



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Stockholm Agreement gives hope of peaceful solution in Yemen

Published 14 December 2018

During eight intensive days, the eyes of the world were trained on Rimbo, where UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths led consultations with the parties to the conflict in Yemen. The delegations from the two parties, the Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah, agreed on Thursday 13 December in the ‘Stockholm Agreement’ to a ceasefire in the port city of Hodeidah. The parties have agreed to withdraw their troops from Hodeidah and for the port to be managed and monitored with UN support, which will enable the import of vital provisions to the country. The Stockholm Agreement also includes a prisoner exchange and steps towards a ceasefire in the city of Taiz.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres participated in the final stages of the negotiations and spoke about the importance of trust-building talks and the agreements reached in Sweden.

“This is just a beginning. But at least, it’s the beginning of a process in which there is a clear will to come to an end result that is peace in Yemen and the future that the Yemeni people deserve. The fact that we came to an agreement on Hodeidah – that many would consider the most difficult of the problems on the table – gives us the hope that this process will now be moving step by step,” said Mr Guterres.

“The Yemeni people now want to see results. They want stability, prosperity

and peace in their country,” said Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, and encouraged the parties to continue to engage constructively with the UN process to pave the way for stability and peace in Yemen.

“We hope that this positive spirit of Rimbo will prevail,” added Ms Wallström, who also raised the important role played by the Women’s Technical Advisory Group in the process.

Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs at end of consultations

Full text of the Stockholm Agreement

UN press release from the concluding press encounter with Secretary-General António Guterres



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

#StandUp4HumanRights in focus as the Ministry for Foreign Affairs marks the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Published 07 December 2018

On 10 December, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights celebrates its 70th anniversary. But democracy and human rights are still under threat around the world. Via the #StandUp4HumanRights communications campaign, the MFA in Stockholm, missions abroad and partners are highlighting human rights in various ways – with the aim of creating opinion and reminding decision-makers to live up to their commitments.

- Human rights, democracy and the principles of the rule of law are at the core of Sweden's foreign policy and permeate our operations in both word and deed. At a time when the rules-based multilateral international order is being challenged, it is particularly important that we dare to stand up for these principles, says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

In connection with the anniversary on 10 December, many missions abroad are holding seminars or events with the aim of supporting and increasing awareness about the principles set out in the Universal Declaration. Since the 70th anniversary coincides with Nobel Day, the MFA is also cooperating with the Nobel Foundation to highlight the fact that human rights are a precondition for research and science.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Handbook on Sweden's feminist foreign policy launched

Published 30 August 2018

On 23 August, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström presented a handbook on Sweden's feminist foreign policy. "In a worsening climate where human rights and women's and girls' rights are increasingly questioned and threatened, and in a world of shrinking democratic space, a feminist foreign policy is needed more than ever. I hope this handbook can be of help along the way for all of us who want to continue fighting for a gender-equal world," says Ms Wallström.

The handbook shares the lessons and examples of four years of feminist foreign policy. At the same time, it describes just a small sample of all experiences, not least because the work is constantly evolving.

Sweden is the first country in the world to pursue a feminist foreign policy. The handbook is intended to support the Swedish Foreign Service, central government administration and society in general. But the handbook is also expected to attract an international readership, since there is major international interest in the policy.

The handbook answers many of the questions about how Sweden has worked on developing and implementing the feminist foreign policy, and is structured to be relevant to anyone working multilaterally, bilaterally or on changing social norms in general.

The handbook is available from regeringen.se in both Swedish and English, and in PDF and printed formats.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Climate change belongs on the security agenda

Published 04 July 2018

The effects of climate change threaten peace and security and must therefore be dealt with as a global security issue. This and how developments should be dealt with were the point of departure when Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström took part in the high-level event 'Climate, peace and security: the time for action' in Brussels on 22 June.

"A climate change conference will be held in Katowice in December this year, and that agenda must incorporate climate-related security risks," emphasised Ms Wallström in her concluding remarks.

In addition to ministers from countries across the globe, participants included UN environment, climate change and disaster management representatives, NATO and other organisations, European Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy Miguel Arias Cañete and the event's initiator High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini.

In her opening address, Ms Mogherini stressed the fact that for the second year in a row, climate impacts have displaced more people than war. She added that control over water is also becoming an issue of power and a source of conflict.

"The international community must become much better at understanding, highlighting and committing to tackling the security threats posed by climate change. A climate change conference will be held in Katowice in December this year, and that agenda must incorporate climate-related security risks,"

said Ms Wallström at the event, where she both took part in a panel discussion and summarised the discussions in a concluding address.

The different effects of climate change were highlighted. They included the immediate impact of extreme weather events that requires preparedness, but especially the long-term consequences, as sea levels are expected to rise, disrupting hydrological cycles and drying up lakes and other fresh water sources, leading to extensive drought events. Several participants highlighted the risk of these developments increasing competition for food and water, undermining people's ability to support themselves. This could in turn cause people to be displaced and increase tensions in nations already at risk, resulting in instability and conflict. The risk of people in vulnerable situations joining extremist groups was also highlighted.

Other issues discussed included the leadership role that large organisations such as the EU and UN must assume, and the close global cooperation needed to build capacity, increase knowledge and promote cross-sectoral efforts to tackle common challenges and threats.

"We are seeing a lot of extremism and nationalism, when what we really need is more multilateralism, not least to tackle the challenges posed by climate change. When Sweden holds the presidency of the United Nations Security Council in July, we will focus on the link between climate change and peace and security," said Ms Wallström.

"These challenges must be taken very seriously. We therefore very much welcome this initiative by Federica Mogherini. This event offers an important platform for advancing the discussion on how to address these complex issues," said Ms Wallström.



Article

19 updated country reports on human rights, democracy and the rule of law – some positive developments but still a long way to go

Published 28 June 2018

Today, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs publishes new, updated country reports on human rights, democracy and the rule of law, covering 19 countries in the Americas, Central Asia and Eastern Europe in which Sweden has a permanent presence. The reports are written in Swedish and can be found on the Government's website.

Our country reports are one of the many tools available to us to promote respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law. This work involves a large part of the Swedish Foreign Service. The reports give us knowledge and underpin our analysis.

This round of reports describes the situation as of 31 December 2017. The reports are all written using the same standardised format, and all issues are covered for all countries: an important principle to ensure uniform assessments.

All in all, we see that while progress is being made in some areas, other areas are lagging behind – not least in terms of the situation for certain groups of individuals.

Since 2000, poverty has been reduced extensively in the Americas as well as in Central Asia and Eastern Europe, which has led to a better living standard for millions of people. When people are lifted out of poverty, doors open to new opportunities.

At the same time, we see great challenges when it comes to upholding the rule of law. Corruption, nepotism and, in some areas, collusion with organised crime are widespread, despite many countries having adopted legislation to counter these developments.

The huge increase in the number of democracies in the world since the end of the Cold War has halted. In some areas, developments are even moving backwards.

Civil society space is shrinking. Many countries, not least in Eastern Europe, have instituted complicated legislation often specifically targeting human rights organisations that are critical of the ruling party. Laws on 'foreign agents' are used to silence civil society.

In the Americas, defenders of the rights of indigenous peoples, often in connection with conflicts concerning land or natural resources, are often particularly vulnerable and, in some cases, structurally discriminated against.

Human rights are violated around the world with worrying regularity, including in these regions. Freedom of expression, of the press and of information is often protected in the countries' constitutions, but purported threats against national security or from terrorism are often used to legitimise restrictions to these and other freedoms, as well as to arbitrarily detain peaceful protesters.

In all three regions, religion is often very present in society, even in countries that do not have an official state religion. Sometimes this leads to religious minorities being denied access to human rights, including through targeted violence.

The conditions in detention centres and prisons are generally very tough and torture occurs, to a greater or lesser extent, in several countries. Sexual and gender-based violence is still commonplace.

We see that people face difficulties organising themselves in independent

unions, both because of deliberate actions against them and because the permitted unions are closely linked to the ruling party.

The reports show that sexual and reproductive health and rights remain limited. While there are some positive developments, many countries in Latin America still have very restrictive legislation on abortions, leading to hundreds of thousands of illegal abortions every year. Alongside the physical and mental risks to these women, in some cases they risk facing long prison sentences for having an illegal abortion.

Almost every report describes how women and girls continue to face violence and discrimination, both in law and in practice. Domestic and intimate partner violence, particularly affecting women and children, are often seen as a private matter to be handled within the family, often leading to complete impunity for the perpetrator.

However, it is not all bad news.

In some countries, special courts have been established to investigate violence against women. In other countries, women's political participation has increased. In addition, some countries, especially in the Americas, have taken steps forward in terms of recognising that LGBTI persons should be able to enjoy the same human rights as everyone else. Finally, almost all countries in the Americas, Central Asia and Eastern Europe have abolished the death penalty, either through legislation or through a de facto moratorium.

Overall, however, the reports give us cause for concern. But our work does not end here – it will continue with determination and purpose until human rights, democracy and the rule of law are equally assured to everyone, everywhere and all the time.

I hope that our reports, and the information contained in them, will further strengthen the work that we all do. I also hope that they will be seen as a support to all the brave women and men who – sometimes at risk to their own lives – work to strengthen respect for human rights, and for democracy and the rule of law.

Finally, I hope they can convey a signal to other countries that Sweden will not remain silent when we see human rights being violated.

On 9 September this year, Sweden will hold general elections. That is a privilege. We who live in a country of free and fair elections, and with strong legal protection for human rights, have a special responsibility to pay attention to and help those whose voices may otherwise be silenced.

