



Article from Ministry of Employment

The Istanbul Convention is an important tool in efforts to stop men's violence against women

Published 11 May 2021

On 11 May 2021, the Swedish Government will join the international celebrations to mark the 10th anniversary of the Istanbul Convention. The Istanbul Convention is the informal name of the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.

“Men's violence against women affects women and girls around the world and here at home in Sweden. It affects individuals and the society as a whole. This violence prevents the enjoyment of human rights, gender equality, development and freedom. The Swedish Government is therefore working to encourage more countries to ratify the Istanbul Convention,” says Minister for Gender Equality and Housing Märta Stenevi.

A historical document

The Istanbul Convention recognises violence against women as a violation of human rights. It condemns all forms of violence against women and describes this violence as an expression of a historical imbalance of power between women and men. When the Convention was open for signature in 2011, it was the most comprehensive human rights convention in its field and the first legally binding regional instrument on violence against women in Europe. All countries that have ratified the Istanbul Convention must adopt legislation on matters such as rape, sexual harassment, female genital mutilation, honour-based violence and oppression and forced marriage.

“The Istanbul Convention can have a real impact in the countries that ratify it. It represents an important basis for Sweden’s efforts to prevent and combat men’s violence against women, and is a key component in the Government’s national strategy in these efforts,” says Ms Stenevi.

The Government has tasked the Swedish Gender Equality Agency with disseminating information about the Istanbul Convention in Sweden. The mandate instructs the Agency to spread awareness among municipalities, regions and relevant government agencies about the Council of Europe’s recommendations concerning Sweden’s compliance with the Istanbul Convention.

Monitoring compliance with the Convention in Sweden

Ratification of the Convention brings with it obligations to comply with the Convention’s requirements concerning prevention, protection, prosecution and coordinated policies in the efforts to combat men’s violence against women. In September 2017, the Government submitted a report on Swedish conditions and initiatives to comply with the Istanbul Convention to the Council of Europe’s Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO).

GREVIO’s 2019 evaluation report points out the advantage of Sweden considering violence against women to be a fundamental challenge for gender equality and holds Sweden up as a leading country in gender equality policy. GREVIO presents a total of 41 recommendations to Sweden on further improvements they consider necessary. The Government has until January 2022 to report on how the recommendations have been dealt with in Sweden.



Article from Ministry of Employment

Gender equality initiatives in the Spring Budget for 2021

Published 30 April 2021

The Government has proposed gender equality initiatives in the Spring Budget for 2021. The proposal is based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about serious consequences for lives and health. The crisis facing Sweden and the entire world is without parallel in modern times. At the same time, there are other problems lingering in the shadow of the crisis, such as unemployment, exposure to violence and other types of vulnerability, where children and adults who are already at risk suffer greatly. The Government therefore proposes a series of initiatives focused on supporting people subjected to violence and children in vulnerable situations.

Civil society important for children in vulnerable situations and people subjected to violence

Voluntary organisations carry out vital activities during the COVID-19 pandemic while at the same time suffering greatly from the crisis and its economic consequences. The Government proposes allocating an additional SEK 90 million in 2021 to organisations working with children in vulnerable situations and with women, children and LGBTIQ people who are victims of violence; it will also go to organisations working to end men's violence against women, domestic violence and honour-related violence and oppression

The aim of the funding is to support these organisations, which are forced to adapt or enhance their support activities to meet increasing or changing

needs due to the pandemic. The proposed aid is a continuation of an earlier initiative.

In addition to the initiative for children at risk and people subjected to violence, the Government also proposes allocating SEK 50 million to strengthen civil society's social and humanitarian activities for society's most vulnerable people.

More resources for work against violence and oppression

The Government proposes allocating SEK 37 million to initiatives to strengthen work against men's violence against women, domestic violence, prostitution and human trafficking. Additional support to young people at risk of domestic violence is also proposed.

Preventive action is important – the violence must stop

The pandemic brings into focus the need for improved preventive action aimed at preventing violence from occurring or recurring, and protecting and supporting those at risk. The Government sees a need for early preventive action. This pertains to young people and older people alike, with the aim of stopping violence from occurring or recurring. The Government recently presented the Government Bill 'Prevention of domestic violence' Prop. 2020/21:163 to the Riksdag. Funds are now being allocated to governmental agencies to support preventive action at municipal level.

Detecting violence at an early stage and modifying the behaviour of those who subject or have subjected a close relative to violence or abuse are important steps in preventing domestic violence. For this reason, funding will go to activities such as the Välj att sluta (Choose to Stop) telephone helpline, which is intended for people who want to change a violent behaviour in a close relationship.

Increased vulnerability in prostitution and human trafficking

Vulnerability in prostitution and human trafficking has increased during the pandemic and it is important to strengthen preventive action and support

initiatives to provide at-risk people the protection and support they need and are entitled to. With additional resources, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency can strengthen the initiatives within the framework of its national coordination remit to combat all forms of human trafficking and provide additional skills support to professionals. The Swedish Gender Equality Agency co-finances the regional coordinators in social services working to fight prostitution and human trafficking. They conduct outreach and give support to vulnerable people.



Article from Ministry of Employment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden pushes for economic justice and rights

Published 12 March 2021

On 8 March, International Women’s Day, a stakeholder meeting was held at which Minister for Gender Equality Märta Stenevi and Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde met with more than 40 civil society organisations to get input for Sweden’s engagement in a global action coalition on economic gender equality.

