs of the future
- Safeguard the EU's fundamental values

The five headings are general in nature and will be developed and consolidated, ultimately resulting in the priorities and work programme to be presented in December.

Time is available for media questions; contact Press Secretary Victoria Frisk

**Garcia.**

Published 07 June 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

# Prime Minister to receive President of the European Council

On Wednesday 25 May, Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson will receive the President of the European Council, Charles Michel.

Their discussions will concern current EU matters ahead of next week's meeting of the European Council, and the security situation in the EU in light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren will also take part in the meeting.

## **Media programme**

11.30: Ms Andersson receives Mr Michel outside the entrance to Björnen – photo opportunity

10.45–11.15: Admittance and security checks ahead of the photo opportunity, via Rödbodgatan 6

12.45: Press conference in Bella Venezia

12.15–12.40: Admittance and security checks ahead of the press conference, via Rödbodgatan 6

The press briefing will be livestreamed on [government.se](http://government.se) and on the Government's YouTube channel.

## [The Government's YouTube channel](#)

A maximum of 2 people per editorial office. Participation is subject to available space. Press credentials are required.

Advance registration required by 14.00 on Tuesday 24 May to Nina Kefi (see press contacts). Give your name, the name of your editorial office, your

email address and mobile phone number, and attach a photo of your press credentials.

Published 24 May 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

# Sweden closes airspace to Russian aircraft

The Government has decided to ban Russian aircraft from Swedish airspace. An ordinance to this effect enters into force on 28 February 2022.

In light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Government has decided to ban Russian aircraft from Swedish airspace.

Yesterday evening, EU foreign ministers adopted a ban on Russian aircraft landing in, taking off from and overflying EU territory. The ban enters into force on 28 February 2022.

“This flight ban aims to further isolate Russia. It is also important that the EU is continuing to demonstrate great unity,” says Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren.

The ordinance enters into force on 28 February 2022.

Published 28 February 2022



# After EU judgment – EU funds can be withheld when Member States do not respect rule of law

The European Court of Justice decided yesterday that it is possible to stop payments of EU funds to Member States that do not fully respect the rule of law. Sweden played an active role in the legal process in which Poland and Hungary wanted to stop an EU regulation that would allow this.

“That the rule of law must apply in all EU Member States is a very important issue for the Government, which we have long been pushing for. Yesterday’s judgment is therefore very welcome,” says Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren.

In December 2020, the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers jointly decided to introduce a rule of law conditionality regulation. This makes it possible to stop payments of funds to Member States that do not fully respect the rule of law in matters such as independent courts, and thereby protect the EU’s financial interests.

Hungary and Poland later requested that the European Court of Justice declare the regulation invalid, as they claim it contravenes the Treaty on European Union. This is a view that the Swedish Government does not share, and it therefore decided – as did several other EU countries – to join the proceedings and to side with the Council and the Parliament when the case was examined by the European Court of Justice in autumn 2021.

“Many of us in the EU take a positive view of the regulation and have done so since it was introduced in 2020. It means that an EU country that does not respect the rule of law can be faced with serious economic consequences. Simply put, if you don’t follow the rules, it will cost you,” said Mr Dahlgren.

Defending and pushing for all EU Member States to have free, independent courts is a priority issue for the Government. This is also why Sweden was actively engaged in the court proceedings, in defence of the important instrument that the regulation represents.

The judgment yesterday by the European Court of Justice means that Poland and Hungary have lost the case. The Court instead followed the line taken by the Council, the Parliament, the Commission and the EU countries – including Sweden – that were engaged in the case. The regulation therefore remains in force.

“Yesterday’s judgment by the European Court of Justice is very welcome, and it is important that the regulation can now begin to be fully applied,” Mr Dahlgren concluded.

