

*Mr. Carl Bildt,
Minister for
Foreign Affairs*

Statement of Government Policy

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Mr/Madam Speaker,

Our world is facing major challenges that can only be resolved through broad cooperation. This is the only way in which we can contribute to peace and security in vulnerable countries and regions. This is the only way in which we can effectively promote development, democracy and human rights in the world, confront the climate challenge and create the conditions for sustainable globalisation.

In the second half of 2009, our country held the responsibility of the Presidency of the European Union.

We continued to work, successfully, for a Sweden with a stronger standing in Europe and a Europe with a stronger standing in the world.

Through European cooperation, the nations of Europe can bring their influence to bear in a multi-polar world facing major challenges. Through Europe our voice carries weight, and our actions gain strength.

The Statement of Foreign Policy 2010 is the first under the Treaty of Lisbon – a treaty that represents a decisive step towards strengthening the European Union as a global actor by matching its economic weight with political power.

Europe has thereby gained new opportunities to shape international developments on the basis of European interests and values. The Government's foremost foreign policy priority is to work to enable this to happen to the fullest extent.

The Government has previously presented and established Sweden's security policy in the Riksdag. This security policy remains firmly in place.

Our foreign policy is a part of the common European foreign policy, and a decisive part of our day-to-day work is about being involved in shaping and communicating this. The development of the European External Action Service, which Sweden actively supports, is an example of this.

Membership of the European Union means that Sweden is part of a political alliance and takes its share of responsibility, in the spirit of solidarity, for Europe's security. Sweden will not remain passive if another EU Member State or Nordic country suffers a disaster or an attack. We expect these countries to act in the same way if Sweden is similarly affected.

For Sweden, which has chosen to take a place at the heart of European cooperation, this is a natural and desirable development, just as it is natural and desirable to work to ensure that the EU's voice is heard more clearly throughout the world. This is the best way to safeguard our values and national interests in an increasingly complex world.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Sweden took over the Presidency of the European Union at a time of great challenges. The financial crisis had begun to have its full impact on the real economy and the EU's role ahead of and during the international climate change conference in Copenhagen was a central issue. Our country bore a heavy responsibility, as holder of the Presidency, to complete the ratification and begin the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon while, in parallel, the new European Commission was to be appointed and the newly elected European Parliament to take office.

We showed that we are committed and competent Europeans. We moved important points on the EU's agenda forward.

The European Union has played a key role in the extensive international cooperation that has been crucial to the economic recovery now coming ever more clearly into view.

In order to deal with the economic crisis and reduce the risk of future serious financial imbalances, supervision of the financial markets has been tightened and initiatives taken to promote free trade and counter protectionism. European coordination of economic policy has been deepened.

In the area of climate, the EU was a strong driving force for a climate agreement in Copenhagen. Where others reneged, the EU demonstrated its capacity to take responsibility by putting concrete and ambitious bids on the table. From this point of view, the result in Copenhagen was a disappointment. Confidence must be restored between countries, and attention must be paid to the needs of the least developed and most vulnerable countries. The world must now unite behind a climate agreement that guarantees that the two-degree target is met. The Government will do all it can to ensure that this happens.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The EU's emergence as a global actor is a consequence of institutional reforms and political leadership, but ultimately its success rests on its attractiveness, economic weight and values-based social model.

Its gradual enlargement has resulted in an EU with a population today numbering over half a billion and the world's largest integrated economy, representing around 25 per cent of global production and one fifth of global trade. The EU also contributes around 60 per cent of total global development assistance.

Our Europe must be an open Europe.

We all have open economies and open societies. Democracy is the indispensable basis of European cooperation.

Our European Union remains open – in accordance with Article 49 of the Treaty – to all European countries that wish to, and are capable of, living up to the requirement imposed by full participation in our cooperation.

We do not want to close the door on the future – we want to open up possibilities.

The European Union has a particular interest in, and responsibility for, development in our neighbour countries to the east and south. The EU's peace policy in its neighbourhood consolidates stability on our continent and our credibility on the global stage.

During the Swedish Presidency, we had the opportunity to help break deadlocks in the European integration process in the Western Balkans.