The global action coalition on economic gender equality is one of six action coalitions that will promote gender equality and women’s and girls’ rights as part of the Generation Equality Forum. This initiative was launched by UN Women together with various gender champions with the aim of fulfilling the international commitments made under the Beijing Platform for Action.

“As early as the UN Conference on Women, in Beijing in 1995, Hillary Clinton made the famous statement that ‘human rights are women’s rights and women’s rights are human rights’. This is self-evident, but even so it is still far from being realised,” says Minister Stenevi, and continues:

“In this action coalition, Sweden will contribute with its experience from working with economic and social reforms and gender equality policy. We will highlight issues such as individual taxation, parental leave, childcare reforms and gender-transformative budgeting. But above all, we will learn from other stakeholders and strengthen one another in our work – this is why the stakeholders meeting with civil society is so important.”

Sweden shares the leadership of the action coalition with South Africa, Mexico, Spain and Germany, the OECD, the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the civil society

organisations Care International, FEMNET, the Huairou Commission, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the Women's Working Group on Financing for Development. Sweden's priorities in the action coalition are efforts for economic and social reforms for gender equality, efforts against discriminatory legislation, a gender-equal labour market including promoting the initiative Global Deal, and a feminist trade policy.

“To strengthen economic gender equality, women and girls must have greater access to economic resources, work and education. The majority of the world's poorest are women, and this has increased during the pandemic. That's why extensive reforms for economic gender equality are needed, as are enhanced efforts to combat discriminatory legislation and norms that obstruct women's and girls' access to resources. Only then can we achieve the global goals on gender equality,” says Minister Linde.

The action coalition's action plan for economic gender equality will be discussed at the Generation Equality Forum in Mexico City, to be held on 29–31 March 2021. The action plan will later be launched globally at the follow-up Generation Equality Forum in Paris, to be held on 30 June–2 July at which President Emmanuel Macron will be the host.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Employment

The Government's gender equality work is more important than ever

Published 08 March 2021

Sweden has the first feminist Government in the world. Gender equality is central to the Government's priorities – in decision-making and resource allocation. The Government's gender equality work is based on six objectives. It addresses power and influence, gender equality in economy and education, and the equal distribution of unpaid housework and provision of care. It is also about gender equality in health and ending men's violence against women. In brief, it is about gender equality in all facets of life and society.

- Women and men must have the same power to shape society and their own lives – this is the primary goal of our feminist Government. This means that the work of all the ministers in my Government will contribute to the development and implementation of gender equality policy, says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

- Sweden is one of the most gender-equal countries in the world – but we can never take this for granted. We must continue to fight so that every woman can live a life in security, free from violence and oppression. We must do more to reduce the gender gap in lifetime earnings. I am proud to be involved in this work in a feminist Government, where all ministers are responsible for promoting gender equality, says Minister for Gender Equality and Housing Märta Stenevi.



Article from Ministry of Employment

Measures against racism, similar forms of hostility and hate crime

Published 01 March 2021

The Government has adopted several measures against racism, similar forms of hostility and hate crime. Several of the measures are being carried out within the context of the national plan against racism, similar forms of hostility and hate crime, which the Government adopted in 2016. The plan takes an integrated approach and comprises strategies and measures to prevent and combat racism and hate crime through improved coordination and monitoring, more education and research, increased support to and deepened dialogue with civil society, strengthened preventive measures online and a more active justice system.

Below are examples of measures:

Improved coordination and follow-up

The Living History Forum is responsible for coordination and follow-up of the work on the plan against racism, similar forms of hostility and hate crime and presents a comprehensive report to the Government annually.

More education, knowledge and research

The Government has instructed the Ombudsman for Children in Sweden to – based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – produce and compile knowledge about children's and young people's vulnerability to

racism.

The Government has instructed the county administrative boards to advance the work against racism in the labour market. In doing this work, the county administrative boards are to increase knowledge and awareness among stakeholders in the labour market about racism, with a focus on Afrophobia.

The Living History Forum carries out major education initiatives on different forms of racism throughout history and in the present day. It offers education and training for school staff and other public sector employees, with a focus on quality-assuring public sector services to the general public through work against racism.

The Living History Forum has been instructed to develop and implement skills development initiatives for public sector employees on equal treatment regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

The Government has instructed the Living History Forum to survey people's experience of racism in contacts with Swedish government agencies and other public sector services at national, regional and local level.

The Stockholm County Administrative Board has been tasked with increasing knowledge about how Roma children and young people are subjected to antigypsyism in the present day.

The Government has provided the Sami Parliament with funding to conduct a consensus-seeking process among the Sami people ahead of the establishment of a truth commission.

The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society has been tasked with implementing measures for an open and inclusive environment in schools for young LGBTIQ people.

The Swedish Research Council has announced special funds for research on racism.

The Government has allocated funds to support remembrance trips to Holocaust memorial sites in 2018–2022.

On 13–14 October 2021, Sweden will host the Malmö International Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism and other forms of racism. The Forum will focus on issues concerning remembrance, Holocaust education, antisemitism in social media, and measures against antisemitism.

In connection with the Forum, the Government is conducting a national initiative to increase knowledge in schools and wider society.