Published 17 February 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

# Change of government, 30 November 2021

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

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

## **Prime Minister's Office**

Magdalena Andersson, Prime Minister

Hans Dahlgren, Minister for EU Affairs

## **Ministry of Employment**

Eva Nordmark, Minister for Employment and Gender Equality

Johan Danielsson, Minister for Housing and Deputy Minister for Employment

## **Ministry of Finance**

Mikael Damberg, Minister for Finance

Max Elger, Minister for Financial Markets

Ida Karkiainen, Minister for Public Administration

## **Ministry of Defence**

Peter Hultqvist, Minister for Defence

**Ministry of Infrastructure**

Tomas Eneroth, Minister for Infrastructure

Khashayar Farmanbar, Minister for Energy and Digital Development

**Ministry of Justice**

Morgan Johansson, Minister for Justice and Home Affairs

Anders Ygeman, Minister for Integration and Migration

**Ministry of Culture**

Jeanette Gustafsdotter, Minister for Culture

**Ministry of the Environment**

Annika Strandhäll, Minister for Climate and the Environment

**Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation**

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

Anna-Caren Säterberg, Minister for Rural Affairs

**Ministry of Health and Social Affairs**

Lena Hallengren, Minister for Health and Social Affairs

Ardalan Shekarabi, Minister for Social Security

**Ministry of Education and Research**

Anna Ekström, Minister for Education

Lina Axelsson Kihlblom, Minister for Schools

**Ministry for Foreign Affairs**

Ann Linde, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Anna Hallberg, Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs

Matilda Ernkrans, Minister for International Development Cooperation

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Published 30 November 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

# Sweden's new Government

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

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

## **Prime Minister's Office**

**Prime Minister**

Stefan Löfven

**Minister for EU Affairs**

Hans Dahlgren

## **Ministry of Employment**

**Minister for Employment**

Eva Nordmark

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

Märta Stenevi

## **Ministry of Finance**

**Minister for Finance**

Magdalena Andersson

**Minister for Public Administration**

Lena Micko

**Minister for Financial Markets and Deputy Minister for Finance**

Åsa Lindhagen

**Ministry of Defence**

**Minister for Defence**

Peter Hultqvist

**Ministry of Infrastructure**

**Minister for Infrastructure**

Tomas Eneroth

**Minister for Energy and Digital Development**

Anders Ygeman

**Ministry of Justice**

**Minister for Justice and Migration**

Morgan Johansson

**Minister for Home Affairs**

Mikael Damberg

**Ministry of Culture**

**Minister for Culture and Democracy, with responsibility for sport**

Amanda Lind

**Ministry of the Environment**

**Minister for Environment and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister**

Per Bolund

**Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation**

**Minister for Business, Industry and Innovation**

Ibrahim Baylan

**Ministry of Health and Social Affairs**

**Minister for Health and Social Affairs**

Lena Hallengren

**Minister for Social Security**

Ardalan Shekarabi

**Ministry of Education and Research**

**Minister for Education**

Anna Ekström

**Minister for Higher Education and Research**

Matilda Ernkrans

**Ministry for Foreign Affairs**

**Minister for Foreign Affairs**

Ann Linde

**Minister for International Development Cooperation**

Per Olsson Fridh

**Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs**

Anna Hallberg

Published 09 July 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

# Government decision today: Sweden supports new rules making EU budget conditional on respect for rule of law in case before Court of Justice

The Government decided today to support the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union in a case before the Court of Justice of the European Union concerning new rules to make the EU budget conditional on respect for the rule of law.

In December last year, the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers jointly decided to introduce a rule of law conditionality regulation, making it possible to stop the payment of EU budgetary funding to countries that do not fully respect the rule of law.

Hungary and Poland later demanded that the Court of Justice of the European Union declare the regulation invalid, as they claim it contravenes the Treaty on European Union.

The Swedish Government does not share this view, and has therefore decided today to side with the Council and the Parliament when the case is examined by the Court of Justice.

“Many of us throughout the EU were pleased with the decision whereby there can be severe economic consequences for countries that do not respect the rule of law,” says Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren. “Defending these important principles and pushing for them to be applied in all EU Member States is a priority issue for the Government. For this reason, it is very problematic that two EU states are demanding that the entire regulation be declared invalid.

