

Sweden's strategy for the Arctic region





Photo: Kristian Pohl/Government Offices of Sweden

Sweden is an Arctic country.

We have a particular interest and responsibility in promoting peaceful, stable and sustainable development in the Arctic.

The starting point for the new Swedish strategy for the Arctic region is an Arctic in change. The strategy underscores the importance of well-functioning international cooperation in the Arctic to deal with the challenges facing the region. The importance of respect for international law is emphasised. People, peace and the climate are at the centre of Sweden's Arctic policy.

Changes in the Arctic have led to increased global interest in the region. The Arctic Council is the central forum for cooperation in the Arctic, and Sweden stresses the special role of the eight Arctic states. At the same time, increased cooperation with observers to the Arctic Council and other interested actors is

becoming ever more necessary, especially in the climate and environmental area. The EU is an important Arctic partner, and Sweden welcomes stronger EU engagement in the region.

Swedish engagement in the Arctic has for a long time involved the Government, the Riksdag and government agencies, as well as regional and local authorities, indigenous peoples' organisations, universities, companies and other stakeholders in the Arctic region of Sweden.

A prosperous Arctic region contributes to our country's security and is therefore an important part of the Government's foreign policy.

Ann Linde
Minister for Foreign Affairs

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Sweden will contribute, as one of the eight Arctic countries, to peaceful, stable and sustainable development in the Arctic.

The Government wants to strengthen Sweden's Arctic profile by making use of the full range of knowledge and resources available in Sweden.

1.

Introduction – starting
points for Sweden as
an Arctic country

Sweden is an Arctic country. Sweden therefore has a particular interest in and responsibility for promoting peaceful, stable and sustainable development and contributing to constructive international cooperation in the Arctic. As one of the eight Arctic countries, Sweden is a member of the Arctic Council.

The Arctic is facing both new opportunities and severe challenges. This applies especially to the dramatic climate and environmental changes. Global warming has hit the Arctic particularly hard, reducing the extent of ice and permafrost cover and affecting biodiversity and the living conditions of the region's population. The indigenous peoples are particularly vulnerable. Climate change has also played a part in increasing the economic importance of the Arctic. The smaller ice cover creates new conditions for the use of natural resources and sea transport, for instance. The region's geostrategic importance has increased for both Arctic and non-Arctic states. Increased military presence and activity in the region have security policy consequences. COVID-19 has underlined the need for both resilience and preparedness in the local communities in the Arctic region to deal with pandemics.

Sweden has to take these changes in the Arctic into account. A Swedish core interest is to try to contribute to a peaceful, stable and sustainable development of the region through well-functioning international cooperation with Arctic and non-Arctic actors in the region. In both bilateral and multilateral settings, the Government will uphold an approach based on a broad concept of security. It is an overarching Swedish interest to uphold respect for international law and the rules-based world order, which form part

of the foundations for international security and stability in the region. The Government will also contribute to achieving relevant global Sustainable Development Goals in the 2030 Agenda in the Arctic, too, and show leadership in the implementation of the international climate agreement (the Paris Agreement) to limit global warming, including in the Arctic.

The changes in the Arctic have also led to increased international interest in the region. Several countries in Europe and Asia have become observers to the Arctic Council. The European Union (EU) has strengthened its Arctic profile. The Government welcomes this development and takes a positive view of the possibility of mobilising increased international support and engagement to address the global challenges, in the Arctic region, in particular the impacts of climate change.

At the same time, it is in Sweden's interest to safeguard the special role and position of the Arctic states in promoting peaceful, stable and sustainable development in the Arctic region, mainly by strengthening cooperation in the Arctic Council.

The Government's previous strategy for the Arctic region was adopted in 2011, the same year that Sweden assumed the rotating two-year Chairmanship of the Arctic Council for the first time. In the light of the rapid developments in the region, there is now reason for the Government to adopt a new integrated approach to Arctic policy.

This renewed strategy is intended to set out the Government's objectives and main priorities in relation to the Arctic region and to specify the political direction of further work on the Arctic in six thematic areas:

1. international collaboration;
2. security and stability;
3. climate and the environment;
4. polar research and environmental monitoring;
5. sustainable economic development and business interests;
6. securing good living conditions.

One important starting point for the strategy is to make use of the full range of knowledge and resources available in Sweden regarding the Arctic region so as to contribute to sustainable development in the Arctic and also to enhance Sweden's profile as an important actor in this respect. For a long time, Sweden's engagement in the Arctic has involved not only the Government, the Riksdag and government agencies, but also regional and local authorities, indigenous peoples' organisations, higher education institutions, businesses and other actors in Sweden's Arctic region.

1.1 Guiding principles of Swedish foreign policy

The Government's Arctic policy is based on the basic principles that guide Sweden's broad foreign and security policy. Central among them are respect for international law, human rights, democracy, the principles of the rule of law and gender equality.

The Government stands up for democratic principles in all contexts and is working to strengthen democracy. This applies both to our own situation in our neighbourhood and to our efforts in support for peace, security and development in the world. Gender equality is essential to democracy.

1.2 Global framework for sustainable development and climate work

The past decade has seen considerable development in the normative area of particular importance for managing global challenges such as the rapid climate change, and for working for economically,

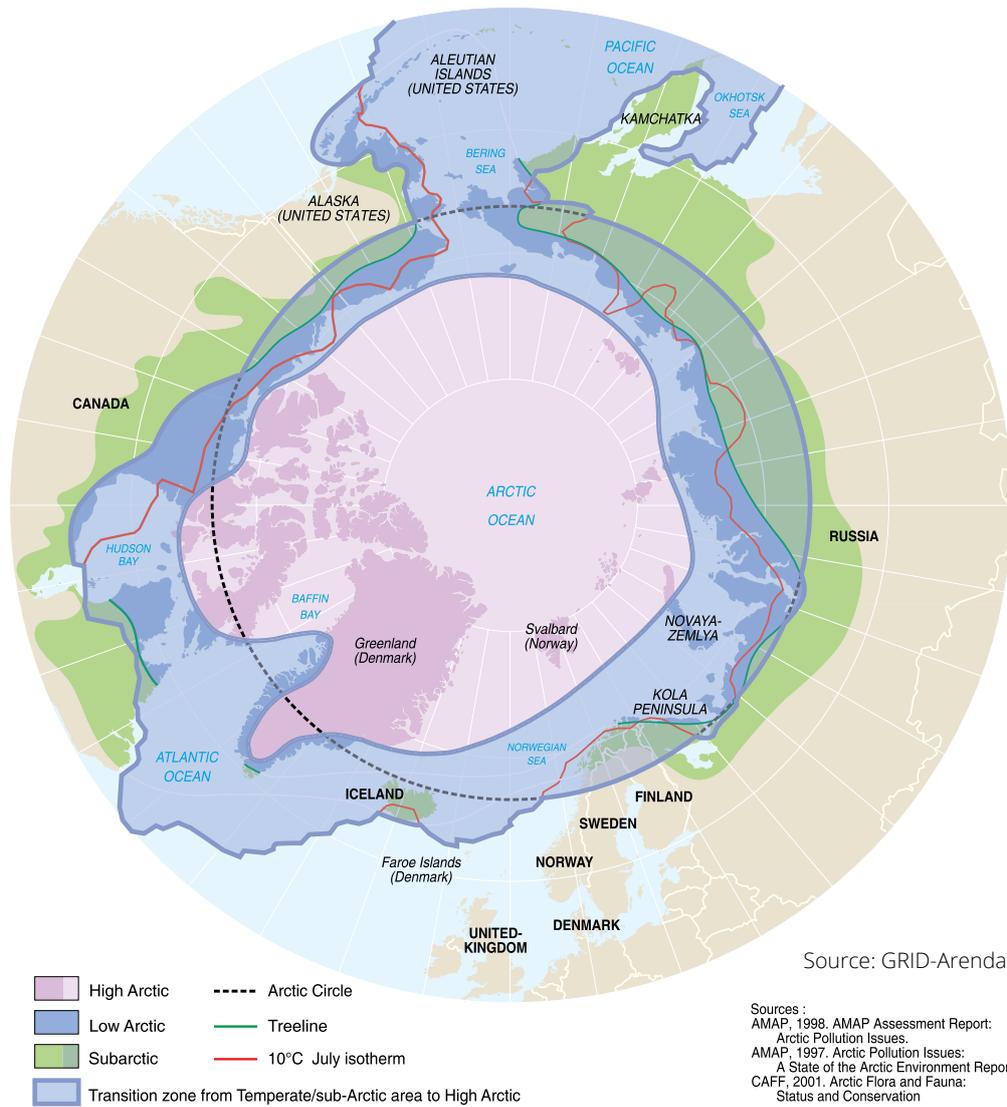
socially and environmentally sustainable development. Following extensive global negotiation processes, both the global agenda for sustainable development (the 2030 Agenda) and the international climate agreement (the Paris Agreement) were adopted in 2015. These global frameworks are important starting points for Swedish engagement and international cooperation in the Arctic.

The Government considers that Sweden should take a leading role in the global implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the global agenda for sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda contains 17 global goals (SDGs) and 169 targets for sustainable development. Several of them are particularly relevant to developments in the Arctic; examples are goal 12 Sustainable consumption and production, goal 13 Combating climate change and its impacts, goal 14 Sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources and goal 15 Sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems. In these matters the Government calls for a high level of ambition in the implementation phase.

Sweden will also be a leader in the implementation of the Paris Agreement to limit global warming, including in the Arctic. One commitment made by the parties to the Paris Agreement is to keep the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels. Preserving Arctic ice and permafrost is crucial in limiting global warming. The Government has the objective that Sweden will be the world's first fossil-free welfare nation and that, by 2045, Sweden will not have any net emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

1.3 Definition of the Arctic

There are several different definitions of the Arctic region. Its borders are drawn in different ways in different scientific areas or political agreements. The region is characterised by being made up of an ocean (the Arctic Ocean) surrounded by sovereign states. Here the Arctic differs



from the Antarctic, which is a land continent surrounded by an ocean and does not have a permanent population.

This strategy applies the common political definition that was adopted in conjunction with the establishment of the Arctic Council in 1996: the Arctic includes the areas north of the Arctic Circle and the associated eight Arctic states, i.e. Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark including Greenland and the Faeroe Islands, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States. When international bodies refer to “the Arctic” and “the Arctic states” they specifically

mean the area north of the Arctic Circle and the eight Arctic states. As regards the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, two Swedish counties, Norrbotten och Västerbotten, are included in its interregional cooperation. So, they are usually regarded as forming part of Sweden’s Arctic region.

2.

Priorities for Swedish
Arctic policy

The Arctic has long been described as a low-tension area with favourable conditions for international collaboration. However, the dramatic climate change in the past decade and the new geostrategic realities in the region mean greater challenges and changed circumstances for Swedish Arctic policy.

Sweden will participate actively in international cooperation on Arctic-related issues and contribute to peaceful, stable and sustainable development with respect for the framework of international law. The Government will work for the promotion of human rights, democracy and the principles of the rule of law in all international cooperation on Arctic-related issues, and especially a meaningful participation of all interest groups. The Government will contribute to the reduction of climate-impacting emissions both nationally and globally in line with scientific

findings and safeguard long-term economically, environmentally and socially sustainable development in the region. In the Government's assessment, safeguarding biodiversity is central to achieving all the dimensions of sustainable development in the Arctic. Further Swedish polar research and environmental monitoring are crucial to achieving progress. The Government will continue to work to secure good living conditions for the population in the region, including the indigenous peoples.

In this context the Government gives priority to the following thematic areas: international collaboration; security and stability; climate and the environment; polar research and environmental monitoring; sustainable economic development and business interests; and securing good living conditions.



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11TH MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE ARCTIC COUNCIL
7 MAY 2019, ROVANIEMI

#ArcticMinisterial2019
#Arctic
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Channel 1: English
Channel 2: Russian

Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Rovaniemi 7 May 2019.
Photo: Jouni Porsanger / Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

2.1 International collaboration in the Arctic

The Government intends to work to maintain good and well-functioning international relations and cooperation formats that deal constructively with opportunities and challenges in the Arctic, within the framework of international law.