Let us take that responsibility seriously and stand up for all human rights, everywhere and all the time.

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality - Hosts' summary and reflections

Published 20 June 2018

The Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality was held on 15–17 April 2018 and gathered more than 700 participants from over 100 countries and a multitude of sectors and functions. The discussions covered a broad range of areas and focused on concrete methods and tools to enhance gender equality and the full enjoyment of rights, representation and resources for all women and girls.

The hallmark of the Forum was co-creation. This included:

- A broad nomination process in which CSOs and other partners joined the Swedish Foreign Service, the Swedish Institute, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) in suggesting participants.
- A co-owned agenda inspired by the participants themselves and what they reported as being the greatest challenges to gender equality.
- A collaborative process in which partners, collaborators and participants developed and organised seminars together and in close dialogue with the Swedish Institute.

Results

- A unique Forum constituting a global and vibrant manifestation and mobilisation for gender equality and the full enjoyment of human rights

by all women and girls.

- A powerhouse of inspiration co-created by, and further invigorating, a multitude of gender champions from all over the world.
- A total of 29 interactive seminars and roundtable discussions that were co-organised with participants and – thus – contributed to substance, methods and partnerships.
- A platform for non-stop sharing of experiences and best practices, both within and across sectors, policy areas and regions.
- A wealth of new and further developed initiatives, commitments and partnerships focused on areas such as creating awareness, legislative change and capacity building, involving countries from all over the world.
- A number of launches of new tools, such as a 'Women, Business and the Law' report from the World Bank Group.
- A Call to Action to counter the shrinking space and to increase support for women human rights defenders, drafted and presented by the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation with partners and other women's rights activists.
- A broad communicative reach. During the week of the Forum alone the hashtag #GenderEqualWorld reached almost 3 million people, trending in countries such as Australia, India, the US and the UK, and also achieving huge reach in countries such as Brazil, Canada, China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, France, Iraq, Poland and Turkey.
- A wide range of articles and news broadcasts in traditional media around the globe.
- A distinct contribution and push for the efforts to implement the SDGs as well as CEDAW and other relevant conventions, resolutions and agreements.
- A starting point for discussions in new constellations, including in the form of a first cross-sectoral Feminist Think Space held back-to-back with the Forum and co-hosted by UN Women and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and cofacilitated by UN Women and Sida.

Next steps

- Building on the momentum and capitalising on the results of the Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality, Tunisia will host the conference Tunis Forum on Gender Equality in 2019.
- Participants are pursuing a number of other initiatives linked to and/or inspired by the Forum.
- Participants can continue to register initiatives, commitments and partnerships resulting from or connected to the Forum on the Forum

website: <http://genderequalworld.com/initiatives/>.

- The Swedish Institute will post documentation from all the seminars and roundtables on the website. Together with other outcomes of the Forum, the documentation will serve as a library of best practices and a platform for continued networking.
- The Swedish Institute will develop a tool kit so that Swedish embassies and other stakeholders can take the Forum and its outcomes further in their respective context.
- Sweden commits to implementing the 2018 action plan for feminist foreign policy and launching a handbook on how to conduct a feminist foreign policy. Sida will operationalise the new global development cooperation strategy for gender equality.
- Sweden will present the documentation and results of the Forum to UN Women, as well as cooperate with UN Women and other partners on following up the Forum, including by disseminating and drawing on the best practices and experiences shared.
- Sweden will continue the dialogue with partners interested in arranging events inspired by and following up the Forum.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Joining forces to strengthen global gender equality efforts

Published 23 April 2018

More than 700 gender equality advocates from more than 100 countries gathered at the Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality to exchange experiences and mobilise efforts for global gender equality. The participants included key figures from civil society organisations, business, academia and politics. They all have the same goal: a gender-equal world.

The Forum took place at a decisive point in time. While gender equality is progressing in many places, many of the participants highlighted the fact that gender inequality and discrimination of women and girls are among the greatest human rights challenges of our time. Efforts to promote women's and girls' rights, representation and access to resources therefore require concerted action. It requires cooperation between gender equality advocates and decision-makers, and between men and women.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström began her speech with a special welcome to the men, stressing that gender equality is not a women's issue – it concerns peace, security, development and democracy. To illustrate the path to gender equality, she quoted Mahatma Gandhi:

"First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win. I sense that we are winning," she said.

More statistics needed

To tackle the issue of gender equality, the right conditions are required. Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation and

Climate and Deputy Prime Minister, highlighted identifying gender inequality as an area requiring considerable improvement.

"What you don't know about, you don't care about. We need more statistics on gender equality in the world to move forward. That will give even better opportunities to work for increased gender equality," she said.

"Gender equality is smart economics"

Minister for EU Affairs and Trade Ann Linde made the point that gender equality is not only wise and right, it is also smart economics.

"Women who participate in the labour market have more power over their own lives. This strengthens the whole of society. Shutting women out of economic activity is probably the world's greatest waste of opportunity and talent," said Ms Linde.

The Forum delegates are now urged to submit concrete examples of commitments, initiatives and cooperation to continue supporting and inspiring each other in their efforts to increase gender equality.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Note to members of the media: Programme for UN Secretary- General and Security Council working meeting and visit in Sweden 20–23 April 2018

Published 20 April 2018

The annual informal working meeting with the UN Secretary-General and the Security Council will be held at Dag Hammarskjöld's farm Backåkra in Skåne on 21–23 April 2018. Afterwards, UN Secretary-General António Guterres will continue to Uppsala and Stockholm.

Media programme

Friday 20 April

Visit to the European Spallation Source (ESS), Lund

Members of the Security Council visit the European Spallation Source (ESS) in Lund. This is a unique material research facility based on the world's most powerful neutron source. Sweden and Denmark are the host countries of the ESS, which is one of Europe's largest infrastructure projects for research. The visit provides an opportunity to examine the interplay between technological development and global challenges, and how research and development can be used to meet current problems and crises.

The media will have the opportunity to cover the beginning of the visit.

Saturday 21 April

Secretary-General and Security Council informal working meeting at Backåkra

Besides the Secretary-General and members of the Security Council, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will be on hand in connection with the informal working meeting.

Photo opportunity on arrival.

Press briefing/doorstep with Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, UN Secretary-General António Guterres, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and President of the UN Security Council, Peru's UN Ambassador Gustavo Meza-Cuadra.

Sunday 22 April

Secretary-General visits Uppsala

Secretary-General António Guterres delivers the Dag Hammarskjöld Lecture at Uppsala Castle. Since 1998, the Lecture has been an annual event held in memory of Dag Hammarskjöld and the values he stood for in his deeds and actions. Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate and Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin will attend on behalf of the Government. In addition to the Lecture, the Secretary-General will take part in a wreath-laying ceremony at Dag Hammarskjöld's grave and have a meeting with Crown Princess Victoria.

A separate press invitation will be sent by the co-organisers, the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation and Uppsala University.

Monday 23 April

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven receives Secretary-General António Guterres in Stockholm

Press invitation



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The UN Secretary-General will be holding an informal working meeting with the Security Council in Sweden

Published 22 March 2018

In April, UN Secretary-General António Guterres will hold his annual informal working meeting with the UN Security Council in Sweden. The meeting will take place in April at Dag Hammarskjöld's farm Backåkra in Skåne. During his visit to Sweden, the Secretary-General will also have talks with the Prime Minister, as well as giving the annual Dag Hammarskjöld Lecture, which is arranged by Uppsala University and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation.

What will the meeting with the Security Council be about?

The theme of this year's meeting is how UN peace-keeping missions can be strengthened and made more effective, and how cooperation can increase between regional organisations. The meeting is an opportunity for the Secretary-General and the Security Council to discuss current issues in a confidential and informal setting.

Who will be taking part?

The informal working meeting will be attended by the Secretary-General and

the members of the Security Council, represented by their UN ambassadors. The Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs will also attend parts of the meeting. The Secretary-General will pay a longer visit to Sweden and will also have talks with the Prime Minister, as well as giving the Dag Hammarskjöld Lecture, which is arranged by Uppsala University and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation. Representatives of the Riksdag parties will be invited to take part in parts of the programme.

What is Sweden's role?

The Secretary-General holds an informal working meeting every year, as will be the case this year too. With the meeting being held in Backåkra, Sweden will host the visit of the Security Council and the Secretary-General. The Prime Minister will host a working lunch and the Minister for Foreign Affairs will host a dinner for the Security Council.

During its time on the Security Council, Sweden has taken an active role and achieved concrete results. Sweden has a long tradition of working for conflict prevention, as well as for peaceful solutions to conflicts. Moreover, it was Dag Hammarskjöld, a Swede, who took the initiative to create the UN's first peace-keeping mission with armed troops.

Why Sweden and Backåkra?

This is a unique opportunity for Sweden to provide a meeting place for the entire UN Security Council. Backåkra has been renovated so as to function as a meeting place on topics that were close to Dag Hammarskjöld's heart, such as international cooperation, peace research, the environment and human rights.

Why is this important?

The informal dialogue at the working meeting will give the Secretary-General an opportunity to gain support among the Security Council members for his ideas for reform of UN peacekeeping. For Sweden this is an opportunity for exchange with the highest leadership of the UN, as well as with its bodies for peace and security. It is also an opportunity to further strengthen Sweden's impact during our time on the Security Council.

Who is paying?