“This conditionality already applies, and has done so since 1 January this year. I hope that its application in practice will also begin as soon as possible. Sweden will therefore now defend this important instrument in the Court proceedings,” Mr Dahlgren concludes.

Published 20 May 2021



# First meeting to be held in Kiruna when Sweden takes over EU Presidency in 2023

The European Commission will be invited to Kiruna when Sweden holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union from 1 January–30 June 2023.

Preparations by the Government and the Government Offices ahead of Sweden's Presidency of the EU in the spring of 2023 have been under way for over a year. During the Swedish Presidency, the Government and Government Offices officials will lead many of the Council of the European Union's meetings. In all, this includes around 2 000 meetings in Brussels and Luxembourg. Some 150 informal meetings and conferences will be organised here in Sweden. The first meeting of the European Commission will be held in Kiruna in January 2023.

“It's a tradition for the country holding the Presidency to invite the European Commission at the beginning of its term for a meeting with the government about current matters on the EU agenda. Inviting the Commission to Kiruna gives us a fantastic opportunity to show the unique and beautiful countryside, as well as the power and drive inherent in the region,” says Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren.

## **Background to the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union**

The Presidency's most important task is to move the EU's agenda forward and work out negotiated solutions. The Presidency must be well-organised and create efficient meetings that deliver decisions and positions that benefit EU citizens. The primary focus during a Presidency is to do a good job in leading the work of the EU. The Presidency rotates among the EU Member States.



# Government's preparations for a no-deal Brexit

The Swedish Government has assessed that the risk of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union without a withdrawal agreement has increased. To address the most serious consequences of a no-deal withdrawal, the Government has taken a range of measures that strengthen Sweden's preparedness. At a press conference today, Minister for Finance Magdalena Andersson and Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren outlined Sweden's preparations ahead of the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

“The Government has prepared for the consequences of the UK's withdrawal from the EU in various ways, for example through official information to companies on the new conditions for trade and on measures to assist private individuals. Central government finances are in order, and our national debt is at its lowest level since 1977. This means we are in a strong position for a no-deal scenario,” says Ms Andersson.

International analysts agree that Brexit – regardless of whether the UK leaves the EU with a withdrawal agreement or without one – will mean lower growth and less trade for the UK and EU Member States. No withdrawal agreement has yet been approved and the positions of the EU and the UK are far apart on the key issue of the backstop. Despite this, the Government is working – with other EU countries – for an orderly withdrawal.

“We would, of course, like to see an orderly withdrawal. But according to recent statements from the UK Government, the UK intends to leave the EU on 1 November, with or without an agreement. The situation is serious and we need to be well prepared for a hard Brexit too,” says Mr Dahlgren.

The Government has taken measures in many areas. Preparations have been made in close cooperation with government agencies, the European Commission and other EU Member States. However, the Government notes that even if Sweden is well prepared, the negative consequences of a no-deal withdrawal will be unavoidable.

At Wednesday's press conference, Ms Andersson and Mr Dahlgren outlined what has been done to:

- assist Swedish citizens residing in the UK and British citizens residing in Sweden;
- ensure that the financial markets can continue to operate effectively and that financial stability is not jeopardised by a no-deal withdrawal;
- inform companies and private individuals about the new customs regulations that may be introduced;
- enable Swedish Customs to manage the increased work burden that a no-deal withdrawal would cause;
- manage the new rules that would apply to the fishing industry and air and rail transport;
- ensure medicines supply in the EU.

Published 28 August 2019



Government Offices of Sweden

# Minister for EU Affairs to receive Ireland's Minister of State for European Affairs Helen McEntee

On Thursday 14 March, Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren will receive Ireland's Minister of State for European Affairs Helen McEntee. Mr Dahlgren and Ms McEntee will discuss current issues such as Brexit, the EU budget, migration and the rule of law.