- The Government intends to contribute to the Arctic states continuing to jointly maintain well-functioning international cooperation in the Arctic.
- The Government intends to work to maintain the rules-based international order and respect for international law, which is ultimately the basis for well-functioning international relations in the Arctic.
- The Government intends to work to strengthen the Arctic Council in its role as the central multilateral forum for questions concerning the Arctic.
- The Government intends to work to strengthen the role of Barents cooperation on issues of particular relevance for the Barents region.
- The Government intends to work to strengthen Nordic cooperation on issues concerning the Arctic where the interests of the Nordic countries coincide.
- The Government intends to work to ensure that the EU continues to strengthen its engagement and support for sustainable development in the Arctic, in close cooperation with the local actors in the region. The Government supports the EU's application for permanent observer status in the Arctic Council.
- Sweden intends to safeguard the rights, perspectives and interests of indigenous peoples and to work for greater participation by young people and women in political processes regarding the Arctic.

Well-functioning international cooperation in the Arctic is in Sweden's interests. It is crucial for dealing with the cross-border challenges that the region is facing. Essentially, this is about ensuring sustainable development for people in the Arctic, working for continued stability and peaceful cooperation in the area and dealing jointly with climate change and its effects in the Arctic.

International cooperation in the Arctic rests on a firm foundation in international law. This cooperation is based on international law, including a framework of international conventions, rules and institutions, as well as mutually reinforcing cooperation formats at various levels.

The eight Arctic states have a particular role and responsibility for the Arctic region. All Arctic states have expressed a will to preserve the Arctic as a region characterised by stability, constructive cooperation and respect for international law. Sweden will contribute to the Arctic states continuing to jointly maintain well-functioning international cooperation in the Arctic. At the same time, cooperation with non-Arctic states needs to be strengthened in order to deal with the challenges in the Arctic that are of a global nature.

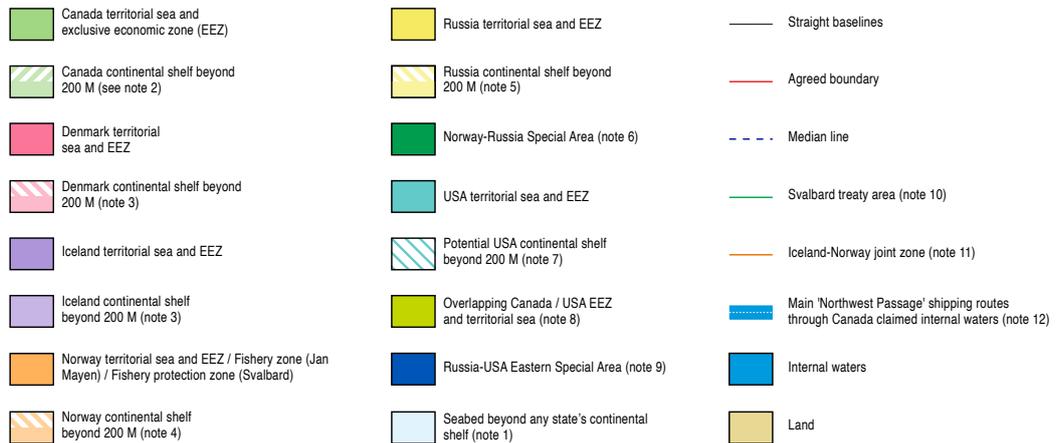
Sweden's international cooperation in the Arctic will be guided by the basic principles of its foreign and security policy of support for the rules-based world order, human rights, democracy, the principles of the rule of law, gender equality as well as by Sweden's feminist foreign policy and the main goals in the global frameworks of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement for global climate action. Sweden will uphold the rights, perspectives and interests of indigenous peoples and will work for greater participation by young people and women in political processes about the Arctic.

2.1.1 International law framework

There is not international law vacuum in the Arctic. The Arctic region covers both land and sea areas where the eight Arctic states have varying degrees of sovereignty and jurisdiction. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) sets out the fundamental legal framework for sea areas.

The five Arctic coastal states have legitimate rights and obligations in the sea areas of the Arctic regarding both the sea and the seabed. They have sovereign jurisdiction over their internal waters and territorial seas and sovereign rights in their exclusive economic zones (EEZ) and continental shelves. Outside their exclusive economic zones is the high seas. Within the framework of the law of the sea, all states enjoy rights in respect of, for instance, navigation, marine scientific research and resource utilisation in Arctic waters. The law of the sea also obliges all states to cooperate to protect the marine environment.

The UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS), the International Seabed Authority (ISA) and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) are three important bodies all established by the parties to UNCLOS. The Polar Code under the International Maritime Organization (IMO) is another important part of the international law framework for the Arctic. There are also important regional agreements, including the Treaty concerning the Archipelago of Spitsbergen and the Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bears; bilateral agreements including that between Norway and Russia about the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean; and resource management agreements and fisheries management regimes that regulate specific conditions in the Arctic. The UN human rights conventions and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples are also core international documents with a direct bearing on the Arctic region.



This is the original IBRU Arctic map, first released in 2008 and revised several times since. States' submissions to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) regarding their extended continental shelves are presented in the context of a range of other maritime zones. The map presents a comprehensive view of CLCS recommendations.

Source: IBRU, Durham University, UK, <http://www.durham.ac.uk/ibru/resources/arctic>

In the area of climate and the environment the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR) are crucial to sustainable development in the Arctic. The Paris Agreement, as a part of the UNFCCC, and the 2030 Agenda for the global Sustainable Development Goals are the latest contributions to the development of the normative framework for the Arctic.

Sweden has no territorial claims in the Arctic Ocean, but it is in Sweden's interest that overlapping claims among the five Arctic coastal states regarding continental shelves and territorial disputes are resolved in accordance with international law, including UNCLOS. All external actors with a presence in the Arctic region must also respect the rules and conventions of international law.

Sweden will work to maintain the rules-based international order and international law, which is ultimately the basis for peace and stability in the Arctic. Sweden is open to and has preparedness for the development of supplementary regulatory frameworks and agreements to respond to further developments in the Arctic and the evolution of Arctic cooperation.

One important instance is the negotiations under way since 2004 for an international legally binding instrument under the UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ). The Government intends to work to make the new agreement as broad as possible and for the inclusion of all relevant principles for protection of the environment and biodiversity in the seas. A new global agreement containing specific actions and mechanisms for protection of marine environments beyond national jurisdiction is necessary to enable effective and long-term protection of biodiversity.

2.1.2 Institutional framework

In addition to the legal setting, the institutionalised formats for cooperation play an important role in creating political conditions for collaboration, sustainable development and confidence-building in the region.

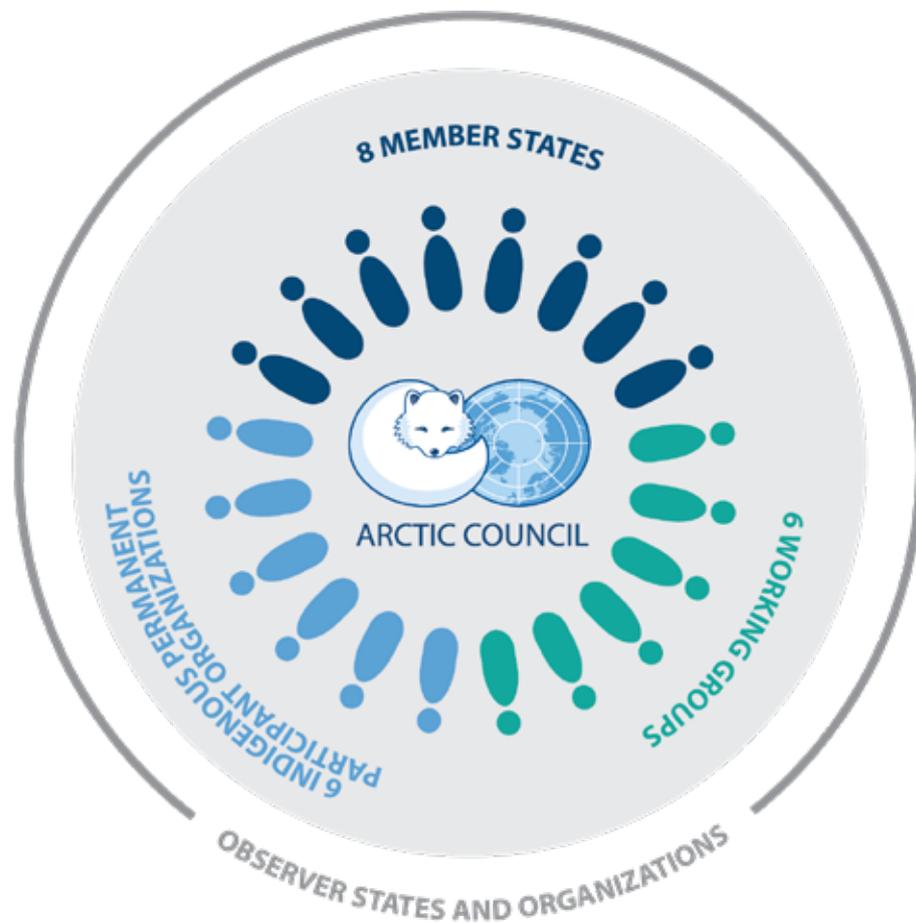
In general, Sweden welcomes the increase in international interest in the Arctic. The eight Arctic countries have a particular role in the Arctic that should be maintained; broader, increased international cooperation is important in dealing with climate challenges in the Arctic especially.

The Arctic Council is the hub for international cooperation in the Arctic, between the eight Arctic states and with non-Arctic states and organisations. In the Barents region the Barents Euro-Arctic Council also plays an important role. Overall, the bodies for cooperation reflect a realisation of the need for cooperation, and a will to engage in it.

Arctic Council

The Arctic Council is the main multilateral regional format and constitutes the core of the cooperation in the Arctic region. Its activities focus mainly on environmental issues and sustainable development. The Council's mandate does not include security policy and military issues or fisheries management. All eight Arctic states are members of the Council. The Arctic Council is characterised by a constructive spirit of cooperation and has functioned well despite a deterioration of relations between western countries and Russia at global level in recent years. However, this cooperation cannot be taken for granted and all the parties affected will need to take responsibility for ensuring that the Arctic Council retains its role as the central forum in the Arctic.

Sweden values the inclusive approach in the Council's work. Representatives of six indigenous peoples' organisations in the Arctic, including the Sami Council, take part in the Council's work at all levels, in-



Credit: Arctic Council Secretariat

cluding its working groups. It is a unique feature and a strength of the cooperation that the indigenous peoples in the Arctic Council are involved in the Arctic Council’s discussions and that their perspectives are reflected in its decision-making. The Arctic Council current 38 observers – non-Arctic states, international and interparliamentary organisations and civil society organisations – are invited to attend formal meetings and can make important contributions to the work of the working groups.

Sweden's engagement in the Arctic Council is manifested in various ways including our chairmanship of CAFF (*Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna*) and AMAP (*Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme*) in 2019–2021 and of PAME (*Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment*) in 2022–2024. These are three of the six working groups that make up a central part of the

work of the Arctic Council. The working groups have an important task of following developments regarding environmental change and living conditions for people living and working in the Arctic. The working groups’ scientific evaluations and reports, including their recommendations, are an important starting point for decision-making in the Arctic Council. Sweden will work to strengthen the link between working group activities, council policy work and national implementation of recommendations adopted by the Council.

Sweden wants a strong and effective Arctic Council. The Arctic Council’s 25th anniversary in 2021, will be an important opportunity to recognise what the Arctic Council has achieved and attained. It will also be an opportunity to look ahead and ensure that the Arctic Council is ready and geared to deal with future challenges.



Just south of Jokkmokk, the Arctic Circle cuts through Sweden. The Arctic Circle is the sunniest part of the world during the summer and shifts about 15 meters every year due to changes in the tilt of the Earth's axis.

Photo: Jerker Andersson/imagebank.sweden.se

A great deal of progress has been made since the formation of the Arctic Council in 1996, both organisationally and in terms of its activities. In addition to greater cooperation in areas including research and the making of recommendations, the Arctic Council has negotiated three agreements under international law: the Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic (2011), the Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic (2013) and the Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation (2017). These agreements are important in themselves, but they are also a manifestation of the responsibility that the eight Arctic states are taking jointly for the development of the Arctic.

Sweden will contribute actively to the further strengthening of the Arctic Council. The Arctic states should have a preparedness to broaden the activities of the Arctic Council to cover new activities within the limits of its mandate and, when required, to enter into new agreements to ensure sustainable and stable development in the Arctic.