Croatia's accession negotiations were stepped up, after the dispute with Slovenia over the future handling of the border issue had been resolved. Serbia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Montenegro were granted visa-free access to the European Union. Albania's membership application was forwarded to the Commission. We were also able to receive Serbia's application for membership. Along with the United States, we gave new impetus to the necessary reforms in Bosnia, which we hope will be possible after the parliamentary elections in the autumn.

Through the soft power of the European Union, the countries of the Western Balkans have taken the path of reform and decisive steps towards European integration, and thereby towards stability and increased prosperity. By allowing the doors of the EU to remain open, we make a considerable contribution to peace and democracy on our

own continent. We will continue to be strongly committed to the European peace and integration process in the Western Balkans.

We were also able to open another chapter in the accession negotiations with Turkey.

We welcome the continued democratic transition in Turkey.

We view arrests of democratically elected politicians with concern and see the country's reforms – with their increased human rights protection – as a development of very great significance for the future.

Although much remains to be achieved, not least a new and modern constitution with greater protection for political rights, we are convinced that the European Union will be both more dynamic economically and stronger politically with Turkey as a member. This would show even more clearly that our European cooperation can bridge the antagonisms that in times past characterised our continent's history, and continue to characterise parts of our world.

An agreement on the reunification of Cyprus would give new impetus to developments in south-eastern Europe. Sweden fully supports the UN's mediation efforts for a united Cyprus.

Last summer, Iceland submitted its membership application. Iceland is already a part of Schengen and, through the EEA Agreement, the internal market. Sweden will work to ensure that Iceland's EU accession negotiations are opened as soon as possible, and that the negotiation process is as rapid and efficient as possible.

In addition to this, important steps were taken during the Swedish Presidency in the implementation of the Eastern Partnership. In 2010 the Government will contribute to its further development, in order to promote reforms and EU integration among the EU's closest neighbours to the east. Funding of necessary reforms in our partner countries, simpler opportunities for travel and work to and within the EU, trade liberalisation and a strengthened role for civil society are all priority areas.

Sweden continues to attach great importance to cooperation in various areas with Ukraine. Democratic development in the country is of great importance. We hope that the negotiations on the new association agreement with the European Union can be concluded in the course of this year.

The situation in Belarus is still a cause for concern, not least with regard to respect for human rights. The Government's support for an open and democratic Belarus continues.

Cooperation with South Caucasus must also be strengthened. Georgia's territorial integrity and democratic development are also important to the wider region.

Sweden welcomes the Russian President's statements on the importance of a functioning rule of law and an extensive modernisation of Russian society. We hope that it will soon be possible to welcome Russia too as a member of the WTO.

The decision to adopt an EU Baltic Sea Strategy has lent new strength to cooperation in our own immediate neighbourhood.

The Union for the Mediterranean is an important part of the EU's broad neighbourhood policy. Cooperation with partner countries around the Mediterranean is multifaceted and of strategic importance for the European Union. It also means better opportunities for strong European commitment within areas that are important to Sweden, such as human rights, democracy, gender equality, trade, investment and the environment.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

In the wake of globalisation, a new and better world is being created.

Globalisation has helped bring freedom and prosperity to growing numbers of people. The gradual recovery we are now experiencing demonstrates the strength of globalisation.

Globalisation will continue to be the process that most clearly defines the development of our world. It is being driven forward by technological progress, by capital flows and trade, by people's mobility, but also by political decisions.

The battle against protectionism is a key task for global trade. The Government will therefore continue to work for the conclusion of the Doha Round in 2010. An agreement would mean an annual global stimulus effect of over SEK 1 100 billion and would be an important step towards economic recovery. Free trade and new technology create the conditions to make this recovery sustainable. The Government will also press for a strengthening of the EU internal market and for the conclusion of the ongoing negotiations on regional and bilateral free trade agreements between the European Union and a number of important partners.

Promoting developments that can cope with the major environmental and climate challenges is a matter of crucial importance to the world. Sustainable globalisation requires new forms of international

collaboration. The fact that it was not possible to arrive at a far-reaching and binding climate agreement in Copenhagen shows how difficult it is for the existing international institutions to effectively tackle the challenges of our time.

