

Action plan to safeguard democracy against violence-promoting extremism

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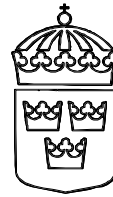


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Action plan to safeguard democracy against violence-
promoting extremism

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The Government hereby submits this communication to the Riksdag.

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Jan Björklund

Birgitta Ohlsson
(Swedish Ministry of Justice)

The main content of the communication

The action plan sets out the measures which the Swedish Government has already taken and intends to take in order to strengthen awareness of democracy and to safeguard it against violence-promoting extremism.

The action plan contains measures to increase knowledge about violence-promoting extremism, to discourage individuals from joining violence-promoting extremist groups and to facilitate for those who have already joined to leave such groups. The action plan also contains measures to strengthen the structures for cooperation and measures to counter the breeding grounds for ideologically motivated violence.

The Government intends to implement the measures in 2012-2014.

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In accordance with the preamble of the Swedish Instrument of Government, Swedish democracy is based on the free formation of opinion and on universal and equal suffrage. It is through belief in this democratic system and by means of the respect for the equal worth of every individual that broad acceptance of the rule of law and of the results of free elections is created. Based on these principles, we can shape a society in which everyone feels they participate and are equal.

A precondition for vibrant and sustainable democracy is for every individual to have the opportunity to exert influence and have power over decisions that affect their everyday lives. Human rights, as they are expressed in terms of Sweden's international undertakings and enshrined in Swedish legislation, shall be respected at all levels of society. Knowledge and awareness of the fundamental values of democracy must be firmly entrenched.

There are however people who do not accept the foundations on which our open society is built - individuals and groups who believe that the rule of law lacks legitimacy and that breaking the law and using violence to achieve social change are justifiable courses of action. Extremist groups who operate on the fringes of society normally attract just a small number of individuals, but when they commit violent acts that are aimed at the very core of our democratic system; they become a pressing concern for the whole of society. The suicide bombing in Stockholm on 11 December 2010 and the attacks in Oslo and on Utøya on 22 July 2011 demonstrate the importance of continuous and long-term preventive work in the Nordic region to safeguard our democracy and open society.

Over the last three years, the Swedish Government has gathered background information to create a holistic picture of violence-promoting extremism. In 2008, the Swedish Security Service (*Säkerhetspolisen – SÄPO*) and the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (*Brottsförebyggande rådet - Brå*) were commissioned to map out current violent political extremism in Sweden as regards the autonomous movement and the White Power movement (*Violent political extremism*, Brå 2009:15). This report, presented in July 2009, shows that several neo-Nazi groups that advocate violence based on an anti-democratic and racist view of the world are active within the White Power movement in Sweden. At the opposite end of the ideological spectrum, the autonomous movement attracts individuals who see the rule of law and the market economy as hostile and who believe that violence is a legitimate means of changing society.

In 2010, the Swedish Security Service was tasked by the Government to describe violence-promoting Islamist extremism in Sweden (*Violence-promoting Islamist extremism in Sweden*, Swedish Security Service, 2010). According to this report, presented in December 2010, a number of people participate in and support violence-promoting Islamist extremism in Sweden. Some individuals have been radicalised in Sweden and some have taken part in violent acts in other countries.

Their ideological differences aside, these various violent extremist environments are similar social phenomena. They are often based on a

black-and-white and conspiratorial view of the world. Conflict with the surrounding society and the glorification of violence are central to them. It is basically the same social mechanisms that motivate individuals to join a violent extremist environment, regardless of whether it promotes a classless, an ethnically homogenous or an Islamist society.

Preventing individuals from being enticed into violent extremist environments and preventing such movements from establishing themselves and spreading in Sweden is also a matter of strengthening and safeguarding the democratic system. Ideologically motivated violence or the threat of such violence is normally directed at society's institutions or its representatives, however, it also affects private citizens based on their ethnic, religious or sexual identity or on their political views. A society that does not clearly distance itself from violence-promoting extremism risks becoming polarised.

Democracy is currently well established in Sweden. The number of people active in violence-promoting extremist environments is, according to the Security Service, too limited to constitute a threat to the cornerstones of the democratic system. Our belief in democracy is strong, but there are tendencies suggesting that anti-democratic attitudes have gained a foothold among certain groups of young people. These individuals may be enticed into violence-promoting extremist environments. Political circumstances in Sweden or in the rest of the world may also affect people's long-term willingness to sanction violence as a means of achieving ideological aims. Democracy can therefore never be taken for granted, but must be continuously improved, strengthened and safeguarded.

2 Democracy policy and violence-promoting extremism

Historically speaking, efforts to prevent extremism have not been part of policies aimed at improving and strengthening Swedish democracy. The threat of violence-promoting extremism has primarily been considered a threat to Sweden from abroad. It has therefore been mainly treated as an issue for the crime-fighting authorities within the justice system.

Not until the 1990s was violent political extremism highlighted for the first time as a potential threat to the Swedish democratic system. In 1997, the Commission on Swedish Democracy was appointed and given the task of highlighting the problems and opportunities that democracy was likely to face during the 2000s. Among the issues discussed by the Commission was the threat to democracy based on the increasing presence of right-wing extremist groups. In its bill "Democracy for the New Century" (Government Bill 2001/02:80), the Government highlighted the need to strengthen democracy in order to counter the threat from anti-democratic forces with a xenophobic and racist agenda as well as anarchist ideologists advocating violent, extra-parliamentary methods. The bill also proposed measures to improve the preparedness against violence and threats to elected representatives. In 2004, the

Government appointed a committee to examine the scope of crime committed against elected representatives, to review their penal protection and to examine the support and help offered to elected representatives who had been the victims of such crime. The Committee presented its findings in the report *Jakten på makten* (Threats against politicians) (SOU 2006:46) in April 2006.

The work to safeguard democracy and to thereby prevent violence-promoting extremism is also one of the fundamental components of the fight against terrorism and its breeding grounds. In its communication “National responsibility and international commitment - A national strategy to meet the threat of terrorism (skr. 2007/08:64), the Government presented Sweden’s national strategy to combat terrorism. This strategy is currently being revised.

In light of the above, the Government considers it important to intensify the efforts to safeguard democracy in order to counter tendencies that may constitute a long-term challenge to the democratic system. Awareness of democracy must be strengthened on all levels of society and efforts must be made to counter the breeding grounds for all forms of violence-promoting extremism. These efforts cannot be limited to measures taken by the police and judicial authorities but must be cross-sectoral in nature and be based on a broad consensus in society.

As mentioned above, the Government has gathered background information over the last three years in order to create a holistic picture of violence-promoting extremism and assaults against democracy and against the fundamental structures of society. In addition to the commissions given to the Security Service and the National Council for Crime Prevention, the National Board for Youth Affairs was given a special assignment in 2010 to examine activities that help young people to leave groups that promote violence and threats as a means of achieving political aims (*Defector activities - Analysis and proposals from the National Board for Youth Affairs on how society can support young defectors*, National Board for Youth Affairs publications 2010:11). In 2010, the Government also gave the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions financial support to compile a compendium of good practice of local measures initiated to counter violence-promoting extremism. This was presented in the publication *Local initiatives to counter violence-promoting extremism* (Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, 2010) in November 2010.

3 Aim and scope

3.1 Aim and objective

The overarching aim of the action plan is to safeguard and strengthen democracy and hence make society more resistant to violence-promoting extremism. This necessitates long-term efforts to increase democratic awareness and initiatives to prevent the emergence of violence-promoting extremist environments. Authorities and relevant societal actors, especially on the local level, must have the tools and the resources

to carry out this work, which requires broad advocacy in society. The measures in the action plan have the following objectives: Skr. 2011/12:44.

- To enhance awareness of the values upon which our democratic system is based.
- To increase awareness and knowledge of violence-promoting extremism among authorities, municipalities, organisations in civil society and the business sector.
- To develop or establish mechanisms and structures to allow authorities, municipalities and civil society organisations to be able to cooperate more effectively on preventive work.
- To intensify efforts to prevent individuals from joining violence-promoting extremist movements and to help individuals to leave them.
- To strengthen efforts to counter the breeding grounds for ideologically motivated violence.
- To further develop European and global efforts to prevent extremism by deepening cooperation and knowledge exchange.

Enhancing awareness of democratic values

To counter intolerance and extremism, the principles of democratic governance and respect for human rights must have an effect. Ideological violence has a tendency to occur in societies in which intolerance, xenophobia and anti-democratic attitudes are rife. In a society where all citizens have equal rights, obligations and opportunities, regardless of their identity or background, extremism will be confined to the fringes. Such a society not only requires the authorities to respect human rights and treat individuals fairly and legitimately, but also requires every individual to be aware of their rights and to respect the rights of others. The Swedish state shall guarantee the freedoms and rights laid down in Article 4 of the European Convention on Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, while every individual has a responsibility to exercise their human rights in a way that does not violate the rights of others, as explained in Article 17 of the Convention. The Convention has been incorporated into Swedish law. Respect for the rights of others requires both an awareness of this responsibility and extensive knowledge of the principles of the democratic system and human rights as well as what they mean.

Increasing knowledge about violence-promoting extremism

An important step towards preventing violence-promoting extremism is to create awareness of the phenomenon. In addition to the police, it is also relevant for those working in the education system, social services and the prison and probation services to be knowledgeable about extremism. These are professional groups that come into contact with individuals who are in the risk zone for being enticed into extreme movements or who are already active within such groups. Furthermore, it is important that awareness of extremism is enhanced in local authorities

as well as in civil society, including sports clubs and other voluntary organisations. Extremism issues can be complex. Dissociating oneself from a young person with extremist views may merely reinforce their destructive tendencies. Efforts to prevent extremism can also cause debate on people's freedom of thought and association. Knowledge about extremism must be based on factual and scientific data. Information based on prejudice or that exaggerates the problem may be damaging and instead stir up fear and create polarisation.

Developing the structures for cooperation

Work to identify and support individuals who risk being lured into extremist environments cannot be limited to a single task for a small number of authorities or societal actors. To counter violence-promoting extremism effectively, authorities, municipalities, organisations in civil society and the business sector and other relevant actors must cooperate. Different initiatives have to be coordinated, not least because different forms of extremism have similarities and can be prevented using similar measures. Only through efforts that are well advocated in society can extremism and anti-democratic tendencies be countered and prevented. To begin with, structures and mechanisms that are already in place should be used and developed.

Preventing individuals from joining violent extremist groups and supporting defectors

Individuals join violent extremist groups for several reasons. Often a person feels excluded or feels powerless in the face of injustice. A violent extremist environment can constitute a sub-culture for such a person, which can provide an affinity or compensate for a feeling of powerlessness. Socioeconomic exclusion or a feeling of discrimination may also reinforce the individual's frustration. It is however difficult to generalise about the background factors that may cause individuals to join violent movements. Individual factors are often crucial. Initiatives must therefore look at the problem from an individual's perspective in order to be successful. It is vital that authorities and relevant societal actors, especially organisations in civil society, are furnished with knowledge, effective tools and resources in order to be able to support individuals who are in the risk zone for joining an extremist group or who are looking to leave one.