Barents cooperation

Barents cooperation contributes to greater trust, stability and security in the Barents region. The unique structure of Barents cooperation ensures that its activities have clear local rooting. The Barents Euro-Arctic Council, with the participation of the five Nordic countries, Russia and the EU, has an equivalent at county level through the Barents Regional Council.

Sweden intends to work for further deepened people-to-people contacts in the Barents region, not least between young people. Sweden intends to work to strengthen the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Barents Regional Council in matters of particular relevance to the Barents region such as the environment and climate, civilian crisis management and rescue services, gender equality, health and social care, sustainable transport and communications, culture and tourism.

The EU's Northern Dimension Programme is also part of the institutional framework for cooperation in the European Arctic, and plays an important role for cooperation, including cooperation with Russia at national and regional level.

Sweden attaches great importance to the enhanced cooperation in the Barents region between counties and provinces, parliaments and non-governmental organisations and between other actors in the Arctic. This also includes the vigorous cooperation that has developed between the indigenous peoples in the Arctic, as well as the extensive and long-established academic research cooperation between universities.

Nordic cooperation

The Government intends to work to further strengthen Nordic cooperation on questions concerning the Arctic where the interests of the Nordic countries coincide. The Nordic countries have different starting points for their engagement in the Arctic, but nevertheless share a community of values. They also have a geographical closeness, forming the European part of the Arctic. Based on this, the Nordic countries can jointly make important contributions to development in the Arctic. In addition to the Arctic Council, the Nordic Council of Ministers and Barents cooperation are important forums for Nordic cooperation on the Arctic.

Sweden has very good bilateral cooperation with Denmark, Finland, Norway and Iceland. The range of bilateral cooperation makes up an important part of Nordic cooperation on the Arctic. Sweden will therefore continue to work to strengthen bilateral cooperation on Arctic issues with the other Nordic countries.

In the Nordic Council of Ministers, Sweden intends to work for a greater focus on project activities with an Arctic orientation. Sweden will also work to ensure that the projects have an explicit added value in relation to the Arctic Council and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. Nordic parliamentarians broaden, and contribute further, to cooperation through the Nordic Council and the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (SCPAR).

Sami cooperation

The close cooperation between Sweden, Norway and Finland in the Nordic Government Officials Body for Sami Affairs is important in endeavours to preserve, develop and strengthen Sami culture. For this purpose the Government Officials Body considers all Sami issues that are common to developments in the languages, culture, industries and community life of the Sami population group. The three Sami Parliaments collaborate, with the Russian Sami as observers, through a Sami Parliamentary Council in order to strengthen cooperation between Sami and to speak for them as one voice internationally.

To strengthen the Sami People's influence and their possibilities of preserving and developing their culture, languages and community life, the Government will continue to work to conclude the negotiations on a Nordic Sami convention. The provisions of the convention require the states to work to enable the Sami Parliaments to cooperate and form joint organisations.

2.1.3 European Union

Sweden attaches great importance to the engagement of the EU in the Arctic. Sweden will contribute actively to the development of the EU's policy on Arctic matters and a stronger EU role in the Arctic region. Sweden welcomes the EU's active participation and its contributions to the Arctic Council, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Northern Dimension, and continues to support the EU's application for permanent observer status in the Arctic Council.

The EU is part of the European Arctic though the three EU members Denmark, Finland and Sweden. The Arctic is also in the EU's neighbourhood. The EU has bilateral relations with all the Arctic states.

Sweden will to work to encourage the EU to continue to strengthen its engagement and support for sustainable development in the Arctic, especially the European Arctic region, and to build on the *EU Arctic Forum* in Umeå in October 2019, one purpose of which was to strengthen the ties between the EU and local and regional actors in the Arctic region.

Several of the EU's central policy areas and relations have a clear Arctic dimension. In the light of the geopolitical changes in the Arctic, the EU needs to identify its strategic interest in the Arctic, and ensure that its policies take account of developments in the region. The EU's Arctic Strategy from 2016 should be updated to reflect this. In December 2019 EU foreign ministers adopted conclusions containing such a message.

At the same time, the overall priorities of the EU's Arctic Strategy remain relevant: a focus on climate change and safeguarding the Arctic environment; sustainable development in /and around/ the Arctic; and international cooperation on Arctic issues. The importance of research, science and innovation in all three areas is emphasised. The support given by the EU to development and the population



Family photo of high-level participants at the EU Arctic Forum in Umeå 3–4 October 2019.

Photo: Patrick Trägårdh

in the Arctic through various instruments and programmes is valuable and should be reinforced, including through greater coordination between them. The EU's structural fund programmes contribute to cooperation in the Arctic region, which covers the Swedish, Norwegian and Finnish regions. Within the framework of the Northern Periphery Programme and the EU's Kolarctic Neighbourhood Instrument, these regions can also cooperate with regions in Russia and with Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands.

Sweden will support the EU's institutions in work on updating the strategy, along with Denmark and Finland in particular. At the same time, Sweden wants to see broad engagement from all of the EU's membership. The EU countries with observer status in the Arctic Council – France, Germany, Italy, Poland and Spain – have a particular role to play here. The UK remains an important partner in Arctic issues even after leaving the EU.

2.1.4 Cooperation

United States

Engagement by the United States is an important factor in functioning international cooperation in the Arctic, based on the rules-based world order. Sweden's

close relationship with the US is of central importance for Sweden's security and prosperity. This also applies to the Arctic region. Sweden wants to further deepen cooperation with the US, both within the framework of the Arctic Council and bilaterally in matters of common interest regarding development in the Arctic. Sweden wants to strengthen cooperation especially in the areas of polar research, innovation, trade, climate and the environment, including with a focus on the protection of ecosystems.

Canada

Canada is a particularly important partner for international cooperation in the Arctic and has considerable engagement in Arctic issues. Sweden is working actively for deeper cooperation with Canada within the framework of the Arctic Council and bilaterally in matters of common interest and on the basis of foreign policy priorities. Cooperation in the Arctic between Sweden and Canada is largely characterised by shared perspectives, especially in the areas of polar research, innovation, Arctic indigenous peoples and climate and the environment.

Russia

Although relations with Russia have deteriorated in the light of its breaches of international law and the European security order, cooperation with Russia in the Arctic Council has functioned well. Sweden cooperates with Russia on climate and environmental issues within the framework of the Arctic Council, Barents cooperation and bilaterally. People-to-people contacts with Russia strengthen the ties in the region. Sweden will clearly draw attention to issues where our views differ but will

continue to cooperate with Russia where we have common interests. This benefits developments in the Arctic, as well as our security and stability in the neighbourhood. Russia holds the chairmanship of the Arctic Council between June 2021 and May 2023.

Non-Arctic states and actors

Alongside the special role of the eight Arctic states, Sweden also stresses the need for greater international cooperation with non-Arctic countries and actors to deal with the challenges in the Arctic. This applies especially to issues of importance for sustainable development and where our interests and values are aligned. Climate and environmental issues will, like science and research, be a central part of this kind of cooperation. There can also be an interest in cooperation in the area of trade.

Sweden intends to continue to develop cooperation with several non-Arctic countries and actors that have, in recent years, increased their interest in Arctic issues and attained observer status in the Arctic Council. In addition to the European observers, several Asian countries are now participating in the Arctic Council's work. This applies not least to China.

The Government will attach particular importance to developing cooperation with Germany linked to the Arctic and drawing on the increased German interest and level of ambition concerning the Arctic. Germany is also a close partner in the defence of multilateralism and the rules-based world order, as well as in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.



Northern Lights, Aurora Borealis in northern Sweden. Source: Imagebank

2.2 Security and stability

Sweden will work to ensure that the Arctic will continue to be characterised by peace, security and stability.

- In relation to security policy developments in the Arctic, the Government will work to preserve peace and stability in the region and contribute to confidence- and security-building measures. At the same time, Sweden's national capability and advance planning will be enhanced.
- The Government will work to ensure that the Arctic is a region characterised by well-functioning international cooperation, in which international law, including the law of the sea, is respected.
- The Government will continue to strengthen Sweden's military capability to operate in the northern parts of Sweden and neighbouring areas.
- The Government intends to work for the further development and deepening of Nordic and Euro-Atlantic security and defence policy cooperation focusing on the European part of the Arctic, the Cap of the North and the North Atlantic region.
- Sweden will work to retain and increase the engagement of European countries and the EU in northern Europe and the Arctic and to strengthen the transatlantic link.
- Sweden will work for continued access to relevant cooperation formats and processes in which regional security issues are discussed.
- Sweden will contribute to cross-border cooperation in civilian crisis management and rescue services in the Arctic, i.e. through the Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF).
- Sweden will continue to closely follow the development of the security situation in the Arctic, including detecting and countering attempts to exert influence in and destabilising the region.

The Arctic has long been described as a security policy low-tension area, characterised by constructive international cooperation. At the same time, the security policy environment has changed, and new challenges have emerged. It is therefore important to maintain effective international cooperation between the eight Arctic states and with international partners. This extensive cooperation contributes to confidence between the actors and reducing the risk of conflict.

Sweden will take its responsibility and work to preserve the Arctic region as a peaceful and stable area and will contribute to confidence- and security-building measures in the region. The overarching interest is to maintain the rules-based world order, which is part of the foundations for international security and stability, also in the Arctic.

The rapid climate change has made the Arctic's natural resources more accessible and interesting to commercial actors and has created expectations of greater navigability in marine fairways. As the region's importance has increased, in strategic and in economic terms, for both Arctic and non-Arctic states, tensions in the region may rise. The military presence and activity in the Arctic have grown, partly as a result of deteriorating relations at global level. This also increases the risk of an arms race and incidents in the region. Strained relations at global level can have repercussions at regional level in the Arctic.

Sweden has to take account of these developments in the Arctic. On the basis of Swedish security policy this will be done applying an approach with two main tracks. One is to ensure continued peace and stability in the Arctic through well-functioning cooperation. The other is to strengthen Sweden's national capability and advance planning to deal with various developments in the region. The full range of security policy instruments – political, diplomatic, economic and mili-



F21 Norrbotten Air Squadron.

Photo: Photo: Jesper Sundström/Swedish Armed Forces

tary – should be able to be used in an integrated way to achieve our objectives.

2.2.1 Security policy trends

The geostrategic change in the Arctic is complex. A combination of increased great power competition and climate change is influencing developments, which can be summarised in three overall trends.

First, security policy consequences can arise from the increased interest in the Arctic's enormous natural resources, which climate change is making more accessible. The largest undiscovered oil and gas reserves in the Arctic are estimated to be within the continental shelves of the coastal states. The seabed around the North Pole is thought to contain large quantities of natural resources, including minerals. The International Seabed Authority (ISA) has an important role for the protection of natural resources of the seabed in the high seas. To the extent that competing claims arise for areas, it is important that they are handled by relevant international mechanisms. It is crucial for continued stability in the Arctic that the states concerned deal with their claims on the continental shelf through the Commission on the Limits of the Continental

Shelf and accept advisory outcomes of its assessment. In the same way, it is of central importance that the freedom of navigation along the Northeast and the Northwest Passages in accordance with the law of the sea is maintained, and that disputes about restrictions on free navigation in these sea routes can be resolved by diplomatic means.

Second, there is a new military dynamic in the Arctic region. What is particularly noticeable is increased Russian activity and military build-up to defend Russian territory. Russia's new and modernised military bases in the north contribute to what is called its bastion defence. The Arctic is seen as a key area for early warning and for the global strategic nuclear weapon balance. In addition, the Russian submarine-based second-strike capability has its base areas in the region. NATO and its members have reacted to the Russian reconstruction, including increased exercise activities and the establishment of an operational-level staff function to secure transatlantic communications. The US has re-established its Second Fleet, with the Northern Atlantic Ocean as its operational area.

Sweden sees a risk of an arms race and incidents. Developments in the Arctic are also affected by the global security policy situation, which is characterised by instability and unpredictability. The military strategic importance of the Arctic has increased, and, as in the Cold War, the Arctic is a dividing line between western countries and Russia.

Third, a growing number of non-Arctic states are expressing interest in the Arctic. China has a special position in this context. China's increased global ambitions are also expressed in the Arctic, and its approach to strengthening its presence follows the pattern from other parts of the world. Since 2013 China has participated in the activities of the Arctic Council as an observer. China's central role in the climate area and in global environ-

mental cooperation is also important in an Arctic context. At the same time, China has already shown that it wants to have more influence on developments in the Arctic. This can risk leading to conflicts of interest. China expresses general support for international law, but acts selectively, especially concerning issues that China regards as its core interests.

