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Sweden

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I. Introduction

1. Respect for human rights is a cornerstone of the Swedish Government's policy. Ensuring compliance with obligations under international human rights conventions is more important than ever at a time when attempts to reinterpret and weaken human rights are increasingly evident. The Government is aware that challenges remain in the work to protect and promote human rights in Sweden. Efforts to overcome these challenges have high priority.

2. The United Nations Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is an important tool in Sweden's work to ensure compliance with its international human rights obligations. Sweden takes the Recommendations very seriously and works actively to implement them in all parts of society. To make the best use of the Recommendations, Sweden ensures constructive dialogue with relevant actors, especially civil society.

3. This report focuses on the Recommendations that Sweden accepted within the third cycle of the UPR, in line with the guidance from the UN for the national reports.

Method and consultation process

4. This report was coordinated by the Department for International Law and Human Rights at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. All ministries responsible for issues raised in the Recommendations received by Sweden in the third cycle of the UPR have been involved in the process.

5. A consultation with civil society organisations on the UPR process, and specifically on the national report, was held at the Government Offices on 4 October 2024. Another consultation is planned for spring 2025, ahead of Sweden's review in Geneva.

II. Protecting human rights

A. National human rights strategy

6. The Government's goal for its human rights policy is to ensure full respect for Sweden's international human rights obligations.

7. In line with the Government's strategy for its work with human rights at the national level,[1] which was submitted to the Riksdag (the Swedish parliament) in 2016 and remains valid open-endedly, the Government's long-term efforts to ensure full respect for human rights should permeate a range of policy areas and involve civil society. The purpose of these efforts is to increase awareness of and competence in human rights. Civil society is involved in this work, in part through the Government obtaining the views of civil society stakeholders when reporting under the conventions.

8. Since 2006, the Government Offices of Sweden have had an inter-ministerial working group on human rights, appointed by the government at the time. This working group's remit includes sharing information and experience on human rights issues, following up on the human rights strategy, and responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Government Offices' procedures for monitoring with Sweden's international human rights obligations.[2]

B. International human rights conventions

1. Ratification of the Third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure

9. The Government at the time appointed an inquiry to consider whether Sweden should ratify the Third Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The inquiry proposed that Sweden should ratify it.[3] The inquiry's report has been circulated for consultation and the responses are being analysed.

2. Ratification of the ILO's Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169)

10. The Government is working towards ratification of the ILO's Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169). Decision to ratify conventions are made by the Riksdag.

C. Establishment of an independent national human rights institution

11. On 1 January 2022, the Swedish Institute for Human Rights was established. Under the Act on the Institute for Human Rights (2021:642), the Institute is required to monitor, investigate and report on how human rights are being respected and put into effect in Sweden. The Institute must also perform the tasks of an independent national mechanism under Article33(2) of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

12. The Government considers that the Institute has a key role to play in meeting the objective of ensuring full compliance with Sweden's international human rights obligations.

13. In November 2024, the Institute gained 'A status' from the accreditation body GANHRI, the highest accreditation for a national human rights institution.

III. Specific areas of human rights

A. Constitutional protection of democracy and fundamental rights and freedoms

1. Strengthened protection for democracy and the independence of the courts, etc.

14. Democracy, human rights and the rule of law lie at the heart of every state governed by law, and are central to the Swedish form of government and to Sweden as a state governed by law. Human rights are protected in Sweden's Constitution, and the European Convention on Human Rights is Swedish law.[4]

15. In 2020, an all-party committee of inquiry on the Constitution was tasked with strengthening the protection for Sweden's democratic structures in the Constitution by reviewing the forms for amending the Constitution, and the need to further strengthen the independence of the courts and judges in the long term. The committee's report[5] of March 2023 contains several proposals which aim to make it more difficult to amend the Constitution and to strengthen the independence of the courts and judges.

16. In light of the proposals of the constitutional all-party committee of inquiry of 2020, in April 2024 the Government appointed an inquiry tasked with reviewing certain questions relating to the legal status of ordinary judges in order to further strengthen the independence of the courts and judges in the long term. A report on the task must be presented by 13 May 2025.[6]

17. In June 2023, the Government decided that an all-party committee would review whether protection for fundamental rights and freedoms in Sweden should be further strengthened, including whether constitutional protections should be expanded to include the right to abortion, the right to judicial review and a general protection against discrimination A report was presented to the Government on 15 January 2025.[7]

2. Public gatherings

18. In Sweden, the freedoms of expression and assembly are constitutionally protected and extensive. They include the right to express opinions that others may perceive as provocative or hurtful. However, these freedoms are not without limits; they are limited today by national and international law.[8]

19. In October 2023, Sweden received a visit from the UN's Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief. In connection with the visit, the Government reiterated its commitment to combating ethnically and religiously motivated hate crimes. Hate crimes are

criminalised in Swedish law, for example by means of the offence *agitation against a population group*.

20. In Sweden, permits are required for public gatherings, such as demonstrations, in public places. Under the Public Order Act, permits may be refused only if necessary for reasons such as public order or safety at the location in question or with regard to traffic.

21. The Swedish Police Authority examines applications for permits for public gatherings. The Authority is independent in its assessments. How the Police Authority makes its assessments is a matter for the Authority alone. The Police Authority is also responsible for public order and safety at demonstrations and is responsible for ensuring that the freedoms of assembly and to demonstrate are respected. Where an offence is committed, police officers can arrest the person who commits the offence.

22. In August 2023, an inquiry chair was tasked with reviewing how circumstances related to Sweden's national security could be taken into account when examining applications for permits and imposing conditions for public gatherings under the Public Order Act. The remit required that the proposals should be compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights and Sweden's other international obligations. The mandate did not include giving suggestions on changes in fundamental law. The inquiry submitted its report[9] to the Government in summer 2024.[10]

B. Measures for legal certainty

1. Measures related to organised crime

23. The Government is implementing a change in crime policy that shifts the focus from the perpetrator to the victim and society's need for protection. For example, tougher penalties for unlawful coercion, making an unlawful threat, making a gross unlawful threat, robbery, extortion and gross extortion were introduced on 1 July 2023.[11]

24. In April 2024, provisions on security zones (also known as 'stop-and-search zones') were introduced into the Police Act (1984:387). The Police Authority can decide on security zones, in which police officers have extended powers to search for weapons and dangerous objects in a demarcated area for a maximum of two weeks. The purpose of this is to prevent shootings and explosions in criminal settings. The legislation explicitly requires that the grounds for the security zone should outweigh considerations relating to the harm or prejudice that this measure may entail for individuals or an interest opposing the measure.[12] The Police Authority has been tasked with reporting on how extensive the application of security zones has been, how large the zones have been, for how long the zones have been in force and how many arrests have been made in these zones. The Police Authority has produced a guide for the security zones.

25. Legislative amendments that recently entered into force[13] give law enforcement authorities expanded powers to use coercive preventive measures in order to prevent serious crime.[14] At the same time, legal certainty and the protection of the individual's privacy have been strengthened, including through improved transparency and supervision powers and expanded prohibitions on interception and surveillance.

2. Measures for children in detention and other detainees

26. Legislative amendments that came into force in 2021 mean that a person under 18 years of age suspected of committing a crime and remanded in custody has the right to be with staff or someone else for at least four hours of every day. Furthermore, time limits were introduced for remand, which means that a suspect may be remanded in custody for a maximum of nine months before charges are brought. If the suspect has not reached the age of 18, the maximum time in remand is three months.[15] The Government has decided on a new Ordinance (2023:797) with instructions for the Prison and Probation Service.[16]

27. Tasked by the Government in 2023, the Service identified measures aimed at reducing isolation for detainees. The goal is to break up the isolation of remand by giving all detainees, children as well as adults, more time with others. In 2023, the Service also decided to allocate

resources to metropolitan remand centres specifically for measures to break up isolation for children, as these remand centres generally have more child detainees than the other centres in the country.