Countering the breeding grounds for ideologically motivated violence

Violence from extremist groups can constitute a threat to parts of the democratic system. Violence and the threat of violence against elected representatives and persons in authority can weaken the justice system. Hate crime committed against individuals on the basis of their ethnicity, religious faith, sexual orientation or political conviction increases the risk of social polarisation. The glorification and justification of violence are central to extremist groups, but violence is not necessarily considered as

merely a tool to achieve a political aim. The use of violence among young people may also be an attempt to compensate for a feeling of frustration and powerlessness and can often reflect social problems such as mental ill-health and stereotyped gender roles. This is particularly true of young men who are often both the victims and perpetrators of violence. In light of this, work aimed at combating the social factors that motivate young people to use violence is both a question of strengthening trust and creating a society characterised by tolerance.

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Deepening international cooperation

Social development has contributed to growing globalisation. Progress in information technology and the development of the global economy has facilitated the unhindered exchange and spread of goods, services and ideas on a global market. As a result of this development, different parts of the world have become more mutually dependent on one another. Political events that were previously considered to be local affairs can inspire individuals to do things in other parts of the world. This has also allowed extremist groups and terrorist networks to act on a global level. Preventive work against violence-promoting extremism should therefore also include international measures. International cooperation as regards exchanging knowledge about democracy-promoting and extremist prevention methods must continue to be long-term. This applies to cooperation structures not just within the EU but also in the UN and other international bodies.

3.2 Scope and concept definition

This action plan includes measures intended to safeguard democracy and to prevent individuals, especially young people, from developing attitudes and behaviour that contravene basic democratic values and the principle of the equal worth of all individuals. Societies where anti-democratic values gain a foothold provide a breeding-ground for violence-promoting extremism and ideological violence.

In addition to measures aimed at preventing the emergence of extremist environments, the action plan is also directed at networks or environments that promote violence to achieve an ideological objective. The word extremism is used here to describe movements, ideologies or people who do not accept a democratic social system. The concept of 'violence-promoting extremism' is interpreted based on the description used by the Swedish Security Service in their report on violence-promoting Islamist extremism. According to this description, a person is said to be violent if he or she "is deemed repeatedly to have displayed behaviour that not just accepts the use of violence but also supports or exercises ideologically motivated violence to promote something".

Violence-promoting extremism, according to the Swedish Security Service, manifests itself in three main violence-promoting ideologies: the autonomous movement, the White Power movement and Islamist

extremism. The organisation and scope of these three ideologies are described in more detail in Chapter 4. Skr. 2011/12:44

Researchers often use the concept of 'radicalisation'. This concept denotes the process whereby an individual goes from being non-violent to being in favour of violence. The concept of 'de-radicalisation' in this context describes the opposite process.

3.3 Relevant policy areas and target groups for the action plan

The work to prevent violence-promoting extremism affects many different policy areas. The importance of a broad-based approach to prevention is also underlined in the communication *National responsibility and international commitment - A national strategy to meet the threat of terrorism* (skr. 2007/08:64). The communication presents the Government's national strategy against terrorism. This strategy is currently being revised.

An important part of the strategy is the Government's systematic work on human rights and its work to combat discrimination, xenophobia and similar intolerance. Initiatives to ensure that all individuals can enjoy their human rights are essential if the work to counter anti-democratic tendencies and to prevent extremism is to be successful.

The work also affects youth policy. Many of the values that a person bears with them through life are formed during adolescence and it is also true that it is primarily young men who join violent extremist movements. Initiatives to strengthen democratic awareness and to stimulate democratic involvement should therefore be directed at young people. For these to be successful, it is important that young people are not seen simply as a target group. Some young people can also help to design the initiatives aimed at their contemporaries. One of the Government's youth policy objectives is that all young people shall have real access to influence. This means that they must be given the opportunity to participate and influence on equal terms with other groups in society (skr. 2009/10:53 *The Government's strategy for youth policy - focusing on their welfare and influence*).

Schools are the obvious place to reach young people. In accordance with the new Education Act (2010:800), which came into force in July 2011, schools have a clear task in the promotion of democratic values. Democratic and human rights shall pervade the education they provide. Education in these issues constitutes an important element in the creation of a social climate that is characterised by tolerance and that is resistant to extremism.

In addition, civil society is important in the fight against anti-democratic tendencies. In its bill, *A policy for civil society* (2009/10:55), the Government reiterates that civil society is a lynchpin of democracy. Civil society organisations offer people the opportunity to take part and get involved in order to influence their own lives or the society as a whole.

The municipality has considerable influence on people's everyday lives. Active participation from the municipalities and cooperation

between national agencies and local actors is crucial if the initiatives planned are to reach individuals in risk environments. Skr. 2011/12:44.

The Government's employment measures and their efforts to combat social exclusion are also important in order to counter the breeding grounds for extremism and to create the right conditions for a cohesive society.

Countering violence-promoting extremism is also a crime policy issue. Extremist issues fall within the police authorities' general crime prevention remit. Much of this work is described in the Government communication *National responsibility and international commitment - A national strategy to meet the threat of terrorism* (skr. 2007/08:64), which is currently being revised. The focus of this action plan, however, is not crime prevention in the traditional sense. The plan takes a more holistic approach in order to engage a larger part of society.

In conclusion, the work to prevent extremism is very much about cooperating and exchanging knowledge on the international level.

4 The need to safeguard and strengthen democracy against violence-promoting extremism

This chapter describes the need to safeguard and strengthen democracy based on a detailed review of violence-promoting extremism in Sweden, including its history, scope and organisation, and based on an assessment of its breeding grounds. The description is mainly based on the report from the Security Service and the National Council for Crime Prevention entitled *Violent political extremism* (Brå, 2009:15), which in turn is based on Security Service intelligence between 1999 and 2009 and qualitative interviews, as well as on the Security Service report *Violence-promoting Islamist extremism in Sweden* (Security Service, 2010), which is based on Security Service intelligence from 2009. Both reports include a detailed research study on extremism and radicalisation. The threat of terrorism against Sweden and Swedish interests is described in the communication *National responsibility and international commitment - A national strategy to meet the threat of terrorism* (skr. 2007/08:64). This strategy is currently being revised.

4.1 History and ideology of extremism

The ideational tradition of racial hatred - From National Socialism to white power

National socialist organisations emerged in Sweden during the 1920s and expanded rapidly in many parts of the country after the Nazis took power in Germany in the early 1930s. The Nazi movement's objective was to create a society based on principles of racialist ideology. The interests of the state, the nation and the race were more important than those of the individual. To create this society, individuals who, according to the

Nazis, belonged to inferior races, in particular the Jews, had to be annihilated. As is described in the official government report entitled *Organised crime, agitation against a national or ethnic group and agitation against homosexuals* (SOU 2000:88), traditional Nazism went underground after the holocaust and the Second World War and apart from a few minor extremist parties, such as the *Nordic National Party*, the movement was in steady decline. A new xenophobic movement emerged in the 1980s, however, influenced by the British extreme right-wing and the violent-minded skinhead culture. Due to the popularity of White Power music, this movement became very popular among young Swedish people. Sweden was a leading producer of White Power music in the mid-1990s and around 40 bands toured and played around the country (*White power music*, Brå 1999:10). White power ideology had its roots in Antisemitism and the notion of a “global Jewish conspiracy”. The movement also attacked homosexuals and those in power who advocated a society in which cultures, religions and individuals of varying ethnicity were mixed. A conspiratorial view of society was prominent and the justice system was viewed with suspicion. Ideologically speaking, the movement was also inspired by the American White Power movement, which claimed that immigration would lead to internal antagonism and ultimately an international race war.

At the beginning of the 1990s, new racist groups became well known among the general public after a series of well-publicised burglaries, bank robberies and violent attacks perpetrated by members of a network which became known in the media under the name *White Aryan Resistance* (*Vit Ariskt Motstånd - VAM*). The violence escalated and the number of hate crimes increased dramatically during the 1990s. According to the Security Service’s review, there was a particular increase in crimes committed by people with a connection to the White Power movement. Neo-Nazis were involved in several well-publicised acts of violence, including the murders of teenager John Hron in 1995 and the syndicalist Björn Söderberg in 1999 as well as the murder of two police officers in Malexander in 1999. From the beginning of the 1990s until 2000, the number of instances of agitation against a national or ethnic group reported to the police in Sweden rose from around 100 to over 800 a year. This rise depended both on an actual increase in this type of crime and on a greater propensity among the general public to report crime to the police (*Agitation against a national or ethnic group*, Brå 2001:7). During the 2000s, the number of hate crimes decreased, partly as a result of the most criminally active Neo-Nazis having been incarcerated, partly because the justice system devoted special attention to this form of crime (*Hate crime - a follow-up of measures implemented by the Swedish justice system*, Brå 2002:9).

In recent years, the White Power movement has toned down its Nazi ideology and its members have instead elected to call themselves nationalists or patriots. The anti-Semitic element has become less prominent and has in part been replaced by increasingly powerful anti-Muslim tendencies. The movement’s conspiratorial and anti-democratic message remains, however.

The autonomist movement consists of a network of smaller organised groups whose political struggle is primarily inspired by an ideational tradition based on Marxism, anarchism and syndicalism. An organised group of libertarian socialists and anarchists emerged in several European countries towards the end of the nineteenth century. Early on, however, the movement was divided up among those groups who pursued a political struggle within the confines of democracy and those who felt that the state was part of the class society against which they were fighting.

Political events during the 1960s, however, especially international anti-Vietnam war protests and the left-wing ideological orientation of several youth movements in Europe, gave the extreme left movement considerable impetus. This development provided some scope for extreme left-wing terrorism. In West Germany and Italy, organisations such as the *Red Army Faction* and the *Red Brigades* carried out terrorist attacks throughout the 1970s against banks, authorities, etc. In contrast to the trend towards violence in several parts of Europe, the extreme left movement in Sweden was generally non-violent, something which was made evident in the Security Service Commission's report on the Security Service's surveillance of autonomist movements (*The threat from the left*, SOU 2002:91).

According to the Security Service and the National Council for Crime Prevention, today's autonomist movements are only weakly associated with the left-wing extremist groups of the 1970s. The concept of "autonomism" itself is taken from the trade-union conflicts in Italy during the 1960s. It is a name sometimes used by the groups themselves to emphasise their independence. The violent extreme left-wing movement that is currently active in Sweden dates from the end of the 1980s. It has in part emerged in resistance to the White Power movement. Counter-demonstrations against extreme right-wing manifestations, e.g. in connection with anniversary of the death of King Charles XII on November 30, attracted a large number of activists and provided impetus for a more extensive extreme left-wing political struggle. Several single-issue movements have also emerged in the autonomist environment, including groups against environmental destruction, the sexualisation of public space and animal cruelty. Since the prevailing system and class society are seen to constitute a common cause of different types of social problems, these various groups do, however, act within a common ideological framework.

During the early 2000s, the autonomist movement was fuelled by a more extensive anti-globalisation movement. The large demonstrations in connection with international summits during the 2000s provided the autonomist movement with a platform for violent acts. Alongside its anti-globalisation stance, the autonomist movement also harbours clearly anti-American sentiments and strongly negative attitudes to Israel. In certain extreme cases, autonomists express anti-Semitic views, but the criticism of Israel stems mostly from the conflict in the Middle-East. The extreme left seeks subversive change in the prevailing social system. A conspiratorial view of society is central and representatives of the

authorities, such as police officers and civil servants working at the Swedish Migration Board and certain companies, are seen as upholders of the capitalist or Fascist social order and hence are legitimate targets for violence.