The military dimension of China's actions in the area has so far been limited, but China is gradually building up naval forces with global reach, including submarines. More attention needs to be given to the military cooperation between China and Russia, especially regarding possible military cooperation aimed at the Arctic. The Government is encouraging like-minded countries and the EU to cooperate and act together regarding challenges and opportunities resulting from the increase in China's global influence.

2.2.2 Cooperation

The Government intends to work, along with international partners, to preserve the Arctic region as a peaceful and stable area characterised by constructive and well-functioning international cooperation.

Sweden will work for respect for international law, including the law of the sea. Continued peaceful and stable development in the Arctic is dependent on the maintenance of the rules-based order and on all actors with a presence in the area respecting international law. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is of central importance in this context. The eight Arctic states have a particular responsibility for developments in the Arctic. The Ilulissat Declaration, signed by the five coastal states in 2008 and reconfirmed by all Arctic states in 2018, declares a common commitment to preserve the Arctic as a peaceful and stable region. The Arctic states undertake, among other matters, to solve outstanding issues concerning overlapping claims to the continental shelf within the framework of applicable inter-

national law. Agreements like this and other bilateral and multilateral agreements demonstrate the will and readiness to cooperate to deal with common issues and challenges in the Arctic.

Well-functioning bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the Arctic fulfils a confidence-building function and contributes to greater security in the region. Through long-term engagement Sweden will contribute to the development of this cooperation and strengthen existing forums. The Arctic Council is the central forum for cooperation. Even though the Council's mandate does not cover issues concerning hard security policy and military security, the activities of the Council contribute to a climate of trust for cooperation in the region.

The cross-border cooperation in civilian crisis management and rescue services in the Arctic plays an important role for building confidence and strengthening security in a broad sense. The *Arctic Coast Guard Forum* (ACGF) was set up in 2015 as an informal and independent organisation to foster safe, secure, and environmentally responsible maritime activity in the Arctic. Sweden participates along with all the other Arctic states in this forum.

In the Barents Euro-Arctic Council there is collaboration, based on the Barents Agreement of 2008, between Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia to strengthen the capability of the cooperating countries to receive and provide support to one another in the event of complex disruptions to society in the Barents region. Sweden intends to continue to contribute actively to the international civilian crisis management exercise called *Barents Rescue*.

Sweden considers that it is important to find forms and arrangements for risk minimisation. More activity in the Arctic risks leading to incidents that could, under certain circumstances, escalate into a conflict situation.

2.2.3 Enhanced national capability

As concluded by the Defence Commission (Ds 2019:8 Värnkraft [*Defensive powers*]), the Cap of the North, the Barents Sea, the Norwegian Sea and the northern parts of the North Atlantic are part of Sweden's neighbourhood in the same way as the Baltic Sea and the North Sea are. The Commission argues that, up to now, Swedish strategic thinking has taken far too little account of security policy and military developments in the Arctic and how they can affect Sweden. It demonstrates emerging Swedish strategic defence policy interests in the Arctic, with a particular centre of gravity in the area around the Barents Sea and the North Atlantic.

Military strategic developments in our neighbourhood demonstrate the importance of continuing to strengthen military capability in the northern parts of Sweden and of being able to operate with them in adjacent areas. Military exercises with other countries have a threshold-raising and stabilising effect.

On account of the greater strategic importance of the Arctic, the Government intends to work for the further development and deepening of Nordic and Euro-Atlantic security and defence policy cooperation focusing on the European part of the Arctic, the Cap of the North and the North Atlantic region. Sweden has an interest in retaining and increasing the engagement of European countries and the EU in northern Europe and the Arctic since this contributes to Sweden's security. Transatlantic cooperation is fundamental to both American and European security. The North Atlantic will play an important role as a link for military support to Europe from North America in the event of a crisis.

Along with relevant partners, the Government will intensify the security policy and defence policy dialogues on developments in the Arctic, including the North Atlantic, both in bilateral cooperation and in the



Swedish corvette in northern Norwegian waters.

Photo: Alexander Gustavsson / The Swedish Armed Forces

multilateral security policy and defence policy forums that Sweden is a member of. The Government will work to have access to relevant, existing formats for cooperation and processes where regional security issues are discussed and will work, in them, for détente, stability and peaceful development.

The The Government intends to continue to closely follow the development of

the security situation in the Arctic region, including in terms of detecting and countering improper attempts to exert influence in and destabilise the region. Security and defence policy studies and research on the region to build up the Swedish knowledge base will be encouraged in order to further develop Swedish courses of action in the Arctic, including concerning potential hybrid threats..



Abisko National Park

Photo: Katja Kristoferson/Folio/imagebank.sweden.se



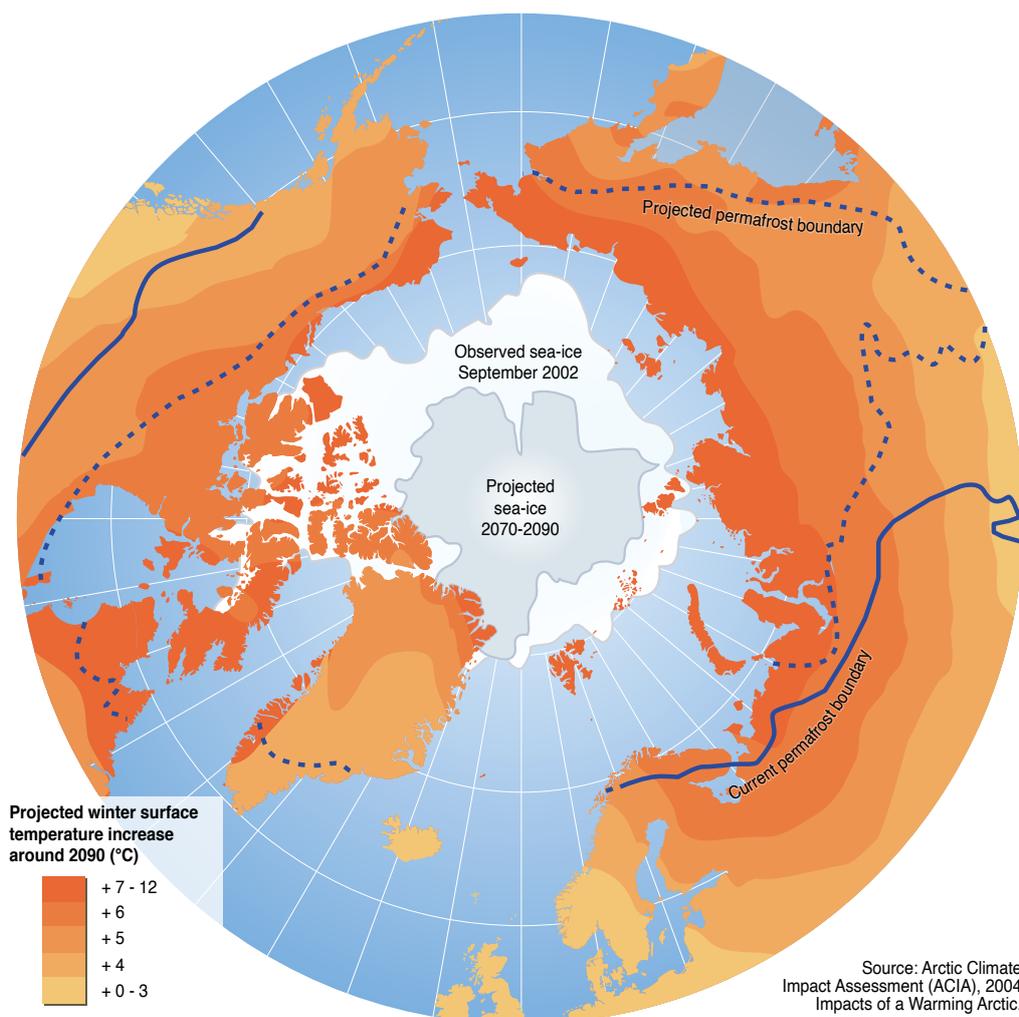


Photo: Martin Jacobsson

2.3 Climate and the environment

Sweden wants to work for limited warming of the Arctic in accordance with the Paris Agreement's aim of limiting global warming. Sweden also wants to work for the conservation of biodiversity in accordance with the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and to work for the implementation of a non-toxic circular economy.

- The Government will take a leading role in the implementation of the Paris Agreement to limit global warming, including in the Arctic.
- The Government intends to work for the strengthening of environmental and climate work in the Arctic Council and for the Arctic Council to be given a more prominent role in global efforts to reduce global emissions of both long-lived and short-lived greenhouse gases.
- The Government will have a leading role in the implementation of protection for biodiversity under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Ramsar Convention and other relevant international agreements.
- The Government will work for the conservation and sustainable use of Arctic biodiversity and for the provision of adequate protection for areas of high natural and cultural values in Arctic environments.
- The Government intends to work for long-term and sustainable management of wetlands and marine ecosystems in the Arctic.
- The Government will work for regional and global action in the area of chemicals and waste with a bearing on the Arctic and the development of a non-toxic circular economy in accordance with the Government's strategy for a circular economy.
- The Government will work to have assessments made of environmental impacts in the planning of land and water use.
- The Government will work to prevent and limit the negative impacts that can arise in radiological and nuclear emergencies involving transports of radioactive and nuclear materials, reactor-powered marine transport and floating nuclear power plants in the Arctic.



Source: GRID-Arendal

The Arctic region is characterised by rapid changes of various kinds. The effects of climate change, ocean acidification and pollution are already apparent. If these trends continue, they will fundamentally change living conditions for humans, affect resilience to negative environmental changes in local communities and disturb the balance in Arctic ecosystems. It is therefore important for Sweden to strengthen work to protect the Arctic environment in close cooperation with other Arctic and non-Arctic states and with civil society and regional and local actors.

Sweden will therefore focus on action that contributes to achieving results in three main areas: limiting Arctic warming by reducing global emissions of both long-lived and short-lived greenhouse

gases; conserving biodiversity in the Arctic including its marine environment; and establishing a global non-toxic circular economy. These actions contribute to the following Global Goals of the 2030 Agenda: Goal 6 Clean water and sanitation for all, Goal 7 Affordable and clean energy for all, Goal 12 Sustainable consumption and production, Goal 13 Combating climate change and its impacts, Goal 14 Life below water and Goal 15 Life on land.

One essential component of an active environmental policy for the Arctic is to strengthen the capacity of humans and nature to deal with and adapt to the negative effects of climate changes that are unavoidable. Representatives of the indigenous peoples should be involved in concrete cooperation drawing on traditional



Source: GRID-Arendal

Changes in sea ice extent

- Median ice edge in autumn for the period 1981-2010
- Sea ice extent in September 2018
- Sea ice extent in September 1981
- Retreat of sea ice
- Freshwater input

Changes in snow cover

- Area where seasonal snow cover was 2-3 weeks shorter in the period 2005-2015 compared to 1980-1990

Changes in glacier extent

- Main glaciers and Greenland ice sheet
- Retreat of glaciers
- Freshwater input

Discharge of main rivers at mouth

- 590 km³/y
- 300 km³/y
- 120 km³/y

Main marine transport routes during summer

and local knowledge, including in the work of the Arctic Council.

2.3.1 Climate

The Arctic is particularly vulnerable to climate change. The Arctic region is warming more than twice as fast as the rest of the globe. Conversely, the changes in the Arctic climate affect the rest of the world. There is a greater risk of critical

thresholds in the climate system being passed, for example as a result of melting sea ice during the summer months and of thawing permafrost. Thawing permafrost releases great quantities of greenhouse gases, resulting in severe effects on the global climate. A warmer Arctic can influence weather systems in the northern hemisphere in particular. In the long term, the melting of Arctic land ice, espe-

cially on Greenland, can lead to a significantly higher sea level. The ever-poorer ability to reflect sunlight from the Arctic on account of the smaller mass of ice also contributes to a further acceleration of global warming.

Sweden will take a lead in the implementation of the Paris Agreement, which will guide the Government's work in the Arctic. Sweden's ambition is to be the world's first fossil-free welfare state. The Government climate policy framework lays down that Sweden is to reach zero net emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere by 2045 and is then to reach negative emissions.