C. Asylum and migration

28. The asylum examination system in Sweden has effective guarantees to ensure a legally secure process. In cases involving a child, particular attention must be given to requirements concerning the child's health and development and the best interests of the child in general. The principle of non-refoulement has long been part of Swedish law and is expressed in the Aliens Act (2005:716).[17] The rules on family reunification are designed to assure the right to family life.

D. Measures to combat discrimination and exclusion and promote integration

1. Legislation against discrimination

29. Work to safeguard effective and comprehensive legislation against discrimination continues. The goal of anti-discrimination policy is a society free from discrimination. There are continued challenges in the field of discrimination.

30. As mentioned in the mid-term report, the Inquiry on certain provisions in the Discrimination Act has submitted an interim report[18] and its final report.[19] Among other things, the final report proposes strengthening protection against discrimination in public sector activities, and the Government has announced that it intends to present a legislative proposal to this effect.

31. Currently, protection against discrimination is not uniform across the public sector and the Government has therefore concluded that the current legislation means that individuals have weaker protection against discrimination in their contacts with some government agencies compared with others. The Government therefore intends to draft a legislative proposal on increased protection from discrimination in public sector activities.

32. Two EU directives on standards for equality bodies in the field of equal treatment were adopted in May 2024 and must be implemented in Swedish law by June 2026. The purpose of these directives is to strengthen the role of equality bodies.

2. Equality Ombudsman and the anti-discrimination offices

33. The Equality Ombudsman (DO) has a central role in combating discrimination. The DO's mandate is broad, covering many different areas. The DO's appropriation has increased steadily since its establishment in 2009.

34. Anti-discrimination offices are civil society organisations that work to prevent and combat discrimination at the local level, e.g. offering free advice to people who feel they have been discriminated against.[20]

3. Specifically about discrimination due to ethnic origin and religion or beliefs

35. Discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin and religion or belief is prohibited under the Discrimination Act. The prohibition covers several different sectors in society including the workplace and health care. The DO has implemented initiatives to acquire and communicate increased knowledge in the field.

36. The Education Act (2010:800) and the Discrimination Act (2008:567) prohibit discrimination on the grounds of religion or beliefs in the area of education. The Instrument of Government contains a specific provision that protects religious freedom, according to which everyone is guaranteed freedom of religion in relation to the public domain.[21]

4. Efforts to improve integration and counter exclusion

(a) Work to improve integration

37. The overall objective of integration policy is that those in Sweden long-term should work to become part of society and that society should both impose demands and provide opportunities for integration.

38. People who come to Sweden must establish themselves in the labour market and become self-supporting as soon as possible. The Government is taking steps to promote integration with the aim of expanding newly arrived immigrants' networks and building trust and familiarity with activities crucial to integration in society and the labour market. Investments also continue to be made in education to create more pathways to work and to strengthen children's and pupils' language, reading and writing skills and to improve learning outcomes in schools. Tasked by the Government, the Swedish National Agency for Education has implemented efforts to strengthen the quality of education for newly arrived children and pupils or who have a mother tongue other than Swedish.[22]

(b) Work to counter exclusion

39. The Government is working with general measures as well as with targeted measures to counter exclusion in Sweden and the risk that children and young people grow up in insecure circumstances with poorer chances in life.

40. The Government has received an in-depth analysis of the neighbourhoods where exclusion is particularly great, which will enable it to better target its work to counter exclusion. Initiatives in preschools and schools are very important for the future prospects of children and young people, and the Government is implementing a number of initiatives in this area. The draft new Social Services Act and the transition to more preventive work in social services are also important elements in the Government's efforts to counter exclusion.

5. Efforts for equal rights and opportunities

41. The Government is implementing several measures nationally to strengthen equal rights and opportunities for LGBTQI persons.

42. The following are examples of these measures. The Swedish Gender Equality Agency has been tasked with mapping the risk of domestic violence among LGBTQI persons and to propose concrete initiatives. The Government of the time also tasked the National Centre for Knowledge on Men's Violence against Women with operating a help line for transgender and non-binary people who are victims of violence. The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society has been tasked with carrying out an in-depth analysis of the need for support initiatives to combat honour-related violence and oppression, including young LGBTQI persons being exposed to sexual orientation change efforts (SOCE) or gender identity change efforts (GICE). Work is also ongoing to develop a new and updated action plan for equal rights and opportunities for LGBTQI persons.

43. A report[23] concludes that neither a specific regulation criminalising SOCE and GICE targeting LGBTQI persons nor a special ground for imposing tougher penalties for such efforts should be introduced. The reason for this assessment is that the current regulation provides plenty of scope for criminal law to intervene against the practices of SOCE and GICE. The question of how to combat SOCE and GICE effectively is the object of analysis at the Government Offices.

E. Measures to combat racism and hate crime

1. National plan to combat racism, similar forms of hostility and hate crime

44. The Government is working to make Sweden a country free of racism and hate crime. In 2022, the Government decided[24] on five action programmes for the period 2022–2024 targeting Afrophobia, antisemitism, antigypsyism, Islamophobia, and racism against Sámi people. The work has helped to increase knowledge about racism and discrimination, and

strengthened the capacity of government agencies to integrate work in this area into their activities. In December 2024, the Government launched a new action plan to combat racism and hate crime so that this work can be more accurate, measurable and long-term.

2. Measures to increase knowledge, education and research on racism and hate crime

45. Since 2015, The Living History Forum has been tasked with conducting courses on various forms of historical and contemporary racism for staff in schools and various occupational groups in public sector activities. Employees at the offices of the Swedish Public Employment Service, social workers and Police Authority employees are among those who have participated in these courses.

46. In 2022 for the period 2022–2024, the agency was tasked with developing and distributing material describing a methodology for work to combat racism so public sector activities' treatment of the public could be quality assured.

47. The agency has also produced support material for teachers on racism against Sámi people and Islamophobia.

48. In 2024 and 2025, with the Swedish National Agency for Education the Living History Forum will further develop their work on strengthening democracy in the school system in order to combat antisemitism and other forms of racism.

49. The National Agency for Education will also inquire into children's, pupils' and staff's experiences of antisemitism in the school system, and schools' work to combat this, in a national study.[25]

50. The Living History Forum is implementing knowledge-enhancing efforts to combat antisemitism in collaboration with the Segerstedt Institute and the Swedish Committee against Antisemitism (SKMA). A higher education course intended to provide in-depth knowledge of antisemitism and educational tools for teaching in schools has been established.[26]

51. The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society has implemented actions aimed at increasing awareness of antigypsyism and racism against Sámi people and strengthening work on better treatment of young Sámi and Roma people in the activities of the municipalities and regions.

52. The Swedish Agency for Support to Faith Communities has implemented efforts to strengthen security for faith communities and increase knowledge about their security situation and their exposure to various forms of racism and hate crime. In collaboration with the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society, the Agency has also been tasked with implementing knowledge-enhancing efforts to prevent and combat anti-Muslim racism.

53. Within the framework of their mandate to support municipalities and regions in their work on human rights, county administrative boards have been tasked with describing how efforts to combat various forms of racism, including antisemitism, can be included.