Violence in the name of religion

Islamism is a concept that denotes a political ideology rather than a religious orientation. The concept is hotly debated and accommodates a broad spectrum of ideologies. In its report on *Violence-promoting Islamist extremism*, the Security Service describes Islamism as denoting an approach where Islam is seen as an entire, self-contained social system. Society as a whole shall be characterised by a specific interpretation of Islam and this interpretation shall be the basis for society's legal, social and cultural systems. Certain factions of Islamism do not therefore recognise the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual and, for example, cannot accept equality between men and women. Among people and groups claiming to be Islamist, there are both those who operate within the democratic system and those who denounce secular political systems completely.

Extremist groups with an Islamist view of society have had a presence in several Muslim countries, but it was only after the revolution in Iran in 1977 that Islamism became a prominent political power. Islamist currents have often emerged in resistance to authoritarian and corrupt regimes that control several Muslim countries. The disparities between different Islamist factions are considerable, however, and several Islamist groups have elected to work within the parliamentary system.

The militant Islamist movement has its roots in the armed resistance to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1970s and 1980s. This struggle attracted activists from several different parts of the world and hence became an international issue. During the 1990s and 2000s, global terrorist networks such as al-Qaida have called on Muslims to take up arms to defend Islam, which, in their opinion, is constantly violated by the West and by authoritarian and corrupt regimes in a number of Muslim countries. The West's military presence in Afghanistan and Iraq and, above all, the political situation in Israel have galvanised violent Islamists the world over.

In recent years, radicalisation has gained a foothold among Islamist groups in Europe. A small number of violent Islamist extremists have also been operating in Sweden. According to the Security Service, these are individuals inspired by Islamist extremism via international contacts or through the Internet. The international furore over the cartoons of the prophet Mohammed and Sweden's military presence in Afghanistan have also contributed to Sweden now being considered a legitimate target by violent Islamist groups. The principal object of interest for violent Islamist groups is however developments in the rest of the world. Conflicts in countries such as Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan have led to an upswing in the membership of violent Islamist groups.

The White Power movement

The extreme right-wing movement is a sub-culture that motivates young people to commit hate crime, but which is currently too small to challenge the fundamental functions of our democratic system. Over the last ten years, the Security Service has identified 845 individuals who either have been or are active within the White Power movement and who have been suspected or found guilty of politically motivated crimes. The number of active members is stable and the Security Service estimate the number of criminally active white supremacists to be around 100. The group of individuals that is inspired by, or that is sporadically involved in, the White Power movement is considerably larger, however.

The violent extreme right movement is a male-dominated youth movement. Less than ten percent of its active members are women and these are responsible for less than two percent of White Power-related crime. Active members are also young. The average age of first offenders committing politically related crime within the white power movement is 21. After upper secondary school, most leave the movement and very few offenders are over the age of 25. The White Power movement is mostly a threat to private individuals, the most common crime victims being people with a foreign background, LGBT persons (lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transsexuals) and those with opposing political opinions. In some cases, journalists and school staff have been the victims of White Power-related crime. The most common crime is agitation against a national or ethnic group, which makes up about one third of suspected crimes perpetrated by active members of the White Power movement. Persons involved in the movement have been suspected of several violent crimes, including grievous bodily harm, manslaughter and murder. The White Power movement is the only extremist environment in Sweden in which murder has been committed. According to the National Council for Crime Prevention, the amount of White Power-related hate crime has decreased in recent years and in 2010, approximately one in nine reported hate crimes were White Power-related (*Hate crimes 2010*, Brå 2011:8).

The autonomist environment

The autonomist environment constitutes a platform for a limited number of young people who, based on an ideological objective, threaten and attack elected representatives, people in authority, business operators and political opponents. The autonomist movement currently has too few individuals within its ranks to be able to do serious harm or to change the democratic system. Between 1999 and 2009, the Security Service identified 564 criminally active individuals within the autonomist movement, 420 of whom were men and 144 were women. The average age of those active in the autonomist movement is low and the average age of a first offender committing a politically related crime is 20 years old. As in the White Power movement, most autonomist activists leave

the movement before they reach the age of 25. According to the Security Service, there are currently around 100 criminally active members of the autonomist movement, although a significantly larger number of individuals who do not commit criminal acts can be found within it. In a study of attitudes and values performed by the National Board for Youth Affairs (*Young people with attitude*), one percent of young people aged 16 to 29 say that they have participated in illegal political actions such as the illegal occupation of property or damaging public property (National Board for Youth Affairs publications 2007:11). According to the National Council for Crime Prevention, this means that around 16 000 young people have committed a politically related crime at some time or another.

In contrast to those perpetrated by white supremacists, crimes committed by autonomists are often planned. In particular, politicians from the Sweden Democrats Party have been subjected to threats or violence by autonomists (*A threat to elected representatives*, Swedish Security Service, 2008). Furthermore, the autonomist movement has both the intention and the capacity to disrupt public order and can thereby restrict the right of other people to exercise their constitutional rights and freedoms. Members of the autonomist movement have acted against and attacked both entrepreneurs and businesses.

The Islamist extremist movement

Members of the violent Islamist extremist movement can threaten private citizens in both Sweden and other countries, although seen as a whole, the movement is too limited in size to constitute a threat to democracy. According to data collected by the Security Service in 2009, around 200 people actively participate or support violent activities. The number of individuals in the movement is currently neither increasing nor decreasing. Even though several individuals have been radicalised in recent years, many have also left the movement or distanced themselves from violence.

Violent Islamist extremism is a male-dominated movement. The few women who can be found within it are not directly linked to security-threatening activities. The movement is, on the other hand, not a youth movement in contrast to the white supremacist or autonomist groups. Even though the majority of extremists who have been radicalised are young, between 15 and 30 years old, members don't tend to defect to the same extent as those in the White Power and autonomist movements when they get older. Most of them who are active in such circles are foreign-born or persons with at least one foreign parent. Some have been radicalised outside Sweden, but the majority have been enticed into violence inside Sweden. A small number of extremists are people who have converted to Islam.

Violent Islamism is not made up of just a few formal organisations. Individuals operate within various international networks and in Sweden, most of them are bonded by friendship or have other social ties. They do not, however, constitute a single coherent network that can act in a coordinated fashion and strive towards a single goal. Political events in

Sweden and in the world around may however influence the movement in the long term. Skr. 2011/12:44.

4.3 Violence-promoting extremism as a future challenge

The breeding grounds for extremism

A democratic and open society can never be entirely invulnerable to violence-promoting extremism. In different contexts and under different circumstances, individuals will be tempted to resort to violence in order to achieve social change. It is furthermore difficult to establish which factors give rise to political violence and will affect the long-term threat from violence-promoting extremism. Research reviews of extremism have been published in the report on violent political extremism by the Security Service and the National Council for Crime Prevention and in the Security Service's report on violence-promoting Islamist extremism. According to these reviews, opinion is split among researchers as to why certain individuals develop into violent extremists.

Issues concerning socioeconomic exclusion are mentioned when the driving forces of extremism are discussed. Circumstances such as perceived discrimination or unemployment can make individuals more prone to joining anti-democratic movements. Such factors can also affect people's trust in the democratic system. People who consider that their lives don't live up to the expectations and norms of society often feel frustrated. Collective feelings of powerlessness can be a breeding-ground for violence and cause individuals to give credence to dogmatic political solutions.

The research review carried out by the Security Service and the National Council for Crime Prevention shows, however, that the reasons why people develop into violent extremists is more complex than simply a feeling of social and economic injustice. The desire to resort to violence is instead described as an emotional driving-force that comes from within. The extremist environment is often a context that creates meaning for individuals with poor self-esteem. Membership in the group can satisfy a need for power or control, status, social interaction, friendship or identity and affiliation. Individuals who join extremist movements often come from conflict-ridden and socially weak homes, although research shows that many of them also come from well-educated and relatively high-income families.

Furthermore, the very social dynamic and social intercourse within extremist groups are key to individuals developing a propensity for violence. Leadership figures can also play a crucial role in attracting people into violent environments. Radicalisation is a process by which the individual is conditioned into taking on the group's world view and political norms. According to the Security Service and National Council for Crime Prevention, certain individuals may have developed an ideological conviction before they join the group while others are invigorated by a black-and-white, dogmatic world view as a result of their affinity to the group. In the same way, extremist environments can attract individuals who are prone to violence and who find an outlet for

their fascination for it by being part of the group. Other individuals build up an acceptance for violence as a result of their involvement in the group. According to the Security Service, the factors that influence an individual's decision to join a violent extremist group vary from person to person. Radicalisation is often, on the other hand, a similar socio-psychological process regardless of the ideological context - the actual ideological content being seldom of crucial significance.

Furthermore, there are disparities between different ideological environments as regards the social background of the individuals and their reasons for joining. These disparities are most obvious between the White Power movement and the autonomist movement. According to the report by the Security Service and National Council for Crime Prevention, young people who are involved in the White Power movement often have difficult conditions at home, a weak social safety net and poor self-esteem, while young autonomists are often from well-educated and relatively high-income families. There is a difference here in how society views these environments. Involvement in autonomist groups is not associated with the same stigma as membership of the White Power movement. Furthermore, the latter is made up of more rigid organisations, and social togetherness in these groups is often more important than the ideological message itself.

Individuals who join a violent Islamist extremist movement mostly have a Muslim background, although there is nothing to say that religiousness itself is significant. It is, rather, people with only a slight or newfound interest in religion who are attracted into violent environments. Since people who belong to the Muslim minority in Europe often feel discriminated against and economically marginalised, they often find it more difficult to feel involved in society. Islamist extremism ideology depicts a conflict between a western and a traditional social system and, as a sub-culture, the violent Islamist environment can create a feeling of belonging and meaning for individuals who feel excluded.

Whether socioeconomic factors affect a person's propensity to be radicalised into violent Islamism is a subject of hot debate, however. Research shows that the radicalisation process varies a great deal from one person to the next. A report submitted to the European Commission establishes that people who are guilty of violent Islamist acts come from a very wide variety of socioeconomic backgrounds and it is not uncommon for people who have been radicalised to be both well educated and high-income earners (*Radicalisation, Recruitment and the EU counter-radicalisation strategy*, Transnational Terrorism, Security and the Rule of Law, 2009). Ideas of global injustice and political circumstances have also been identified as the driving-forces for why individuals join violent Islamist extremist groups, although several research reports show that individuals who have been radicalised are often subjected directly to the circumstances that motivated them to commit political violence in the first place.

Well-functioning democracy offers the best protection against extremism. As long as people trust in the democratic system and feel that they can influence the decisions that affect their everyday lives, extremism will be confined to the outer fringes of society. In all fundamental respects, democracy is well established in Sweden. Internationally speaking, election turnout is high in Sweden and has increased in all elections held since 2002. In the 2010 general election, 84.6 percent of those eligible to vote did so. The high election turnout is also reflected in a substantial public interest in politics and confidence in the country's political institutions. According to measurements taken by the SOM Institute at Gothenburg University, the vast majority of the Swedish population has a high level of confidence in the government and the Riksdag as decision-making institutions (SOM Institute, 2010). The level of confidence has varied over the years and normally increases somewhat in an election year, but is not showing any tendency to fall.