The heating of the Arctic can only be limited by a radical reduction of global emissions of long-lived climate gases, especially carbon dioxide. The aim of the Paris Agreement – to keep the global temperature increase well under 2° C with the ambition of limiting it to 1.5° C – is of crucial importance for the future of the Arctic region. At the same time, it is important to also take measures that reduce the effects of short-lived climate forcers such as soot, tropospheric ozone and methane. A reduction in emissions of short-lived climate forcers, especially soot, could temporarily dampen the rapid warming of the Arctic and help slow the pace at which sea ice is melting.

Sweden will work for the strengthening of environmental and climate work in the Arctic Council and for the Arctic Council to be given a more prominent role in global efforts to reduce the global emissions of both long-lived and short-lived greenhouse gases. Together, the Arctic states are responsible for a large part of global emissions and therefore have a particular responsibility for driving the climate issue and take a lead in global climate work. All Arctic Council members also belong to the developed countries, which are to take the lead in climate work according to the Climate Convention. A number of Arctic Council observer coun-

tries account, together, for the greater part of global emissions outside the group of Arctic states. This contributes to the Arctic Council's possibilities of exercising influence on the world's aggregate greenhouse gas emissions.

2.3.2 Biodiversity

Arctic biodiversity is unique and of global importance. Climate change has dramatic effects on biodiversity. Arctic species and habitats risk disappearing completely or only being left as isolated fragments. The current mix of species in the Arctic is changing as southern species begin to crowd out Arctic species. Palsas, a type of wetland with permafrost only found in the Arctic, are melting at an ever-increasing rate, which means that unique ecosystems risk being changed.

Protecting biodiversity in the Arctic and its important ecosystem services – in the form of products and services from nature – will require vigorous action. The Government intends to work for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the Arctic, taking account of traditional knowledge. The Government also intends to work to have adequate protection provided for areas of high natural and cultural values in Arctic environments and to have exploitation take place in a way that minimises and compensates for biodiversity losses. Networks of protected areas linked together by green infrastructure should be created in the long term. In the negotiations on a new framework of global goals in the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Sweden will work for an ambitious outcome, along with the rest of the EU. Forest areas in the Arctic have a large share of low-productive, difficult-to-regenerate and biologically valuable forest, and account should be taken of this.

Without the oceans, the global greenhouse effect would have been even more extensive since up to a third of carbon dioxide emissions are absorbed by the oceans. The Arctic Ocean is changing



The Wilderness Road at Stekenjokk near Vilhelmina in northern Sweden.

Photo: David Sandström/imagebank.sweden.se

rapidly by these emissions, leading to a temperature rise both in the air and in the sea and causing a lower oxygen content and rising ocean acidification. As the polar ice melts, new sea areas are opened up for shipping, fishing and the extraction of natural resources, which then changes the living conditions of every Arctic inhabitant. Increased shipping also results in higher underwater noise levels, chiefly affecting marine mammals.

Sweden will continue to work for good collaboration between the Arctic Council and the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR). In the Arctic Council, the Government will support work on a Pan-Arctic Network of Marine Protected Areas (Ark-MPA) and promote

a global goal protecting at least 30% of the ocean through a network of marine protected areas.

In the negotiations on a new binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ), Sweden intends to work for the inclusion of specific measures such as regulations for marine protected areas, environmental impact assessments and mechanisms for enabling effective environmental protection in the oceans. The Government considers that extraction of minerals from the deep sea, including in the Arctic, must not be undertaken before sufficient scientific descriptions of its effects on the marine environment, biodiversity and human activities are available.



Kungsleden is Sweden's longest and best-known hiking trail.

Photo: Michael Jönsson/Scandinav Bildbyrå/imagebank.sweden.se

The Government intends to work for long-term management of marine ecosystems and wetlands in the Arctic, including in the Arctic Council.

2.3.3 Non-toxic environment

Harmful substances spread and accumulate in the Arctic environment. Most of these pollutants originate from emission sources outside the Arctic, but considerable emissions also occur in the Arctic.

The spread of harmful substances in the environment is a major problem for the population and wildlife. Chemicals and waste are transported via air or water currents, and atmospheric conditions make the Arctic particularly exposed to deposition of mercury, for instance. This exposure is so serious that mercury-related health effects have been identified in the

Arctic population. Organic pollutants that accumulate in living organisms can also lead to lower reproductive capacity – in both humans and animals.

Stricter global chemical control is necessary to improve the environment and health in the Arctic. Sweden will continue to press the issue of reducing emissions and will work for regional and global action in the area of chemicals and waste and for the phasing out of the use, emission and spread of particularly hazardous chemicals such as mercury and persistent organic pollutants.

The spread of plastics and microplastics to and via the Arctic is a major problem for wildlife. Plastic is transported via air or water currents and since plastic is a

persistent material, it remains in the environment for thousands of years. The Government will press actively for an ambitious global agreement to counter and minimise emissions of plastic waste and microplastics. In the Arctic Council, Sweden intends to continue to participate in work on marine litter, including by drafting a regional plan for dealing with litter in the Arctic.

Globally, Sweden will work for a non-toxic circular economy and an ambitious global framework for chemicals and waste that means that materials and products are seen as resources and that harmful substances do not enter material cycles. Negotiations will take place within the framework of the UN Environmental Assembly (UNEA), the International Resource Panel (IRP) and Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) as well as of the Basel, Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions.

Greater resource extraction in the Arctic involves considerable risks of local emissions with a direct impact on the surrounding environment. The increased pressure on land- and sea-based mineral extraction means that considerable measures are required to ensure circular and sustainable resource use. In land- and water-use planning it is important to assess environmental impacts. Sweden intends to work to improve the state of knowledge regarding the consequences of greater exploitation as well as the safeguards essential to provide long-term sus-

tainable protection for the environment and health. Cooperation with the Barents Euro-Arctic Council on action in severely polluted areas ('hot spots') should also be strengthened.

2.3.4 Nuclear safety and radiation protection

The questions of nuclear safety and radiation protection are relevant since radioactive and nuclear materials are constantly being transported in the Arctic region. The traffic of reactor-powered ships such as icebreakers and container ships has increased, and the establishment of new floating nuclear reactors has now commenced along Russia's northern coast. These floating nuclear reactors bring a new type of sea transport in the region. At regular intervals the nuclear reactors will be moved by sea to replace nuclear fuel and to possibly perform maintenance.

Sweden intends to take a clearer role in the Arctic Council's working groups to draw attention to the cross-border risks associated with movement in the direction of a greater presence of nuclear and other radioactive materials in the Arctic. The Government will work to prevent and limit the negative impacts that can arise in radiological and nuclear emergencies involving transports of radioactive and nuclear materials, reactor-powered sea transport and floating nuclear power plants in the Arctic.



The icebreaker Oden during the Ryder Expedition to northwest Greenland in the summer of 2020.

Photo: Martin Jacobsson

2.4 Polar research and environmental monitoring

Sweden wants to be a world-leading polar research nation with capacity for expeditions on a year-round basis and wants Swedish polar research to make a greater impact internationally.

- The Government will continue to strengthen research, environmental monitoring and observation systems in and about the Arctic.
- Sweden will support and further develop international cooperation on polar research, including climate research.
- The Swedish Polar Research Secretariat needs to continue to consider possible alternatives to access a heavy polar-classed, climate-neutral research ship for year-round activities even when it is considered that the Swedish icebreaker Oden can no longer be used for research assignments.
- Sweden intends to encourage exchanges of knowledge between researchers and indigenous peoples in the Arctic and to work to make traditional knowledge and scientific research mutually available.

Research and environmental monitoring in and about the Arctic is becoming ever more important in understanding the global, regional and local effects of climate change and the possibilities of adapting to it. Data from the Arctic Ocean is also needed to reduce the uncertainty in global climate models. The rapid changes to the climate demonstrate both the importance of a fact-based and scientific approach and the need for speedy action.

Sweden has long experience and a proud history of polar research. As early as 1758, a disciple of Linnaeus, Anton Rolandson Martin travelled to Spitsbergen to study meteorology and water temperatures. In 1879 Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld became the first to complete a crossing of the Northeast Passage. Swedish polar researchers are world leaders in their fields, which cover research in natural science, social science and the humanities. Several higher education institutions in Sweden conduct polar research, including climate research; they include the Swedish Polar Research Secretariat, the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI) and the Universities of Gothenburg, Luleå, Lund, Stockholm, Umeå and Uppsala. Swedish polar research contributes in this way to the following Global Goals of the 2030 Agenda: Goal 13 Combating climate change and its impacts, Goal 14 Life below water and Goal 15 Life on land.

Swedish climate-related research in the Arctic goes back a long time. By having continuous and long series of measurements, in some cases more than 100 years, Sweden has contributed to the growth of knowledge about global climate change, including regionally in the Arctic. However, the regional system of meteorological observations has major gaps and deficiencies on account of difficult access in the Arctic. Forming a better understanding of the complex connections that affect the weather and the climate requires large-scale data series from satellite observations, local data in the form of continu-

ous series from fixed measurement stations and detailed studies from ship-based observations collected for all seasons in the Arctic. Sweden will continue to work to strengthen environmental monitoring, earth observation systems and research in and about the Arctic. Cooperation in the Arctic Council is central in this context.

2.4.1 Cooperation

High-class polar research is conducted by both Arctic and non-Arctic states. Field research in the polar areas is very expensive. Support for relevant polar research is therefore of central importance. International cooperation enables world-leading researchers to participate in research cooperation and expeditions in the Arctic. Sweden wants to see greater possibilities of circumpolar international cooperation.

Sweden intends to continue to contribute to the international cooperation on Arctic research and education being conducted within various platforms and networks. This cooperation is, for instance, being conducted within the *Arctic Five*, which consists of five Arctic universities (Luleå, Rovaniemi, Tromsø, Oulu and Umeå) and whose purpose is to develop knowledge, education and innovations for sustainable development in the Arctic. Globally, the *Arctic Five* is the largest knowledge node concerning Arctic research and development; together its parties have more than 90 000 students and 4 000–5 000 research students.

Sweden is also active in the *University of the Arctic*, which works globally to strengthen cooperation in research and education with Arctic relevance. Sweden, the other Nordic countries, Canada and Russia participate in the *North2north* exchange programme. The programme should be strengthened for exchanges of students and researchers between the eight Arctic states.

Sweden has extensive international cooperation in polar research and logistics with countries including Canada, Den-



Field research work at the Sálajiegna Glacier.

Photo: E Gylfe

mark, Finland, Germany, Norway, Russia, the UK and the US. Examples are Sweden's cooperation in marine research with the UK and US on glacier and seabed studies and with the US and Germany on atmospheric and climate conditions near the North Pole. Swedish researchers also conduct marine bioprospecting for unique genes, molecules and organisms, which may result in new products and processes for commercial use in a range of different areas such as the health sector, biologically based raw materials, food production and renewable energy production.

Sweden and several other countries have pressed for the EU to provide more funding for Arctic research and higher education. The EU has increased its support for Arctic research and innovation in the past

decade, with a budget of EUR 70 million for the period 2018–2020. The EU participates actively in international cooperation between Arctic ministers of science.

2.4. 2. Logistics platforms

Sweden has a considerable and world-leading research infrastructure in the Swedish Arctic and the Arctic Ocean. Access to modern logistics platforms is crucial for environmental research in the Arctic and is available through several Swedish authorities. The Swedish Polar Research Secretariat is the government agency tasked with coordinating and promoting Swedish polar research by, for example, being responsible for and supplying certain infrastructure and conducting expeditions along with the research community.

In northern Sweden there are research stations in Abisko and Tarfala as well as to the EISCAT scatter radar facility in Kiruna. Abisko Scientific Research Station has an extensive environmental monitoring programme that has been running for more than 100 years. The Swedish icebreaker Oden is used as a platform for conducting expeditions to the Arctic Ocean, including north of Greenland, and to the North Pole. Since 2001, the Swedish-led satellite Odin has gathered atmospheric data from its orbit over both poles. An additional Swedish-led satellite, *Arctic Weather Satellite, AWS*, is going to be sent up. This satellite has great potential to improve weather forecasts and climate monitoring in the Arctic and its vicinity. AWS will be an important complement to other weather satellites.