Sweden and the UN will share the costs. The UN will cover the costs of the Secretary-General's travel to and from Sweden. The UN will also pay for most of the costs of his delegation's travel and some of the delegation's hotel costs in Stockholm. Sweden will cover the rest of the costs, including the Council members' travel to and from Sweden, some of the costs of their and the Secretary-General's accommodation in Sweden, and the meeting venue. The costs are expected to amount to SEK 2 million, which will be charged to the Government's budget, expenditure area 5 International cooperation, appropriation 1:2 Peace and security-building activities, appropriation item 4:1 Ministry for Foreign Affairs – special initiatives. The financing, budget and costs will be



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Talks between Swedish and North Korean foreign ministers concluded

Published 17 March 2018

On 15–17 March, Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and North Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs Ri Yong-ho met in Stockholm for talks. The North Korean delegation also paid a courtesy call on Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven. The talks focused primarily on the security situation on the Korean peninsula, which is high on the UN Security Council agenda. Sweden is a member of the Security Council for the 2017–2018 term.

The foreign ministers discussed opportunities and challenges associated with continued diplomatic efforts to reach a peaceful solution to the conflict. They also discussed bilateral relations.

Talks concerned Sweden's consular responsibilities as a protecting power for the United States, Canada and Australia. Sweden underlined the need for North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons and missile programmes in accordance with Security Council resolutions. Other discussions centred on the humanitarian situation in North Korea, sanctions, and regional cooperation and security issues for countries including South Korea, Japan, Russia, China and the United States.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

World's first public digital meeting of foreign ministers held today

Published 08 March 2017

Today, March 8, on International Women's Day, the first public digital meeting of foreign ministers was held. Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström gathered her network of women foreign ministers to discuss feminist foreign policy. During the meeting the participants shared experiences and good examples, and gave their views on gender equality in a foreign policy context.

Foreign ministers from four countries participated in the meeting on the theme of 'women, peace and security'. In addition to Sweden, the participating countries were: Panama, Kenya and Liechtenstein. During the meeting, each country presented their priorities in the area.

"Issues surrounding women, peace and security not only concern women's rights, they also concern creating peace and stability in the world. Studies show that women's involvement increases the chances of securing peace agreements, and ensuring that they are sustainable in the long-term. In a world affected by more conflicts than in several decades, it is therefore a very important theme to both highlight and implement measures on," says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

Sweden has made this theme a high priority issue during its two-year non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council.

"Peace and security are created together. They require dialogue and cooperation. The digital meeting was therefore an opportunity to discuss

common challenges and share experiences. The discussions were very rewarding and constructive," concludes Ms Wallström.

The meeting could be watched online by the general public. Anyone could follow the discussions in real-time on the Ministry for Foreign Affairs Facebook page, Twitter feed and YouTube page. A recorded video of the meeting can also be viewed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=117nZnUWgrQ>

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business_id=247984128886880](https://facebook.com/SweMFA/posts/618902731636212?business_id=247984128886880)



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden chair of expert group on women, peace and security

Published 21 December 2016 Updated 21 December 2016

As of 1 January 2017, Sweden will co-chair the UN Security Council's Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security together with Uruguay and the United Kingdom.

The purpose of the expert group is to improve the flow of knowledge and information to the Security Council, to influence country-specific situations and to facilitate better oversight, coordination and implementation of the agenda for women, peace and security. This co-chairmanship will be a unique opportunity for Sweden to influence the work of the Security Council in this area. The informal expert group has been active for a year, with the United Kingdom and Spain as co-chairs in 2016. The focus during the first year was the situation in Mali, the Central African Republic, Iraq and Afghanistan.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Baltic foreign ministers welcomed to Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Published 30 August 2016 Updated 30 August 2016

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström today received the foreign ministers of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania for talks in connection with the 25th anniversary of the Baltic countries regaining their independence and the re-establishment of diplomatic relations.

At the meeting, held at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Stockholm, the ministers discussed the security policy situation in the neighbourhood, current EU issues (including the consequences of Brexit), migration and Turkey.

Also on the agenda was Sweden's membership of the United Nations Security Council in 2017–2018



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Tuesday's the day the UN General Assembly elects new Security Council non-permanent members

Published 23 June 2016 Updated 23 June 2016

The finish line for Sweden's candidacy to the United Nations Security Council for 2017–2018 is in sight.

"Our candidacy to the Security Council is about Sweden's ability to influence the troubled world we live in. A seat on the Security Council would mean an additional platform for us to pursue our policies. Sweden can take a seat at the table and put forward opinions and values that influence the world in a positive direction," says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

The election takes place on Tuesday 28 June in the General Assembly at UN Headquarters in New York.

It is expected to begin in the late morning, local (New York) time, which means around 17.00 Swedish time. It will be broadcast on UN Web TV. Follow the election here: <http://webtv.un.org/>

Sweden, the Netherlands and Italy are competing for two seats for the Western European and Others Group (WEOG).

If Sweden is elected, it will once again be a member of the Security Council after a twenty-year absence. Sweden was the first to formally announce its candidacy in 2005, and was followed by the Netherlands the same year and Italy in 2009.

For Sweden to be elected to the Council, two thirds of the Member States of the UN General Assembly must vote for Sweden. Every Member State has two votes. If all the 193 countries are present at the election, 129 votes are

required (two-thirds majority). In theory, only one round of voting is required, but the voting will continue until two countries have secured the two-thirds majority required for a seat.

There is no limit to the number of voting rounds that may take place. The record number was set in 1979. After 154 rounds could not produce a winner between Colombia and Cuba, Mexico was endorsed as the compromise candidate in round 155.

The election is usually decided by between one and four rounds of voting.

This year, Sweden is also celebrating its 70th anniversary as a member of the United Nations. If you would like a three-minute summary of these 70 years, be sure to watch the UN film by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs met American Jewish Committee

Published 08 June 2016 Updated 09 June 2016

Today, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström met representatives of the American Jewish Committee (AJC).

The AJC is one of the oldest Jewish organisations in the United States. Aron Verständig, chairman of the Jewish Community in Stockholm, also took part in the meeting. The meeting was an opportunity to discuss antisemitism in Sweden and globally, as well as the Government's work to combat antisemitism and other types of racism, intolerance and discrimination. The Government is currently preparing an action plan to combat racism and hate crime.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Public lecture with Margot Wallstrom on the Feminist Foreign Policy

Published 16 March 2016 Updated 16 March 2016

In 2014, as newly-appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs, Margot Wallström launched Sweden's feminist foreign policy. At a public lecture in Brussels on 14 March, she spoke about the content and implementation of this policy. Ms Wallström stressed the reasons why women need to be at the negotiating table in peace talks, and the responsibility the European Union has to make a difference, in particular with regard to external relations.

"What is important is that the realisation is growing that gender equality is not a women's issue but rather a make-or-break issue. It is a make-or-break issue in itself – and for peace, security and sustainable development as a whole."

With these words, Ms Wallström began her lecture, addressing a crowded hall and an audience watching the livestream.

Despite the fact that peace processes involving both women and men result in more sustainable agreements, only four per cent of signatories of peace agreements between 1992 and 2011 were women.

"A feminist foreign policy therefore defines gender equality as a peace and security issue as well," Ms Wallström explained.

This is also why the Swedish Government supports women in mediator networks, for example in the ongoing conflict in Syria.

Ms Wallström reminded the audience of the success of the Millennium Development Goals in making it possible for more girls to attend school, but that much remains to be done, as she showed through a number of concrete examples.

"It is clear that we have to start with the facts if we want to make a difference for the 'three Rs'," Margot Wallström said, referring to women's representation, rights and resources.

Ms Wallström's message to the EU was clear: the EU has an important role in showing that there is a link between internal and external policy. The EU must deliver for women and girls, lead by example and ensure that gender equality permeates all external action.

"A gender perspective should also be part of the EU political dialogue with third countries, our neighbourhood policy, the Eastern Partnership, and our enlargement and trade policy," Ms Wallström emphasised.

Ms Wallström recounted that in the EU Foreign Affairs Council she asks whether women are part of the processes, but that sometimes she waits to see whether anyone else will raise the issue.

"Why does it always have to be me?" she asked rhetorically.

The lecture was arranged jointly by the German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the European Union.

Event page at the German Marshall Fund of the United States



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

A Feminist Foreign Policy - a public lecture with Margot Wallström

Published 11 March 2016 Updated 11 March 2016

”We can firmly state that the promotion of gender equality is not only a matter of women’s rights, but also, more importantly, a matter of ensuring peace and security for all.” These are the words of a Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström in an article on the Syrian peace talks published in the Guardian on March 8 - the International Women’s Day. On March 14 Margot Wallström elaborates on Sweden’s Feminist Foreign Policy in a public lecture, 6PM, Sofitel, Place Jourdan, Brussels.

Register for the event

Due to increased security measures, we kindly request you to RSVP in advance and arrive 15 minutes before the start of the event. Please bring a photo ID.

Press is welcome at 5.30 for interviews on Feminist Foreign Policy.

The lecture will be livestreamed

Pioneering in feminism – nationally and internationally

When Margot Wallström took up her office as Foreign Minister after the Swedish election in October 2014, she launched a Feminist Foreign Policy.

- Sweden has a political history of national reform aimed at gender equality taking us to where we are right now. And now we need to take another step forward as we have seen for ourselves that gender equality makes a world of a difference for everyone, explains Margot Wallström.

In her public lecture on Monday evening, Margot Wallström will talk about the international potential of gender equality, about women's role in peace talks and conflict prevention and the responsibility of the EU in making a difference in the Union as well through its external relations.

She will also elaborate on the prerequisites of pursuing a Feminist Foreign Policy – on the systematic and strategic work within her own ministry.