The initiative consists of the following four assignments:

1. The Living History Forum will implement a national initiative to enhance educational initiatives about the Holocaust, antisemitism, antigypsyism and other forms of racism, to particularly target audiences that are rarely reached by the Forum's activities. Various parts of the school and liberal adult education systems are to be the focus of the initiatives. Civic orientation for newly arrived immigrants is also included in the assignment.
2. The National Historical Museums are to develop a Swedish-language version of the Dimensions in Testimony installation (developed by the Shoah Foundation) that allows visitors to converse with Holocaust survivors via pre-recorded answers to questions, made possible by artificial intelligence technology.
3. The University of Gothenburg (the Segerstedt Institute) is to prepare a research review and conduct a research seminar on education in the school system that can combat antisemitism and other forms of racism.
4. The Swedish Defence Research Agency is to produce a report on antisemitism in social media and other digital environments.

Strengthened preventive efforts online

The Swedish Media Council has run a campaign to combat racism on the internet – the No Hate Speech Movement – targeting children and young people.

The Swedish Defence Research Agency has been tasked with analysing violent extremist propaganda in digital environments.

More active judicial system

The Swedish Police Authority has raised its level of ambition with respect to hate crime. A national contact point for hate crime issues is now in place, as are democracy and anti-hate crime groups in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö.

The Government has instructed the Swedish Police Authority to continue

measures against racism, hate crime and other crimes that threaten democracy.

The Swedish Police Authority has also been tasked with reporting on the results of measures taken to combat hate crime and other crimes that threaten democracy. The Swedish Police Authority is to describe how cooperation with government agencies and organisations is conducted and how a functioning dialogue is ensured with regard to groups subjected to this type of crime.

The Swedish Prosecution Authority has taken measures to enhance the quality of its work to combat hate crime.

On the instructions of the Government, the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention has conducted an in-depth study of antisemitic hate crime in Sweden and is now conducting an equivalent study into Islamophobic and Afrophobic hate crime respectively.

The Swedish Center for Preventing Violent Extremism has been part of the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention since 2018. The Center's mandate includes giving needs-based support to local actors, serving as a knowledge hub and contributing to creating greater effectiveness and coordination in preventive measures.

The Government has appointed an all-party committee to consider the introduction of specific criminal liability for participation in a racist organisation and a ban on racist organisations.

Increased support to and deepened dialogue with civil society

The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society distributes annual funding in accordance with the Ordinance on government grants to activities combating racism and similar forms of intolerance.

The Swedish Commission for Government Support to Faith Communities has been tasked with increasing knowledge about security for mosques and Muslim communities as well as about the vulnerability of stakeholders to Islamophobia and hate crime.

The appropriations to security-enhancing measures for civil society were increased from 2018.



Article from Ministry of Employment

Märta Stenevi took part in informal video conference on the EU's post-pandemic recovery

Published 24 February 2021

On 22 February, Minister for Gender Equality and Housing Märta Stenevi took part in an informal video conference between EU employment, social affairs and gender equality ministers. Ms Stenevi participated in a discussion on the link between gender equality and the EU's post-pandemic recovery.

Ms Stenevi raised issues such as differences in the employment rate between women and men and how it has been affected by the pandemic. Women have been more severely impacted by the pandemic than men. There are also differences in the employment rate between foreign born women and women born in Sweden.

“When we plan the measures for the EU's post-pandemic recovery, we must not only look at the differences between women and men, but also specifically at foreign born women and their conditions for returning to work,” says Ms Stenevi.

The purpose of the informal video conference was to provide input to the European Commission's action plan to implement the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights. The European Pillar of Social Rights consists of 20 principles which, among other things, address gender equality and equal opportunities in the labour market, fair working conditions and social protection and inclusion. During the spring, Council conclusions are also expected on the pandemic's impact on gender equality.



Government Offices of Sweden

Opinion piece from Ministry of Employment

The Istanbul Convention 10 years: Every woman and girl has the right to live free from violence.

Published 11 May 2021

Opinion piece by Swedish Minister for Gender Equality and Housing Märta Stenevi, together with 20 other European politicians. Published in Swedish newspaper ETC along with other European newspapers on 11 May 2021.

Today we mark the 10th anniversary of the opening for signature of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating violence against women and domestic violence. It was concluded and signed in Istanbul in 2011. A result of a series of European initiatives started in the 90', it came into force on 1 August 2014 and it is known as the "Istanbul Convention". As of today, 33 countries have signed, ratified and enforced it. Another 11 countries have signed without ratifying it as of yet. One country recently withdrew from it.

The Istanbul Convention has been a landmark achievement in the fight against gender-based violence. It is the first European legally binding treaty in this area. It includes a set of wide-ranging measures to prevent violence, protect its victims and prosecute perpetrators. It gives the signatory countries a set of tangible measures such as shelters, helplines and a comprehensive help for victims of all kinds of violence. In addition to those concrete measures, it firmly states that violence against women is a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination. The convention created also a legal framework at pan-European level and includes a specific monitoring mechanism to ensure effective implementation of its provisions.

The implementation of the Istanbul Convention has already had a real impact on the lives of women and men, girls and boys in all their diversity. It has helped to raise awareness of gender-based violence in society. It has been instrumental in raising more ambitious legislative and policy standards in national legislation. What is more; it has resulted in more training for legal professionals, health professionals and law enforcement – a very important measure if we are to remove obstacles to access to justice for victims of gender-based violence. Importantly, it has also raised the profile of the societal debate on the issue.