Adelcrantzska. Entrance on Rödbodgatan 6

## **Press programme**

14.30: Photo opportunity as the Minister for EU Affairs receives Minister of State for European Affairs Helen McEntee in Adelcrantzska.

Photographers and journalists may enter via the Kopparporten entrance on Rödbodgatan 6 between 13.45 and 14.15.

Please bring your press credentials.

Registration required.

Published 14 March 2019



## Social protection following Brexit

The Government wishes to mitigate the consequences for Swedish citizens in the United Kingdom in the event that the country leaves the EU without reaching any agreement whatsoever on how this withdrawal is to take place. Among other things, the government bill submitted to the Riksdag proposes that, in the event of a hard Brexit, it should still be possible to pay Swedish social security benefits to individuals in the United Kingdom over a transitional period. It is also proposed that it should still be possible to receive compensation for healthcare expenses over the same period.

– The EU was created to secure peace, freedom, democracy and the freedom of movement. People who have moved between Sweden and the United Kingdom must also be able to feel secure in times of uncertainty. The Government has therefore submitted a legislative proposal to the Riksdag to create security for people during this adjustment, says Minister for Social Security Annika Strandhäll.

The bill proposes that, over a transitional period, individuals can continue to receive Swedish social security benefits, with the exception of unemployment benefit, paid to them in the United Kingdom in the same way as at present. The proposal also means that individuals will be able to receive compensation for healthcare costs in certain cases. The provisions for the payment of benefits and compensation for healthcare costs will cease to apply at the end of 2019.

– We want to see an orderly British withdrawal from the EU – everybody would benefit from this. But the date for the withdrawal is coming ever closer and there is still no agreement. This makes it important that we also prepare for a hard Brexit so that nobody gets into difficulties, says Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren.

It is also proposed that provisions be introduced to protect, in the future, the right to aggregate periods of acquired insurance and the right to equate benefits and so on for people working or residing in the UK during the period in which the country was a member of the EU. This may become relevant for future claims of social security benefits, such as pensions.

It is proposed that the legislative amendments enter into force on 29 March 2019.

Published 25 February 2019



Government Offices of Sweden

# The ministers' press contacts

Here are the contact details for the ministers' press secretaries.

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**Ministry of Justice**

**Press Secretary to Minister for Justice Morgan Johansson**

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**Press Secretary to Minister for Home Affairs Mikael Damberg**

**Miriam Abu Eid**

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**Ministry of Culture**

**Press Secretary to Minister for Culture and Democracy, with responsibility for sport,  
Amanda Lind**

**Anna Söderström**

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## **Ministry of the Environment**

**Press secretaries to Minister for Environment and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister,  
Isabella Lövin**

**Jakob Lundgren**

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**Press Secretary to Minister for Rural Affairs Jennie Nilsson**

**Maria Soläng**

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## **Ministry of Health and Social Affairs**

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# New state secretaries at the Government Offices

The Government today appointed 31 state secretaries at the Government Offices. Former state secretaries have been dismissed from their positions. Most of the state secretaries have previously held corresponding positions at the Government Offices.

## **Prime Minister's Office**

The Government has appointed Nils Vikmång as the Prime Minister's State Secretary. The Government has also appointed Madeleine Harby Samuelsson and Karin Wallensteen as state secretaries to Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

The Government has appointed Paula Carvalho Olovsson as State Secretary to Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren.

The Government has appointed Mats Andersson and Maria Ferm as state secretaries in the coordinating committee at the Prime Minister's Office.

## **Ministry of Employment**

The Government has appointed Annika Dahl as State Secretary to Minister for Employment Ylva Johansson.

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

## **Ministry of Finance**

The Government has appointed Max Elger and Leif Jacobsson as state secretaries to Minister for Finance Magdalena Andersson.

The Government has appointed Ulf Holm and Elin Olsson as state secretaries

to Minister for Financial Markets and Housing, Deputy Minister for Finance, Per Bolund.

The Government has appointed Alejandro Firpo as State Secretary to Minister for Public Administration Ardalan Shekarabi.