54. The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (BRÅ) has conducted in-depth studies on antisemitic, Islamophobic, and Afrophobic hate crimes, as well as hate crimes targeting Sámi people, in Sweden. These provide important input for work in this area. The latest study, published in 2024, shows that hate crimes targeting Sámi people occur in a variety of contexts.[27] Reindeer-herding Sámi are potentially particularly vulnerable to hate crimes. BRÅ was also recently tasked with conducting a similar study concerning antigypsy hate crimes. On behalf of the Government of the time, BRÅ conducted a study of hate crimes targeting the Sámi minority. The Government intends to continue efforts to prevent hate crime targeting Sámi people.[28]

3. Legislation

55. On 1 July 2024, protection against racist hate speech was strengthened through legislative amendments clarifying and expanding the provision on agitation against a population group. The amendments mean that individuals who are victims of the offence *agitation against a population group* can be granted injured party status and the right to damages. Furthermore, the amendments explicitly criminalise Holocaust denial and certain

other international criminal offences. It is proposed that similar amendments to Sweden's Freedom of the Press Act should enter into force on 1 January 2027.[29]

56. In 2019, the Government of the time tasked a committee of inquiry with considering a prohibition on racist organisations. The committee proposed that participation in the activities of a racist organisation should be criminalised under certain conditions, but the proposal was widely criticised.[30] The Government has appointed a new committee to assess whether freedom of association should be restricted in relation to criminal associations. The committee presented its report on 15 January 2025.

4. Other areas

57. Hate crimes are dealt with by specially designated prosecutors. There is at least one such prosecutor in every local public prosecution office. The Swedish Prosecution Authority regularly takes measures to enhance the quality of its work to combat hate crimes. These include appointing specialists in hate crime who work to enhance knowledge about hate crime among these prosecutors. These specialists also lead a national network of hate crime prosecutors from all over the country.

58. Between December 2021 to December 2023, the Police Authority had a special government mandate to continue developing and improving its work to combat hate crime and other crime that threatens democracy.[31] The work has created better conditions for identifying hate crimes early, and for more legally secure assessments in these cases.

59. Combating hate crime is part of the Government's new strategy against violent extremism and terrorism.[32] In February 2024, the Government decided to task the Police Authority, along with several other government agencies, with taking measures to incorporate the national strategy into their operations. The strategy states that the Police Authority shall continue to develop its work to investigate people for hate crimes and other crimes that threaten democracy, as well as its work to combat IT-related hate crimes.

F. Measures for gender equality and to prevent domestic violence

1. Policy objective, government agency and gender mainstreaming

60. The overall policy objective for Swedish gender equality policy is that women and men must have the same power to shape society and their own lives. The Gender Equality Agency is key to the implementation of gender equality policy.

61. In 2018–2023, about 90% of the budget for specific gender equality measures was spent on the sub-objective of combating men's violence against women. The remaining funding financed efforts for gender mainstreaming and the five other sub-objectives.[33]

62. The Government Offices' gender mainstreaming work monitors government decisions and includes the budget process, the legislative process, agency governance and international work. Statistics Sweden (SCB) follows up on this work annually.

63. Since 2013, the Government has had a development programme for gender mainstreaming in government agencies (GMGA), which now includes some fifty agencies.[34]

64. Gender-disaggregated statistics, and analyses of these statistics, are fundamental to work on gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting. Statistics Sweden has developed a digital platform to support the utilisation of gender-disaggregated statistics.

2. Representation

65. The Government has established a new central government grant to strengthen women's and girls' organising in areas with socioeconomic challenges. This will encourage more women and girls to get involved in voluntary work. The central government grant is in line with the overall policy sub-objective that there should be an equal distribution of power and influence between women and men. Funding for this initiative has increased substantially.

66. In 2022, the Gender Equality Agency was tasked with carrying out an in-depth study of empowerment and participation in local democracy, as well as activities to spread knowledge and share experience. These activities will target individual municipalities and civil society at the local level.

3. Domestic violence and honour-related violence and oppression

67. The Government has recently launched an action programme for 2024–2026 containing over 130 measures to prevent and combat men's violence against women, domestic violence, honour-related violence and oppression, and prostitution and human trafficking. The programme highlights four areas for development that should be given special attention in the coming years:

- A programme for leaving destructive relationships;
- A mobilisation against honour-related violence and oppression;
- Strengthened support for children and young people experiencing violence, including children taken abroad in honour-related contexts; and
- Enhanced knowledge of the digital dimensions of violence.

68. The Government has also decided on several tasks for the relevant government agencies. For example, the National Board of Health and Welfare has been tasked with analysing the conditions for and proposing a coordinated chain of support for victims of violence. The Swedish Prison and Probation Service, the Swedish Police Authority, the National Board of Health and Welfare, and the Swedish Prosecution Authority have all been tasked with strengthening their operational cooperation in efforts to prevent and combat men's violence against women.

69. Women between the ages of 20 and 24 belong to the group most exposed to sexual offences. Several government agencies are working to prevent violence in young people's relationships and to increase knowledge about digital violence. The Government has tasked several government agencies with mapping the current state of knowledge about the digital dimensions of several areas[35] to develop measures.

70. Uppsala University[36] is tasked by the Government with supporting the operation of national help lines addressing women, men, non-binary persons, and persons of trans experience. To reach more target groups, accessible chat functions for all help lines will be developed. Uppsala University is also tasked with introducing an EU-wide harmonised number for helplines for victims of violence.

71. Since October 2022, the Government has intensified its work against honour-related violence and oppression. The Government is investing in regional resource centres and has set up a national support function, launched in June 2024, for individuals subjected to honour-related violence and oppression.

72. The National Agency for Education has been tasked with working to strengthen efforts to combat honour-related violence and oppression in schools and preschools. BRÅ monitors the offence of *gross violation of integrity* and, as tasked by the Government, has carried out a national survey of the incidence of domestic violence offences, as there were previously no population-level statistics on the incidence of various forms of violence from a current or former partner.

73. Changes to the compulsory school curriculum related to sexuality, consent and relationships have been applied from the 2022 autumn term. According to the new formulations, schools have a responsibility to ensure that pupils regularly get to work with this area of knowledge to assist them in making conscious and independent choices. The School Inspectorate has been tasked with reviewing the work of schools arising from these changes in the curriculum.

74. Since July 2022, the Swedish Police Authority has been tasked with developing its work to enhance police employees' competence in how to respond to people with mental illness in cases of domestic violence.

4. Legislation

75. On 1 January 2022, a number of legislative amendments were implemented.[37] The minimum penalty for the offences *gross violation of integrity* and *gross violation of a woman's integrity* was increased from imprisonment for nine months to imprisonment for one year. Tougher penalties for breach of a non-contact order were introduced resulting in fines being removed from the range of punishment. Less serious breaches of non-contact orders are no longer free from penalty, but will instead be punishable by fines.[38] An expanded non-contact order can now be combined with electronic monitoring as a first-line measure.

76. In order to strengthen the protection against serious sexual violations committed remotely, such as over the Internet, the provisions on rape and sexual assault were expanded on 1 August 2022.[39] At the same time, the provisions on rape were made neutral regarding gender and sexual orientation. An entirely new penalty provision on gross sexual molestation was introduced, and tougher penalties were implemented for a number of offences in order to better reflect their seriousness.[40]

77. In February 2024, the Inquiry to review the non-contact order legislation submitted its report.[41] Among other things, the Inquiry proposes that it should be possible to impose non-contact orders in more situations than currently, and that more extensive non-contact orders to a greater extent should be used as a first-line measure and cover a larger geographical area. Furthermore, the presumption of a non-contact order should be introduced after a conviction for, for example, more serious violent offences against a person with whom the offender is, or has previously been, in a close relationship.[42]

78. A report[43] was submitted in November 2023. The Inquiry proposes, among other things, that the provision on the rape of a child should be expanded to include cases where a person exploits a child under the age of 18 who has a reduced capacity to safeguard their sexual integrity due to, for example, mental illness, disability, abuse or the offender's authority. Furthermore, the Inquiry proposes that the criminalised area for purchase of sexual services and procuring should be expanded to include sexual acts carried out without physical contact, and that gender should be added as a new ground in the provision on aggravating circumstances for hate crimes. A draft proposal is now being prepared within the Government Offices of Sweden.