It is with great concern that we witness an ever-growing opposition to this landmark Convention. At the moment of a health, economic and social crisis, women were at the frontline of the coronavirus pandemic working in the healthcare, care, education, retail or cleaning sectors. At the same time, the number of reports of domestic and intimate partner violence rose quickly in the first months. Shelter for victims and counsellors faced a surge in demand and women and girls were often trapped at home with their perpetrators during lockdowns and curfews. And yet; the voices against the Convention are louder than before.

Every woman and girl has the right to live free from violence. Preventing all forms of violence is not controversial. Protecting victims of abuse is not controversial. Most of all, it is not negotiable. And yet, since its conception, the convention was met with an unprecedented campaign of disinformation and misinterpretation. Its opponents took offence at the Convention's definition of gender as a social construct or on the requirement for including teaching material on non-stereotyped gender roles.

Even more worryingly, the opposition to the Convention recently comes also from some governments and members of parliament in the European Union. This resulted among others in the blocked ratification process by some Member States and stalled process of ratification by the European Union. Another Member State announced its intention to withdraw from the treaty.

The recent decision of the Turkish government of 19 March 2021 to withdraw from the Convention, has shown us that those threats of revocation are indeed very real. The decision of Turkey comes 10 years after it was the first country to sign the Convention in Istanbul.

We are deeply alarmed by those unprecedented attacks on women's rights and their safety. We stand together in solidarity with women and girls in Turkey and beyond. We call on Turkey to reverse its decision.

We also urgently call on all Council of Europe Member States who have not yet done so to sign and ratify this landmark treaty.

We are committed to ensuring full implementation and enforcement of the Convention in our countries and to working together to protect the fundamental values guaranteed by the Convention.

Sweden: Ms Märta Stenevi, Minister for Gender Equality and Housing, with responsibility for urban development, anti-segregation and anti-discrimination

Austria: Ms Susanne Raab, Federal Minister for Women, Family, Youth and Integration

Belgium:

Ms Sarah Schlitz, the State Secretary for Gender Equality; Equal Opportunities and Diversity

Ms Sophie Wilmès, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs

Estonia: Ms Signe Riisalo Minister of Social Protection

Denmark: Mr Peter Hummelgaard, Minister for Equal Opportunities.

Finland :

Ms Krista Kiuru, Minister of Family Affairs and Social Services

Mr Thomas Blomqvist, Minister for Nordic Cooperation and Equality

France:

Ms Elisabeth Moreno, Minister Delegate for Gender Equality, Diversity and Equal Opportunities attached to the Prime Minister

Mr Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs

Mr Franck Riester, Minister Delegate for Foreign Trade and Economic Attractiveness attached to the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs

Mr Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne, Secretary of State for Tourism, French Nationals

Abroad and Francophonie attached to the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs

Mr Clément Beaune, Secretary of State for European affairs attached to the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs

Germany: Ms Franziska Giffey, Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

Ireland: Mr Roderic O’Gorman, Minister for Children, Equality, Integration, Disability and Youth

Italy: Ms Elena Bonetti, Minister for Equal Opportunities and Family

Luxembourg, Ms Taina Bofferding, the Minister for Equality between women and men

The Netherlands:

Ms Ingrid van Engelshoven, Minister for Gender Equality

Mr Paul Blokhuis, State Secretary for Health, Welfare and Sports

Mr Stef Blok, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Spain: Ms Irene Montero, Minister for Equality



Press release from Ministry of Employment

Substantial investments in the budget to prevent and combat men's violence against women

Published 16 September 2021

Men's violence against women must stop. This is a priority issue for the Government. In the Budget Bill for 2022, the Government proposes a range of measures to prevent and combat men's violence against women and honour-based violence and oppression. This involves permanent funds and government grants, and a sheltered housing reform for adults and children who are subjected to violence.

Stopping men's violence against women has been a priority for the Government in both the current and previous electoral periods. In June this year, the Government presented a package of 40 measures to step up efforts to combat men's violence against women. The package includes measures to prevent the use of violence, support and protection to those affected and stricter legislation on prosecuting those who subject their partner or former partner to violence. In the Budget Bill for 2022, the Government proposes extensive resources to help implement the package of measures as well as additional measures that – together with the package of measures – will constitute the action programme to be presented later this autumn.

“Men's violence against women must stop. Permanent funds and government grants will allow us to create stable and long-term conditions for efforts to prevent men's violence against women, honour-based violence and oppression, domestic violence, and the efforts to protect those who are subjected to violence. Now we can build on the package that was presented

last spring,” says Minister for Gender Equality and Housing Märta Stenevi.

Permanent funds to combat men’s violence against women and honour-based violence and oppression

To ensure that the measures are long-term and that the actors in the area can better plan their activities, the Government proposes allocating SEK 215 million in 2022 to efforts to combat men’s violence against women, which means that a total of SEK 350 million will be available during the year. The Government also proposes that from 2024, the funds be made permanent at a level of SEK 300 million per year.