### **Ministry of Defence**

The Government has appointed Jan-Olof Lind as State Secretary to Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

### **Ministry of Infrastructure**

The Government has appointed Mattias Landgren as State Secretary to Minister for Infrastructure Tomas Eneroth.

The Government has appointed Sebastian De Toro as State Secretary to Minister for Energy and Digital Development Anders Ygeman.

### **Ministry of Justice**

The Government has appointed Catharina Espmark and Lars Westbratt as state secretaries to Minister for Justice and Migration Morgan Johansson.

The Government has appointed Elisabeth Backteman as State Secretary to Minister for Home Affairs Mikael Damberg.

### **Ministry of Culture**

The Government has appointed Helene Öberg as State Secretary to Minister for Culture and Democracy, with responsibility for sport, Amanda Lind.

### **Ministry of the Environment**

The Government has appointed Eva Svedling and Gunvor Ericson as state secretaries to Minister for Environment and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister, Isabella Lövin.

### **Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation**

The Government has appointed Stina Billinger and Emil Högberg as state secretaries to Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Ibrahim Baylan.

The Government has appointed Per Callenberg as State Secretary to Minister

for Rural Affairs Jennie Nilsson.

### **Ministry of Health and Social Affairs**

The Government has appointed Maja Fjaestad as State Secretary to Minister for Health and Social Affairs Lena Hallengren.

### **Ministry of Education and Research**

The Government has appointed Erik Nilsson as State Secretary to Minister for Education Anna Ekström.

The Government has appointed Malin Cederfeldt Östberg as State Secretary to Minister for Higher Education and Research Matilda Ernkrans.

### **Ministry for Foreign Affairs**

The Government has appointed Annika Söder as State Secretary for Foreign Affairs to Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

The Government has appointed Per Olsson Fridh as State Secretary to Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson.

The Government has appointed Niklas Johansson as State Secretary to Minister for Foreign Trade, with responsibility for Nordic affairs, Ann Linde.

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Government Offices of Sweden

# Statement of Government EU Policy

The Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren, the Riksdag, 26 January 2022. Check against delivery.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

In the beginning, the European Union was a peace project, created in response to the horrors and abuses of the Second World War. Weaving strong bonds between citizens on our continent was supposed to prevent any further wars.

And the EU has been an incredible success in this regard. A unique example of peaceful cooperation between independent states. Today, we regard war between Member States of the EU as inconceivable.

Right now, the EU's importance as a security policy foothold is clearer than it has been for some time. Our own security policy choices are decided at national level and as a sovereign state. But to achieve the goals we set – freedom, independence, democracy – solidarity within the EU is indispensable. The EU is Sweden's most important foreign and security policy arena.

Russia's recent unacceptable demands and ultimatums have met with European and transatlantic unity and steadfastness. This includes preparedness to impose extensive and severe sanctions if Russia further aggravates the situation. Such sanctions are most effective if they are implemented jointly, at EU level.

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Mr/Madam Speaker,

EU cooperation gives Sweden so much. A market in which businesses and all of us can freely buy and sell goods and services, creating jobs and prosperity.

A democratic tool with which to influence our neighbourhood. And a platform to amplify Sweden's voice in the world.

There are those who claim that the EU limits more than it enriches us. Many nationalists profess that it would somehow be possible to "take back control", as they say, by leaving the EU.

The reality is quite the opposite. Active participation in the EU gives a country such as Sweden the best opportunities to decide our own fate and exercise control over our lives.

It is the best way to safeguard the principles of democracy, human rights and openness to the rest of the world that have served Europe and Sweden so well.

When Sweden takes over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2023, these principles will also shape our work. It is an important undertaking that involves moving the Council's agenda forward and helping ensure that the EU can take decisions that benefit Europe's citizens.

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Mr/Madam Speaker,

The Government has three priorities for its work:

Breaking down segregation and combating crime.

Accelerating the climate transition.

And taking back democratic control over the welfare system.