The lecture is a co-arrangement between The German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU.

Time and place: Monday March 14, 6:00PM, Sofitel at Place Jourdan, Brussels



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Today is International Women's Day

Published 08 March 2016 Updated 08 March 2016

Equality between women and men is a fundamental aim of Swedish foreign policy. Ensuring that women and girls can enjoy their fundamental human rights is both an obligation within the framework of our international commitments, and a prerequisite for reaching Sweden's broader foreign policy goals on peace, and security and sustainable development.

The situation in the world calls for a feminist foreign policy that aims to strengthen women's rights, representation and access to resources.

On international women's day, join us in drawing attention to the #3rs of gender equality.

Rights

The human rights of women and girls are violated all over the world. The full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls must become a reality, including by combating all forms of violence and discrimination that restrict their freedom of action.

Representation

Women are still under-represented in influential positions in all areas of society and in all processes. Women's equal participation and influence in decision-making processes must be promoted at all levels and in all areas of society, including all stages of peace processes and peacebuilding. Research

shows that inclusive peace processes pave the way for a greater number of possible solutions that become better established and are more sustainable.

Resources

Women and girls often lack social or economic rights, including access to and control of economic resources, quality education, land, inheritance rights, productive work and equal pay. Women and men must have the same power to shape their societies and their lives. Resources must be distributed differently to promote equal rights and opportunities for all. In global terms, a larger proportion of aid must go to promoting gender equality and women's rights.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Visit of the Minister for Foreign Affairs to Baku, Azerbaijan

Published 11 February 2016 Updated 11 February 2016

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström's trip to Southern Caucasus continued on Tuesday with a visit to Baku, Azerbaijan. The visit began on Tuesday evening with a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Ali Hasanov.

On Wednesday morning, Ms Wallström held a breakfast meeting with representatives of women's organisations, where women's rights and opportunities for political influence, as well as violence against women, were discussed. After that Ms Wallström and the Swedish delegation met Sheik Allahshukur Pashazade, head of the Caucasus Muslims, and representatives of the Jewish and Christian faith communities, with whom he is successfully pursuing a platform for interfaith dialogue.

The day continued with a meeting with Azerbaijan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Elmar Mammadyarov. In connection with the meeting, a tax agreement aimed at avoiding double taxation and combating tax evasion was signed between Sweden and Azerbaijan. The visit in Baku concluded with a meeting in the Parliament with parliamentarians, the Speaker of the Parliament Ogtay Asadov and Deputy Speaker Bahar Muradova.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Minister for Foreign Affairs visiting Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan

Published 10 February 2016 Updated 10 February 2016

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström is travelling in Southern Caucasus between Monday 8 February and Wednesday 10 February for visits in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Member of the Riksdag Kerstin Lundgren is also taking part.

The visit started on Monday in Tbilisi in Georgia. Ms Wallström first met Georgia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Mikheil Janelidze for talks on current issues and regional challenges. Then, Ms Wallström visited Tbilisi Public Service Hall to meet civil society actors such as journalists, human rights activists and representatives of LGBTQ organisations. After that, Ms Wallström met representatives of the opposition.

The visit in Tbilisi then continued with meetings with Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili, Speaker of the Parliament David Usupashvili, and in conclusion, Georgia's President Giorgi Margvelashvili.

The talks focused mainly on the reforms and changes that Georgia is carrying out as part of the process of establishing closer ties to the European Union and as a member of the EU's Eastern Partnership. In 2014, Georgia signed an Association Agreement and a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement with the EU.

"We can see a positive development in Georgia. The reform process is making progress, but challenges remain. This is why it is important for Sweden and the EU to continue to support Georgia in its rapprochement to the EU and in order to bring about a well-functioning society free of corruption and with transparent institutions and political processes," said Ms

Wallström.

Ms Wallström's visit in Southern Caucasus continued on Tuesday in Yerevan, Armenia. In the morning, Ms Wallström met representatives of organisations that work with democracy, gender equality and freedom of press issues to hear their perspectives on current issues and challenges. During the day, Ms Wallström met Minister of Foreign Affairs Edward Nalbandian and President Serzh Sargsyan. At the meeting with Mr Nalbandian, a tax agreement was signed between Sweden and Armenia, which will counteract double taxation and tax evasion. The purpose of the agreement is to increase economic and professional exchange between Sweden and Armenia by making it easier for Swedes to work in Armenia and vice versa.

The visit in Yerevan continued later in the day as Ms Wallström met with Armenian members of Parliament. In conclusion, Ms Wallström visited Tumo Centre for Creative Technologies, a place that offers young people free education after school in subjects such as design, programming and artistic activities.



Article

Government to strengthen Arctic environmental policy

Published 25 January 2016 Updated 25 January 2016

The Government is now strengthening the Swedish environmental policy for the Arctic. As an Arctic country with high environmental ambitions, Sweden has an important role to play internationally.

A whole world is affected when the Arctic environment is threatened. The Government is now strengthening efforts to protect the natural environment in the Arctic. We want to see stronger climate efforts, legal protection for sensitive natural environments and prevention of the risks involved in drilling for oil and overfishing. This new focus for environmental policy in the Arctic is being presented today by Minister for Strategic Development Kristina Persson at the Arctic Frontiers conference.

The Arctic acts as the planet's refrigerator. Its enormous white expanses of ice and snow reflect large parts of the sun's rays back into space, thus stabilising the Earth's climate. The area is home to millions of people, including indigenous peoples, and ecosystems of global importance. The Arctic environment and its fate concerns us all, directly or indirectly.

Today, the natural environment in the Arctic is largely unprotected. Just a few decades ago this was not considered to be a major problem. The greenhouse effect was not yet making itself clearly felt and the northernmost expanses were difficult to access. But the situation has worsened in a short period of time.

The snow and ice in the Arctic is melting increasingly rapidly due to global warming. This increases accessibility and thus opportunities to exploit oil, gas, minerals and fish in this sensitive environment. At the same time, the fact that the ice is shrinking means that the reflection of solar radiation is

decreasing, fuelling global warming. The consequences could be catastrophic.

The new global climate agreement from Paris marks the start of a substantial increase in climate efforts in all countries. The agreement states that the global rise in temperature must be kept well below two degrees Celsius and that measures must be taken to keep the temperature below one and a half degrees. In order to achieve this goal, further decisions need to be taken in international climate work, including in Arctic cooperation.

The Government is now strengthening Sweden's environmental policy for the Arctic. As an Arctic country with a high level of environmental ambition, Sweden has an important role to play internationally. While we are making demands of other Arctic countries, the Government is taking responsibility at home. This is a basic premise for our proposals:

1. Stronger climate efforts

The Arctic countries (Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Russia, Canada and the United States, all members of the Arctic Council) are responsible for a large proportion of global greenhouse gas emissions and have a major responsibility to reduce emissions. Sweden has pushed for a reduction in emissions of short-lived climate forcers, such as soot and methane. This is still important, but climate efforts must be broadened. The Government therefore wants to strengthen measures in the Arctic Council concerning climate and renewable energy.

2. Legal protection for sensitive natural environments

There are serious shortcomings in the protection of the valuable Arctic environment. In particular, there is a lack of adequate protection of the marine environment, which is becoming increasingly accessible and vulnerable as the ice melts. This calls for efforts on a broad front. We are beginning this work to make progress. In the first week of February, all Arctic countries are invited to Sweden and the Government Offices to discuss the management of the marine environment in the Arctic. The Government is pushing for the Arctic countries to develop a network of protected environments, for the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to be supplemented with a new protective agreement and for other decision-making bodies to be as active as possible in putting protection in place.

3. Preventing the risks of drilling for oil

Researchers have warned that offshore oil extraction in the Arctic is a high-

stakes undertaking. A large proportion of the world's oil resources must stay in the ground if we are to keep global warming as far below two degrees as possible. Extracting oil in the Arctic is both expensive and risky. An oil disaster could cause a great deal of damage to the sensitive environment. In recent times, a low global oil price has made drilling for oil in the Arctic an unprofitable business, but a low price in the short term is no lasting guarantee that the sensitive Arctic environment will be protected.

This is why it is crucial that we make demands of the oil companies, in terms of both economics and safety. Sweden wants to see robust regulations that ensure the highest level of protection. We want only companies that can assume the entire cost of a disaster to be granted permits to extract oil in the Arctic. The costs must not be shifted onto the environment or the world population through environmental damage, or onto the tax payers in the Arctic countries. In practice, these are requirements that together can protect the Arctic from the risks of drilling for oil.

4. Preventing overfishing

The parts of the Arctic Ocean and seabeds that have historically been covered by a permanent layer of ice must now be protected. The Government considers that commercial fishing in the central northern Arctic Ocean should not be permitted until a regional organisation for fisheries management is established to ensure that fishing is carried out in a sustainable way. Sweden believes that a precautionary approach should be taken and that consideration should be given to the ecosystems when designing this fisheries management. Good management is informed by decisions made on scientific grounds with a long-term perspective.

This is how the Government is taking the next step in the international arena to strengthen efforts to protect the Arctic environment. With legal protection of sensitive environments and clearer requirements in the area of oil prospecting and fishing, we can protect the natural environment in the Arctic – and by doing so improve the chances of today's children living a good life in the future. The world needs countries that move the environment further up the agenda. Sweden is one such country.

Åsa Romson, Minister for Climate and the Environment

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Kristina Persson, Minister for Strategic Development



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Focus on peace and development when Margot Wallström and Peter Hultqvist visited Mali

Published 07 January 2016 Updated 07 January 2016

The peace agreement in Mali, talks with representatives of the Malian Government and a visit to the Swedish detachment in Camp Nobel as part of the UN stabilisation mission, MINUSMA. These were some of the points on the agenda when Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist, together with Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Micael Bydén, visited Mali on 5–7 January.