This investment will make it possible to move away from short-term projects and instead conduct long-term and sustained efforts, which this type of social problem requires. The measures cover all the areas described in the national strategy to prevent and combat men’s violence against women, including LGBTIQ people and men’s vulnerability to domestic violence, and prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes. Children are also severely affected by men’s violence against women and domestic violence, both through witnessing violence and being subjected to violence. The rights of the child and the best interests of the child are basic premises of the national strategy.

Permanent government grants to women’s and girls’ shelters

The Government proposes that government grants to women’s and girls’ shelters, their national organisations and other organisations that provide similar support to those subjected to violence be made permanent. For 2022, the Government proposes additional funding of SEK 50 million on top of the SEK 100 million allocated earlier. Starting in 2023, the Government proposes providing SEK 150 million annually.

Non-profit organisations working with victims of crime have long been an important complement to the public commitment of providing protection and support to victims of crime. The non-profit shelters conduct outward-looking preventive work, and they embody knowledge, competence and experience that is valuable in the development of public activities to support victims of crime.

Reform of sheltered housing for adults and children who are subjected to violence

The initiative regarding sheltered housing for people subjected to violence (usually women) and their children is currently not clearly regulated by law and there are no specific quality or permit requirements. The rights of children in sheltered housing are not always respected when it comes to support, initiatives from health care and schooling. It is therefore necessary to strengthen the child rights perspective for children accompanying a custodial parent being subjected to violence to sheltered housing. The Government intends to present legislative proposals aimed at enhancing the child rights perspective in such housing. The Government plans to present the government bill on this in 2022 and expects that the reform will be able to enter into force on 1 January 2023.

The proposal will require application of the financing principle. The Government will allocate SEK 30 million for preparations in 2022. For 2023, the reform is expected to cost SEK 345 million and thereafter SEK 375 million annually.

Stricter quality requirements based on new legislation may mean that some non-profit organisations that run sheltered housing may have to adapt their activities to comply with the new requirements. The Government therefore proposes allocating funds for a temporary targeted government grant aimed at supporting the non-profit organisations that run sheltered housing and that need to improve the quality of their activities. The temporary government grant is expected to amount to SEK 50 million in 2022, SEK 50 million in 2023 and SEK 20 million in 2024.

Investment in permanent housing for women and children subjected to violence

Women and children subjected to violence should not have to leave sheltered housing and return to the perpetrator simply because they lack permanent housing. In the Budget Bill for 2022, the Government therefore proposes appointing an expert group to strengthen efforts by municipalities to provide people subjected to violence with permanent housing. To establish this expert group, it is proposed that SEK 15 million be allocated in 2022 and SEK 30 million in 2023 and 2024. Some of these funds will go to activities in a number of pilot municipalities.

Funds to Kvinnofridslinjen and PrevenTell to be made permanent

It is of the utmost importance that people subjected to violence have someplace they can turn to for help and further guidance on how they can extricate themselves from their situation. One such opportunity is the national helpline for women subjected to violence, Kvinnofridslinjen. It is run by the National Centre for Knowledge on Men's Violence Against Women (NCK), based at Uppsala University. The Government therefore proposes allocating SEK 8 million annually to Uppsala University to provide long-term and favourable conditions for operating Kvinnofridslinjen.

In 2012, the Government helped launch the national helpline PrevenTell to prevent sexual violence. Support for treatment against sexual violence is part of the Government's crime prevention efforts to prevent serious crime targeted primarily at women and children. PrevenTell focuses on perpetrators, who are offered adequate treatment programmes, and relatives and care providers, who need advice and assistance in dealing with issues concerning sexual violence and sexual abuse. The Government wants to establish long-term conditions so that PrevenTell's activities can continue and – in the Budget Bill for 2022 – proposes that SEK 5 million be allocated annually to PrevenTell.

Increased resources for the Swedish Prison and Probation Service, the National Board of Institutional Care and health care

The 2020 Sexual Offences Inquiry was tasked with reviewing the scales of penalties for sexual crimes. Last summer, the Inquiry presented its findings, which have been circulated for comment. The Inquiry proposes tightening the scales of penalties for most sexual offences. In light of the proposals, the costs for the Swedish Prison and Probation Service are expected to increase. In the Budget Bill for 2022, the Government proposes increasing the appropriation to the Swedish Prison and Probation Service by SEK 8 million in 2022. The appropriation is expected to increase by SEK 23 million in 2023 and by SEK 155 million in 2024.

In view of some of the proposed stricter penalties, the Government considers that more young people will be sentenced to institutional youth care, which in turn will result in increased costs for the National Board of Institutional

Care. For this purpose, the Government proposes that the National Board of Institutional Care be allocated SEK 8 million for 2022 and SEK 17 million annually from 2023.