In recent decades Swedish ship-based polar research has assumed a world-leading role. The Swedish icebreaker Oden, which is owned by the Swedish Maritime Administration, is one of the world's leading research infrastructures with substantial icebreaking capacity. In the period between 1991 and 2019, the Swedish Polar Research Secretariat has used Oden to conduct more than 20 research expeditions, 9 of which to the North Pole. Joint research expeditions using Oden have been conducted with Canada, Germany and the US, for example. Swedish marine polar research has contributed to scientific progress in a number of areas, such as atmospheric sciences, biology, geology, geophysics, meteorology and oceanography.

The polar research conducted with Oden as its platform is of central importance for Sweden's role in the Arctic and for our international climate and environmental work. To make it possible to retain the position as an important polar research nation and to contribute to the understanding of, for instance, climate change and its consequences, the Swedish Polar Research Secretariat needs to con-

sider possible alternatives to enable Sweden to have continued access to an ice-breaking research ship for year-round activities when it is estimated that the Oden can no longer be used for research assignments. The Swedish Polar Research Secretariat's planning for future access to a heavy polar-classed, climate-neutral research ship for year-round activities needs to continue.

2.4. 3. Knowledge exchange

The cultures of the indigenous peoples in northern Europe, Siberia and North America are based historically on a sub-



Swedish polar researcher at Sherard Osborn Fjord.

Photo: Martin Jacobsson

sistence economy and a close relationship with nature and the environment. By observing, assessing and adapting to local conditions, the indigenous peoples have knowledge and insights that are also a valuable asset in scientific contexts.

In the Arctic there is considerable traditional knowledge among the indigenous groups who make up about 10% of the Arctic population. It is important to make use of and develop traditional knowledge not only so as to preserve the culture and identity of the indigenous peoples but



Interior from the Swedish Polar Research Secretariat in Luleå.

Source/photo: Swedish Polar Research Secretariat

also because that knowledge can help to increase understanding of and find solutions to various global challenges such as the effects of climate change and other environmental change in the Arctic.

Orally transmitted knowledge of natural and weather conditions can contribute to climate research, and their observations can complement other historical data. As a result of the Convention on Biodiversity, interest in traditional knowledge and its significance for sustainable development especially has increased. The Sami Parliament has highlighted traditional Sami knowledge in cooperation with the Swedish Biodiversity Centre (CBM). Traditional Sami knowledge and natural resource use have been documented as part of this Sami initiative.

Exchanges of knowledge between researchers, indigenous peoples and local communities living and working in the region should be developed and structured so as to make traditional knowledge and scientific research mutually available. Cooperation in the Nordic Council of Ministers is also a good starting point for the further development of this cooperation from an Arctic perspective. The Govern-

ment takes a positive view of increased exchange and greater collaboration between Sami institutions in the countries in question within the Arctic Council, as well as between Swedish mountain museums and Sami museums.



The Scandes, the Scandinavian mountain range
Photo: Anders Ekholm/Folio/imagebank.sweden.se

2.5 Sustainable economic development and business sector interests

Sweden wants to act for sustainable economic development in the Arctic, on the basis of the 2030 Agenda and taking special account of its vulnerable environment.

- The Government will contribute to sustainable trade and investments in the Arctic region, and work to ensure that the increase in economic activity in the Arctic benefits local economic growth.
- The Government will work to maintain and further develop a robust regulatory framework for free, fair and sustainable trade. Proactive work to address technical trade barriers and to promote greater border trade are also vital for economic development in the Arctic.
- On the basis of the 2030 Agenda and the EU's Green Deal, Sweden will force the pace of international cooperation to protect the unique environment in the Arctic and minimise the negative effects of and risks associated with the use of natural resources in the region.
- Sweden intends to be a forerunner regarding the green transition. Through innovation and sustainable environmental technology, Swedish companies can contribute to a reduced environmental footprint from economic activities in the Arctic and to the transition to a circular economy.
- The Government will work for joint initiatives in the EU, OECD and Arctic Council to also contribute to a sustainable mineral industry at global level. In the context of the Nordic Council of Ministers, Sweden intends, together with the other Nordic countries to, for instance, examine the potential for traceability and marking of metals for the introduction of a certification system, as well as the conditions for secondary extraction. Business models for products with sustainably produced metals will be examined.
- Through cooperation in the EU, Sweden will continue to follow the implementation of the Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean, and will also work in other ways for sustainable management of fisheries in the Arctic region.
- Sweden intends to promote long-term sustainable transport systems in the Arctic, in close cooperation with its Nordic neighbours and Russia.
- Sweden will actively support the ongoing work in the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases from shipping.
- Sweden intends to work for cooperation with other countries in the region and between various actors so as to develop sustainable and attractive tourist destinations that take into account the Arctic's sensitive environment and the needs and situation of its indigenous peoples.

The economic potential of the Arctic contributes to growing global interest in investing and seeking business opportunities in the region. Increased economic activity can benefit growth in the Arctic countries and contribute to livelihoods in local communities. At the same time, increased economic activity risks having negative impacts on the unique and sensitive Arctic environment and the living conditions of the local population, including indigenous peoples, if it does not take place in a sustainable way. Difficult balances may have to be struck between using natural resources and protecting the environment. From the Swedish perspective, it is important that all economic activity in the Arctic is conducted and developed in a long-term sustainable way.

Sustainable development is one of the main aims of the Arctic Council, and this also guides and informs the activities of its working groups. The Arctic Economic Council (AEC), a separate and independent organisation, is an important platform for cooperation between businesses in the Arctic and responsible economic development in the Arctic region, partly through exchanges about good practice, technical solutions and standards. This cooperation is underpinned by the CSR instrument adopted by the AEC, the Arctic Investment Protocol, which aspires to promote sustainable and equitable economic growth in the region that furthers community well-being and builds resilient societies in a fair, inclusive and environmentally sound manner.

Through the Global Deal, Sweden is working for a global partnership in order to promote inclusive growth and decent working conditions. Sweden intends to contribute to sustainable trade and investments in the region in line with the objectives of Sweden's Trade and Investment Strategy and the Government's Strategy for a Circular Economy and through close cooperation with other countries and actors. Sweden intends to be a forerunner regarding the green transition.

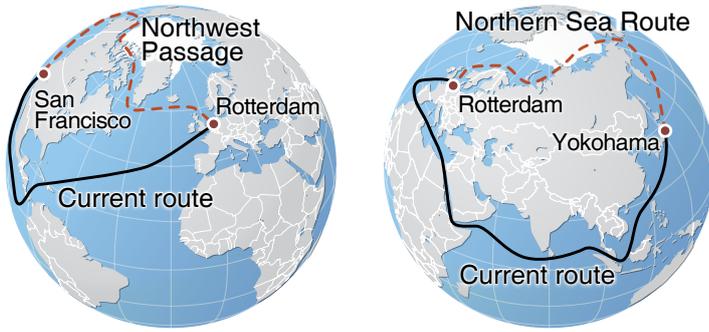
Swedish companies can contribute innovative solutions and sustainable environmental technology to reduce environmental footprints of economic activities and promote the transition to a circular economy, including sustainable extraction of ore and minerals.

Sustainability is a cornerstone of Sweden's trade promotion. An enhanced platform for international sustainable business has been drawn up nationally in parallel with the updating of the Trade and Investment Strategy. Increased Swedish exports of sustainable circular innovations and internationalisation can also contribute to a positive development in the countries where Swedish companies conduct trade and make investments. Developing climate-smart technology that can contribute to more circular and fossil-free solutions also creates competitive advantages, employment and export opportunities.

Sweden will work to maintain and further develop a robust regulatory framework for free, fair and sustainable global trade. This rules-based system of multilateral trade is intended to contribute to growth, employment and sustainable development. Proactive work to address technical trade barriers and to promote greater border trade are also vital for economic development in the Arctic. Sweden will press for the modernisation of the rules for multilateral trade in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and for these rules to take clearer account of environmental and climate issues and to contribute to a green transition.

2.5.1 Sustainable economic development

Sweden will promote sustainable economic development in the Arctic on the basis of the 2030 Agenda. Several of the global Sustainable Development Goals are relevant, including Goal 8 Decent work and economic growth, Goal 9 Sustainable industry, innovation and infrastructure, Goal 12 Sustainable consumption and production, Goal 13 Combat



Shorter international transport routes may be possible via Arctic waters.

Source: GRID-Arendal

climate change and its impacts and Goal 14 Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources. Sustainable economic development is crucial in strengthening the region's sustainable growth, resilience to negative environmental changes and community well-being.

The forms for further management and action in three central areas will be crucial in securing sustainable economic development in the Arctic: use of natural resources; transport and infrastructure; and tourism.

Sustainable use of natural resources

On the basis of the 2030 Agenda and the EU's Green Deal, Sweden intends to be a driver of international cooperation to protect the unique environment in the Arctic and to minimise the negative effects of and risks associated with the use of natural resources in the region.

Sustainable energy use

Around 30% of the world's undiscovered gas assets and 13% of its undiscovered oil assets are estimated to be north of the polar circle. As a result of the decreasing ice cover in the Arctic these natural resources may become more accessible, especially those located on the continental shelves of the coastal states. However, the sea-based extraction of deposits is, as yet, both complicated technically and associated with major costs.

Sea-based oil and gas extraction is particularly sensitive in the Arctic, since the risks associated with this are high. Robust regulation that ensures the highest level of protection for existing and planned oil and gas installations is essential, as is full financial cover for the costs that may arise in an accident. This applies especially to areas with permanent or temporary ice cover where the risks of harm to biodiversity and ecosystems are particularly high. The extraction of fossils fuels also threatens global efforts to achieve the aims of the Paris Agreement and must be phased out as soon as possible.

Unlike the five Arctic coastal states, Sweden does not have its own oil and gas resources, so it does not participate in the energy policy cooperation in the region. Swedish industry does, however, play an important role in the industries that assist this energy sector. Examples include ice-breaking, sea transport and consultancy services based on knowledge of business activities in an Arctic climate. The Government has commissioned the Swedish Export Credits Guarantee Board to review, along with AB Svensk Exportkredit, how the Swedish and international system for export financing should contribute to a clear transition and strong decrease in emissions of greenhouse gases.

Sweden has a prominent position in hydropower and wind power, solar and bioenergy and also technology for improving energy efficiency and reducing carbon dioxide emissions. The direction of Sweden's energy policy is to arrange energy supply using 100% renewable energy sources.

Extraction of ore and minerals

The transition to circular and fossil-free energy technologies such as wind and solar power and electromobility generates greater demand for rare earth metals and other metals found in the Arctic as well as elsewhere. Interest in the extraction of metals at sea is expected to increase and regulatory frameworks and knowledge

need to be developed to prevent negative effects.

The extraction of ore and minerals has led to considerable investments in the Swedish mining industry, a large part of which is in Sweden's Arctic region. Here Sweden and the Nordic region can play an important role both by contributing to sustainable production of metals and helping to create conditions for secondary extraction, and also by delivering sustainable environmental technology and solutions to other mining countries. When new mining activities are established in the Arctic, Sweden can contribute important knowledge and environmental technology.

When new value chains are built up around metal extraction, it is important to take account of the circular flow of metals so that the metals that are extracted are also recycled. Primary raw materials must be replaced as far as possible by resources used efficiently in circular flows.

Sweden will work for joint initiatives in the EU, OECD and Arctic Council to contribute to a sustainable extraction of ore and minerals at global level. Labelling systems for sustainably produced metal and minerals will also be promoted, and coordination regarding development assistance for sustainable extraction of raw materials will be strengthened. The Nordic Council of Ministers' vision of the Nordic region as the world's most sustainable and integrated region in 2030 means that the Nordic region will be a leader for sustainable mineral production. The Nordic countries will jointly examine the potential for traceability and marking of metals for the introduction of a certification system. Business models for products with sustainably produced metals will be examined.

Sustainable fisheries

Until recently the high seas portion the Central Arctic Ocean has been completely covered by ice all year, making fishing



The mining and steel industry has always been of great importance for Sweden's economy. LKAB's mine in Kiruna is the largest and most modern iron ore mine in the world.

Photo: Sonia Jansson/imagebank.sweden.se

impossible, but the ice cover in the area has decreased in recent years. The Arctic region also includes parts of the North East Atlantic where fishing is regulated in part by the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC). In the North East Atlantic Swedish ships fish in international waters in the Norwegian Sea and Sweden also has fishing rights within the framework of the EU's Fisheries Partnership Agreement with Greenland.