Ms Wallström and Mr Hultqvist's visit to Mali comes at an important time for the country. A peace agreement was signed last June and is now being implemented with the support of the UN stabilisation mission, MINUSMA.

During their visit, the ministers met Mali's President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta, Prime Minister Modibo Keïta, Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdoulaye Diop and Minister of Defence Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly for talks on peace, security and development in the country. Peace and security and the implementation of the peace agreement were also the focus when Ms Wallström and Mr Hultqvist visited the Swedish unit in Timbuktu.

"For sustainable peace, it is important that the peace agreement is implemented in an inclusive manner. Women must have a role in the peace process," says Ms Wallström, who with Mr Hultqvist also met local women's organisations in Timbuktu.



Article from Ministry of Defence, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The Government presented Sweden's support to France

Published 16 December 2015 Updated 16 December 2015

Sweden attaches great importance to the EU as a community of solidarity. It is in our security policy interest that Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union and the EU's security policy as such are credible. This requires that the bilateral assistance and support requested by France is now credible and fit-for-purpose. Sweden will therefore play its part, as outlined at a press briefing by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist today.

As a follow-up of France's request under Article 42 (7) of the Treaty on European Union and additional support in the fight against ISIL, an inventory of possible Swedish contributions has been made. The starting point for this is that it must be requested, fit-for-purpose, effective and efficient, credible, sustainable over time, in accordance with international law, based on a risk analysis and based on broad consensus and available Swedish resources, in terms of both personnel and funding.

In an initial package, Sweden can offer the following:

- 50–100 SAC hours (strategic airlift capability) will be placed at France's disposal.
- Tactical air transport (1 TP84) for use in MINUSMA within the framework of a Nordic rotation in which Sweden would take over from Norway and Denmark in spring 2017.
- A number of staff officers for MINUSMA or UNTSO.
- A reinforced Swedish contribution to EUTM Mali is being looked into, if

possible in cooperation with others.

- A request concerning support in the form of military equipment is being processed under a separate decision procedure.

In addition to this, there is the Swedish military training contribution comprising 35 people who have been on the ground in northern Iraq since August 2015 and will remain there in 2016 if the Riksdag gives its approval. Sweden's contribution also includes personnel stationed at staff headquarters in Baghdad and Erbil. In Mali, Sweden is participating in MINUSMA with a contribution of 250 people. The current mandate extends until 30 June 2016. An extension of Sweden's contribution is expected until the end of June 2017. Sweden currently has 10 people placed with the EUTM in Mali and has decided to continue its contribution of two staff officers with the EUMAM in the Central African Republic.

In spring 2016, the conditions for additional Swedish support will be regularly looked into on the basis of the needs that exist and that emerge in the anti-ISIL coalition, and on the basis of what other countries have contributed, as well as in line with the aforementioned criteria. A review will then take place in autumn 2016.

Moreover, Sweden is providing extensive humanitarian support and development cooperation. Sweden's humanitarian support to Syria since 2011 has amounted to SEK 1.9 billion, and in 2015 support amounted to SEK 577 million. The Government is now raising its level of ambition by drawing up a whole new type of aid strategy for the Syrian crisis, comprising SEK 1.7 billion for the period 2016–2020. SEK 16 million will go to the Syria Recovery Trust Fund, which meets the needs of the population in the opposition-controlled areas. In addition, support is being given to Birgitta Holst Alani's facilitator role in the Intra-Syrian Contact Group for the Continuity of Public Services, Reconstruction and Development, and the opposition's efforts to agree and take part in the UN process are being supported by Special Envoy Niklas Kebabian. Moreover, Sweden is working to strengthen women's participation in the UN-led negotiations.

Since 2014, Sweden has given more than SEK 300 million in humanitarian support to Iraq, in addition to major Swedish non-earmarked core support to the UN and other international organisations, which in total makes Sweden one of the largest donors to the region. Development cooperation will be expanded by SEK 40 million in 2016 for capacity building of central and local government in Iraq. Sweden is also contributing USD 4 million to the UNDP stabilisation fund (approx. SEK 32 million). In addition to this,

possibilities are being looked into for providing support to strengthen the rule of law and the security sector in Iraq, and to contribute to the country's long-term stabilisation. (One possibility could be a civilian ESFP operation targeting capacity building in these areas.)



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström hosts high-level meeting on women's role in peace processes

Published 15 December 2015 Updated 15 December 2015

Some of the world's top women peace mediators and representatives of civil society, foreign governments, the UN and the EU have gathered in Stockholm for two days to discuss women's participation in peace processes and mediation. The high-level meeting is part of the Government's initiative to establish a Swedish network of women mediators, which is an important focus area of Sweden's feminist foreign policy agenda.

'More Women, More Peace – the Stockholm High-Level Meeting on Inclusive Peace Processes', hosted by the Swedish Government and taking place on 15–16 December, aims to identify tangible measures for more inclusive and sustainable peace processes. Delegates include prominent mediators from peace processes in the Philippines, Yemen, Afghanistan, Uganda, Nepal, Burundi, Timor-Leste, Sudan and Liberia and other parts of world. Other delegates include representatives of civil society, foreign governments, the UN and the EU.

Women still excluded from peace processes

Fifteen years after the adoption of UN Security Council resolution on women, peace and security (UNSCR 1325), women are still largely excluded from formal peace processes and international mediation efforts. Some

progress has been made in recent years. But between 1992 and 2011, less than ten per cent of the those sitting at the negotiating table – and only four per cent of those who signed the peace agreements – were women. Of the peace agreements signed between 1990 and 2014, only 18 per cent included references to women and gender equality.

Yet, research shows that women's participation in peace processes and mediation increases the likelihood of a peace agreement being concluded, adhered to and more sustainable.

In a world where almost half of all peace agreements collapse within the first five years, and where protracted conflicts including in Syria and Libya have led to the largest refugee flows since the Second World War, there is a great need to strengthen our efforts in peacebuilding operations and sustainable peace processes.

Launch of Swedish network of women mediators

As part of broader efforts to support sustainable peace processes, the Government has initiated a Swedish network of women mediators, an initiative led by the Folke Bernadotte Academy. The aim is to increase the number of Swedish women in international peace processes and strengthen Sweden's ability to contribute effectively to sustainable peacebuilding. The initiative will also link up with other international networks of women mediators and contribute to developing the Nordic network, launched in Oslo on 27 November.

The high-level meeting opened on Tuesday 15 December with a joint dinner. Roundtable discussions, lunch and a public seminar are scheduled for Wednesday 16 December.

Follow the discussion on social media at [#MoreWomenMorePeace](#)



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Tunisia is showing the way

Published 10 December 2015 Updated 10 December 2015

Five years ago, Tunisia's population wanted change, dignity and democracy. The Tunisian Revolution marked the beginning of a process of change that is still under way in parts of the Arab world, and that has also come to greatly affect Sweden and the rest of Europe. Tunisia succeeded where many other countries in the region failed: they achieved democracy by peaceful means. Today, the well-deserved Nobel Peace Prize will be awarded to the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet for its decisive contributions in the wake of the Tunisian Revolution.

The Quartet, comprising Tunisia's leading trade union, employer organisation, the human rights organisation Tunisian Human Rights League, and the Tunisian Order of Lawyers took a leading role in uniting a society that was being torn apart by tensions and instability. It was a strong driving force behind the adoption of a new democratic constitution that was unprecedented in the region. This took place at a time when the democratic process in Tunisia was about to collapse.

Following free and democratic elections late last year, Tunisia is now governed by a president and a broad coalition government. One third of the members of the Tunisian parliament are women – one of the highest proportions in the region. Women generally play an important role in politics and public life, and gender equality is emphasised in the constitution, although many challenges still remain in this area.

When I took office as Minister for Foreign Affairs, I decided to visit Tunisia at an early stage to show Sweden's support for the path that the country has chosen. During my visit in February, I met representatives of the Government, civil society and the business sector for talks on the country's political and economic development, security in the neighbourhood and human rights. I left Tunis inspired and full of hope that Tunisia, despite great challenges, faces good prospects of maintaining and developing democracy

and stability in a region where these values in particular are in short supply.

The close relations between Sweden and Tunisia were clearly displayed during the State Visit by President Essebsi to Sweden in early November. During the State Visit, it was announced that we will reopen the Swedish Embassy in Tunis. Our presence on the ground will open a new chapter in our relations with Tunisia and provide us with opportunities to intensify our support for democracy and promote the economic development of the country.

Tunisia is facing major challenges: in the area of security, where the acts of terrorism in Tunis in November reminded us of the forces at work in the region and the challenges involved in counteracting them; in the economic area, where reforms are needed and many people are waiting for improvements in daily life, not least the younger generation that courageously confronted the old authoritarian regime; and in the institutional area, where considerable progress has been made, but where the constitution's promises need to be converted into practical action.

With a democratically elected leadership, an active civil society and international cooperation, there are good chances of overcoming these challenges. Sweden is contributing in several ways. We have comprehensive bilateral cooperation to strengthen democracy and respect for human rights. Swedish companies employ more than 5 000 Tunisians, a figure that is increasing.

A pluralistic and stable Tunisia can continue to inspire the region's youth, women and men, who, through concerted efforts, chose the path of democracy. It is not always easy, but it is always right. The choice of the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet for the Nobel Peace Prize is a recognition of all the forces in the region that strive for democratic change through peaceful means. We welcome and look forward to the Prize Laureates' traditional visit to Stockholm after the award ceremony in Oslo.