In 2008, the market survey company Synovate was tasked by the Government to conduct a survey on attitudes and values regarding democracy and human rights. The survey showed that the democratic tradition is firmly and universally rooted in society. Almost all the respondents were of the opinion that people must have the opportunity to be involved in and influence decisions that affect their everyday lives and that people must follow the decision of the majority. Attitude surveys also show that there is no significant support for alternative forms of governance such as giving power to a strong leader or to a team of non-elected technocrats. According to the *World Value Survey*, Sweden is one of the countries of the world where there is least support for a political system with a strong leader or with a team of technocrats (*Democracy and human rights - Swedish people's knowledge and values*, National Board for Youth Affairs publications 2008:4). These opinions reflect a political tradition in which the ruling power has chosen to create broad consensus when taking difficult political decisions and attempted to prevent conflicts occurring between different interests in society.

There are however considerable disparities in democratic participation and in attitudes to democracy among different groups in society. These discrepancies are particularly obvious between young and older people. Election turnout has traditionally been low among first-time voters (*Election turn-out survey*, Statistics Sweden, 2010). Young people vote less than older people in general elections, although in comparison with previous generations, young people are now more interested in politics. Politically aware consumption has increased among young people, where the impact of the Internet has led to more political activities taking place online. (*Focus 10 – an analysis of young people's influence*, National Board for Youth Affairs publications 2010:10).

Young people do not constitute a homogenous group of voters. There are some youth groups that have a very low election turnout and that have less trust in democracy than others. This is particularly true of young men in rural municipalities and foreign-born young men, whose election turnout is significantly lower than the rest of the population.

Election turnout has also risen among these groups in the last two elections, however.

Young people generally have lower confidence in the political institutions than the rest of the population. According to an analysis of young people's influence performed by the National Board for Youth Affairs, 44 percent of 16-25 year-olds have a lack of confidence in the government and the Riksdag (National Board for Youth Affairs publications 2010:10). Confidence is especially low among young people living in rural areas and smaller urban areas, where only 13 percent say that they have considerable or quite considerable confidence in the Riksdag and the government. About 75 percent of 16-25 year-olds reject a political system with a strong leader. There are differences between youth groups even when it comes to this attitude, however. Readiness to accept being governed by a strong leader is greater among young men than among young women. This is also true of foreign-born young people and young people whose parents are unemployed or on sickness benefit, or who say that they are dissatisfied with their family situation. More than 30 percent of the young people in these groups believe that a political system with a strong leader is a good or rather good idea. Individuals in these youth groups are targets for all forms of extremism.

Acceptance for ideological violence and crime

The resistance to movements that use anti-democratic methods is strong in Swedish society. According to Synovate's survey on attitudes and values regarding democracy and human rights, almost nine out of ten think that violent demonstrations that threaten public order should be banned. At the same time, however, there is an understanding for the freedom of assembly and more than seven out of ten believe that people with extreme views must have the right to demonstrate. The number of young people who believe that violent demonstrations should be always permitted is extremely limited and only two percent think that it is right to use basically any method at all to get one's way.

Younger people have slightly more acceptance for breaking the law to achieve political objectives. According to the National Board for Youth Affairs' attitudes and values study, nearly eight out of ten 16-29 year-olds and nine out of ten over-34 year-olds believe that it is morally wrong to resort to violence for political purposes (National Board for Youth Affairs publications 2007:11). Even if the survey shows that only a few individuals accept the use of violence for political purposes, the 20 percent who don't believe it is morally wrong should still be seen as a high percentage. Furthermore, every fourth young person under the age of 25 says that he or she is prepared to take part in unlawful demonstrations. Illegal political actions, such as squatting, defacing public buildings with slogans and damaging private or public property in protest, are only supported by a small group. The survey showed that six percent might contemplate carrying out such actions. Only one percent on the other hand stated that they had actually squatted or damaged property.

Even if there is little public acceptance for politically motivated crime, this survey shows that there is a small group of individuals who are willing to resort to violence for political purposes and that a high proportion of these have taken part in illegal actions. According to the National Board for Youth Affairs survey, the values and attitudes of individuals affect their propensity to use violence and perform illegal actions. Those people who are inclined to take part in illegal political actions take a considerable interest in society and want to influence its development, but on the other hand have little confidence in its institutions. These people are very much to the left on the political spectrum and their notion of freedom and codetermination is more important than social stability and hierarchy.

Attitudes to and respect for diversity

Swedish society has traditionally been diverse with respect to language use and culture. Diversity in Swedish society has increased dramatically as a result of large-scale immigration in recent decades. According to Statistics Sweden, 15 percent of the Swedish population were foreign-born in 2010. This development has left Sweden well equipped in a world of increasing globalisation.

As diversity has increased, however, society has become increasingly segregated. Many people live in contexts where they exclusively meet others with the same background. Issues that concern ethnic groups, culture or religion, are becoming increasingly important. With this in mind, the multicultural society constitutes a challenge for social cohesion. Globalisation has also given rise to a feeling of insecurity among certain groups in society, a feeling that political movements, looking to set groups against each other, have been able to utilise. Parties with a fundamentally xenophobic message have plenty of leeway in Sweden, but there is nothing to suggest that this leeway is on the increase. According to a survey that was performed every year between 1999 and 2007 by the Swedish Integration Board, the proportion of people who said that they might contemplate voting for a party looking to restrict the rights of migrants fell from 29 percent in 1999 to 23.6 percent in 2007 (*The Integration Barometer*, Swedish Integration Board 2007).

There is nothing to suggest that intolerant attitudes are on the increase in Sweden. For example, the SOM Institute's annual surveys show how Swedish opinion has become significantly less negative to migrants and to the presence of people from other countries (SOM Institute 2010).

Intolerant and xenophobic attitudes are not particularly widespread among young people in general either. Indeed, young people tend to have a more tolerant attitude to immigration than older people, which may reflect the fact that younger people have grown up in a society characterised by diversity. Acceptance of a generous refugee policy has also increased among young people. According to the National Board for Youth Affairs study *Young people with attitude*, 70 percent felt that Sweden should receive fewer migrants in 1993, while only 40 percent of

young people agreed with this opinion in 2007 (National Board for Youth Affairs publications 2007:11).

There are, however, major differences in attitudes between different population groups in society. Surveys show that people with a low income and a low level of education often express xenophobic attitudes. Since 2005, Uppsala University has compiled the 'Diversity Barometer'. The 2011 Barometer shows that a majority of the Swedish population have had a positive experience of their close contact and cooperation with persons with an migrant background and are of the opinion that diversity has enriched Swedish culture. Low-educated individuals are generally more negative as are those living in smaller towns and rural areas. About five percent of the population has an extremely negative attitude towards migrants. This group can constitute a breeding-ground for movements harbouring extreme or xenophobic attitudes.

Among Sweden's young people, however, there are some groups that express intensely intolerant opinions. In 2010, the Living History Forum conducted a survey on tolerance levels among upper secondary school students (Living History Forum, Report series 1:2010). The survey showed that about 20 percent of the students harboured clearly intolerant opinions on homosexuals, Jews, Muslims, the Roma and migrants. Those with negative attitudes were primarily boys, students on vocationally oriented programmes and students with low-educated parents. The survey also ascertained that intolerance varied depending on the student's cultural background. Islamophobia is particularly widespread among boys with a Swedish or Christian background, while Antisemitism dominates strongly among boys with a Muslim background.

Issues of intolerance have become increasingly complex and cannot be considered merely in terms of how the majority population relates to minorities. Minority groups in Sweden are affected by and are involved in international conflicts and political events that take place in their countries of origin. Global conflicts are hence having an ever-greater impact on Swedish society. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights has, for example, shown that the increased focus on counter-terrorism after the September 11 attacks in 2001 has led to Muslims in general being perceived as violent (*Perception and Discrimination*, FRA 2006). The linking together of Islam, fanaticism and terrorism has generated negative prejudices against Muslims in general and the notion that Islam is unable to adapt to the secular democratic tradition of the West has gained ground in certain groups. These prejudices can fuel extreme right-wing groups as well as incite discrimination and harassment.

Furthermore, the conflict between Israel and Palestine has led to an increase in anti-Semitic attitudes in Sweden. In a report from 2010, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has shown that people of Jewish origin are increasingly seen as representatives of Israel's policies and that anti-Zionism is often equated with Antisemitism. (*Report of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chair-in-Office on Combating Anti-Semitism*, OSCE, 2010). According to the Living History Forum's study on attitudes among upper secondary school students, Antisemitism is especially well established among young people with a Muslim background. A full 55 percent of upper

secondary school students with a Muslim background had a negative attitude towards Jews and only eight percent were positively disposed to them. Among students with no foreign background, 15 percent had a negative attitude while 32 percent expressed themselves positively.

Skr. 2011/12:44.

The abovementioned tendencies towards polarisation have only marginally affected society. Hate crime, which can in part be seen as a concrete measure of tolerance in society, has remained constant in recent years. In 2010, 5 140 crimes that were reported to the police were identified as hate crimes, which was less than the year before (Brå 2011:8). The distribution among different categories of reported hate crimes is in line with the distribution of hate crimes which people say they have been the victim of in the National Crime Survey (Brå 2011:1).

5 The Government's efforts to strengthen democracy in general

The Government is taking several different measures aimed at strengthening democracy in the longer term and at preventing anti-democratic tendencies and intolerant attitudes. The following chapter presents an overview of the work done in recent years to strengthen democracy.

5.1 Initiatives to increase election turnout and to enhance democratic awareness

The Government's democracy policy objective is to create a vigorous democracy in which citizens have more influence and in which human rights are respected (Government Bill 2011/12:1). A vigorous democracy is one in which all individuals have the opportunity to influence decisions that affect their everyday lives. The Government is therefore striving to bring citizens closer to political decision-making by widening the scope for active participation and accountability and by creating good social cohesion, where the individual's right to self-determination is not violated by other individuals.

Between 2000 and 2006, the Government implemented a number of measures to increase election turnout. These were evaluated and the evaluations were compiled in a report produced by the Committee on the Constitution entitled *Democracy policy measures - initiatives to increase election turnout - a knowledge review* (2008/09:RFR15) The report shows that, although election turnout can be positively influenced, there is no clear evidence to suggest that the Government's democracy-promoting initiatives have in fact increased it. In light of these conclusions and an actual increase in turnout, the Government did not take any wider initiatives to promote democracy prior to the election in 2010.

Several specific measures have however been carried out to stimulate active participation on the local level. In cooperation with the Swedish

Association of Local Authorities and Regions, IT tools have been developed that can improve the dialogue between citizens and the authorities and make the decision-making process more transparent and accessible. Several democracy-promoting initiatives have also been implemented on the local level and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions is running a number of projects to support municipalities and county councils in their efforts to improve local democracy.

The Government has also highlighted the need to take measures to improve awareness of the rules of democracy and of human rights. In 2008, the Government therefore began an initiative to stimulate a dialogue on the fundamental values of society based on the principles of human rights and democracy. The overall focus of this initiative was presented in the Government's communication *A dialogue on the fundamental values of society* (skr. 2009/10:106). The aim was to strengthen social cohesion in society. The work took civil society organisations as its starting-point and the principal target group was young people.

In 2011, the Government tasked the National Board for Youth Affairs to distribute funding to civil society organisations whose activities are aimed at enhancing the democratic values of young people, preventing them from developing anti-democratic tendencies and from being recruited to anti-democratic movements. Funding has also been allocated to civil society organisations that run educational programmes in democracy and leadership for young people who can serve as model examples in the local community.