79. In recent years, a number of measures have been taken to combat honour-related violence and oppression, which mainly affects girls and women.

80. On 1 June 2022, a new offence was introduced: *honour-based oppression*. The provision contains a special stricter penalty scale for those who repeatedly commits certain criminal acts with a motive to preserve or restore the honour of a person or of an immediate or wider family or some other similar group, if the acts was part of a repeated violation of the person's integrity and were liable to severely damage the person's self-esteem. The punishment is imprisonment for a minimum of one and a maximum of six years.

81. In January 2024, the Government appointed an inquiry in order to strengthen measures to combat honour-related violence and oppression. The inquiry will – among other things – consider whether the penalty scales should be stricter for certain honour-related offences including forced marriage, child marriage and deception for the purpose of marriage.[44] In addition, the inquiry is to consider whether the group of persons who can be held criminally liable for allowing a child to marry, or travel to another country for the purpose of subjecting the child to marriage in that country, should be expanded. Furthermore, the inquiry is to consider whether attempts and conspiracy to commit deception for the purpose of marriage abroad should also be criminalised. A report must be presented by 18 April 2025.

5. The gender pay gap

82. In Sweden, responsibility for wage formation lies with the social partners. The employer and employee organisations work actively to reduce the pay gap between women and men. Under the sub-objective of economic equality, men and women must have the same opportunities and conditions regarding paid work to provide economic independence throughout their lives. When it comes to the gender pay gap, the objective has not been met. In 2023, the gender pay gap was 10%. When factors such as occupation, sector, education,

age and working hours are taken into account, the unexplained pay gap is 4.8%. The single most important cause of the difference in pay is that women and men work in different occupations and these occupations have different pay levels.

83. Many efforts have been made to achieve equal pay between men and women. For example, Sweden is implementing the EU's Pay Transparency Directive (EU) 2023/970. The Directive aims to strengthen the application of the principle of equal pay for men and women for equal work or work of equal value (the equal pay principle).[45] The Government appointed an inquiry on the implementation of the Directive which submitted its report in May 2024.[46]

84. In March 2020, the Government at the time decided to appoint a commission for gender-equal lifetime incomes tasked with presenting proposals intended to increase economic gender equality in Sweden in the long term. The commission's report[47] was submitted in February 2022. The commission stressed that the Work Environment Act (1977:1160) and the Discrimination Act (2008:567) remain the most central laws for promoting gender-equal workplaces. Aided by the proposals in the commission's report, the Government has initiated several tasks to the relevant government agencies. The tasks deal with teleworking after the COVID-19 pandemic, women's entrepreneurship, women's establishment in the labour market, gender equality in the housing market, and an analysis of lifetime incomes.

85. Under the Discrimination Act, all employers must conduct a pay survey each year. Employers with ten employees or more must also document their work on the survey. The purpose of the survey includes employers being able to detect, remedy and prevent unfair differences in pay between women and men.

6. Genital mutilation

86. The Gender Equality Agency coordinates and supports the development and implementation of government agency efforts to prevent and combat genital mutilation in girls and women. The Migration Agency, the Agency for Participation, the Agency for Support to Faith Communities, the Police Authority, the National Board of Health and Welfare and the Prosecution Authority contribute actively to this work.

7. Marriage and division of marital property

87. In September 2023, an inquiry was appointed to develop a proposal for a prohibition on marriage between cousins to counter honour-based oppression and lack of freedom in general when entering into marriage. The inquiry, which reported on its remit on 8 October 2024, assessed that the proposal can be expected to lead to increased gender equality. This is because girls and women are often more vulnerable in an honour-related context.[48] [49]

88. The Government has appointed an inquiry chair with the remit to review the rules in the Marriage Code on the process of marital property division and the reconsideration period.[50] The aim is to ensure a well-functioning, effective and legally secure system for people who wish to separate, and thereby to counter economic violence.

G. Measures to combat human trafficking

89. The Swedish model for combating human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation includes measures to reduce the demand for sexual services. Therefore, purchasing sexual services is prohibited but selling sexual services is not.

90. In 2022, changes were made to the Aliens Act that allow social services to apply for a temporary residence permit for recovery and reflection for presumed victims of human trafficking or human exploitation. The legislative changes increase the opportunities for presumed victims to receive support without having to contact the police, for example.[51]

91. For the period 2025–2027, the Government intends to develop a new national action plan to prevent and combat exploitation in prostitution and human trafficking and to strengthen the protection of victims.

92. Since June 2021, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency has been tasked with strengthening the work to combat the sexual exploitation of children, prostitution and human trafficking. The Agency has further developed its preventive efforts, strengthened its skills and method support and developed its cooperation at the national and international levels. The Agency also coordinates Sweden's regional coordinators and distributes funds for the national support programme and the return programme.

93. Since 2015, the national support programme has been run by the Swedish Platform Civil Society against Human Trafficking. This programme supplements the support that society can provide via its formalised support and protection process. The return programme aims to ensure that people who are victims of human trafficking and exploitation can return to their home countries safer and is administered by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

94. In June 2024, the Gender Equality Agency was tasked with mapping the current state of knowledge about the digital dimensions of prostitution and human trafficking, and to propose measures for increasing skills and to reduce exposure to digital violence. The Gender Equality Agency is responsible for the national coordination of efforts to combat human trafficking and for a formalised support process for victims. The regional coordinators are an important link in this support process. The Gender Equality Agency coordinates Sweden's regional coordinators. As part of the support process, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency operates a help line for professionals working in the area.

95. In September 2024, the Government extended the Agency's mandate to, together with the eight other government agencies, continue their cooperation as well as the joint work at the seven regional centres to help combat work-related crime. The mandate includes working to combat human trafficking, human smuggling and human exploitation in the workplace. The mandate runs until the end of 2026.

96. To raise the ambition in Sweden's efforts to combat work-related crime, in the 2025 Budget Bill the Government proposed to increase the funding for the nine government agencies that are jointly cooperating to combat work-related crime. This also includes funding for the regional coordinators combating prostitution and human trafficking, and their participation in the regional centres to combat work-related crime.

97. In the 2025 Budget Bill, the Government proposed initiatives to strengthen support for victims of prostitution.

98. In December 2023, the Government received a report[52] from the inquiry on exit programmes for victims of prostitution. The inquiry proposed introducing individually designed exit programmes and contact pathways to get help, support and protection. The report was circulated for consultation in spring 2024 and will be prepared at the Government Offices.

H. Measures for the rights of the child

1. Compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child

99. The Convention on the Rights of the Child has been part of Swedish law since 2020. The National Audit Office, which has reviewed compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Sweden, considers that the Government has generally laid the groundwork for the implementation of the Convention, but that there is a need for this work to continue. The Government is therefore taking two new measures to continue its work on compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. These are analysis and evaluation of the national strategy on the rights of the child, and mapping and analysis of further guidance for public actors' work with the rights of the child and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

2. Violation of a child's integrity

100. A new offence, violation of a child's integrity, graded into two degrees of severity, was introduced on 1 July 2021 to enhance the legal protection in Sweden's Penal Code of children who witness domestic violence.[53]

3. Access to care and treatment for child victims of violence

101. The Government has commissioned the National Board of Health and Welfare to implement measures to support equal, evidence-based care for victims of sexual violence. The remit includes a detailed mapping and analysis of the need for appropriate, cost-effective measures to develop health care for both children and adults who have been victims of sexual assault and sexual violence.