This does not only apply to national policy – we are also working on these issues at EU level. Because the aim of all social democratic policy, including at EU level, is to bring about concrete improvements in people's everyday lives. And through active EU policy, there are good prospects of achieving results in all three of these areas.

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Mr/Madam Speaker,

The first priority concerns segregation and crime.

Shootings and explosions are occurring on Sweden's streets. This is absolutely appalling. The full force of all of society is now being mobilised to crack down on gangs.

Organised crime is, by its very nature, transnational. For this reason, transnational solutions are also needed.

Through the EU, Sweden has the opportunity to combat criminal gangs with considerably greater force.

Over the past year, cooperation between police authorities across Europe has time and time again delivered concrete results in the fight against crime. Important steps have been taken to deepen existing police cooperation, to facilitate work across national borders.

More must be done. This includes increased cooperation between prosecutors and police, but also legislation to ensure that law enforcement authorities have the tools they need.

Migration is also an important security issue.

This means having control over our borders and knowing who is in our countries. Effective tools for returns and readmission are needed. We must not forget that migration is about human beings. About human security. For this reason, the conditions for long-term sustainable, humane and legally certain migration policy in the EU must be improved.

One important aspect is addressing the fact that just a few countries take responsibility for people arriving in the EU. This is not reasonable. Negotiations are under way on a common regulatory framework, which must lead to orderly migration management in the EU.

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Mr/Madam Speaker,

The second priority concerns climate change.

We are in the midst of a climate transition, which must be accelerated.

The climate crisis is the existential issue of our time. In the long term, it is a

matter of ensuring survival on this planet.

We have to end the climate crisis. And the EU must lead the way with an ambitious climate policy.

The EU Member States have set a goal of reducing emissions by at least 55 per cent by 2030. The Government will strive for the EU to achieve climate neutrality no later than 2050, in accordance with the European Climate Law.

Goals are one thing – now they must be implemented in concrete policy. In the summer the European Commission presented its extensive ‘Fit for 55’ package of legislative proposals. The ambitions are good, but the Government does not share the Commission’s direction in every respect. We are also clear about this in the negotiations.

The emission reduction requirements must be the top priority – not laying down exhaustive rules for forestry or paying massive subsidies. At the same time, we must bear in mind that considerable willingness to compromise will be needed on all sides if we are to achieve results.

Joint EU solutions are crucial. Emissions trading, not least, has contributed in recent years to an increasingly rapid phasing out of coal burning. Sweden is now pushing for the emissions trading system to be further expanded and sharpened.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Climate change is the defining issue of our time – but also an opportunity. All around Europe, attention is being directed to what is happening in Sweden. Green reindustrialisation, with carbon dioxide-free steel production and large-scale battery production, is showing the way towards a sustainable society. And it also leads to new jobs.

The green industrial revolution places demands on policy. The updated EU industrial strategy presented in 2021 makes a number of proposals in this direction. We do not believe that it is for politicians to identify the technologies and solutions of tomorrow. But European cooperation in particularly important sectors may sometimes be necessary to boost the transition.

Forests play a central role in climate action. The Government recognises the climate benefits of forests, both as a carbon sink and as a source of sustainably produced raw materials to replace fossil-based products. Forestry

must not be subject to exhaustive rules from Brussels.

As Europe's economies restart after the pandemic, economic growth and climate transition must go hand in hand. This requires new green investments throughout the EU. But these investments must not be financed through additional joint borrowing at EU level. Sound public finances are crucial throughout Europe. They will strengthen European resilience to future crises.

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Mr/Madam Speaker,

The third priority is welfare.

The pandemic is the greatest threat our welfare has faced for a very long time. The dramatic rise in infection rates has once again put pressure on care systems throughout Europe.

But in the midst of this health crisis, there is reason to highlight the success of the EU countries' joint procurement of vaccines against COVID-19. It has contributed to the unprecedentedly rapid development of safe and effective vaccines, which has saved many lives.