5.2 Democracy-promoting initiatives in civil society

Civil society organisations offer people the chance to take part and be involved so that they can influence both their own lives and society at large. In its bill *A policy for civil society* (Government Bill 2009/10:55), the Government states that civil society is one of the lynchpins of democracy. Being active in a club or association can help an individual's personal development and enhance their understanding of democracy. Both the report produced by the Security Service and the National Council for Crime Prevention on violent political extremism and the Security Service's report on violence-promoting Islamist extremism highlight the value of activities in civil society that aim to promote involvement, meetings, dialogue and participation among young people. By providing a context in which young people can get involved in issues they find interesting, it is possible to prevent not just radicalisation and violence-promoting extremism but also crime in general.

Almost 100 national youth organisations receive state support every year and in 2011, the Government set aside about SEK 235 million (EUR 26.7 million) for this purpose. Since 2010, the Government has also financed a pilot scheme with 'participation guides' whose task is to encourage local residents, particularly young people and women, in areas where there is less participation in activities run by various civil society organisations. As part of the implementation of the Policy for civil

society, a joint forum was set up to promote dialogue between the Government and the relevant organisations on the conditions for civil society, in part as a component of democracy and the role it plays in promoting participation in democracy. Within the framework of this forum, the Government has initiated a discussion on ways of further increasing participation in civil society.

The Swedish Inheritance Fund allocates funding to civil society every year. In 2010, a total of SEK 211 million (EUR 24 million) was allocated to various youth projects and SEK 97 million (EUR 11 million) went to projects aimed at promoting democracy and participation. In 2012, projects aimed at preventing young people from developing anti-democratic behaviour or from joining anti-democratic groups will receive special attention as regards the Inheritance Fund's three target groups of children, young people and persons with disabilities.

The Government presented the direction of its future youth policy work within the framework of the policy's existing objectives in its communication *A youth policy strategy* (skr. 2009/10:53). The strategy describes the starting-points for the youth policy and sets down a number of challenges that are crucial if the policy objectives are to be achieved. The communication also presents an action programme of measures within the five main areas of the youth policy, including the area of influence and participation. A large number of activities to help young people living in urban areas which are characterised by widespread social exclusion are being implemented as part of national and local support programmes. Promoting influence among young people is one of the overarching objectives of Swedish youth policy and also one of the joint goals of EU youth policy cooperation. It is not just a question of young people's right to take part in decisions that affect their daily lives but it is also important to make use of their knowledge, opinions and experience as a resource in democratic processes.

Sports policy is a special component in the Policy for civil society. The bill *State support to sports* (Government Bill 2008/09:126) states that the state shall support a free and independent sports movements based on voluntary involvement that offers a wide range of activities, promotes sound ethics, creates equal conditions for girls and boys, women and men, actively promotes integration and encourages democratic development and participation. The democratic aspects of sport find expression in the real opportunities that members actually have to influence. The Swedish Sports Confederation and the SISU Sports Education Organisation are working together to create a common set of fundamental values for the entire sports movement. These fundamental values include: democracy within the association; participation and the right of all individuals to take part based on their own prerequisites, regardless of their nationality, ethnic background, religion, age, sex or sexual orientation or physical and mental preconditions. In accordance with its own programme of ideas, the sports movement shall adhere to the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The SISU Sports Education Organisation is also implementing a special initiative on issues surrounding fundamental values in sport.

Part of civil society that has become increasingly significant in recent years is faith communities. Allowing different faiths that uphold our democratic system and promote its development good opportunities to make themselves heard is significant for Swedish democracy. State support to stable and robust faith communities who operate in accordance with the fundamental values of democracy is allocated every year by the Swedish Commission for Government Support to Faith Communities. In 2010, a total of SEK 50 million (EUR 5.7 million) was allocated to 40 faith communities. The Commission will also serve as a dialogue forum for faith communities on issues relating to values, respect and tolerance.

5.3 Promoting democracy in schools

Schools play a central role and have a clear task to perform as regards heightening awareness and understanding for democratic principles among young people. A new *Education Act* (2010:800) came into force on 1 July 2011 and a new compulsory school curriculum (Lgr 11) has been in force since the start of the autumn term. In accordance with the new act and curriculum, education shall convey and firmly establish respect for human rights and fundamental democratic values on which Swedish society is built, including the sanctity of human life, individual freedom and integrity, the equal worth of all people, equality between men and women and solidarity with the weak and vulnerable. Schools shall also be non-discriminatory of differences in opinion and encourage such differences to be aired. In the autumn of 2011, the Government adopted a new upper secondary school curriculum, in which the wording on democracy and human rights has been made even clearer than the previous curriculum. The upper secondary school curriculum is basically the same as the compulsory school curriculum.

Several of the objectives defined in the compulsory school curriculum also have a direct bearing on democracy. Schools shall, for example, be responsible for ensuring that every student leaves equipped with knowledge of society's laws and norms, human rights and democratic values both at school and in society as a whole. The objective of the education system is for all students to be knowledgeable about the principles of democracy and to develop their capacity to work in democratic forms. The curriculum also states that school principals shall ensure that the school staff are knowledgeable about the various international agreements which Sweden has undertaken to observe in its education system.

Since 2009, the National Agency for Education has had a government assignment to promote, strengthen and disseminate knowledge about the fundamental values of Sweden's education system. The Agency's task also includes the implementation of a follow-up study on the work done in schools to promote fundamental values, the development of tailored support material which schools can use in this work and the production of special support material on discrimination and degrading treatment.

The Government has initiated a project to combat discrimination and degrading treatment in schools. Furthermore, the National Agency for

Education was tasked by the Government to evaluate the effects of existing anti-bullying methods and to design an educational programme on research-based action programmes against bullying. The aim has been to reduce bullying in schools by disseminating knowledge about preventive methods that are both evidence-based and quality-assured. A total of SEK 45 million (EUR 5.1 million) was set aside for this task between 2007 and 2011. The Government has announced a further SEK 40 million (EUR 4.5 million) for renewed initiatives against degrading treatment in 2011-2014.

Between 2008 and 2010, the Riksdag set aside SEK 110 million (EUR 12.5 million) to improve gender equality in schools. The Delegation for Gender Equality in Education (ToR. 2008:75) was appointed to examine the issue and to propose measures on how to develop long-term gender equality work. Furthermore, the National Agency for Education has been tasked to implement measures to promote gender equality in education by providing in-service training on gender and academic success, honour issues and sex and personal relationships.

5.4 Protection of human rights and efforts to combat discrimination, xenophobia and similar forms of intolerance

A key part of the work to uphold the democratic system is to ensure human rights are respected. The Government's long-term objective is to safeguard total respect for human rights. Promoting a society in which all individuals enjoy human rights without discrimination will neutralise the breeding grounds for extremism and intolerance. In March 2006 and as part of these efforts, the Government adopted a national action plan for human rights for the period 2006-2009 (skr. 2005/06:95). This action plan, which contained a number of measures, has been evaluated by a special investigator (ToR. 2009:118). The investigator submitted the report *Coherent, well-considered and sustainable? An evaluation of the Government's national action plan for human rights 2006-2009* (SOU 2011:29) in April 2011.

As set out in the national action plan, the Delegation for Human Rights in Sweden was established to support long-term efforts to safeguard total respect for human rights (ToR. 2006:27). The Delegation has submitted its final report *New structure for the protection of human rights* (SOU 2010:70). The report, which has been circulated for comments, contains several proposals aimed at strengthening protection for human rights. The proposals in both the abovementioned reports are currently under discussion in the Swedish Government Offices.

Broad consultation is also taking place with various actors in society to identify flaws in the work on human rights. The Government has already announced that it intends to come back to the Riksdag before the end of the current mandate period regarding how future systematic work to promote human rights in Sweden is to be implemented. The Government intends to submit a communication on this issue to the Riksdag later in 2012.

According to the Security Service's report on violence-promoting Islamist extremism, individuals who feel discriminated against can be motivated to join a violent sub-culture. Discrimination, xenophobia and similar forms of intolerance ultimately constitute a challenge for those values upon which a democracy rests. Work to combat discrimination, xenophobia and similar intolerance is therefore a priority area for the Government. The Discrimination Act (2008:567) came into force on 1 January 2009. Under the act, the number of grounds for discrimination has been increased and protection against discrimination has been extended to new sectors of society. On the same day that the new act came into force, a new supervisory agency, the Office of the Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination, was established. In connection with the establishment of this new agency, the previous four ombudsmen against discrimination were abolished. The Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination has been given better tools than previous ombudsmen to take action against those who do not fulfil their obligations under the Discrimination Act.

The Government is also taking other measures to counter discrimination and to prevent xenophobia and other forms of intolerance. Government support is being disbursed, both to civil society organisations that work to counter discrimination, racism and similar forms of intolerance, and to organisations in aid of LGBT persons and persons with a cross-gender identity and expression.

In May 2011, the Government appointed a special investigator whose task was to propose how to make the work against xenophobia and similar forms of intolerance more effective. The investigator is due to report to the Government no later than 26 October 2012 (ToR. 2011:39).

5.5 Culture as part of the democratic system

Culture is a central part of the democratic system in that it provides a free and creative arena for expression and opinion-building. In its bill *Time for culture* (Government Bill 2009/10:3), the Government points out that an active culture policy provides good conditions for robust democracy. Democracy is promoted when many different experiences, thoughts and stories are told and reflected in a multifaceted range of cultural activities. Culture and art encompass many of the values and qualities associated with a good society, e.g. freedom of expression, creativity, humanism, diversity and openness. The arts can and do contribute to the questioning and problematisation of ingrained opinions and thought patterns.

Public cultural institutions and the media play an important role as a forum and support for public debate and freedom of expression. The Government has highlighted institutions such as the Living History Forum and the Swedish National Museums of World Culture as important resources in the efforts to promote intercultural exchange, democracy and human rights.

The task of the Living History Forum is to be a national meeting-place to promote work on democracy, tolerance and human rights using the Holocaust as its starting-point. The Agency has been given the specific task of informing about the Holocaust and the crimes against humanity

committed in the name of Communism and operate on the basis that it is possible to learn lessons from history to combat and prevent intolerance. By organising exhibitions and seminars, producing information material and offering in-service training for teachers, the Living History Forum disseminates knowledge and creates dialogue. It has also developed different types of educational material and working methods for use in schools.

The Swedish National Museums of World Culture have the task of exhibiting and bringing to life cultures, especially those originating from outside Sweden. The Agency is to document and shed light on both the manifestations and conditions of different cultures as well as cultural meetings and cultural variation, historically and in present-day society, nationally and internationally. The Agency works actively to provide perspectives that help people to refresh and deepen their view of the world in an evermore internationalised global environment. The objective is to contribute to social development in which gender equality, respect and tolerance are enshrined and where diversity is utilised as a force for good.

5.6 Initiatives to reduce exclusion among young people and foreign-born individuals

Exclusion and poor integration are factors that can affect the likelihood of a person being radicalised. Young people who feel excluded and alienated in relation to the surrounding society can be easily enticed into violent sub-cultures. The feeling of not taking part in society can lead to young people looking to find affinity in gang cultures that express resistance to the established norms of society in one way or another. Exclusion and unemployment are particular common among young people and foreign-born individuals. A project aimed at enabling young people and newly arrived migrants in particular to establish themselves on the labour market can therefore help to create a cohesive society.

The Government has implemented special employment policy measures to reduce youth unemployment. Since the beginning of January 2010, the Government has added more activities to its Youth Work Guarantee scheme. The purpose is to offer young people special initiatives at an early stage of their unemployment so that they can find employment or start an educational/training programme within mainstream education as quickly as possible. In 2009, an average of 35 000 people participated in the Youth Work Guarantee scheme. Thirty-seven percent of these were women and sixty-three percent were men. Fifty percent of the participants found employment within 30 days of leaving the scheme and 17 percent started an educational/training programme within the same period.