A strong and well-functioning United Nations is a prerequisite for effective multilateralism, which is the cornerstone of Swedish and European foreign policy. Sweden has long been working for a reform of the UN and will therefore take a proactive role in efforts to find ways out of the political deadlocks that are currently making it difficult for the United Nations to effectively deal with global problems.

Several of today's challenges must also be dealt with in other forums. The G20 have played an important role in negotiations, both on international economic crisis measures and the issue of climate change. There is every indication that the G20 will remain a central group when it comes to important decisions in the future too. It is therefore in Sweden's interest to gain influence in this forum as well.

Transatlantic relations are a central element of the European Union's foreign policy. These relations are becoming increasingly important. The Obama administration has brought new prospects for this cooperation. The summit between the European Union and the United States held during the Swedish Presidency made an important contribution to transatlantic relations.

The world of tomorrow will be shaped to a great extent by Asia's emerging strength. The economic crisis has caused not only economic power but also political influence to further shift towards Asia.

China is leading the way in terms of development among the new major economies. The impact of the country's influence is becoming increasingly clear. We must take action to harness the opportunities and meet the challenges that this entails.

Several specific steps were taken at the EU Summit in November 2009 to strengthen EU-China relations. Sweden and the EU also expect strengthened relations to favour respect for human rights in China, an area that remains a cause for concern, not least in view of the persecution of dissidents and continued executions. The World Expo in Shanghai, which opens in May, will provide further opportunities to strengthen Sweden's relations with China.

India's regional and global influence is on the rise. As a democratic country where the rule of law prevails, India is becoming an increasingly important cooperation partner for the European Union. Strengthening the strategic partnership between the European Union and India is therefore an important task for the future. Economic growth in India,

the size of its market and the major investment needs in the country also open up great opportunities for European companies.

Brazil and South Africa are emerging as increasingly important economic and political actors. It is therefore natural for Sweden and the EU to strengthen and deepen strategic relations with these countries.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Sustainable globalisation must build on democratic values, respect for human rights and the principles of international law.

During the Swedish Presidency the EU Member States adopted an Agenda for Action on Democracy Support in EU External Relations. This provides the EU with more effective instruments for promoting democracy and human rights in the world.

Sweden is raising its ambitions concerning democracy assistance. This year, the Government will further increase Swedish support for democratisation and freedom of expression, among other measures. The Government continues to work to increase women's participation in decision-making on the same terms and with the same rights as men. Efforts to stop human trafficking will be pursued and intensified.

Defence of human rights is a linchpin of Swedish foreign policy. We are working to support human rights advocates around the world. Efforts to bring about the release of Swedish-Eritrean journalist Dawit Isaak are continuing.

Sweden will continue to work for freedom from oppression. That all people should be able to live in freedom is a goal in itself. It is also a means to achieve security and development.

Developments over the past few years concerning respect for freedom of expression in the world have included some deeply worrying aspects. Sweden takes a proactive role in the European Union when it comes to promoting human rights in countries such as Cuba, Burma and North Korea.

The Government is strengthening its efforts for freedom of expression, with a particular emphasis on supporting the strong potential of new technology and new media to promote free speech. The free flow of information and the global electronic infrastructure are a foundation for both economic development and greater freedom in the world. This is why we are extremely concerned to note that information technology is being abused to a growing extent by certain actors to combat the free exchange of opinions, thoughts and ideas.

For a country such as Sweden that strongly defends an open society, it is a political responsibility to contribute to freedom and security in our communications systems, as these are mutually dependent. The Government will therefore prioritise these issues this year. The United Nations' Special Rapporteur for freedom of expression has asked for our participation in developing protection for freedom of expression in electronic media. A special reference group for issues concerning freedom on the Internet and international IT security will be appointed.

Ten years have passed since the first Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust and the adoption of the Stockholm Declaration. Combating intolerance and xenophobia is unfortunately an increasingly urgent international task, whether it is a matter of antisemitism, Islamophobia or other forms of intolerance.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

During the last few weeks, we have been reminded of the very great risks that many Swedes take to safeguard freedom and peace in the world. Only by successfully completing our mission in Afghanistan can we show that the losses suffer are not in vain.

In a globalised world, foreign policy risks know no borders. Threats that originate far away from Sweden can be just as palpable as those that are rooted in our geographic proximity.