Crises are best tackled collectively. When borders have been closed and prevented the delivery of medical equipment, everyone has been affected. This is why the fundamental principles of free movement must be protected.

The EU's crisis management capability in the field of civil protection also needs to be strengthened and further developed.

There are several good examples of how the operational capabilities of the civil protection mechanism have recently been strengthened. These include the fire-extinguishing aircraft stationed in Sweden that last summer helped to fight fires in Greece, and the common European reserves of medical equipment – one of them in Kristinehamn.

The foundation of an effective welfare system is a strong and viable economy. This, in turn, requires a strong and viable EU.

The strength of the EU economy is its openness – openness between Member States, but also to the world. Being able to exchange goods, services and ideas beyond the EU too. This is a strong engine for growth and new jobs, and helps to reduce the vulnerability of the European economy.

There are now tendencies in the EU pointing in a somewhat different direction. Towards more isolationism and protectionism.

This is the wrong path to take. The Government is resolute in its determination to defend the EU's openness to the world. This involves safeguarding the model that has made Swedish export companies successful and created many jobs in Sweden.

We protect jobs and welfare, but it is also a matter of safeguarding openness as the basis of cooperation for common security, across the Atlantic and with other partners.

Few links are as clear as the link between the welfare of citizens and access to decent work. More needs to be done to strengthen the position of workers in the EU.

No one should be worried about being injured or becoming ill at work. No one should risk their life for their job. By tightening the rules on hazardous substances in the workplace, better working environments will be achievable throughout the EU.

At the same time, national competence in this area – not least with regard to wage formation – will continue to be protected.

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Mr/Madam Speaker,

I have spoken about how the Government's three priorities can be channelled into EU policy. But I would also like to address one other very important area.

Cooperation in the EU builds on the Member States' pledge to respect our fundamental values. Freedom and democracy. Respect for human rights. Equality, gender equality and tolerance. Justice and pluralism. An independent judiciary.

These are not exclusively European values. But they are the values of the European Union, and they are the values that all the members of the European Union have pledged to uphold.

This is why it is a matter of very serious concern when, in several Member States, respect for these values is lacking. When LGBTIQ people are

harassed. When women's right to abortion is curtailed. When journalists are intimidated into silence. And especially when respect for the rule of law is challenged by removing judges and questioning whether rulings of the European Court of Justice need to be complied with at all.

Addressing this situation is a matter that concerns all Member States. The Government will push for the European Commission to continue to take action to reverse this trend. The new conditionality mechanism, which makes receipt of EU funds by a Member State dependent on its respect for the rule of law, must become an effective tool.

Values are the very foundation of the European Union. But they also add weight to the EU's voice in the global arena.

The EU's foreign policy voice needs to be stronger. To create common security, in collaboration with others. And to firmly stand up against anti-democratic forces beyond the borders of the EU.

At the same time, the EU remains a union of independent nations; it is not a federal state.

There are some matters that we can best decide for ourselves, here in Sweden. For example, our military defence. Our wage formation system. Our forestry. This is how it will remain. But ultimately, the EU gives us more influence and greater power over our own future.

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Mr/Madam Speaker,

Rarely have the arguments for Sweden's EU membership been stronger. Rarely has the need for strong European cooperation been so great. Rarely has there been such a great need for an active Swedish voice in the EU.

This is why the Government will continue to work tirelessly for an EU that will help us crack down on gangs, that will drive the climate transition and that will strengthen welfare. And for an EU that will defend our values.

Because that is precisely what Sweden needs.

Published 26 January 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

# Sweden supports efforts for greater transparency in the EU

In response to the ongoing Conference on the Future of Europe, Sweden and others have signed a pledge for greater openness and transparency in the EU. All Member States, 37 MEPs, the European Commission and the European Ombudsman have signed the pledge, committing to work for greater transparency in the EU institutions.

“For the Government, it goes without saying that we must continue to work for an open and transparent EU. An EU with dialogue and participation for all of its citizens,” says Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren.

[Read full pledge here.](#)

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