Taking the current economic crisis into account, the Government has invested SEK 100 million (EUR 11.4 million) in 2010 to create more summer jobs for school students in municipalities, county councils and voluntary associations. To get more long-term unemployed people back into work, the Government has introduced what it terms 'Fresh Start Jobs', which are a universal initiative aimed at groups who have been

away from the labour market for one reason or another. A person between the age of 20 and 26 and who has been unemployed for six months qualifies for a Fresh Start Job and any employer offering one will receive financial compensation equal to the amount he or she would normally pay in social security contributions for the employee.

In order to help foreign-born individuals establish themselves better on the labour market, the Government has implemented radical reforms to integration policy. It has set out the direction of its integration policy over the next few years in the communication *Empowerment against exclusion - the Government's strategy for integration* (skr. 2008/09:24). This communication presents initiatives aimed at a more effective system of measures to improve the reception and induction of new arrivals and an initiative to put more of them in work and encourage more of them to become self-employed. A new reform to speed up the establishment of newly arrived migrants on the labour market and in society (Government Bill 2009/10:60) came into force on 1 December 2010. The reform covers refugees, others who have been granted residence and who are in need of protection and their close family members, all aged between 20 and 64 years old. New arrivals aged 18-19 are also included if they don't have any parents in Sweden. Faster establishment is to be achieved by increasing the incentive both to start work and to participate actively in vocational initiatives. An effective establishment chain is created as a result of clearer accountability between different actors. The establishment reform gives the Swedish Public Employment Service a coordinating responsibility for establishment initiatives and instructs it to draw up an establishment plan with new arrivals to help them establish themselves more quickly.

New arrivals who have an establishment plan are to take part in social orientation courses. This social orientation is to provide a basic understanding of Swedish society and a basis for learning more. The objective is for the participants to learn about human rights and fundamental democratic values, other rights and obligations, about how society is organised and about practical everyday life in Sweden.

According to the Security Service report on violence-promoting Islamist extremism, violent ideological environments tend to emerge in areas where social exclusion is widespread. The Government has signed local development agreements with 21 municipalities relating to 38 inner city areas where social exclusion is widespread. These agreements apply to the period 2008-2011 and provide a framework for cooperation with the municipalities in order to reduce exclusion in the inner city areas concerned. Municipalities that have signed local development agreements to stimulate dialogue on fundamental social values in these inner city areas are also involved in these urban development efforts.

6 Ongoing work to prevent violence-promoting extremism Skr. 2011/12:44.

The following chapter presents examples of the work being done to prevent violence-promoting extremism. This is cross-sector work and involves several government ministries. The aim of the presentation is not to give a comprehensive description of the work but to provide an overview of what being done by the Government, central agencies, municipalities and civil society organisations. Much of the preventive work is currently being implemented by the Swedish Police and the Swedish Security Service. The challenge for the future is to involve other sectors of society that have an important part to play in prevention work.

6.1 Preventing violence-promoting extremism

Work being done by the Police

The Police have a central role in preventing extremism. The fact that the Police work closely with local communities makes it easier for them to identify young people who risk being drawn into violent ideological environments and hence to implement measures to prevent individuals being recruited into such groups.

The National Police Board has initiated a project aimed at increasing knowledge and improving working methods to facilitate the discovery of violent radicalisation. The project is in part being implemented within the framework of an EU-funded initiative involving eleven EU Member States - *Community Policing Preventing Radicalisation & Terrorism* (COPPPRA). In the first phase of the project, which was completed in 2010, a methodology and an educational programme have been developed. In the second phase, which started in 2011, the educational programme is being implemented.

The police authorities in the counties of Stockholm, Västra Götaland and Skåne have established special 'police liaison officers', as a link between police officials and those who arrange different types of rallies and demonstrations. The basic aim of the project is to protect people's legal right to demonstrate. The liaison police officers distribute information between police officers and groups who are organising demonstrations and other manifestations of opinion. These groups are more often than not extreme right or autonomist. The liaison officers are also in contact with groups that are themselves non-violent, but are at risk of being attacked by other groups. The purpose of these liaison officers is to avoid misunderstandings when rallies and demonstrations take place and to create a joint strategy for how they are to be policed in order to avoid crime and public disorder. They cooperate with municipalities, the social services, community workers, parents' associations, local transport companies and business operators whose businesses are close to where the demonstration or rally is to take place.

The police authorities are also taking special measures to combat hate crime. Within the Stockholm County Police, the work to combat hate

crime is coordinated by a special Hate Crime Unit. This unit trains staff in how to deal with crime victims and provides support when alleged hate crimes are being investigated with the aim of increasing the number of indictments for hate-motivated crimes. The unit also cooperates with various other organisations, interest groups, researchers and authorities.

The Security Service is responsible for preventing crimes that threaten national security and for counter-terrorism. They work to uncover, combat and prevent activities that, using violence or threats, aim to change the democratic system of government or to influence political decisions, the implementation of such decisions or free public debate. The work done by the Security Service to prevent violence-promoting extremism is described in the Government's communication *National responsibility and international commitment - A national strategy to meet the threat of terrorism* (skr. 2007/08:64). This strategy is currently being revised.

Work on the local level

Violent extremist environments can emerge on the local level for different reasons. Individuals with strong leadership qualities can attract followers and establish local networks or groups. Conflicts between different extremist groups can result in a larger number of individuals getting involved. White Power environments have, in several cases, gained a foothold in smaller, more isolated communities whereas autonomist groups often emerge as a counter-reaction to right-wing extremism. Violent Islamist networks are principally concentrated in the big cities.

In 2010 and in cooperation with the Swedish Government Offices, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions compiled a compendium of local examples of how different actors have countered and prevented violent political extremism (*Local initiatives to combat violence-promoting extremism*, Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, 2010). This publication highlights a number of cases where municipalities have cooperated with local actors in projects aimed at improving the way society deals with political extremism. The publication is to serve as a basis for discussion and the exchange of experiences and to provide concrete examples of local projects.

The compendium identifies a number of success factors that are common to the examples presented. All the municipalities achieved success by taking advantage of the commitment and competence of different actors and by utilising existing resources in the municipality. Cooperation among different actors in the municipality was also a crucial success factor, especially between the police, social services, schools and recreation leaders.

In 2011, the Swedish Government Offices arranged a conference on the prevention of violence-promoting extremism. The conference was held in cooperation with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions and intended to introduce primarily authorities and actors on the local level to issues concerning violence-promoting extremism and how to prevent it.

Important work on how to prevent people from becoming violent extremists and how to support people who want to leave such environments is being done by civil society organisations. A number of organisations and networks have been established in order to prevent violence-promoting extremism.

The organisation EXIT, which is part of the KFUM Söder Fryshuset Foundation, has been conducting activities to support defectors from the Nazi movement. According to an evaluation performed by the National Board for Youth Affairs in 2010, EXIT has been reasonably successful, partly because the organisation is run chiefly by people who have previously been active within the White Power movement (*Supporting defectors - analysis and proposals by the National Board for Youth Affairs on how society can support young defectors*, National Board for Youth Affairs publications 2010:11). EXIT also works with counsellors who offer professional support to defectors and to the parents of people involved in the movement. This work includes the training of teachers and community workers, giving lectures in schools and consultancy work aimed at municipalities in which right-wing extremism occurs. EXIT's activities are partly financed by state subsidies that are distributed to counter racism and other forms of intolerance.

EXIT is the only organisation in Sweden that offers such support to defectors, although activities aimed at helping individuals to leave White Power environments have also been conducted by the Centre for Crime Prevention in the western county of Värmland. This is a voluntary association created as a counter-reaction to the White Power movement that established itself in Värmland during the 1990s. The Centre has brought together actors in the education system, police, the Social Insurance Administration, the Public Employment Service, social services and after-school care services in the fight against political extremism. Activities have focused on people in the White Power movement and on people in the risk zone for being recruited to other destructive groups.

Networks of parents whose children have joined Nazi groups have also been established in several other parts of the country. In rural towns like Klippan and Nora, parent networks have played a part in young people choosing to leave right-wing extremist environments. In addition, there are several examples of civil society organisations that conduct activities to support individuals who want to leave other destructive environments. An organisation called Passus has, for example, been formed at the Fryshuset youth centre in Stockholm to help individuals who want to leave criminal gangs. Together with EXIT, Passus is part of the Centre for Information on Destructive Sub-cultures (CIDES) that tries to take a holistic approach to issues concerning the defection from and recruitment to destructive environments.

The organisation Criminals Return Into Society (KRIS) also works to support individuals who want to leave a criminal lifestyle behind them. This organisation is run by people with criminal backgrounds who use their experience to help people to rebuild their self-esteem, build up social networks and readapt to society. In some cases, KRIS has also

worked with people who want to leave right-wing extremist groups. There is, however, no organisation in Sweden that is specifically oriented towards preventing individuals from joining violent autonomist or Islamist movements or that works to support people who want to leave such movements.

International cooperation

Globalisation, increasing migration and the development of information technology have all contributed to extremism becoming a global phenomenon. Circumstances that arise as a result of national or regional conflicts often become significant on a global level and can affect people's propensity to join violent ideological networks and provide justification for acts of violence. The work to prevent violence-promoting extremism cannot therefore be limited to national efforts. Ideologically motivated violence tends to take place in weak states that have inefficient justice systems, a high level of corruption, a lack of protection for human rights and widespread poverty. These factors as well as existing and unsolved conflicts within the country or the region can provide a breeding-ground for ideological violence.

By helping to reduce poverty, Swedish development cooperation can also contribute to nullifying factors that lead to extremism. The breeding grounds for extremism can be countered as a result of democracy-promoting development cooperation and other cooperation aimed at strengthening education systems, justice systems and respect for human rights in weak states. Furthermore, cooperation that stimulates employment and gives women and men living in poverty the chance to take part in, contribute to and benefit from growth is an important part of the long-term efforts to counter extremism.

It is important for Sweden to learn from the work being done to prevent extremism in other countries at the same time as Sweden contributes to disseminating the experience and knowledge it gains from the work done on the national level. This is why Sweden participates in several international initiatives. One such initiative is the network to enhance awareness of extremism and radicalisation established by the European Commission in September 2011 (Radicalisation Awareness Network). The network is to constitute a platform for the exchange of knowledge and experience within the EU. A secretariat will be set up under the Commission to coordinate and create forms of cooperation within the network and to support local anti-extremism efforts.

6.2 Countering threats and violence against elected representatives and persons in authority

The work to strengthen the resilience of democracy includes measures that are implemented to counter threats and violence against elected representatives and persons in authority. In 2004, the Government appointed a committee and tasked it to, among other things, examine the extent of crime committed against elected representatives. In its report,

the Committee stated that the harassment of elected representatives occurred on a wide scale (Threats against politicians, SOU 2006:46). In 2008, the Security Service presented a report into threats against and harassment of elected representatives and persons in authority (*Threats to elected representatives*, Security Service, 2008). The report points out that threats to and harassment of elected representatives and persons in authority are common. In a study on violent political extremism, the National Council for Crime Prevention and the Security Service also state that elected representatives and persons in authority are often subjected to threats and violence from autonomists.