The Sexual Offences Inquiry also proposes introducing a new act instructing health care services to secure evidence following sexual offences. In view of the proposal on securing evidence following sexual offences, it is expected that expenditures for health care services will increase. The Government therefore proposes increasing the general grant to municipalities by SEK 2 million from 2022.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Defence

Sweden's new Government

Published 09 July 2021

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

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

Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister

Stefan Löfven

Minister for EU Affairs

Hans Dahlgren

Ministry of Employment

Minister for Employment

Eva Nordmark

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

Märta Stenevi

Ministry of Finance

Minister for Finance

Magdalena Andersson

Minister for Public Administration

Lena Micko

Minister for Financial Markets and Deputy Minister for Finance

Åsa Lindhagen

Ministry of Defence

Minister for Defence

Peter Hultqvist

Ministry of Infrastructure

Minister for Infrastructure

Tomas Eneroth

Minister for Energy and Digital Development

Anders Ygeman

Ministry of Justice

Minister for Justice and Migration

Morgan Johansson

Minister for Home Affairs

Mikael Damberg

Ministry of Culture

Minister for Culture and Democracy, with responsibility for sport

Amanda Lind

Ministry of the Environment

Minister for Environment and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister

Per Bolund

Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

Minister for Business, Industry and Innovation

Ibrahim Baylan

Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Minister for Health and Social Affairs

Lena Hallengren

Minister for Social Security

Ardalan Shekarabi

Ministry of Education and Research

Minister for Education

Anna Ekström

Minister for Higher Education and Research

Matilda Ernkrans

Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Ann Linde

Minister for International Development Cooperation

Per Olsson Fridh

Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs

Anna Hallberg



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of Employment, Ministry of Justice

The Government presents package of measures to stop men's violence against women

Published 24 June 2021

Men's violence against women must end. The Government is today presenting a package of measures for future work to prevent and combat men's violence against women. The package includes measures to prevent the use of violence, support and protection to those affected and stricter legislation regarding prosecuting those who subject their partner or former partner to violence.

Stopping men's violence against women has been a priority for the Government in both the current and previous electoral periods. In 2016, the Government adopted a ten-year national strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women, with an accompanying programme of measures for 2017–2020. Since then, the focus has been building a long-term sustainable structure at national, regional and local level. The package of measures now being presented intensifies this work.

“As long as one single woman is murdered by her partner or former partner, we have not done enough. No teenage girl should be subjected to violence by their boyfriend. The Government is today presenting measures to put an end to violence here and now, give affected women support and protection, and take preventive action so that no more women are beaten and no men resort to violence,” says Märta Stenevi, Minister for Gender Equality.

The package of measures to stop men's violence against women that the

Government is now presenting contains 40 points. It includes measures to help achieve all four of the objectives in the national strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women:

- Increased and effective preventive work to combat violence
- Improved detection of violence and stronger protection for and support to women and children subjected to violence
- More effective law enforcement
- Better knowledge and methodological development.

“In recent years, the Government has taken a number of important measures to impose stricter punishments on men who commit crimes against women. The punishment should reflect the seriousness of the crime, and further proposals in line with this are presented here. Men's violence against women can never be accepted, and the judicial system must take a severe view of these crimes,” says Minister for Justice and Migration Morgan Johansson.

“Men's violence against women is a high priority for the Government. The authorities in the judicial system are central to the efforts to combat men's violence against women. Making progress in these efforts requires our authorities to join forces and cooperate, based on their different areas of responsibility. It is important that the authorities have the right tools and the right expertise so that we can put our full strength into achieving the objectives in the package of measures and stopping the violence,” says Minister for Home Affairs Mikael Damberg.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of Employment, Ministry of the Environment,
Ministry of Infrastructure

Swedish and French Ministers agree to step up efforts to enhance green transition

Published 08 June 2021

Swedish Minister for Environment and Climate, Per Bolund, Minister for Gender Equality and Housing, Märta Stenevi, and Minister for Energy and Digital Development, Anders Ygeman, met with French Minister for Ecological Transition, Barbara Pompili, on her visit to Stockholm, to discuss joint efforts to enhance the green transition at national, European and global levels.

Building on the Swedish-French partnership for innovation and green solutions, signed by Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and French President Emmanuel Macron in 2017 and updated in 2019, the Ministers discussed among other things how to deepen the collaboration in the areas of smart sustainable cities and renewable energy.

The Ministers expressed their continued support to the 1,5-degree objective of the Paris Agreement and their joint ambition for a successful COP26 in Glasgow, notably by promoting the European Green Deal and the EU Climate Law that will be a part of the French and Swedish future presidencies of the EU. They also discussed the topic of biodiversity, especially in the perspective of COP15 and a post 2020 global biodiversity framework.

Focusing on innovation systems, the Swedish-French partnership for

innovation and green solutions is a valuable platform to jointly develop innovative solutions to global challenges by bringing together Swedish and French decision-makers, national agencies and the business community. The partnership includes areas such as green transition, digitalisation and health.

Friday's discussions prepared for the upcoming review and update of the partnership, foreseen to take place later this year by Prime Minister Löfven and President Macron.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of Employment

Government appoints Inquiry Chair to develop national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children

Published 01 June 2021

The Government has appointed an Inquiry Chair who will propose a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children, including honour-based violence and oppression. The strategy should take an integrated and coherent approach to preventing and combating violence against children over the next ten years. The decision is based on an agreement between the Government, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

Sweden is, and aim to continue to be a pioneer in preventing and combating violence against children. Although much has been done to ensure the right of the child to be protected against all forms of violence and abuse, many children continue to be exposed to violence and the number of unreported cases is probably high. The Government sees a need to take a coherent approach to prevent and combat violence against children.

“It’s unacceptable that children are forced to grow up in violent and abusive environments. We need a coherent, long-term and strategic approach to safeguard children’s rights and address the issues that don’t work in practice. That’s why this inquiry is so important,” says Minister for Gender Equality Märta Stenevi.