Ninety per cent of all heroin sold in our country comes from Afghanistan. Terror groups active in Afghanistan, and in neighbouring Pakistan, have demonstrated that they are capable of carrying out attacks with far-reaching geopolitical consequences. After thirty years of war and oppression, Afghanistan is one of the very poorest countries in the world.

Our commitment in Afghanistan is based on our steadfast determination to help the Afghan people build up a functioning state, lay the foundation for representative government, combat poverty and promote long-term stability. Our commitment in Afghanistan is also governed by the realisation that the groups that are threatening the fragile reconstruction process in the country also represent a threat to the rest of the world, including Sweden.

Sweden will therefore continue to contribute to civilian and military operations in Afghanistan. This was also the reason why we drew up a far-reaching action plan during the Swedish Presidency to strengthen the European Union's commitment to this vulnerable region. It is

therefore the Government's intention to continue to increase Sweden's development efforts in Afghanistan and to work to strengthen the international civilian operation.

Developments in the wider Middle East region are a cause for concern.

Iran is on course for confrontation with the rest of the world. The oppression of members of the opposition, dissidents and defenders of human rights is unacceptable. The country has failed to fully explain the intentions behind its nuclear programme. This is a matter on which the international community must act in unison.

Sweden's commitment to the reconstruction of Iraq continues. Last year, the Embassy in Baghdad was reopened and a consulate was established in Erbil.

It is of central importance for stability in the Middle East that a credible peace process between Israelis and Palestinians is established. It is the responsibility of the parties to the conflict to reach a negotiated solution. The European Union supports the endeavours of the United States to set negotiations in motion as soon as possible that address all final status issues for a two-state solution with an Israel and a Palestine living side by side in peace and security.

The clear voice of Europe is needed in this matter. The conclusions adopted by the European Union during the Swedish Presidency gave the EU a firm foundation for its continued policy in the area. Among other points, the conclusions establish that the negotiations are to be based on the pre-1967 borders, that the settlements are illegal, that all final status issues are to be included in the negotiations – including the status of Jerusalem as capital of two states – and that both parties are to refrain from provocative actions.

Africa is a continent with great potential. Economic and political progress is being made in many parts of Africa and the continent's interchanges with the rest of the world are developing. But elsewhere deep poverty and political instability predominate. From Guinea-Bissau in the west to Somalia in the east, there is a broad swathe of weak states marked by conflict, crime, underdevelopment and in some cases terrorism.

The situation in the Horn of Africa remains grave and Sweden has therefore taken an initiative for a coherent EU policy for the region, focusing on conflict management. Sweden supports a solution to the

border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea based on international law in accordance with the arbitration decision that the parties have undertaken to implement. We remain strongly committed to peaceful developments in Somalia. During the spring, for example, Sweden will lead the EU's marine anti-piracy operation off the coast of Somalia.

Concerted international support for implementation of the peace agreement between northern and southern Sudan will be required for democratic change in the country, which would benefit not only the people of Sudan itself but the region as a whole.

The situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is dominated by an enormous humanitarian disaster. The sexual violence against women and girls is a particularly abhorrent aspect of the warfare there. The Government's action in the area will therefore focus in particular on implementing UN Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security and Resolution 1820 on sexual violence in conflict situations. Priority will be given to efforts to implement these resolutions.

Although there has been some improvement in the situation in Zimbabwe, the future of the country still remains very uncertain. Credible reforms are required if the country is to reverse the negative trend of political repression and economic decline. Sweden and the EU are prepared to increase their assistance to Zimbabwe sharply when a positive change of this kind comes about.

It is precisely so as to be able to promote peace and development in countries such as Afghanistan, Somalia and other places marked by violence and conflict that the European Union needs an effective and long-term crisis management policy.

Sweden's proactive role in strengthening the European Union's common foreign and defence policies has contributed towards the EU's present unique capacity in both civilian and military crisis management. We have participated in all EU crisis management missions and the Government aims to continue to promote the development of the European Union's instruments for peace, and to further develop cooperation with the United Nations and NATO in crisis management and other areas.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The risk of continued proliferation of nuclear weapons is one of the most serious security threats facing the world. A world with an increasing number of nuclear-weapon states is a world that runs the risk of devastating nuclear war becoming a reality.