In recent years, the Government has taken several measures to strengthen the protection of elected representatives. On 1 July 2010, the Act (2010:294) on Security Checks at Public Municipal and County Council Meetings came into force, according to which municipalities and county councils may arrange security checks at their public meetings. From the beginning of 2011, the National Council for Crime Prevention has had the task of developing methods of performing periodically recurring surveys on the scope and development of threats and violence against elected representatives.

6.3 Combating criminal gangs and hooliganism

Different destructive sub-cultures demonstrate several similarities. In many respects, the social mechanisms that lead young people in particular to join criminal networks are similar to the mechanisms that cause the same young people to become violent extremists. Several crime prevention measures can also therefore help to prevent young people from being drawn towards violent extremist environments.

In recent years, the Police have prioritised efforts to combat youth criminality. An awareness of young people's perspective is to underpin the work and the Police must take a long-term approach in order to strengthen public confidence in the police force. In March 2010, the Commission Against Criminal Groups submitted its report *Criminal groups - combating recruitment and facilitating defection* (SOU 2010:15). One of the main proposals in the report is to form social task forces consisting of social services, police and school personnel on the local level in order to work together with young criminals. These social task forces are to constitute a local form of cooperation in which initiatives to help young people in risk situations can be coordinated on the individual level between the relevant authorities and other actors, such as voluntary organisations.

In April 2011, the Government tasked the National Police Board to initiate a pilot scheme setting up social task forces for young people who are at risk of becoming criminals. The National Board for Health and Welfare was also given the task to produce a risk assessment manual to better be able to identify young people who run the risk of being recruited to criminal networks or who want to leave one and to develop a guide to support measures for the benefit of young people targeted by the social task-forces.

In addition to the cooperation established via the social task forces, a number of other forms of cooperation have been established locally. An action plan for cooperation between the Police and the municipality was developed in 2008. The National Police Board and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions are working to implement this action plan and the National Council for Crime Protection is providing assistance in the form of knowledge (PoA-450-3788/06). Under the local development agreements concluded by the Government with municipalities in 2008 and covering inner city areas with widespread exclusion, partnerships involving the police authorities, the Social Insurance Office and the Public Employment Service have been established.

Sport-related crime displays many similarities with the kind of violence perpetrated by extremist groups. Hooliganism is a violence-fixated sub-culture that primarily involves young men. It is not uncommon for individuals to move between these two violent environments. As part of the work to combat sport-related crime, the National Council for Crime Prevention has been tasked by the Government to present a compendium of successful strategies and methods employed both nationally and internationally to reduce the occurrence of public order disturbances in connection with sports events. In the report *Strategies to combat football-related public order disturbances - A knowledge review* (Brå 2008:20), the Council proposes that the Government appoint a responsible body to examine and create a national programme of measures against football-related public order disturbances to promote its implementation. A national coordinator was appointed in 2011 by the Government to help improve cooperation among the relevant organisations on the central, regional and local level and regularly submit proposals for how to combat crime perpetrated in connection with sport events (ToR. 2011:22).

7 Government measures to safeguard democracy against violence-promoting extremism

The Government believes that it is important to intensify the efforts to safeguard democracy in order to counter anti-democratic tendencies that can constitute or may in the future constitute a challenge to democracy. The preventive work against extremism being done by central agencies, municipalities and other societal actors must be both broadened and improved. It is important that authorities and relevant societal actors have the tools and resources to prevent violence-promoting extremism. The measures presented in this chapter make up the strategic focus of future efforts in the area in order to prevent extremism. There are six focus areas:

1. Strengthening awareness of democratic values.
2. Increasing knowledge about violence-promoting extremism.

3. Strengthening the structures for cooperation. Skr. 2011/12:44.
4. Preventing individuals from joining violent extremist groups and supporting defections from them.
5. Countering the breeding grounds for ideologically motivated violence.
6. Deepening international cooperation.

7.1.1 Supporting civil society organisations

Measure 1: The Government intends to task the National Board for Youth Affairs to distribute funding to civil society organisations to finance activities aimed at strengthening young people's democratic values.

There are major differences in the way different groups in society view democracy. Young people generally have lower confidence in political institutions than the rest of the population. The survey by the National Board for Youth Affairs on young people's influence shows that young people's attitudes to democracy, their will to take part and influence and their feeling of participation are affected by a number of different factors. Significant factors that affect young people's attitudes to democracy and their scope for influence include social background, their own situation as regards work and finances and their own health. The survey also shows that there are differences in attitudes between young people who live in cities and those who live in smaller towns (National Board for Youth Affairs publications 2010:10).

In light of this, the Government feels that measures to promote democratic values among young people should be implemented. These measures should be directed at young people in risk environments and be implemented on their terms. The Government intends to give the National Board for Youth Affairs the task of distributing funding to civil society organisations in 2012 for activities that strengthen young people's democratic values.

Measure 2: The Government intends to give the Swedish Commission for Government Support to Faith Communities the task to initiate an extended dialogue with faith communities on democracy-promoting efforts.

Religious diversity in society along with an interest in ethical and existential issues have increased the profile of religious communities and raised expectations on their efforts. They can help to increase knowledge, understanding and respect for different faiths. Contacts and cooperation between different religious communities, as well as their own participation in various sectors of society, are valuable. The government bill *The state and the religious communities in Sweden* (Government Bill 1998/99:124) emphasises the importance of providing the religious communities with support and giving them the scope to participate along with other positive forces to uphold and strengthen the fundamental values upon which our society is built.

Through the Swedish Commission for Government Support to Religious Communities, the Government gives support to stable and robust religious communities that operate in accordance with the fundamental values of democracy. The Commission for Government

Support to Religious Communities also functions as a dialogue forum for religious communities in issues concerning values, respect and tolerance. Skr. 2011/12:44.

The Government feels that it is important to further stimulate and strengthen the Commission's work to increase the part played by religious communities in improving and upholding democracy. The Commission will therefore be tasked by the Government to extend its dialogue with religious communities in order to further stimulate efforts to promote democracy and democratic values and to counter anti-democratic manifestations in society.

7.1.2 Initiatives in the education system

Measure 3: The Government intends to give the Living History Forum the task of disseminating methods and study material to strengthen young people's democratic values.

Schools are the key actor when it comes to ensuring that all young people are made aware of the democratic values upon which our society rests. Under the Education Act (2010:800), schools have a clear task to promote democracy. In accordance with the Act, education shall be designed in compliance with fundamental democratic values and human rights, including the sanctity of human life, the freedom and integrity of the individual, the equal worth of all people, gender equality and solidarity among people.

Studies show that there are significant groups of school students who harbour strongly intolerant and anti-democratic opinions. According to the Living History Forum's study of upper secondary students' attitudes to vulnerable groups, intolerant opinions are particularly widespread among boys from socioeconomically marginalised homes who attend vocational programmes and have low-educated parents (Living History Forum, Report Series 1:2010).

In light of these findings from the study, the Government tasked the Living History Forum to develop methods and study material to strengthen young people's democratic values. This was in 2011 and in 2012 the Government intends to extend this task to include the dissemination of the developed methods and study material mostly to schools but also to civil society and other actors who promote democracy.

Measure 4: An inquiry has been set up to propose how xenophobia and similar intolerance can be more effectively combated. The Government then intends to revisit the issue of how to counter xenophobia and similar intolerance among young people more effectively.

Schools have a key role in the long-term efforts to promote tolerance and openness. Specific knowledge and methods are needed to prevent young people from developing xenophobic attitudes. Different manifestations of

xenophobia and similar forms of intolerance must be identified and adequately dealt with. Skr. 2011/12:44

In May 2011, the Government appointed a special investigator whose task was to propose how to work more effectively against xenophobia and similar forms of intolerance. The investigator is to present his findings no later than 26 October 2012 (ToR 2011:39). As part of this task, the investigator is to compile knowledge on xenophobia and similar forms of intolerance and how they can be dealt with.

The Government then intends to revisit the issue of how to counter xenophobia and similar forms of intolerance among young people more effectively.

7.2 Increasing knowledge about violence-promoting extremism

7.2.1 Improving knowledge about measures to prevent extremism

Measure 5: The Government intends to give a special investigator the task of developing study material on preventive methods against violence-promoting extremism. The investigator shall also promote cooperation and knowledge exchange on prevention between actors in municipalities, authorities and civil society organisations and to present proposals on how to develop and organise future prevention work.

The report on violence-promoting extremism by the National Council for Crime Prevention and the Security Service and in the Security Service's report on violence-promoting Islamist extremism both point to the need to improve knowledge among those professional groups that come into contact with individuals at risk of joining violent extremist movements. Even the compendium of local examples of preventive work against violence-promoting extremism compiled by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions stresses the importance of knowledge-building within professional groups that may come into contact with individuals at risk of joining violent extremist movements (*Local measures against violence-promoting extremism*, Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, 2010). This is particularly true not only of professional groups working in the social services, police and schools but also those working in other authorities, municipal administration and civil society.

In light of this, the Government intends to appoint a special investigator to develop preventive methods against violence-promoting extremism and compile these in a training manual. These methods are intended to help the relevant professionals to deal more effectively with people who are on the verge of joining violent extremist movements or who are already involved with them. The training manual is to be used when training professionals in e.g. the education system, social services,

prison and probation service, municipalities and civil society organisations. The investigator shall also provide support in prevention work by disseminating knowledge and promoting cooperation between actors in municipalities, authorities and civil society organisations and present proposals on how to improve and organise future prevention work.

Skr. 2011/12:44.

7.2.2 Improving knowledge about extremism and anti-democratic movements active on the Internet

Measure 6: The Government has tasked the Swedish Media Council to perform a study on how young people can be made less vulnerable and be protected against the influence of anti-democratic messages spread via the Internet. The study shall provide a basis for further work to ensure young people develop their awareness as media users and to prevent organisations, movements or networks with an anti-democratic agenda from getting their message across online.

In recent years, the Internet has become an increasingly important arena for democratic debate. It has allowed individuals to participate in public debate without having to physically meet each other. According to the report on young people's influence produced by the National Board for Youth Affairs, this is of special significance to young people (National Board for Youth Affairs publications 2010:10).

While the Internet on the one hand contributes to deepening and broadening the public debate, it has also become an arena for extremist groups and forces to spread their anti-democratic message. It offers anti-democratic groups new opportunities to recruit and to convince without the restriction of national borders. Communication can be anonymous and secure for anyone who is already involved with such groups. Those involved in different networks can maintain and develop them online, arrange meetings, initiate campaigns and offer practical information and advice. A great deal of material that glorifies violence is also spread via the Internet. The Internet has also facilitated 'self-radicalisation', i.e. when individuals without physical contact with others are inspired by an ideological message and develop a liking for violence. Both the analysis by the National Council for Crime Prevention and the Security Service of political extremism and the Security Service's report on violence-promoting Islamist extremism point out the Internet as a central arena for all violent ideologies. Furthermore, in its action plan against radicalisation and terrorism recruitment, the EU stresses the need for measures to prevent online recruitment.

Against this background, the Government tasked the Swedish Media Council in September 2011 to perform a study on anti-democratic messages conveyed online and how young people can be strengthened and protected against them. The study will describe the prevalence of anti-democratic messages on the Internet and in the social media that are directed at young people, especially messages that call for violence to be perpetrated for political purposes, and how the Internet is used by

organisations, movements and networks to influence and disseminate an anti-democratic message. The study findings are to be reported in June 2013 and will then form the basis of more work to strengthen young people's media awareness and prevent messages conveyed online by organisations, movements or networks with an anti-democratic agenda from getting through.