4. Health care

102. To strengthen Sweden's work on the health of children and young people, special efforts are needed to increase society's interfaces with younger children and their families in areas with socioeconomic challenges. An important component of this work is greater collaboration between central government, municipal and regional actors.[54] The Government therefore supports the work of municipalities and regions, for example via expanded home visit programmes.

103. Together with several other government agencies, the National Board of Health and Welfare has been tasked with developing a national health programme for children and young people up to the age of 20. The aim of the programme is to create more coherent, regular, equal monitoring of the health of children and young people, regardless of where in the country the child or young person lives. The task continues until October 2025.

104. The Government has appointed an inquiry on improving pupil health. Its remit includes proposing how pupils who are victims of honour-related violence or oppression can receive support and help from the School Health Service more rapidly.[55]

5. Child early and forced marriage and sexual exploitation

105. Child marriage[56] constitutes an obstacle to gender equality and is found in the context of honour-related violence and oppression, for example. The Government has appointed an inquiry whose remit includes assessing whether the group of persons who can be held criminally liable for child marriage offences should be expanded, and whether attempts and conspiracy to commit deception for the purpose of marriage abroad should also be criminalised.[57]

106. In November 2023, a report[58] was submitted by the inquiry. The inquiry's proposals include expanding the provision on rape of a child to cases in which someone exploits a child under the age of 18 who has a reduced capacity to protect their sexual integrity, for example owing to mental ill-health. The report has been referred for consultation.[59]

107. Several legislative changes to enhance the protection of children against sexual assault were introduced on 1 August 2022.[60] The provisions on rape of a child and sexual assault of a child were expanded to strengthen the protection against serious sexual violations committed remotely, for example via the Internet. At the same time, the provision on rape of a child was made neutral concerning gender and sexual orientation. Entirely new penalty provisions were also introduced on sexual molestation of a child, gross sexual molestation of a child and gross sexual molestation. Several tougher penalties were also implemented.[61]

108. Having been tasked by the Government of the time, the Police Authority and the Prosecution Authority have developed efforts to combat IT-related sexual assault of children. In 2023, the Government agencies produced a new guide to the law on investigations into child pornography offences. The guide contains a new working method which aim to make it possible to prosecute more people.

109. In December 2023, the Government received another report.[62] The inquiry's proposals include that knowledge about sexual exploitation for pornographic purposes needs to be improved in the community, and that knowledge about how to identify sexual risk exposure

and effective treatment methods in the health care system should be gathered and disseminated, in particular regarding children.

6. Legislation to enhance the protection of children

110. Under the new legislation on strengthened rights for children and adults in sheltered housing that entered into force in 2024, a child who is to accompany a custodian to sheltered housing must be assessed and granted the intervention individually. The social welfare committee has now been made responsible for ensuring that children in sheltered housing receive the health care they need.

111. To strengthen the protection of children against violence and other violations, the Government has adopted the *Safer homes for children* bill[63] with proposals for certain legislative amendments to the Parental Code. The Government proposes that the risk of a child being harmed be given an especially prominent place in the assessment of what the best interest of the child in matters of custody, housing and access. To improve the courts' access to decision guidance when assessing the risk of a child being harmed, it is also proposed that the court is obligated to obtain an expert opinion from a licensed psychologist in certain cases that are difficult to assess. It is also proposed that it be established that the best interests of the child take precedence over the right of access for a parent with whom the child does not live. The legislative changes entered into force on 1 January 2025.

7. Measures to prevent and combat crime among children and young people

112. In March 2024, the Government presented a national crime prevention strategy, *Barriers to crime*.[64] The focus of the strategy is social crime prevention initiatives to prevent children and young people from becoming involved in criminal networks and to get individuals who commit crimes to leave crime behind.

113. The Government has decided on a Council on Legislation consultation with a proposal for a new Social Services Act to replace the current Act. The proposal aims to create sustainable, more preventive and knowledge-based social services over the long term.

114. In 2024, the Family Law and Parental Support Authority will continue to pay out and follow up on central government grants for enhanced and equal parental support initiatives throughout the country to prevent crime among young people.

115. Municipalities, regions and other relevant actors in the at-risk areas identified by the Police Authority will be offered support to develop knowledge-based, coordinated, long-term parenthood support for parents with children up to the age of 18.

116. Social services need to be able to support and protect children at an early stage, even in the absence of consent. On 13 November 2024, an inquiry submitted proposals on the possibility for the social welfare committee to decide on open forms of intervention for custodians in the absence of consent and enhanced powers to decide on such interventions for children and young people.[65]

117. The Government has tasked several government agencies with setting up a collaborative structure for coherent work with children and young people who are at risk of committing or have committed serious offences in milieux linked to organised crime. The task was reported in December 2024.

118. For children and young people who need to be placed in care outside their own home, there must be good care provided in safe and secure forms. The inquiry on enhanced safety and security for children and young people in homes for care or residence (HVB)[66] has been tasked with investigating a greater differentiation of care in the context of HVB and the introduction of certain special powers when HVB are used for children and young people to ensure a safe, secure care environment and thus enhance HVB as part of the care chain.

119. To ensure that children and young people receive safe, high-quality care, education and treatment at the National Board of Institutional Care's (SiS) special residential homes for young people, a special review of SiS's remit and organisation is in progress.[67]

120. An inquiry chair has investigated certain special powers at SiS special residential homes for young people.[68] The proposal is for SiS's powers to be adjusted to enhance safety and security at its special residential homes for young people.

121. By setting up special juvenile prisons and allowing the Prison and Probation Service to be responsible for children and young people serving a custodial sentence, SiS, which is currently responsible for children and young people convicted of very serious crimes, can focus to a greater extent on its care mission.[69]

122. The offence of involving a minor in crime was introduced on 1 July 2023. A person who is guilty of the offence can be sentenced to imprisonment for a maximum of four years.

8. Leisure-time card for children and young people (*Fritidskort*)

123. In 2024, the relevant government agencies continued to work on preparing and introducing a leisure-time card for children and young people. The leisure-time card is designed to give children and young people aged 8–16 greater access to sport, cultural activities, outdoor recreation and participation in voluntary club and associations. This card is intended to give children and young people from socioeconomically disadvantaged households in particular greater opportunities to participate in sport and recreational activities. Children and young people with disabilities or other needs for special support should be given particular consideration so that card benefits them as much as others.

I. Measures for the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Sweden's national minorities

1. Information about measures for the Sámi people

124. In recent years, the Government has continued its ongoing efforts to strengthen Sámi influence and participation, and the status of the Sámi as an indigenous people and national minority.

125. The Sámi Parliament plays a crucial role in the realisation of Sámi self-determination. The Sámi Parliament is both a democratically elected parliament and government administrative authority tasked with promoting a vibrant Sámi culture in Sweden. The Sámi Parliament is also tasked with participating in spatial planning and monitoring that Sámi needs, including the interests of the reindeer husbandry are taken into account in matters concerning land and water use.[70] Amendments to the Sámi Parliament Act (1992:1433) entered into force on 1 August 2024, making the rules for elections to the Sámi Parliament clearer and more similar to those that apply to general elections. These include rules to ensure that Sámi people with disabilities can vote.

(a) Consultation and the Committee on Reindeer Lands

126. The new Sámi Consultation Act (2022:66) entered into force on 1 March 2022. The Act requires the Government and its administrative authorities to consult the Sámi Parliament, and at times also the reindeer herding communities and Sámi organisations, before making decisions on matters that can significantly affect the Sámi people. As of 1 March 2024, the Act was extended so that municipalities and regions have the same obligation.