The Inquiry Chair will propose long-term goals to prevent and combat

violence against children, and identify shortcomings and possible measures.

Taking these goals into account, the Inquiry Chair will propose measures in the following areas:

- collaboration between government agencies, municipalities, organisations and other relevant actors
- prevention of violence against children and detection of violence against children
- protection, support and treatment for children exposed to violence
- criminal proceedings involving children exposed to violence
- knowledge, methodological development and monitorability

The assignment is to be conducted in dialogue with relevant government agencies and other relevant actors. When developing the strategy, the Inquiry Chair will listen to children and young people and take their views and opinions into account.

“The Liberal Party has long pushed for a national strategy to prevent violence against children and I am pleased that we are now taking further steps to make this a reality. It’s important that the strategy take an integrated approach to preventing and combating violence against children, including honour-based violence and oppression,” says Liberal Party member Juno Blom.

Fredrik Malmberg has been appointed Inquiry Chair. Malmberg has extensive experience in child rights and was the Ombudsman for Children between 2008 and 2017. In June 2017, he was appointed Director-General of the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools.

“In view of both my current assignment related to rights for people with disabilities and my earlier role as the Ombudsman for Children, I am delighted at the confidence the Government has placed in me by appointing me Inquiry Chair to lead the work on a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children. I’m convinced that a long-term national strategy will ensure that combating violence against children has higher priority and a greater impact. In developing the strategy, it will be important to give visibility to the violence that children are subjected to specifically because they are children, regardless of what form that violence takes,” says Malmberg.

The Inquiry Chair will present the final report by 31 May 2022.



Press release from Ministry of Employment, Ministry of Justice

Amended regulations in the Aliens Act

Published 09 April 2021

The Government has decided to refer proposals to the Council on Legislation for amendments to the Aliens Act. The amendments are being proposed to ensure that Swedish migration policy is sustainable in the long term and provides a humane, legally secure and effective regulatory framework that is not materially different from migration policies in other EU Member States.

The proposals referred to the Council on Legislation are based on the report of the Cross-party Committee of Inquiry on Migration. Among other things, the Government proposes that as a general rule, residence permits are to be temporary, and that permanent residence permits are not to be granted until the applicant has had a temporary residence permit for three years and only if certain specific requirements are met, including a maintenance requirement. A maintenance requirement for family member immigration will also be introduced.

The Government is also proceeding with supplementary proposals that have been referred separately. In the proposal referred to the Council on Legislation, the Government considers that – in connection with the return to the Aliens Act – it should still be possible to grant children residence permits under the provisions on particularly distressing circumstances. It is also proposed that a possibility be introduced to grant adults a residence permit on humanitarian grounds. This means that it may be possible to grant an adult who has a residence permit to stay in Sweden and has developed special ties to Sweden a residence permit if the circumstances are

particularly distressing.

“We will not return to the migration legislation from 2015. With these proposals, we ensure a regulatory framework that is sustainable in the long term, at the same time as we – in line with many of the comments from referral bodies – ensure that the system where temporary residence permits are the general rule does not have unreasonable effects,” says Minister for Justice and Migration Morgan Johansson.

“Migration legislation must be humane, legally secure and effective. We are therefore presenting the proposal for a humanitarian ground that makes it possible for vulnerable young people with special ties to Sweden to stay,” says Minister for Gender Equality and Housing, with responsibility for urban development, anti-segregation and anti-discrimination Märta Stenevi.

It is proposed that the legislative amendments enter into force on 20 July 2021.



Press release from Ministry of Employment

New human rights institute to be located in Lund

Published 01 April 2021

The Government has today decided that the new agency proposed by the Government, the human rights institute, is to be located in Lund. An Inquiry Chair has been instructed to prepare for and carry out the formation of the new agency. The agency is to be established on 1 January 2022.

On 18 March 2021, the Government adopted a government bill on a human rights institute. The government bill proposes a new act and legislative amendments to regulate the activities of a new human rights institute. The aim of the institute is to promote the protection of human rights at national level.

- I am delighted that we have been able to adopt this decision today, which means that the practical work to establish the human rights institute can begin. Setting up an institute that will be able to monitor, investigate and report on how human rights are respected and protected in Sweden is of great significance, says Minister for Gender Equality and Housing Märta Stenevi.

In deciding on the institute's location, account was taken of various factors that can be considered beneficial to the Institute's activities. Lund is home to academic institutions with cutting-edge human rights expertise, for example. Proximity to Denmark and the Danish Institute for Human Rights can also promote the exchange of knowledge and experience that can be of great benefit to the Swedish human rights institute.

- Central government must have a presence throughout the country. It is

gratifying that the institute will be established in Lund, where there are good prospects for it to take advantage of the cutting-edge expertise in the region, says Minister for Public Administration Lena Micko.

An Inquiry Chair has now been instructed to prepare for and carry out the formation of the new agency. The Inquiry Chair will propose and take all necessary measures to establish the agency on 1 January 2022. Among other things, the Inquiry Chair will present proposals for instructions and appropriation directions, as well as appoint some of the agency's staff. The final report is to be delivered by 31 December 2021.

Anna-Karin Lindblom has been appointed as Inquiry Chair.