7.2.3 Measures to enhance knowledge about Antisemitism and Islamophobia

Measure 7: The Government intends to initiate special measures to enhance knowledge about Antisemitism and Islamophobia among children and young people in 2012-2014.

In Sweden, as in many other European countries, Antisemitism and Islamophobia have occurred in different guises in recent years. They have taken the form of violent acts and other outrages against people who are, or are perceived to be, Jewish or Muslim and against Jewish and Muslim institutions, including religious buildings and holy sites. According to the National Council for Crime Prevention's compilation of alleged hate crimes, around ten percent had an antireligious motive.

In March 2011, the Government gave the Living History Forum the task of carrying out an analysis of Antisemitism and Islamophobia. The task included compiling existing knowledge on the prevalence of anti-Semitic and Islamophobic ideas in Sweden and on the vulnerability of Jewish and Muslim groups and their propensity to exercise their rights. It also included identifying best practice examples of measures and methods used to counter Islamophobia and Antisemitism. The analysis was presented to the Government in August 2011.

In light of the abovementioned analysis, the Government intends to initiate special measures to enhance knowledge about Antisemitism and Islamophobia among children and young people. These measures will be implemented in 2012-2014.

7.2.4 Support to research into threats against democracy

Measure 8: The Government has tasked the Swedish Research Council to broaden its support to interdisciplinary democracy research.

On behalf of the Government, the Swedish Research Council allocates funding for democracy research. Since 2007, funding has been allocated in accordance with the Swedish Research Council's general criteria to research projects that e.g. highlight citizen influence, representation, participation, insight and accountability.

Knowledge about the threat against democracy and the cornerstones of society, especially about the threat from violence-promoting extremism, needs to be strengthened

In light of this, the Government believes that there is reason to broaden the support to democracy research. As from 2011, the Government has decided that the Swedish Research Council's support to democracy research will also include issues concerning the threat to the cornerstones of our democratic society and the response to such a threat. Skr. 2011/12:44.

7.3 Strengthening the structures for cooperation

Measure 9: The Government intends to work to strengthen cooperation and knowledge exchange between authorities, municipalities, civil society organisations and other actors when it comes to preventing and countering violence-promoting extremism.

The groups that promote violence or threats to achieve a political objective often emerge on the local level. People with strong leadership skills can attract other individuals and establish local networks or groups. Conflicts between different extremist groups can result in a larger number of individuals getting involved. Measures implemented on the municipal level aimed at preventing and dealing with violent extremist environments are hence of considerable importance.

In 2010, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions in cooperation with the Swedish Government Offices produced a compendium of local examples of how different actors have countered and prevented violent political extremism (*Local measure against violence-promoting extremism*, Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, 2010). The publication highlights a number of examples from municipalities that have cooperated with local actors to strengthen the social conditions for dealing with political extremism. To effectively counter violence-promoting extremism, the need of cooperation between actors on the local level is highlighted. These actors include the police, schools, social services, after-school recreation leaders, civil society and the business sector.

In light of this, the Government intends to work to strengthen cooperation and the exchange of knowledge on the local level between authorities, municipalities, civil society organisations and other actors when it comes to preventing and countering violence-promoting extremism.

7.4 Preventing individuals from joining violent extremist groups and supporting individuals wishing to leave such groups

Measure 10: The Government intends to give the National Board for Youth Affairs the task of allocating funding to civil society organisations that conduct activities aimed at preventing individuals from joining violent extremist movements and providing support to individuals looking to leave such environments.

Preventive measures that target individuals before they join a violent extremist movement or develop a propensity for violence have been shown to be effective. The need to strengthen preventive work in order to deal with the threat from violence-promoting extremism is stressed both in the report by the National Council for Crime Prevention and the Security Service into violent political extremism and the Security Service's report on violence-promoting Islamist extremism.

The study by the National Board for Youth Affairs on how to improve the support given to help individuals leave violent extremist movements shows that the defection support activities conducted in civil society currently only focus on right-wing extremist groups (National Board for Youth Affairs publications 2010:11). In its report, the Security Service ascertains that young people who join the violent Islamist movement are not as likely as individuals in other ideological environments to leave them when they get older. Most individuals who join the white power or autonomist movements leave them before they reach the age of 25. It is therefore particularly important to stimulate activities aimed at prevent radicalisation in the violent Islamist extremist environment.

Against this background, the Government intends to task the National Board for Youth Affairs to distribute funding to civil society organisations that conduct activities aimed at preventing individuals from joining violent extremist movements and at supporting individuals looking to leave such environments.

7.5 Countering the breeding grounds for ideologically motivated violence

Skr. 2011/12:44.

7.5.1 Measures to prevent threats and violence against elected representatives

Measure 11: The Government intends to give the National Council for Crime Prevention the task of performing an analysis of the current extent of threats and violence against elected representatives in Sweden.

In 2004, the Government appointed a cross-party parliamentary committee to investigate the extent of violence perpetrated against elected representatives, to review their penal protection and to examine the support and help currently offered to elected representatives who have been the victims of crime. The Committee stated in its report that elected representatives were subjected to considerable harassment (Threats to politicians, SOU 2006:46). In 2007, the Security Service compiled a report on threats to and harassment of elected representatives and persons in authority (*Threat against elected representatives*, Swedish Security Service, 2008). The report points out that threats to and harassment of elected representatives and persons in authority are common.

Apart from the assertions made in the above-mentioned studies, there is no up-to-date picture of the extent of attacks made on elected representatives and persons in authority. In January 2011, therefore, the Government tasked the National Council for Crime Prevention to develop ways of conducting periodically recurring studies of the threats to elected representatives. In 2012, the Government intends to give the National Council for Crime Prevention the additional task of performing an analysis of the extent of threats and violence against elected representatives. This analysis will form the basis for measures aimed at preventing threats and violence against this group.

7.5.2 Study of the conditions for politically elected representatives

Measure 12: The Government has tasked Statistics Sweden to perform a study that highlights the conditions facing elected representatives in a representative democracy. The study is to look at why politicians take on the task of being an elected representative, how they perceive their task once they have done so and why some of them leave their position early.

It is vital for Swedish democracy that there are people interested in becoming politicians at the local, regional and national level. In recent years, the number of members of the established political parties has fallen, which has given rise to debate on the issues of representativity and party recruitment. Furthermore, every sixth politician leaves his or her elected position early. This is particularly true of younger politicians.

The propensity of politicians to leave their elected positions early can create problems for the way a representative democracy functions. There is currently a lack of knowledge as to why so many politicians are leaving the profession.

This is why, in October 2011, the Government gave Statistics Sweden the task of performing a study into the conditions facing elected representatives. The study is to look at the reasons why politicians decide to take on a role as an elected representative, how they perceive their task, how they see the conditions they face and the reasons why some of them leave politics early. The findings of the study are to be presented no later than 15 February 2013.

7.6 Deepening international cooperation

7.6.1 Study of measures to prevent extremism in other countries

Measure 13: The Government intends to give the National Defence College the task of performing a study that highlights examples of successful measures taken in other countries to prevent violence-promoting extremism.

The development of violence-promoting extremism cannot be considered from a national perspective only. According to the Security Service's report on violence-promoting Islamist extremism in Sweden, these extremist environments are influenced by the development of extremism internationally and by political circumstances around the world. Developments in conflict zones can in particular affect a person's propensity to join violent groups.

Other countries have considerable experience in preventing individuals from joining violent extremist movements. Countries in which serious extremist attacks have occurred, such as the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, have implemented extensive prevention work. The experience from such work can help to improve the work done in Sweden to counter violence-promoting extremism.

Bearing this in mind, the Government intends to task the National Defence College to perform a study that highlights examples from successful work against violence-promoting extremism in other countries.

7.6.2 International cooperation and knowledge exchange

Measure 14: The Government wishes to intensify and expand the work done in international networks in order to increase cross-border cooperation and knowledge exchange.

The fact that violence-promoting extremism is organised internationally creates a need for international cooperation and knowledge exchange. Cooperation takes place primarily within the EU, but also bilaterally and

in networks established with the intention of improving the exchange of knowledge in issues related to extremism and terrorism. Since 2008, for example, Sweden has been a member of the Policy Planners Network (PPN), an intergovernmental network created for the systematic exchange of knowledge on preventive work against violence-promoting extremism. Sweden is also a member of an EU network aimed at raising awareness of extremism (Radicalisation Awareness Network). The network is to constitute a platform for the exchange of knowledge and experience within the EU.

In 2012, Sweden intends to participate as a partner in a European cooperation network to counter radicalisation. This project, financed by the European Commission, aims to develop a digital training manual for people who may come into contact with individuals who are in the risk zone for adopting violent behaviour for political or ideological ends. This training manual will be tailored to professionals working in the relevant authorities, schools and civil society organisations. The project will continue until 2014.

The international cooperation and knowledge exchange outlined above has helped to improve national efforts aimed at preventing violence-promoting extremism. The Government is therefore looking to intensify and expand international cooperation and knowledge exchange.

Measure 15: The Government intends to initiate a project to disseminate examples of successful ways of preventing violent right-wing extremism within the EU and promote the establishment of networks for the exchange of knowledge and experience.

Violent right-wing extremism has reared its ugly head in several European countries during the 2000s. A sign of increased activity among right-wing extremists is the increase in the number of right-wing related hate crimes in Europe between 2000 and 2006 (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Report on Racism and Xenophobia in the Member States of the EU*, FRA 2007). Extreme right-wing violence constitutes a particularly major problem for minority groups such as Muslims, Jews, the Roma and LGBT persons.

Sweden has considerable experience in prevention work against violent right-wing extremism. In the 1990s and 2000s, successful efforts were made to counter the growing White Power movement at the time, as is reported in the National Council for Crime Prevention's follow-up of measures carried out by the Swedish justice system against hate crime. Initiatives taken in the justice system, in municipalities and in civil society successfully broke the trend of growing criminality and violence among White Power groups (Brå 2002:9). Examples of successful methods are also presented in the report by the National Council for Crime Prevention and the Security Service on violent political extremism and in the compendium of local initiatives against violence-promoting extremism produced by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (*Local initiatives against violence-promoting extremism*, Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, 2010).

Bearing in mind Sweden's experience in this area, the Government intends to initiate a project to identify, collect and disseminate examples of successful measures against violent right-wing extremism within the EU and to promote the establishment of networks for the exchange of knowledge and experience. Skr. 2011/12:44

8 Funding and economic consequences

Within Expenditure area 1, the Swedish political system, the Government has at its disposal Appropriation 6:1, General elections and democracy, from which new measures in this action plan will be funded.

9 Follow-up and evaluation

In 2014, the Government intends to follow up the work done to safeguard democracy against violence-promoting extremism and perform an evaluation. The aim is to assess the effects of measures and the need for further action.

Record of cabinet meeting on 8 December 2011

Present: Ministers Björklund, chair, Ask, Erlandsson, Hägglund, Carlsson, Sabuni, Billström, Adelsohn Liljeroth, Tolgfors, Björling, Ohlsson, Norman, Attefall, Engström, Kristersson, Ullenhag, Hatt, Lööf

Rapporteur: Minister Ohlsson

The Government hereby adopts communication 2011/12:44: Action plan to protect Swedish democracy against violence-promoting extremism.

Rygg: titel



REGERINGSKANSLIET

Ministry of Justice
Sweden