127. In 2021, the Government at the time appointed a cross-party committee, the Committee on Reindeer Lands, with a remit to propose new reindeer husbandry legislation, taking into account the Supreme Court decision known as the Girjas judgment[71] among other things. In addition to representatives of all the parties in the Sámi Parliament and the Riksdag, the Committee also includes representatives of the Tornedalian minority and a large number of experts. The Committee presented its interim report[72] on 31 August 2023. The interim report, which was circulated for comment, has been widely criticised.[73] The considerable criticism clearly shows that a new approach is needed. As a result of the criticism, the Government intends to consult Sámi representatives, dismantle the Committee and then set up a new inquiry.[74]

(b) Education and language

128. Since July 2024, the compulsory school syllabus in the Sámi language has been expanded with a new track for Sámi as a second language for beginners. During the 2024/2025 school year, changes will be introduced into Sweden's Education Act and the Upper Secondary School Ordinance (2010:2039) and these will provide better conditions for upper secondary school pupils who want to study Sámi.

129. Umeå University has a special obligation from the Government to offer courses in Sámi. For more information, see Section 3.9.2.

130. The Sámi Education Board's remote tuition efforts allows knowledge of the Sámi language and Sámi culture to be conveyed in compulsory schools and upper secondary schools throughout Sweden, and work with integrated teaching of the Sámi language allows Sámi pupils' culture and identity to be strengthened.

131. During 2022–2024, an initiative to promote the national minority languages, including Sámi, was carried out.[75]

(c) The Truth Commission for the Sámi people

132. A Truth Commission was set up for the Sámi people on 3 November 2021.[76] The remit of the Truth Commission is to map and review the policies that were pursued historically in relation to the Sámi and their consequences for the Sámi people. The remit of the Commission is also to highlight and disseminate knowledge about the experiences of the Sámi people and the Commission's conclusions, and to propose measures that contribute to redress and promote reconciliation. The Truth Commission will present its final report in December 2025.

(d) Repatriation of Sámi remains and objects

133. In 2023, the Government tasked the Swedish National Heritage Board with analysing and describing the current legal, economic and practical bases for the identification and repatriation of Sámi objects and human remains. The final report on this task was submitted in March 2024. The Board assessed that there is a functioning legal framework in Sweden for returns, and submitted a number of proposals for facilitating return and repatriation processes.[77]

2. Minority policy

(a) Education and language

134. To ensure the right of national minorities to mother tongue education, the Government has adopted the Government Bill *Expanded right to study national minority languages for pupils in upper secondary school and upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities*.[78] The legislative proposals entered into force on 1 January 2024. Furthermore, the Government has tasked the National Agency for Education with responsibility for the national coordination of tuition in national minority languages and compensation for the additional costs of remote tuition in the languages.

135. The Government has specifically tasked four higher education institutions[79] with offering education in the national minority languages. These tasks were broadened in 2021 to include more types of school. Now, this work will promote tuition in and the teaching of the minority languages in preschool, compulsory school, upper secondary school and higher education. In their work, the higher education institutions must take into account the particular conditions that the languages have, and engage in dialogue with representatives of the national minorities. The higher education institutions also had a specific task to improve and develop work to revitalise and preserve the minority languages during 2022–2024.

136. During the period 2022–2024, temporary funds were allocated for initiatives in contexts such as the Action programme for the preservation and promotion of the national minority languages.[80]

137. For 2025, the Government has proposed additional funds for the coordination and follow-up of the policy area, and that funds are set aside to ensure that the activities within the Institute for Language and Folklore's language centre for Finnish, Yiddish, Meänkieli and Romany Chib can continue, as well as to strengthen the activities of the Sámi Language Centre.

(b) Roma inclusion

138. The Government is continuing to work on its long-term strategy for Roma inclusion,[81] with the priority areas of work, education and gender equality.

139. The National Board of Health and Welfare and the National Agency for Education were tasked with producing and disseminating a training programme for mediators with Roma language skills and cultural competence for their work in schools, adult education and social services or the health and medical care system during the period 2022–2024. The mediators serve as a link between the Roma and public activities.

140. The Stockholm County Administrative Board's task to coordinate, follow up and implement measures within the framework of the Roma inclusion strategy is to continue during 2024–2025.[82] The County Administrative Board of Stockholm was also tasked in 2022 with distributing central government grants to municipalities to promote Roma inclusion.[83]

141. Since 2020, the Swedish Public Employment Service has had two government mandates that aim to further develop work with Roma inclusion in its operations.[84]

142. Since 2022, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society has distributed central government grants for projects that promote Roma health through information, education and activities. In 2020, the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning received grants to combat discrimination against Roma in the housing market in the form of educational initiatives.

143. The Government Offices' consultation with the Roma is designed to help ensure that Roma can participate in and influence work on the Government's national minority policy. The Roma inclusion strategy states that Roma participation and Roma influence should be ensured in all aspects of this work.[85]

(c) Tornedalians, Kvens and Lantalais

144. On 15 November 2023, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Tornedalians, Kvens and Lantalais submitted its report[86] to the Government. In the Budget Bill for 2025, the Government proposes that funds be allocated for the reconciliation process to continue. The Government is keen for the process to take place in close dialogue with the minority.

(d) Jewish life

145. The Government intends to present a long-term strategy with measures to strengthen Jewish life in Sweden. Funds for this are proposed in the Budget Bill for 2025.

146. The Government's *Task force for Jewish life* initiative was presented in January 2023. The working group collaborates and conducts dialogue on preventive measures and efforts to improve the conditions for Jewish life and prevent and combat antisemitism in Sweden.[87]

147. The Government is going to implement further measures to prevent and combat antisemitism in the community. To finance this, funds are proposed in the 2025 Budget Bill. The Budget Bill also proposes a targeted grant of security enhancing funds to the Jewish minority.

J. Measures for the rights of persons with disabilities

1. Full participation and inclusion in society

148. Based on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the objective of the Government's national disability policy is to achieve equality in living conditions and full participation for persons with disabilities in a society founded on diversity. Achievement

of the objective is intended to enhance gender equality and to contribute to the child rights perspective being taken into account.[88] The Government has adopted a strategy for following up disability policy during the period 2021–2031. The aim of the strategy is to follow up disability policy in relation to the national objective.[89]

149. Individual support and solutions is one of the target areas to implement the Government's disability policy and a supplement to the general accessibility in society. In 2023, Sweden introduced new legislation with the aim of expanding the right to personal assistance, strengthening legal certainty in decisions made on personal assistance, and improving patient safety for persons with disabilities.

2. Education

150. In the school sector, the Government has allocated more funding to boost access to special needs teachers, opportunities to set up special classes and for special needs education initiatives. Furthermore, two agencies[90] have been tasked with developing professional development in special needs education with the aim of improving support for pupils with neurodevelopmental disorders.

3. Work

151. In recent years, several measures have been taken to increase transitions to work for persons with disabilities that reduce their capacity to work. For example, the importance of skills and activities to support people with disabilities has been emphasised in the new instruction for the Swedish Public Employment Service.[91]

152. The Public Employment Service is required to work to improve the labour market situation for persons with disabilities. For example, the Service provides support in the form of subsidised positions, where an employer can receive a subsidy to adjust the workplace and work to an individual with special needs due to a disability. The purpose of these positions is to help persons with disabilities to obtain and retain a job.[92]

153. Subsidies for start-up costs when starting a business are available to persons with disabilities that reduce their capacity to work. It often takes time to get up and running in a new business and the start-up phase may be longer for those with a disability. The Government therefore wants to extend the period during which people with disabilities can receive support to start a business, as this may make it easier for them to become self-supporting.

4. Participation for persons with disabilities

154. The Government is working actively to improve the conditions for persons with disabilities to participate in sports activities.[93]

155. The Government has also decided that the Swedish Sports Confederation must submit separate reports on the results and effects of central government grants for sport and their use for activities to promote the integration of persons with disabilities.