Margot Wallström
Minister for Foreign Affairs



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Cooperation on reception of refugees theme for meeting of foreign ambassadors in Stockholm

Published 30 November 2015 Updated 30 November 2015

The EU needs a new system for the reception of refugees. This was the message from Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, as he, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for Finance Magdalena Andersson met the foreign ambassadors in Stockholm on 26 November. He also spoke about the importance of climate change and cited increasing employment as the Government's top priority.

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven began by expressing the Swedish Government's sympathy and solidarity with those affected by terrorist attacks. Mr Löfven stated that the refugee crisis could be handled better by the EU. Sweden, which has taken in 80 000 refugees in the last two months alone, has reached a point where it is necessary for refugees to seek asylum in other European countries. "We should start to discuss a new, sustainable system for refugee reception in the EU, based on a permanent distribution system," he said.

One of the world's first fossil-free welfare countries

There is also a great deal that is positive happening in the world, Mr Löfven pointed out. Extreme poverty has been more than halved worldwide, for example.

"In just four days we will meet in Paris to discuss climate change. Sweden's

aim is a global, fair and legally binding agreement that keeps global warming below two degrees. He stressed that this is a job that begins at home.

“Sweden will be one of the world’s first fossil-free welfare nations. This is morally right, but also economically smart. Countries at the forefront will be the winners – not those who wait until the last moment.” Mr Löfven emphasised Sweden’s continued strong commitment to international cooperation, and the fact that Sweden will continue to be a strong voice for democracy, equality and solidarity.

Increased employment priority goal

The Prime Minister concluded his speech with a few words about the Government’s first year in power.

“We have put more and new jobs at the top of our agenda. The key components are investments in housing and infrastructure, increased cooperation for more and growing companies, and improved job matching and skills. The objective of increased employment becomes even more important in light of the ongoing refugee crisis, Mr Löfven said.

“Everyone who can work should work. Together, we will work Sweden out of the crisis and into the future.” Looking back at the Government’s first year, the Prime Minister also said that he sees greater willingness to cooperate across party lines.

“The Government has been clear from the start in our desire to gather cross-party majorities. I welcome a new era in Swedish politics – guided by responsibility and determination,” he said.

Sweden will continue to take responsibility, but cannot stand alone

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström took the floor after the Prime Minister. She began by quoting writer Stig Dagerman.

“He wrote: ‘In times of no hope there is no worse prison than the future’. We must therefore not lose hope.” She noted that the world is facing a range of challenges and that, as the world’s sixth largest aid donor in absolute terms and the largest per capita recipient of refugees, Sweden is continuing to take great responsibility for global development.

“Our objective of giving one per cent of our GNI in aid remains in place.” Regarding the reception of refugees, she echoed Mr Löfven’s view that Sweden cannot stand alone. She also emphasised that Sweden’s reception of refugees must enable children seeking asylum to have the same opportunities as Swedish children.

“The Government has now agreed that no more than thirty per cent of the aid budget will go to migration costs. “Sweden will continue to be an active and generous member of the international community,” she said.

Minister for Finance Magdalena Andersson also attended the meeting.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Wallström and Linkevičius paid a joint visit to Ukraine

Published 23 November 2015 Updated 23 November 2015

This week, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström visited Ukraine with Lithuania's Minister of Foreign Affairs Linas Linkevičius for a busy three-day programme.

The visit began at Maidan Square to honour the victims of the events of winter 2014. During meetings with President Poroshenko, Prime Minister Yatsenyuk and Minister of Foreign Affairs Klimkin, our countries expressed their strong support for Ukraine's EU integration, which is demonstrated through our commitment to the Eastern Partnership. A cooperation agreement between Sweden and Lithuania was concluded on support for training in Eastern Ukraine.

At the meeting with students at the University of Kyiv, the atmosphere was one of great confidence in the future, as it was during the meetings with young parliamentarians and representatives of civil society organisations. In talks with the leader of the Crimean Tatars, Mustafa Dzhemilev, it was made clear that the Russian annexation of Crimea is not accepted. In a meeting with Vira Savchenko, sister of Ukrainian pilot Nadiya Savchenko currently imprisoned in Russia, the EU's demands that Russia immediately release her were stressed.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Successful State Visit from Tunisia

Published 06 November 2015 Updated 09 November 2015

Tunisia's President Béji Caïd Essebsi concluded his three-day State Visit to Sweden today. The President and his wife were here at the invitation of the King and Queen. Tunisia's Minister for Foreign Affairs also took part in the visit and was received by Margot Wallström at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. It was announced during the visit that Sweden would open an embassy in Tunisia, and a number of bilateral cooperation agreements were signed.

Following a welcoming ceremony for the President and his delegation at the Royal Palace on the first day of the State Visit, the two foreign ministers met to discuss Swedish–Tunisian relations. Democratic development in the country, anti-terrorism efforts, gender issues and trade were the topics discussed between the two ministers.

On day two of the visit, President Essebsi met Prime Minister Stefan Löfven. It was announced following the meeting that Sweden would open an embassy in Tunisia. A broad cooperation agreement was signed between Sweden and Tunisia. The President, the King and Minister for Infrastructure Anna Johansson also took part during the day in a trade forum organised by the Tunisian Embassy and Business Sweden.

On Friday, the President visited Ericsson in Kista. The visit then continued to Uppsala, where the President laid a wreath on Dag Hammarskjöld's grave in the presence of the King, Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Information Technology Mehmet Kaplan and Minister for Public Administration Ardalan Shekarabi. A cooperation agreement concerning decentralisation was also signed during the day between the Swedish

Association of Local Authorities and Regions and their Tunisian counterparts.

Press release: Sweden to open Embassy in Tunisia



Article from Ministry of Defence, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Margot Wallström and Peter Hultqvist visited Iraq on 2–3 November

Published 04 November 2015 Updated 04 November 2015

On 3 November, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist concluded a joint visit to Iraq. One key event was a visit to the Swedish contribution to the military multinational operation in northern Iraq. Developments in Iraq are disturbing and in many ways, the country is at a decisive crossroads. The purpose of the visit was to express support for the country's pro-reform forces and to highlight the scope and sustainability of the Swedish commitment to Iraq, both bilaterally and via the international coalition against ISIL.

In addition to visiting the Swedish military personnel on the ground in northern Iraq, the ministers also met representatives of the Iraqi government in Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Erbil.

The visit began on 2 November in Baghdad, where the two ministers had meetings with President Fuad Masum, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament Salim al-Jabouri, Minister of Defence Khaled al-Obeidi and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ibrahim al-Jaafari, who hosted the visit.

Meetings in Iraqi Kurdistan

On Monday evening, the visit continued in Erbil, the capital of the autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan in northern Iraq. The ministers attended a dinner hosted by Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani, at which government representatives of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) parties took part.

On Tuesday, Ms Wallström and Mr Hultqvist took part in a meeting with Minister for the Interior and acting Minister of Peshmerga Affairs Karim Sinjari and Head of KRG Foreign Relations Falah Mustafa Bakir. The ministers also met representatives of civil society and of the Assyrian, Yazidi and Turkmen minorities in Iraq. On Tuesday, the ministers also met KRG President Masoud Barzani for talks on developments in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Visit to Swedish military force

The trip to Iraq concluded with a visit to the regional coalition headquarters and the Swedish military force that, since the summer, has been operating within the framework of the international coalition against ISIL. The Swedish force consists of 35 persons, whose task is to train the Iraqi armed forces in the fight against ISIL.

Sweden has close relations with Iraq. The countries have extensive people-to-people exchanges. Close to two per cent of the Swedish population has Iraqi roots. Since 2014, Sweden has provided Iraq with more than SEK 300 million in humanitarian support, thereby making it one of the largest bilateral donors to Iraq. The humanitarian support, which is mainly channelled via the UN on the ground, is crucial to relieving the difficult humanitarian situation, with 8.6 million people in need of humanitarian support. It is also vital in trying to avoid even more Iraqis seeing no other choice than to make their way to Europe. In addition, Sweden has engaged in bilateral development cooperation with Iraq, focusing on democracy and human rights, and support to civil society.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Margot Wallström commemorates UN's 70th anniversary

Published 23 October 2015 Updated 23 October 2015

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström is visiting New York on 21–23 October to take part in celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the UN. During her visit, Ms Wallström will speak at the Security Council's open debate on the peace process in the Middle East. Ms Wallström will also take part in two events organised by Sweden: one on women's participation in the peace process in Mali and one on women as peace actors in Syria.

Through its political and financial support, Sweden is a leading actor in the agenda for women, peace and security. In its feminist foreign policy, Sweden prioritises women's participation in peace processes and the fight against impunity for sexual violence in conflicts. Ms Wallström, together with Hans Blix, will also take part in a seminar on disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Ms Wallström's speech at the Security Council's open debate on the Middle East peace process

Ms Wallström's speech at event on women's participation in the Mali peace process

Ms Wallström's Opening Statement at side event in the UN: "Syrian Women Peacebuilders"



Article from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

“Intense, fruitful days in Vilnius” – The State Visit to Lithuania 7-9 October

Published 13 October 2015 Updated 13 October 2015

Friday 9 October was the final day of the Swedish State Visit to Lithuania. Since the State Visit began on Wednesday 7 October, the Swedish delegation has had a fruitful and busy visit on the other side of the Baltic Sea.