Climate change may lead to a shift in the distribution of certain important commercial fish species in the North East Atlantic towards the Arctic. A change in stock distribution and changes in fishing patterns present new challenges for fisheries management, as resource allocation questions can lead to fishing conflicts. Through the EU, Sweden is a party to the Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean.

Sweden follows the work in the regional fisheries management organisations where we have fishing interests, such as the NEAFC, and will continue to work for agreements about the allocation of

fishing possibilities that include all coastal states and other states with direct fishing interests since this is the best way of achieving long-term sustainable management of stocks. Sweden should also continue to follow work in the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) that is of relevance to the Arctic.

Sustainable transport and infrastructure

Sustainable transport and densification are crucial for economic growth and development. The long distances in the Arctic region make high demands on a well-functioning transport system for both persons and goods. This also applies to Sweden's Arctic region. Rising transport demand may increase the demands on infrastructure and sustainable transport solutions in the Barents region, including in the form of expanded and effective railways. The Government takes a positive view of the European Commission's proposal to extend the core network corridor of the trans-European transport network, ScanMed, through Sweden to Narvik and Oulu. Sweden's Arctic region is also highly dependent on well-functioning air services.

Sea transport

Shipping lanes in the Arctic are becoming navigable for a longer part of the year, even though it will take time before conditions will permit commercial shipping on a large scale. At the same time, the large land and sea areas of the Arctic are a vulnerable part of the world's natural environment and climate system. For Sweden, care of the marine environment, both at sea and in coastal areas, is of crucial importance. Sweden will work for joint sea and air monitoring in the region, which contributes to safe and environment-friendly shipping.

In April 2018 the IMO adopted an initial strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from international shipping. Sweden will participate actively in and advance ongoing regulatory work by the IMO as

well as technical and operational actions to reduce the climate impact of shipping.

Sustainable tourism

The tourism sector has grown globally for a long time. The Arctic region is very attractive and offers experiences of nature, cultural life and adventures relating to animal life, hunting and fishing. The midnight sun and the northern lights are natural phenomena that attract visitors. Tranquillity and untouched expanses are also exotic for large parts of the global population.

Greater domestic and international tourism create better conditions for the labour market in the Arctic. It creates new job opportunities for the local population, including indigenous peoples, that supplement traditional activities. Sweden will work for cooperation with other countries in the region and between various actors so as to develop sustainable and attractive tourist destinations that take account of the Arctic's sensitive environment and the needs and situation of its indigenous peoples.

2.5.2 Swedish business interests in the Arctic

Sweden will profile and position itself as an attractive, innovative and competitive Arctic country and make use of Sweden's Arctic skills and resources for growth, employment, greater well-being and sustainable development with a lower impact on the environment and the climate.

- The Government will work to have Swedish skills and experience of activities in an Arctic environment put to use for Swedish business sector interests.
- Sweden intends to work proactively to attract international investments to the Arctic region so as to contribute to increased and sustainable growth.
- Sweden will strengthen the innovative capacity and regional strengths of Sweden's Arctic region through collaboration between the business sector, academia and the public sector.

Swedish companies conduct extensive activities in the Arctic, primarily in the Swedish Arctic region. Sweden has skills from and long experience of economic activities in Arctic environments that should be used to benefit Swedish commercial interests. By strengthening its Arctic profile. Sweden will benefit from the increase in international interest in the Arctic and attract investments, skills, talent and visitors.

Sweden's resources and skills in combination with a capacity for renewal and international exchange give Swedish companies, in Norrbotten and Västerbotten especially, unique competitive advantages. Sweden's Arctic skills can be described as an ability to create conditions for sustain-

able growth, innovation and development in areas with a cold climate, long distances, sparse populations and sensitive Environment.

In several sectors, Sweden is conducting world-leading work on sustainability, which is of crucial importance to the export capability and international competitiveness of Swedish business, especially among companies in Sweden's Arctic region.

Sustainable business promotion in the Arctic, drawing on the considerable resources and skills in Norrbotten and Västerbotten, will be guided by the platform for international sustainable business and will also contribute to the implementation of the Government's Trade and Investment Strategy. Regional export promotion plays an important role in supporting small and medium-sized enterprises in this development. In this way, the business sector also contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Global Goals for Sustainable Development.

Sweden's traditional strength and basic industrial structure consist of nature-based industries and heavy basic industry with extraction and refinement processes of world class. Sweden is also equipped to create sustainable development in both traditional industries and new sectors. Sweden stands strong in this area with



Preparing for launch at the Esrange Space Center in northern Sweden.

Photo: Hans-Olof Utsi/imagebank.sweden.se

several well-developed and competitive areas of strength in Norrbotten and Västerbotten. These include Arctic testing, space activities, digital services, health care and the visitor industry.

Research, innovation and testing

Sweden is a leading innovation country. Close cooperation between academia, business and the public sector is the foremost success factor for economically, environmentally and socially sustainable development. In Norrbotten and Västerbotten research is being conducted at several different higher education institutions and research institutes in Arctic leading-edge areas, often with close links to companies' needs and business opportunities.

Knowledge is transformed into new products and services at a number of world-leading innovation clusters around Sweden's Arctic region, but also by smaller actors and small enterprises in various subsupplier chains. One example is innovative environmental technology solutions for Swedish basic industries that can be exported on a global market with the right support.

Arctic conditions like a cold climate and sparsely populated areas make it possible to provide effective test and demonstration environments for the development of the aviation, automotive and component industry, as well as outstanding space activities at the Esrange Space Center

outside Kiruna. Space is a technology-driving industry of the future that contributes, via the development of new services, to the solution of difficult challenges for society, not least data collection to deal with climate change.

Luleå University of Technology and Umeå University are collaborating closely with the business sector to refine Arctic strengths by, for example, jointly developing research on ice and cold climate technology and by strengthening and broadening space activities. The favourable cold climate in combination with a sustainable and reliable electricity supply have also been important factors in attracting strategic and large foreign direct investments.

Sustainable extraction and refinement of Swedish raw materials in the Arctic region

The world's need for innovation-critical minerals and metals is increasing as the electrification and digitalisation of societies, industries and transport systems are accelerated so as to reduce global carbon dioxide emissions. There is great potential in Sweden's Arctic region for the extraction of several metals and minerals for new environmental and technological innovations. Nordic work on certification systems for metals is a central part of action to increase Sweden's and the Nordic region's competitive advantages for sustainable battery production and green electrification.

The mining industry is an important part of the Swedish economy. As a world-leading mining nation, Sweden has long experience, expertise and modern technology to make use of its own raw materials, both primary and secondary, for sustainable mineral extraction as efficiently as possible, and also has good opportunities for Swedish companies to export their skills in smart mining to other countries, thereby contributing further to the global climate transition.

Sweden is Europe's foremost iron ore producer by far, and is also one of

Europe's foremost producers of other base metals as well as of precious metals. The Swedish mining cluster is strong and leading in terms of innovation and development along the entire refinement chain. As part of the Fossil Free Sweden initiative, the Swedish mining industry has drafted an ambitious agenda for completely fossil-free mining operations by 2045.

Steel production accounts for a significant part of global carbon dioxide emissions, making investments in fossil-free steel production and transitioning along the whole of the value chain highly interesting since the demand for steel is expected to rise as global population grows and urbanisation increases. One of the foremost examples is the initiative taken jointly by LKAB, SSAB and Vattenfall for a new demonstration plant in Luleå to develop technology for fossil-free steel production. The goal is to have a fossil-free industrial process in place in 2035.

Innovative refinement of forest raw materials gives Swedish companies possibilities of exporting competitive timber products while residue and side streams are used for climate-smart alternatives so as to reduce the use of



HYBRIT is a project to develop the world's first fossil-free ore-based steel production/HYBRIT pilot plant start-up.

Photo: Viveka Österman



Luleå University of Technology.

Photo: Luleå University of Technology

demanding energy-intensive industries, such as data storage and battery manufacturing, with a low climate impact. Hydro, wind and solar energy give companies in Sweden competitive advantages in being able to produce products with a much smaller carbon dioxide footprint than global competitors with a more fossil-based energy mix. Facebook's data centres in Luleå and Northvolt's battery factory in Skellefteå are two examples of major locations by international companies that have chosen Sweden in stiff competition, partly on account of favourable Arctic conditions.

Sustainable tourism and the visitor industry

Sweden's magnificent Arctic landscape with its shifting seasons, urban environments and open and modern communities characterised by an environmentally aware lifestyle make Sweden an attractive destination for visitors. By further strengthening their common Arctic location brand, Swedish companies can continue to develop competitive offers of world-class experiences.

Quality, safety and credibility are guiding words for sustainable development in Sami industries. Today most Sami work in occupations that are not traditional for the Sami, and over the years more and more Sami have started businesses in tourism featuring Sami culture.

Sweden's cultural diversity is a great asset and the growth potential in both traditional and new industries in, for example, the visitor industry, culture and gastronomy is great. Sweden's Arctic profile is strengthened through more concrete crossborder cooperation with Norway and Finland, as well as in a broader Arctic context.

fossil raw materials, such as fuels, plastics and chemicals. The development of a circular and bio-based economy in the Swedish Arctic creates sustainable development, new businesses and more jobs. Moreover, effective, active and sustainable forestry plays a crucial role in enabling Sweden and Europe to reach climate and energy objectives since forests with good growth bind large quantities of carbon dioxide.

Renewable energy production

Stable access to renewable energy production and cooling make Sweden attractive for the operation of increasingly



Traditional Sami costume.

Photo: Peter Grant/imagebank.sweden.se

2.6 Ensuring good living conditions

Sweden wants the population in the Arctic to enjoy good living conditions and sustainable economic and social development, with respect for the rights of indigenous peoples.

- The Government will contribute smart solutions and the development of robust infrastructure, including digital infrastructure, to create attractive communities in the Arctic region.
- Sweden will work for greater possibilities for indigenous peoples in the Arctic to preserve and develop their identity, culture and traditional livelihoods.
- Sweden intends to work for a living Sami culture based on long-term sustainable reindeer husbandry and other Sami livelihoods.
- Sweden will promote the preservation of the Sami language and other Arctic indigenous languages and share Swedish experiences of revitalisation work.
- The Government intends to work for a gender-equality perspective throughout the activities of Arctic-related cooperation bodies like the Arctic Council and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council.
- Sweden intends to work so that all young people in the Arctic region have good living conditions, power to shape their lives and influence on the development of society.

About 4 million people live in the Arctic, and about 10% of them are members of the various indigenous peoples. It is of fundamental importance for people living in the Arctic region that there are good possibilities of making a living and good communications. Arctic challenges like long distances, sparse population and a small critical mass make special demands for smart solutions and the development of robust infrastructure, including well-developed digital infrastructure, in order to create attractive communities at places with special conditions. Well-developed infrastructure contributes to economic and social connectivity in the region.

Many parts of the Arctic region have demographic challenges with an ageing population and the out-migration of young people, especially young women, who leave the region to study or work in larger urban areas further south. Thus, there is a need to create good living conditions to get people to stay, move to or move back to the region. Measures to strengthen gender equality can contribute to regional growth and development.

2.6.1 Digital infrastructure

Access to digital infrastructure in the Arctic region provides many advantages for the population and the business sector. Broadband expansion and investments in satellite and telecommunications lay the foundation for digitalisation and distance-bridging technologies that then open up new business opportunities. With growing tourism in the Arctic, mobile and fixed connections make rescue services better able to carry out operations. Digital infrastructure is an important precondition for being able to provide important public services such as education and health care in the Arctic region.

The Government's broadband strategy contains objectives for access to high-speed broadband and access to stable mobile services of good quality for all households and companies throughout Sweden. An extensive expansion of

broadband has been under way for several years, including in Sweden's Arctic region. In areas where commercial actors do not consider it profitable to expand broadband, the Government provides support for expansion.

People living in sparsely populated areas, including Sweden's Arctic region, may need to go long distances to receive health care, and this can be a particular challenge for older people with particular needs. With the aid of digitalisation, innovative solutions are possible when access to health care and social care is not always close at hand geographically. Improving access in sparsely populated areas to good health and social care creates conditions for development and growth. The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 has demonstrated the great need for, and a higher demand for, digital health care meetings in these areas.