156. There is a great willingness and ambition in Swedish sport to create and improve conditions for parasports. Many specialist sports federations have developed plans and goals for this.

157. To enable specialist sports federations to develop their parasports activities, they can be offered initiatives as part of what is known as *Kompetenslyftet* (a national skills enhancement programme). There is great interest in and engagement with this.[94]

K. Health

1. Access to health care for all residents of Sweden, including children

158. In Sweden, healthcare is provided by the regions, which is regulated in Sweden's Health and Medical Services Act (2017:30).[95]

159. Access to health care must be equal for everyone who is registered in the population register in Sweden, regardless of where in the country the patient resides. Access must not be affected by circumstances such as age, gender, initiative, education, financial capacity, nationality or cultural differences. Children have access to free health care in all Swedish regions.

160. Under the Discrimination Act, discrimination is prohibited in the health care system. This prohibition comprises seven grounds, including ethnicity, disability and age. The Equality Ombudsman is responsible for monitoring compliance with the Act.

161. Several initiatives were taken in 2024 to address the challenges inherent in the health care system, including insufficient access and long waiting periods. In addition to investments in primary care, supply of skills and digital infrastructure in the health care system, initiatives have been taken to increase the capacity of the health care system, and to establish a national system for intermediation of healthcare.[96]

2. Mental health and suicide prevention

162. For 2024, funding was allocated to improve work in the municipalities and regions to promote mental health and to prevent mental ill-health and suicide, and to create the conditions for good, accessible health care and social care for patients with mental illnesses.

163. The Government is currently working on a new strategy in the area of mental health and suicide prevention.

164. The Government has appointed an inquiry to review how investigations following suicide can be conducted to improve suicide prevention work. Its report was presented on 1 October 2024. The Government has also appointed a coordinator for suicide prevention work across the nation.[97]

165. In addition, the Government has set aside considerable additional funding to the regions to improve access to health care, including child and adolescent psychiatry.

166. The Government has also appointed an inquiry on better governance for accessible and equal health care with good continuity. This inquiry is tasked with proposing a new, strengthened health care guarantee with substantially shorter waiting periods than today.[98]

167. The Government has increased funding to civil society organisations for the promotion of mental health and prevention of mental illness and suicide. A record amount was allocated for this purpose for 2024.

168. In the 2025 Budget Bill, the Government has invested increased resources in child and adolescent psychiatry and the work of primary care with mental (ill-)health.

169. The Government has tasked the National Board of Health and Welfare with strengthening and developing compulsory psychiatric care and forensic psychiatric care.[99]

170. The Government has also tasked the Health and Social Care Inspectorate with strengthening and developing the supervision of compulsory psychiatric care and forensic psychiatry.[100]

3. Swedish gender identity law

171. On 17 April 2024, the Riksdag adopted the Act on Certain Surgical Procedures on the Genitalia (2024:237), and the Act on Determining Gender in Certain Cases (2024:238).

172. An overall objective of this new legislation is to simplify the procedure for changing the gender shown for a person in the population register. The legislation means that the process for changing the gender shown in the population register for a person is separated from the process for surgical procedures on the genitalia.[101]

173. The age limit for changing legal gender has been reduced from 18 to 16 years of age. Those who are under the age of 18 and want to change their legal gender must have the consent of their parent or guardian.

L. Development cooperation

174. In 2023, about a quarter of Swedish aid channelled via Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) went to the area of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.[102]

IV. Concluding remarks

175. The Government and the Swedish government agencies are working actively and intensively to ensure strong protection for human rights in Sweden, as described in this report. The Government is aware that challenges remain. Work to promote and ensure respect for human rights in Sweden therefore continues.

Notes

[1] Govt Comm. 2016/17:29.
[2] The working group is also responsible for ensuring compliance with the Government Offices' procedures for monitoring with Sweden's international human rights obligations, which were updated in 2023, and that these procedures are disseminated internally within the Government Offices. For this purpose, the working group has appointed a sub-group. The working group also provide a forum for discussing material from the Swedish Institute for Human Rights.
[3] SOU 2023:40.
[4] Ensuring respect for human rights, in line with Sweden's international obligations, is central to all aspects of the Government's work. All new legislation is drafted to ensure that it accords with Sweden's obligations.
[5] Strengthened protection for democracy and the independence of the courts, etc. SOU 2023:12.
[6] ToR 2024:40.
[7] ToR 2023:83 and ToR 2024:92.
[8] For example, slander is not permitted, nor is committing an act that involves unlawful threats or agitation against a population group.
[9] SOU 2024:52.
[10] The report has been sent to a large number of consultation bodies, which have had the opportunity to comment on the proposals. The proposals and consultation comments are now being analysed within the Government Offices.
[11] Govt Bill 2022/23:53.
[12] According to the legislative history of the Police Act, an evaluation of this regulation must begin three years after its introduction, and must analyse its application from different perspectives, including equal treatment and privacy. The legislative history indicates that the Government also advised that it intends to ensure access to data for the evaluation by tasking the Swedish Police Authority with providing data.
[13] On 1 October 2023 and 1 September 2024, respectively.
[14] Govt Bill 2022/23:126 and Govt Bill 2023/24:117.
[15] The time limits may be exceeded if there are exceptional grounds, for example when the suspected offence is particularly difficult to investigate because it is part of organised crime.
[16] The Ordinance states that remand centres must be designed to provide for the rights of inmates and their various needs for employment. The Ordinance entered into force on 1 January 2024.
[17] The Act also contains provisions that ensure that the Migration Agency complies with the requests, decisions and judgments of the international bodies that are competent to hear complaints from individuals.
[18] SOU 2020:79.
[19] *Ett utökat skydd mot diskriminering* (Enhanced protection against discrimination), SOU 2021:94.
[20] The anti-discrimination offices receive central government grants and there are currently 18 anti-discrimination offices spread across the country.
[21] This means the freedom to practise one's religion alone or with others.
[22] Through the county administrative boards, civil society organisations and municipalities can apply for central government grants for initiatives that promote immigrants' establishment in society and in the labour market.
[23] Förstärkt skydd för den personliga integriteten – Behovet av åtgärder mot oskuldskontroller, oskuldsintyg och oskuldsingrepp samt omvändelseförsök (Strengthened personal integrity – the need for measures against virginity testing, virginity certification and hymen reconstruction surgery, and

SOCE and GICE) SOU 2023:37.

[24] Based on the national plan to combat racism, similar forms of hostility and hate crime, as well as dialogues with civil society.

[25] The final report on this study will be submitted in December 2025.

[26] The action programme to combat antisemitism states that the non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) can serve as an important tool in identifying and highlighting different expressions of antisemitism.

[27] For example in schools, workplaces and online, taking a variety of forms.

[28] In 2024, BRÅ was also tasked with carrying out two studies of hate crime with antisemitic and Islamophobic motives, primarily to enhance knowledge about the trend in these types of offences during autumn 2023.

[29] Govt Bill 2023/24:93.

[30] SOU 2021:27.

[31] The mandate included implementing skills enhancement efforts, strengthening its crime investigation capacity, and creating the basis for cooperation with other government agencies and organisations, as well as assuring dialogue with groups who are victims of hate crimes.

[32] Govt Comm. 2023/24:56.

[33] These are an equal distribution of power and influence, economic gender equality, gender equality in education, an equal distribution of unpaid housework and provision of care work, and gender equality in health, care and social services.

[34] The aim of the development programme is to strengthen these agencies' gender mainstreaming efforts so that their activities better contribute to the achievement of the national gender equality policy objectives. A similar programme targets higher education institutions.