The theme of the State Visit was ‘The Baltic Sea unites us’. Environment, sustainability, research and innovation have been in focus. Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg began his part of the State Visit by discussing the business and investment climate with business sector representatives, Minister of Economy Evaldas Gustas and Prime Minister Algirdas Butkevičius.

Following a warm welcome by Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė, the King and Queen, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Mr Damberg visited Antakalnis Cemetery to honour the victims of the struggle for independence and place a wreath there. The King and Queen stressed Sweden’s sympathy and solidarity with the Lithuanian people’s struggle throughout history.

The first evening concluded with a banquet at the Presidential Palace; before it commenced, the King and Queen inaugurated the ‘AccessAbility’ photo exhibition, that highlights openness and inclusion through personal stories by Swedes and Lithuanians who live with impairments.

The second day continued in the same spirit: the King and Queen began their day by meeting the business community and discussing the Lithuanian business climate and the opportunities and challenges Swedish companies who become established there may encounter. Ms Wallström, Mr Damberg, the CEO of Business Sweden Ylva Berg, and a number of other business representatives were also present.

This was then followed by Swedish Business Forum and Awards, where the King presented awards to business community actors who had distinguished themselves in various sectors. Afterwards, the King and Mr Damberg continued to the company TEO LT AB, which is an industry leader in ICT and wireless connection. Parallel with these visits, Queen Silvia and Ms Wallström took part in a round-table meeting on trafficking with a Lithuanian parliamentary committee.

The conclusion of the second day of the State Visit also marked the end of a successful visit for Mr Damberg and Ms Wallström, who said about the visit:

- We have had two intense and fruitful days in Vilnius. I met my foreign minister colleague, Linas Linkevičius, and we announced that we will visit Ukraine jointly in November. I also visited the parliament, met students and took part in a round-table discussion on trafficking.

The King and Queen and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist began their third and final day on the sand dunes of the Curonian Spit, near the harbour town of Klaipėda, where experts from Region Skåne talked about the cooperation around the Baltic Sea to check negative climate impact along the coast.

In addition to environment discussions, the visit to the Curonian Spit included a stop at the local dolphinarium, which provided information about the dolphin therapy developed to help children with various types of impairments. Later in the afternoon, a visit was paid to the NordBalt project's transformer station ahead of the ground-breaking operational launch in Vilnius on 14 December, which will lead to a change of direction in the energy flow on the Baltic market.

The final State Visit stop was at the Amber Museum in Palanga, where President Grybauskaitė was warmly thanked for an inspiring visit in the spirit of sustainability, research and innovation.



Article from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

State Visit to Lithuania begins

Published 07 October 2015 Updated 08 October 2015

The three-day State Visit to Lithuania of Their Majesties The King and Queen of Sweden begins today. The Swedish Government is represented by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg and (on Friday) by Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist. A Swedish business delegation will also take part in the Visit.

Relations between Sweden and Lithuania are very good, and have been so since Lithuania regained its independence. Sweden was the first country to open an embassy in Vilnius in August 1991.

The Swedish delegation was met when it landed today with the same genuine and warm welcome as during the Swedish State Visit to Lithuania 23 years ago. A welcome ceremony took place at the Presidential Palace.

Ms Wallström and Mr Damberg also participated as the King placed a wreath at the Freedom Monument in the Antakalnis Cemetery to honour the victims of the struggle for independence.

The King and Queen, Ms Wallström and Mr Damberg later visited the Seimas, the Lithuanian Parliament, for a meeting with Speaker Loreta Graužinienė.

During the morning, Ms Wallström met with her Lithuanian colleague Minister of Foreign Affairs Linas Linkevičius.

Mr Damberg met Minister of Energy Rokas Masiulis.

Accompanying business delegation

Sweden is by far the largest foreign investor in Lithuania, accounting for over a quarter of the market. Some 30 business leaders are taking part in the delegation in connection with the State Visit. The delegation's day started early with Mr Damberg, discussing the business and investment climate in Lithuania with Chairman of the Bank of Lithuania, Vitas Vasiliauskas, Minister of Economy Evaldas Gustas and Prime Minister Algirdas Butkevičius.

The President will host a dinner during the evening. The State Visit will continue tomorrow and conclude on Friday.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Implementing the 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development, A call to action

Published 26 September 2015 Updated 14 October 2016

The world must get off to a flying start in realizing the new ambitious and transformative sustainable development agenda.

We, the presidents and prime ministers of Brazil, Colombia, Germany, Liberia, South Africa, Sweden, Tanzania, Timor-Leste and Tunisia, have come together today in an initiative aimed at supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We believe that the effective and universal implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires efforts at all levels, and across all sectors. Government's efforts alone will not suffice. But we are committed to lead by example and we pledge to do our share.

We will work actively during the coming months to rally support for the implementation of the Agenda. We will promote the sharing of experiences and best practices and a continuous engagement at the highest political level around the world.

The 2030 Agenda is an agenda of the people, by the people and for the people. We therefore invite all stakeholders, governments, parliamentarians, civil society, business sector, labor unions and academia to join us in calling for action. We need sustained engagement, dedication and leadership at all levels to achieve poverty eradication and sustainable development in all its dimensions by 2030.

We will make it our joint mission to ensure that no one is left behind!



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden taking responsibility to implement the UN global goals for sustainability

Published 25 September 2015 Updated 25 September 2015

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, Minister for Climate and the Environment Åsa Romson and Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin are attending the UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York. On 25–27 September, the new global Sustainable Development Goals will be adopted by all UN Member States.

“Sweden will take a leading role also in implementing the new UN Sustainable Development Goals. Poverty reduction, environmental and climate action, and peacebuilding go hand-in-hand. Sweden will lead the way with a coherent policy that takes into account the perspective of poor people, human rights and planetary boundaries. Efforts to achieve the global Sustainable Development Goals in Sweden are starting now,” says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

During the summit, the Prime Minister will deliver a speech, attend meetings, seminars and roundtable discussions, and have bilateral talks with the heads of government of other countries.

“These global goals are needed for the countries of the world to work together to stop and prevent conflicts and refugee crises. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without peace, security and respect for

human rights. The global goals give us fifteen years of opportunities for a better world,” says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

“It is extremely positive that the world is now agreed on the importance of sustainable development. An ambitious climate agreement in Paris this December is our first opportunity to show what this means in practice. All countries have a responsibility to contribute to climate change adaptation. By taking responsibility at home, Sweden is taking the lead and showing that adaptation is both possible and profitable,” says Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Climate and the Environment Åsa Romson.

From a Swedish perspective, it is important to underline three dimensions of sustainability – economic, social and environmental. The rights perspective, including freedom from discrimination, and gender equality in particular, is a top priority, as are employment and the goal of decent work for all.

“In unsettled times in which the challenges faced by the world can sometimes seem insurmountable, the fact that the countries of the world have now come together and shown that change in a positive direction is possible inspires hope and confidence, as does the fact that we stand united in the battle against poverty, repression and climate change,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

In connection with the summit, a large number of charity events and a music gala – the Global Citizen Festival – will take place in Central Park in New York. The festival will focus on inequalities in the world and access to clean water and sanitation.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Margot Wallström received Selahattin Demirtaş

Published 27 August 2015 Updated 27 August 2015

Last week, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström met the leader of the People’s Democratic Party (HDP) from Turkey.

“HDP is an important political power for shaping the future of Turkey. Sweden and Turkey have a strategic partnership and Sweden supports Turkey’s closer ties with the EU, which require a deepening of democracy and the rule of law. It is now of the utmost importance to resume the peace process and the ceasefire,” says Ms Wallström.

In light of the current situation, Ms Wallström also urged HDP to continue contributing to the resumption of the peace process.

Mr Demirtaş expressed his appreciation for the meeting with Ms Wallström. He repeated his message that the peace process and the ceasefire must be resumed and that violence and weapons cannot solve the conflict. Against this background, he welcomed the fact that Sweden – which has a special role in Turkey by virtue of the high level of credibility it enjoys – was urging for the resumption of peace negotiations.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Minister for Foreign Affairs received Marshall Islands president and Kenyan foreign minister

Published 25 August 2015 Updated 25 August 2015

On Tuesday, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström met Marshall Islands President Christopher J. Loeak and Kenyan Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs Amina Mohamed.

Marshall Islands President Christopher J. Loeak was received for talks on issues such as the challenges of climate change. President Loeak is visiting Sweden on 23–27 August to take part in World Water Week.

Margot Wallström and Kenyan Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs Amina Mohamed held talks on global issues of common interest. The ministers discussed trade relations between Sweden and Kenya, developments in Somalia, development cooperation and the new aid strategy that the Swedish Government is working to produce.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Margot Wallström received US senators

Published 19 August 2015 Updated 19 August 2015

Today, Wednesday 19 August, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström received US Senators John McCain, Sheldon Whitehouse and John Barrasso for discussions on topical foreign policy issues.

The discussions focused on the situation in Ukraine and relations with Russia, countering violent extremism and the Iran nuclear agreement.

The US senators, John McCain (R), Sheldon Whitehouse (D) and John Barrasso (R), are visiting Sweden as part of a tour. Among those they will meet in Sweden are Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist and representatives of the Swedish Armed Forces.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Indian State Visit concluded

Published 04 June 2015 Updated 04 June 2015

On the evening of 2 June, India's President Shri Pranab Mukherjee left Sweden following a State Visit of three days. The President was in Sweden at the invitation of HM the King. The Government was represented, with the majority of ministers participating. The main themes of the visit were innovations and sustainable development, with a focus on urban development, science and research.