Press release from Ministry of Employment

Märta Stenevi to take part in UN session on the status of women

Published 15 March 2021

On 15–19 March, Minister for Gender Equality Märta Stenevi will take part digitally in the sixty-fifth session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW65). The priority theme is women’s opportunities for participation and decision-making in public life, and the elimination of violence against women.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed inequalities and also increased the gap between women and men. It is therefore more important than ever to consistently have a gender perspective when we rebuild a society that is stronger and more sustainable than before the crisis.

- I look forward to representing Sweden at the CSW65 in these challenging times and welcome this year’s priority theme. Women’s empowerment and participation, and the elimination of violence against women, are priority issues for the Swedish Government. This is in line with Sweden’s interim objectives of an even division of power and influence, and ending men’s violence against women, says Ms Stenevi.

Ms Stenevi will give an opening address at two side events hosted by Sweden. Tuesday’s side event will focus on rights and sexuality education, and Wednesday’s event will focus on strengthening economic gender equality.

Ms Stenevi will also take part in a Nordic ministerial meeting together with UN Women’s Executive Director, with focus on involving young people in gender equality efforts.

Ms Stenevi will lead the Swedish delegation that, in addition to representatives from the Government, comprises representatives from government agencies, the Riksdag, civil society organisations and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions.

- This year, twelve civil society organisations will be part of the Swedish delegation, which is considerably more than usual and very gratifying. We place great value on civil society's engagement, says Ms Stenevi.

State Secretary Karin Strandås will also take part in CSW65, and will speak at a side event on the Istanbul Convention and how it has helped strengthen Sweden's efforts to combat men's violence against women.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech

Statement by Ms Märta Stenevi, Minister for Gender Equality, at the UN CSW

Published 19 March 2021

Digital UN Commission on the Status of Women. 18
March 2021. Check against delivery.

Madame Chair,

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Sweden aligns itself with the statement made by Portugal on behalf of the EU, and its Member States.
- I am a proud member of the Swedish feminist government. A feminist government ensures that a gender equality perspective is central to all government ministries and to all our priorities – in decision-making and resource allocation processes.
- The overall goal of Sweden's gender equality policy is for women and men, girls and boys, to have the same power to shape society and their own lives. It is important that the same applies to non-binary people.
- Human rights are universal and apply to all. Everyone must be able to fully enjoy their human rights irrespective of sex, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation, or age. A feminist government also ensures the equal rights of LGBTI-persons.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

- The focus on this year's CSW is important for achieving gender equality: women' full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence.

- As Sweden this year is commemorating the 100th anniversary of suffrage, we know that it takes time to achieve equal representation of women and men in decision-making.
- We also know that although gender balance might be reached, women's conditions to perform their representative duties might be hampered, not least by gender-based violence, online and offline, including threats, harassment, and cyber bullying.
- We also know that increased gender equality is no linear process: gender equality does not develop by itself, and it requires actors that counteract resistance and secure its proper implementation.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

- Last year, marking the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, was intended to be ground-breaking for gender equality, with a reaffirmed global commitment to the full realization and achievement of gender equality and human rights and the empowerment of all women and girls by 2030.
- Instead, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a global crisis affecting human life and health.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has shown to affect everyone, everywhere.
- But it has also shown to affect different groups of people differently, deepening pre-existing inequalities. Those with the least resources and in the most disadvantaged circumstances are generally those who suffer the greatest strain. Often women and girls are part of those groups.
- Vulnerable and marginalized boys and girls are particularly exposed – when schools close, they are deprived opportunities for growth and development.
- Most critical, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the risk of women being subjected to men's violence.
- It has also exacerbated the vulnerability of children and young people at risk at home. The same applies to victims of gender based and 'honour'-based violence and oppression, including women, children, young women, older people, LGBTI persons and persons with disabilities. Greater isolation can increase the incidence of violence and control.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

- Even before COVID-19 existed, men's violence against women was already one of the most serious human rights violations.
- We can never accept that anyone is denied their rights to decide over their own lives and their own bodies.

- In 2016, my Government adopted a ten-year cross-sectoral national strategy for preventing and combating men's violence against women and protecting and supporting women and children subjected to violence. The strategy also covers honour-related violence as well as prostitution and trafficking, and states that men's violence against women must stop.
- In 2018, the Swedish sexual offence legislation was reformed. It is now an offence to perform a sexual act with someone who is not participating voluntarily.
- Women and men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, must have the same right to, and opportunity for, bodily integrity.
- The blame must be put where it belongs: on the perpetrators.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

- Although the COVID-19 pandemic is a profound shock to our societies, affecting lives and livelihoods around the world, I would like to end on a positive note.
- We now have a chance to build back better.
- In responding to the pandemic, work conditions in female dominated sectors must be addressed.
- Long-standing structural inequalities in society in general must be rectified.
- Sweden is therefore happy to be one of the co-leaders in the Generation Equality Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights.
- We must also continue standing up for the rights of women and girls, including all women's sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- We must continue promoting access to safe and legal abortions, contraceptives, and comprehensive sexuality education.
- We must continue standing up for issues relating to women, peace, and security and to pursue our feminist foreign policy.
- Women and girls must be put at the centre of our efforts to recover from COVID-19.
- Responding to the pandemic is about building a more equal and resilient world, in the interest of everyone. It is about building a better world and a better future for everyone.
- That work starts with women as leaders, with equal representation and decision-making power. It starts with you and me as global leaders!

Thank you for your attention!