[35] E.g. men's violence against women, domestic violence, and honour-related violence and oppression, as well as prostitution and human trafficking.

[36] The National Centre for Knowledge on Men's Violence Against Women.

[37] Govt Bill 2020/21:217.

[38] It will be possible to include defamation and gross defamation as an element in the offences *gross violation of integrity* and *gross violation of a woman's integrity*, as well as *unlawful harassment*.

[39] Govt Bill 2021/22:231.

[40] These include raising the minimum sentence for rape from imprisonment for two years to imprisonment for three years, and raising the minimum sentence for sexual assault from imprisonment for 14 days to imprisonment for six months.

[41] SOU 2024:13.

[42] The report has been circulated for consultation and is now being processed within the Government Offices of Sweden.

[43] *Ett starkare straffrättsligt skydd – mot sexuella kränkningar, bedrägerier i vissa fall och brott med hatmotiv avseende kön* (Stronger criminal law protection – against sexual violations, fraud in certain cases and offences with a gender-related hate motive) SOU 2023:80.

[44] ToR 2024:8.

[45] This includes increasing transparency in wage setting, establishing minimum requirements regarding the rules governing the prohibition against pay discrimination, and reinforcing enforcement mechanisms.

[46] SOU 2024:40.

[47] SOU 2022:4.

[48] Ds 2024:20.

[49] The inquiry's memorandum has been circulated for consultation and responses must be received by 6 March 2025.

[50] ToR 2024:107.

[51] Under certain conditions, the victim may also be granted a temporary residence permit for the purpose of cooperation in a preliminary investigation or criminal procedure.

[52] SOU 2023:97.

[53] This makes it a criminal offence to expose a child to witnessing certain criminal acts, such as assault and sexual offences, in the context of a domestic relationship.

[54] This includes child health centres, dental care, social services and preschools.

[55] U 2024:01.

[56] A separate offence in the Swedish Criminal Code since 2020.

[57] ToR 2024:8.

[58] *Ett starkare straffrättsligt skydd – mot sexuella kränkningar, bedrägerier i vissa fall och brott med hatmotiv avseende kön* (Stronger criminal law protection – against sexual violations, fraud in certain cases and offences with a gender-related hate motive), SOU 2023:80.

[59] The matter is now being prepared at the Government Offices.

[60] Govt Bill 2021/22:231.
[61] These include raising the minimum sentence for rape of a child from imprisonment for two years to imprisonment for three years, and raising the minimum sentences for sexual assault of a child and exploitation of a child through the purchase of a sexual act from imprisonment for 14 days to imprisonment for six months.
[62] *Sexuellt utnyttjande i pornografiska syften – våldsutsatthet som behöver synliggöras* (Sexual exploitation for pornographic purposes – subjection to violence that needs to be highlighted).
[63] Govt Bill 2024/25:10.
[64] Govt Comm. 2023/24:68).
[65] Ds 2024:30.
[66] ToR 2024:18 and ToR 2024:81.
[67] ToR 2024:13.
[68] S 2022:C.
[69] To ensure public confidence in the penal system, it is important that a person who has been convicted of an offence can be prevented from absconding or otherwise obstructing the enforcement of their sentence. A safe and secure environment during a period of deprivation of liberty is fundamental to ensuring that children and young people are guaranteed their right to protection and support.
[70] Among other things, the Sámi Parliament participates in consultation processes with central government and regional authorities. The Government has regular dialogue with the Sámi Parliament's political leadership on important matters of Sámi policy.
[71] Judgment of the Supreme Court of 23 January 2020 in T 853-18.
[72] *Jakt- och fiske i renbetesland* (Hunting and fishing in reindeer-grazing areas), SOU 2023:46.
[73] This included criticism from government agencies, municipalities and stakeholder organisations, as well as Sámi organisations and their representatives.
[74] The purpose of dismantling the Committee and the new inquiry is to develop long-term, sustainable proposals that have broad support from both those affected and the Riksdag. In accordance with Sweden's Sámi Consultation Act on consultation on issues that affect the Sámi people, Sámi representatives will be consulted.
[75] The initiative involved funds being earmarked for the Sámi Parliament's work with language technology, for the Sámi-Nordic languages body Sámi Giellagáldu, and to develop activities within the Sámi Language Centre.
[76] Ku 2021:02.
[77] The proposals are now being prepared at the Government Offices of Sweden.
[78] Govt. Bill 2022/23:132.
[79] Umeå University, Stockholm University, Södertörn University and Lund University.
[80] The funds have enabled initiatives such as a strengthening of education and research in Yiddish, strengthened reading and literature promotion measures for all the languages, new knowledge support for minority languages in care for older persons, and work in the area of Sámi language technology.
[81] Government communication 2011/12:56 A coordinated, long-term strategy for Roma inclusion 2012–2032.
[82] The County Administrative Board has offered municipalities and regions networking meetings and knowledge-enhancing support, among other things.
[83] The central government grants have been used in part to employ Roma mediators and to additional school support for Roma children.
[84] For example, the Employment Service is tasked with disseminating information among the Roma national minority about the support it has to offer and improving the opportunities for young Roma men and women to benefit from the Employment Service's initiatives.
[85] Since 2013, the Government Offices have had a Roma reference group, the purpose of which is to be an advisory dialogue partner for the Government Offices in work with the strategy.
[86] *Som om vi aldrig funnits – exkludering och assimilering av tornedalingar, kväner och lantalaiset* (As if we had never existed – exclusion and assimilation of Tornedalians, Kvens and Lantalais) SOU 2023:68.
[87] The working group includes state secretaries from six different ministries and representatives of the Jewish minority in Sweden, as well as representatives of relevant government agencies and organisations.
[88] The implementation of the national objective of the Government's disability policy is to focus on four areas: the principle of universal design, existing accessibility shortcomings, individual support, and solutions for the individual's independence and to prevent and combat discrimination.
[89] The follow-up is to be carried out by 29 agencies, with the support of the Swedish Agency for Participation (MFD).
[90] The National Agency for Education and the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools.

[91] The Employment Service has been tasked with strengthening support in order to effectively introduce the long-term unemployed to employers, and another task to substantially reduce the time it takes to identify a disability that reduces a person's capacity to work and to list the measures taken.

[92] The Public Employment Service has been tasked with increasing the number of people who receive a wage subsidy to get more persons with disabilities into work.

[93] This includes providing financial support to the sports movement, support for the knowledge platform for facilities and outdoor environments, and the investment in the leisure-time card (see Section 3.8.9).

[94] The number of federations participating in the training course increased from 40 to 60 (out of a total of 72 federations) from the end of 2022 to the end of 2023.

[95] The Act states that the goal of health care in Sweden is "good health and care on equal terms for the entire population" and that "care should be provided with respect for the equal value of all people and for the dignity of the individual. Those with the greatest need for health and medical care are to be given priority.

[96] This means that patients waiting for care are offered care by a health care provider (region) with shorter waiting periods than in their home region, regardless of where in the country this health care provider is located.

[97] This work will continue until the end of March 2027.

[98] ToR 2024:50.

[99] The task includes developing effective knowledge support, improving monitoring, strengthening the patient perspective and improving recovery, as well as preventing compulsory care and coercive measures. The task continues until the end of November 2025.

[100] The task continues until the end of May 2025.

[101] Under the new legislation, a diagnosis of gender dysphoria is no longer required to change the gender of a person in the population register. A certificate from a doctor or psychologist is sufficient. The new Act (2024:237) also does not require permission from the National Board of Health and Welfare to undergo gender affirming surgery.

[102] For example, it went to organisations, actors and networks that are working to promote human rights, democracy, and the rule of law; to strengthening independent institutions and systems that uphold human rights standards and processes; and to protecting people who are subjected to discrimination and oppression.