India is one of the leading countries in Asia, the world's fourth largest economy and an emerging global actor. The State Visit by the Indian President – the first ever – was therefore an important milestone in our bilateral relations.

The State Visit began on Sunday with the traditional welcoming ceremony at the Inner Courtyard of the Royal Palace. The King and the President inspected a guard of honour from the Life Guards and many members of the Government, as well as other Swedish public representatives, were present to welcome the President.

Monday began with a visit to the Riksdag, where the President was received by the Speaker of the Riksdag and met with Members of the Riksdag.

In the morning, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven also received the President for talks at Rosenbad. Mr Mukherjee and Mr Löfven discussed issues such as growing trade between Sweden and India and broad bilateral cooperation covering such areas as the environment, renewable energy and health. Minister for Climate and the Environment Åsa Romson, Minister for Foreign

Affairs Margot Wallström, Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist and Minister for Housing and Urban Development Mehmet Kaplan also took part in the talks.

In connection with the meeting at Rosenbad, a number of agreements between India and Sweden were signed, including a memorandum of understanding on sustainable urban development. The aim of the memorandum of understanding is to promote cooperation on matters concerning sustainable and integrated urban planning and land use, waste management, sustainable transport systems, water and sanitation.

Minister for Housing and Urban Development Mehmet Kaplan joined the President and the King later in the afternoon for a boat tour of Hammarby Sjöstad. During the boat tour, a roundtable discussion was held with business representatives on how cities can be built in more sustainable and environmentally friendly ways.

Sustainable cities in focus during the Indian State Visit

Helene Hellmark Knutsson, Minister for Higher Education and Research, was present at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, when a number of cooperation agreements were signed between Indian and Swedish higher education institutions.

On Monday evening, the King and Queen hosted a gala dinner for the President.

Visit to Karolinska Institutet and Uppsala University

The theme on Tuesday, the final day of the visit, was mainly research and science. Minister Helene Hellmark Knutsson was in attendance when the President and the King and Queen visited Karolinska Institutet. The focus lay on scientific cooperation, and included visits to Nobel Forum and Aula Medica. The President was also given a presentation of Nya Karolinska Solna (NKS) and Hagastaden.

Before lunch, Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg took part in a roundtable discussion between representatives of the Swedish and Indian business sectors. The President and the King were also present.

Mr Damberg gave a speech entitled *India-Sweden Partnership – Co-creating a Brighter Future*.

In connection with the business forum, the President announced that Swedish passport holders will now be granted an 'eTourist visa' when visiting India, leading to more expedient visa handling for Swedish citizens.

In the afternoon, the President visited Uppsala University together with Crown Princess Victoria, Prince Daniel and Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström. Ms Wallström gave the opening address and the President held a lecture on the theme 'Tagore and Gandhi: Do they have contemporary relevance for Global Peace?'

Speech by Margot Wallström at Uppsala University

On Tuesday evening, Ms Wallström was in attendance when Crown Princess Victoria and Prince Daniel bid farewell to the President at Arlanda airport.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Historic State Visit from India

Published 28 May 2015 Updated 28 May 2015

The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, will pay a State Visit to Sweden from 31 May to 2 June 2015 at the invitation of His Majesty the King. The Government will be represented, with the majority of ministers participating. The main themes of the visit are innovations and sustainable development, with a focus on urban development, science and research.

India is one of the leading countries in Asia, the world's fourth largest economy and an emerging global actor. The State Visit by the Indian President – the first ever – is an important milestone in our bilateral relations.

Focus of the State Visit

The focus of the State Visit will be on creating conditions for greater exchange in the areas of trade and science, and strengthening Sweden's presence in the Indian market.

There is growing demand in India concerning issues such as innovation, urban development and sustainable development. The State Visit will provide the opportunity to promote potential business opportunities in these areas in both directions.

Sweden already has broad cooperation with India in a number of areas: environment, renewable energy, research, health, etc. This cooperation will be deepened further in connection with the visit, which will include the signing of a number of cooperation agreements.

Programme points

India's President will land in Stockholm on Sunday afternoon and will be welcomed at Arlanda Airport by Crown Princess Victoria and Prince Daniel. The King and Queen will receive the President at the Royal Mews for a horse-drawn cortège to the Royal Palace, where the traditional welcoming ceremony will take place. Representatives of the Riksdag and the Government will be present.

Monday's programme will begin with a visit to the Riksdag and a meeting with Speaker of the Riksdag Urban Ahlin. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will then welcome the President at Rosenbad. Stockholm City will host a lunch at Stockholm City Hall, during which sustainable urban development will be the focus of discussions. The afternoon programme will continue along the same theme with a visit to Hammarby Sjöstad. Minister for Housing and Urban Development Mehmet Kaplan will take part. In the evening, the King and Queen will host a banquet at the Palace.

The theme for Tuesday will be research and science, with a visit to Karolinska Institutet, with Minister for Higher Education and Research Helène Hellmark Knutsson in attendance. This will be followed by seminars and meetings with Swedish and Indian business representatives. Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg will also take part in the programme.

The programme will continue in the afternoon in Uppsala, where the President will deliver a speech at Uppsala University. Crown Princess Victoria, Prince Daniel and Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will be present.

The State Visit will conclude late on Tuesday afternoon.

Follow the visit on social media: use #sweindia2015



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden celebrates 20 years of EU membership

Published 12 May 2015 Updated 19 May 2015

Saturday 9 May marked 20 years since Sweden became a member of the European Union along with Finland and Austria. Sweden's twenty-year history of EU membership has demonstrated the possibilities and advantages of being part of the Union.

The enlargement of the EU has been crucial for peace, sustainable growth and prosperity in Europe - as recognised by the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the EU. The EU has become the world's largest integrated economy, with a population of more than 500 million. Because of the internal market, Swedes can live, travel, study, work and retire wherever they like in the EU. These are just some of the many examples of the impact EU membership has had on Sweden so far.

Europe Day is celebrated throughout Europe on 9 May. On this day in 1950, French foreign minister Robert Schuman presented a plan for how to avoid further armed conflict in Europe. The Schuman Declaration laid the foundation for what would later become the European Union: the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), of which both France and Germany were members. Joint control over the production of the raw materials that were so crucial to the arms industry - coal and steel - aimed to make it impossible for the countries concerned to start re-arming for war.

France and Germany, together with Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Italy, signed the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community - an organisation that in 1967 came to be known as the European Communities (EC). Sweden submitted a formal application for membership of the EC in July 1991. Two years later the accession

negotiations were opened, and on 24 July 1994 the Treaty of Accession was signed at the European Council in Corfu. Since then a further 13 countries have joined, and the EU now has 28 Member States.

To mark Europe Day, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström took part in a seminar at Europahuset on Friday 8 May on the topic 'Sweden's first 20 years in the EU - lessons and challenges for the future'. Ms Wallström presented the Government's EU policy and discussed the developments and challenges in the EU and their significance for Sweden.



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Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Minister for Foreign Affairs visited Washington DC

Published 02 February 2015 Updated 18 May 2015

On 29 December, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström visited her US colleague John Kerry in Washington DC.

"The US is a key global actor with whom Sweden has very good relations. I very much look forward to meeting my counterparts in Washington to discuss how Sweden and the US can further strengthen their cooperation," Ms Wallström said ahead of her trip.

Topics discussed at the meeting included how the good relations between Sweden and the US can be further developed in areas such as climate and energy issues, trade and gender equality. The serious situations in Ukraine and Syria were also discussed.

Ms Wallström said that they were meeting at a time when the world seemed to be in peril. She felt there are many issues that needed attention and which were their responsibility to discuss, including Ebola, extremism and violence, and conflicts around the world. All things considered, she felt that there was a long agenda for them to work through.

Later in the day, Ms Wallström took part in a meeting with US Vice President Joe Biden and also met with Susan Rice, National Security Advisor to Barack Obama.

During her two-day visit to Washington DC, Ms Wallström took part in several seminars and roundtable discussions with representatives of universities and think tanks, including the United States Institute of Peace, where she spoke about feminist foreign policy.

U.S. Department of State: Remarks With Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom Before Their Meeting



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Margot Wallström received Philip Hammond

Published 20 November 2014 Updated 18 May 2015

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström today received her British counterpart Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond.

Discussions included the bilateral relations between Sweden and the UK, the situation in Russia and Ukraine, the situation in the Middle East, and current UN and EU issues.

Ms Wallström stressed the importance of peace and security, respect for international law and the promotion of human rights in the European neighbourhood and elsewhere.

She also called attention to the importance of close cooperation on these issues with the UK in the EU and in other international forums, and the close ties between our countries - past and present.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden raises profile on disarmament

Published 10 October 2014 Updated 18 May 2015

On Tuesday, Sweden spoke at the United Nations General Assembly First Committee, which deals with disarmament issues. Sweden announced that it will take an active part in the initiative on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

Since nuclear weapons were used for the first, and last, time almost 70 years ago against Hiroshima and Nagasaki - with terrible consequences - the humanitarian dimension has been the focus of efforts to achieve a nuclear weapon-free world.

Most agreements relating to non-proliferation and disarmament of nuclear weapons have essentially been based on the principle that nuclear weapons must never again be used as the humanitarian consequences would be unacceptable.

"It is natural that Sweden focuses on people in the work to advance disarmament and non-proliferation efforts," commented Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström. "Sweden will actively participate in the conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons to be hosted by Austria in December this year."

Sweden will also actively participate in consultations and discussions with other countries and organisations to examine more closely the conditions for the elimination of all nuclear weapons, a commitment that all 189 countries that are parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons support.