That is why Sweden has involved itself so clearly in these issues.

While we welcome further reductions by the United States and Russia of their strategic arsenals, we have taken an initiative to make the issue of sub-strategic and tactical nuclear weapons a subject for negotiations and reductions as well.

Sweden will continue to pursue this and other issues, notably at the NPT conference in New York in May.

This also applies to the important Comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Test Ban Treaty. The Government supports the continued efforts to initiate negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for weapons purposes.

Proliferation of nuclear weapons in sensitive regions such as East Asia and the Middle East poses obvious and serious risks for the future.

The efforts to induce both North Korea and Iran to refrain from any ambitions towards nuclear weapons are to be seen in this light. We actively support the attempts to reach agreements on this.

Our goal remains a world without nuclear weapons.

All states have a right to the peaceful use of nuclear power. Initiatives towards a multilateralisation of the nuclear fuel cycle have the potential to increase security and hinder the proliferation of nuclear weapons technology. We will continue to work for deeper international dialogue to create better conditions for moving these initiatives forward. . We are actively involved in the important work on preventing the proliferation and illegal transfer of nuclear material, not least ahead of the nuclear security summit called by President Obama in April this year.

Energy issues are an integral part of foreign and security policy. Developments in the relationship between Ukraine and Russia, between Turkey, Armenia and Azerbaijan, between the central government in Baghdad and the regional government in Kurdistan, and between the central Asian republics and China are all examples of substantial political processes in which precisely energy is an important factor.

All of these relationships have great significance for the security policy situation in Europe's vicinity, as well as, of course, for a secure energy supply. We must therefore take the role of energy issues into account in our foreign policy analysis and our actions. At the same time we will use our foreign policy tools to promote security of supply for Europe.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The reform of Sweden's development policy will continue to move forward.

Poverty reduction is the key point of departure for all Swedish development policy. This policy includes contributing to economic development, promoting human rights and democracy, supporting a sustainable environment and strengthening civil society. During the spring, the Government will submit a written communication to the Riksdag on the policy for global development.

Sweden's development assistance must contribute towards finding solutions to the broad global challenges faced by developing countries. The Government's focus on clear results and increased transparency in development assistance is central. It also increases the potential for accountability.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) estimates that the number of hungry people in the world will increase by 100 million this year alone.

The problems associated with supply and food security are set to become an increasingly important issue on the foreign, trade and development policy agenda in coming years. Besides leading to more entrenched global poverty, the food crisis also risks causing political instability in the poor countries affected by problems of supply and galloping food prices.

Global food production must increase by at least 40 per cent during the coming decades in order to meet demographic developments. This will require a new green revolution and more efficient markets. Trade-distorting agricultural subsidies must be eliminated and trade barriers in the agricultural sector must be combated. To improve access to food and stabilise the global supply, measures are required to make agriculture more efficient, open markets and liberalise trade.

Later this year world leaders will meet at the UN to take stock of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. Five years remain. The gender equality goals in particular are lagging behind. The link between gender equality and poverty reduction is undisputed. Sustained and increasing levels of aid are vital to support developing countries in their progress towards the goals. The Government's extensive efforts to achieve increased aid effectiveness are central in ensuring that the resources are used efficiently and effectively and contribute to good results.

Sweden is one of the world's leading humanitarian actors and provides extensive support in all humanitarian crises, whether they are caused by conflict or by natural disasters, primarily through the UN in its coordinating role. We have recently once again shown our strong humanitarian commitment through our speedy, flexible and efficient response to the urgent humanitarian needs following the inconceivable earthquake disaster in Haiti. Sweden will follow developments in this disaster-stricken country closely and will help promote stability and reconstruction.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

As a result of the Treaty of Lisbon, Sweden's foreign policy has become even more strongly integrated in the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union. This gives Sweden a new responsibility and new opportunities to work for freedom, peace and reconciliation in the world around us. This Government stands united in its ambition to shoulder the responsibility and make use of the opportunities.

Only through commitment, clear visions and a will to take concrete action can Sweden contribute to strengthening Europe's influence in the world. Only through a strong and purposeful European Union can our common values and interests shape a better world.



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**Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Sweden**

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