2.6.2 Gender equality

The rapid climate change and its consequences for living conditions in the Arctic affect both women and men living in the region, but sometimes in different ways. To ensure the growth of local communities, their resilience to negative environmental changes and their sustainable development, it is important that women and men are given equal opportunities of taking part in community life, political decision-making processes and economic activities on equal terms. Equality between women and men is a pillar of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls, men and boys is a legally binding undertaking for all Arctic states. In line with the Government's gender policy objectives and its feminist foreign policy, the Government intends to work to have the gender policy perspective applied throughout the activities of Arctic-related cooperation bodies such as the Arctic Council and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council.



Kiruna – northern Sweden.

Photo: Hans-Olof Utski, Image Bank

A gender equality project, partly financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers, has been under way in the Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group since 2013. The purpose of the project is to conduct studies and foster the dialogue on gender equality in the Arctic and to build networks between experts and stakeholders in the region, including from Sweden. In the third phase of the project Sweden is contributing funding and expertise for the publication of a general report on gender equality in the Arctic in 2021.

The Sami Parliament has been commissioned by the Government to map and analyse Sami society from a gender equality perspective. The purpose is to see how gender equality in Sami society can be

promoted. In 2016 the Sami Parliament adopted a gender equality programme so as to be able to work systematically for greater gender equality in Sami society. Within the framework of the gender equality measures, the Sami Parliament also has an exchange of experience with Finland, Norway and Russia about gender equality, men's violence against women, sexual harassment and abuse.

2.6.3 Young people

To ensure positive and sustainable development in the region young people must be given priority in this cooperation. Youth policy cooperation and people-to-people contacts are important if young women and young men are to be encouraged to remain in the region and create added value for the whole of the popula-

tion. Young people are affected both by decisions taken locally and regionally and by those taken nationally and internationally in all areas of society. Sweden will therefore work for all decisions and actions that affect young people in the Arctic to have a young people perspective both as regards planning, implementation and follow-up.

Sweden intends to work so that all young people in the Arctic region have good living conditions, power to shape their lives and influence on the development of society. This means creating good living conditions at all levels for the individual on the basis of the right of young people to enjoy human rights. The individual must have access to education, employment, housing, health, safety, culture and leisure, their own language, the possibility of participating and exercising influence and a life free from discrimination. It is therefore important to have a cross-sectoral perspective on young people's living conditions in the Arctic.

2.6.4 Indigenous peoples' culture and reindeer husbandry

Indigenous peoples and other groups in the Arctic region who have a traditional lifestyle or who support themselves from biological natural resources, such as reindeer husbandry, hunting, fishing and crafts, are particularly dependent on high biodiversity and intact ecosystem functions. Climate change means that many traditional customs and traditions will be more difficult to maintain. Sweden intends to contribute to strengthening knowledge processes regarding their traditional lifestyle and necessary adaptations to climate change. If indigenous peoples are to be able to meet future challenges, their active participation is required in decisions affecting them in, for instance, the activities of the Arctic Council, where several indigenous peoples are represented as permanent participants. Political solutions should be based on a coherent analysis of knowledge gaps and an interdisciplinary



Students at Umeå University enjoy a day in the sun along the Ume River.

Photo: Jonatan Stålhös/imagebank.sweden.se

approach so that traditional knowledge is made visible and comes to use.

The Sami have special status as an indigenous people in Sweden. The Swedish Constitution lays down that Sami people's possibility of preserving and developing a cultural and social life of their own shall be promoted. The Sami population shall be able to continue to pursue and develop their reindeer husbandry and other Sami livelihoods to be able continue to live and support themselves in the Arctic region.

The Sami people have been subjected to abuse, violations and racism throughout history, and still are today. These injustices still affect the relationship between different Sami groups and between Sami and the Swedish State. The Government is working for redress and reconciliation with the Sami people.

In addition to being an important bearer of culture, reindeer husbandry is a livelihood preserved exclusively for the Sami people in Sweden. For many reindeer-herding Sami, reindeer husbandry constitutes an important part of a "mixed economy" based on reindeer herding, hunting and fishing as well as some other secondary industries. Just like all livelihoods,

reindeer husbandry is facing challenges that must be dealt with to survive and generate a financial surplus. Well-functioning and long-term sustainable reindeer husbandry requires access to suitable calving grounds, functioning migration routes with resting pastures and central connected seasonal grazing areas for each season.

In addition to reindeer husbandry, other important Sami livelihoods are the Sami visitor industry, Sami crafts, doudji (Sami handicraft and applied art) and small-scale slaughter and refinement activities. The work of the Sami Parliament is based on a reindeer policy and food programme called Eallinbiras. Within this programme the Sami Parliament is running several measures for business development focusing on sustainability and long-term sustainable use.

One of the statutory tasks of the Sami Parliament is to lead work with the Sami language. There is, for instance, a Sami language centre that is responsible for outreach activities and language revitalisation. The status of the Sami languages in society and their protection in law are of great importance for interest in using and learning Sami. The Sami Parliament has been commissioned to draft a long-term action plan for the preservation of the Sami languages.

Sámi Giellagáldu is a knowledge and expert body that works on language planning and development work across national borders in order to develop Nordic language cooperation and strengthen the position of the Sami language in Norway, Finland and Sweden. As of 2020, Giellagáldu, which has previously operated in the form of a project, is being given a fixed form as a body in its own right with the Sami Parliament in Norway as its host authority and with joint Nordic funding.



Reindeer sleigh ride in a beautiful snow landscape.

Photo: Asaf Kliger/imagebank.sweden.se

www.nutti.se



Dog sledding close to Jokkmokk.

Photo: Asaf Kliger/imagebank.sweden.se



3.

Background about
cooperation
organisations linked
to the Arctic region

Arctic Council

The Arctic Council was formed in Ottawa in 1996 on the basis of cooperation between Arctic environment ministers – the Rovaniemi Process, which started in 1991. The Council is an intergovernmental forum that considers shared regional challenges facing the states and people concerned. Its activities mainly deal with protecting the Arctic environment and promoting sustainable development in order to improve the economic, social and cultural well-being of the inhabitants of the Arctic.

The Arctic Council consists of the eight Arctic States: Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark (including Greenland and the Faroe Islands), Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States.

Six international organisations representing the indigenous peoples in the Arctic, participate as permanent participants: Aleut International Association (the islands in the Bering Sea between the US and Russia), Arctic Athabaskan Council (Canada and the US), Gwich'in Council International (Canada and the US), Inuit Circumpolar Conference (Greenland, Canada, the US and Russia), Sami Council (Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia), Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (brings together some 50 indigenous peoples in Russia).

The Chairmanship rotates between the eight Arctic States every two years. In between the meetings of foreign ministers, which conclude each Chairmanship, the work of the Council is led by a committee of officials consisting of representatives of the eight Arctic States and the six indigenous peoples (Senior Arctic Officials and Permanent Participants). The permanent secretariat of the Arctic Council is in Tromsø, Norway.

The Council's activities are conducted in six working groups composed of representatives at expert level from ministries and government agencies and of researchers. The working groups are ACAP (*Arctic Council Action Plan*), AMAP (*Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme*), CAFF (*Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna*), EPPR (*Emergency, Prevention, Preparedness and Response*), PAME (*Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment*) and SDWG (*Sustainable Development Working Group*). All working groups report to the SAO meeting and traditionally also to the meeting of foreign ministers for approval of their mandates for the next two-year period.

The Arctic Council has 38 observers, 13 of which are states: China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland and the UK.

Thirteen observers are international and interparliamentary organisations: International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), International Maritime Organization (IMO), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Nordic Council of Ministers, Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO), *North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission* (NAMMCO), Ospar Commission, Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (SCPAR), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), *West Nordic Council* (WNC).

Twelve observers are non-governmental organisations: *Advisory Committee on Protection of the Sea* (ACOPS), *Arctic Institute of North America* (AINA), *Association of World Reindeer Herders* (AWRH), *Circumpolar Conservation Union* (CCU), *International Arctic Science Committee* (IASC), *International Arctic Social Sciences Association* (IASSA), *International Union for Circumpolar Health* (IUCH), *International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs* (IWGIA), *Northern Forum* (NF), Oceana, *University of the Arctic* (UArctic), World Wildlife Foundation (WWF).

Barents Euro-Arctic Council

Barents cooperation is implemented at national level in the (*Barents Euro-Arctic Council*, BEAC) and at regional level in the (*Barents Regional Council*, BRC). The BEAC and BRC have a small joint international secretariat in Kirkenes in Norway.

The members of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council are Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the European Union. Its chairmanship rotates every other year between Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden, with the country's foreign minister acting as chair. Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Neth-

erlands, Poland, the United Kingdom and the United States all have observer status.

The members of the BRC are 13 counties across northern Finland, Norway and Sweden and in northwest Russia, which are represented by their governors. The chairmanship rotates among these 13 counties every other year in the same way as the national-level chairmanship. The Swedish members of the BRC are the counties of Norrbotten and Västerbotten.

The practical work is organised in 16 working groups at national, regional and mixed national/regional level in areas such as economic cooperation, environment, transport and logistics, health and social issues, youth work, culture, research and education, rescue service cooperation and tourism.

The three indigenous peoples (the Sami, Nenets and Vepsians) living in the area are represented in their own working group that reports to and advises both the BEAC and BRC and the working groups.

Sami Council

The Sami Council was founded in 1956 and is an organisation for cooperation between Sami organisations with activities in Norway, Sweden, Russia and Finland. The Sami Council is the Sami's common non-governmental, cultural and political institution and is one of the oldest indigenous peoples' organisations in the world.

The primary aim of the Sami Council is the promotion of Sami rights and interests affecting the Sami in the four countries where the Sami live. The Sami Council participates in international processes on matters concerning indigenous peoples, human rights, the Arctic and the environment.

The Sami Council has a total of nine member organisations: three in Norway, three in Sweden, two in Russia and one in

Finland. The representatives of its member organisations are members of the Council who are nominated by the Sami Conference following proposals presented by the delegations of these organisations. Its work is led by a permanent secretariat, and ministers responsible for Sami matters and the presidents of the Sami parliaments meet regularly.

Sweden's chairmanship of the regional organisations

Since the previous strategy for the Arctic region was adopted in 2011, Sweden has held the chairmanship of both the Arctic Council and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. In this capacity, Sweden has contributed to advancing work in these organisations' priority areas and to strengthening cooperation in each of the regional organisations.

Chairmanship of the Arctic Council in 2011–2013

Sweden chaired the Arctic Council for the first time from May 2011 to May 2013 in accordance with the Council's principle of rotation for its chairmanship. The Government's overall ambition for the chairmanship was to strengthen the Arctic Council as the foremost multilateral forum for issues concerning the Arctic region.

The Swedish Chairmanship gave priority to climate and environmental issues, including by working for significantly lower global greenhouse gases emissions focusing on short-lived climate forcers. During its Chairmanship Sweden contributed to strengthening the processes in these areas in the Arctic Council.

Another of the Government's priority areas was to work to strengthen the institutional framework for the Arctic Council. A permanent secretariat with its own budget was formed in Tromsø. The Gov-

ernment also worked to achieve a clearer link between the research work in the Arctic Council's working groups and the Council's policy work. Action was also taken to increase the effectiveness of both internal and external communication in the Arctic Council.

At the meeting of foreign ministers in Kiruna in May 2013 an agreement was signed about Arctic cooperation on oil pollution preparedness and response. The Arctic Council's eight member states and six indigenous peoples' organisations adopted a long-term vision for the Arctic region. The Council also decided to grant six countries observer status: China, India, Italy, Japan, Singapore and South Korea.

Chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council 2017–2019

Sweden chaired the Barents Euro-Arctic Council from October 2017 to October 2019. The Swedish chairmanship programme built on the two global frameworks of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda. It focused on four priority areas: environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainable development, and stronger and more visible Barents cooperation. Promoting gender equality and strengthening respect for human rights was a running theme throughout the chairmanship, as was enhancing crossborder people-to-people contacts with a special focus on young people.

Young people were among the top priority issues during the Swedish Chairmanship. In conjunction with the 25th anniversary of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council a youth conference was held in Luleå in April 2018. The chairmanship also took the initiative for new educational cooperation with northwest Russia and funded a reportage book about what it is like to be young in the Barents region.

Indigenous peoples also had an important role in the chairmanship. In May 2019 the

Working Group on Indigenous Peoples held a congress and summit in Lycksele whose important themes included regional sustainable development, language, culture and the truth and reconciliation process.

Transport ministers of the Barents countries met in Umeå in September 2019 and adopted a ministerial declaration welcoming the draft Joint Barents Transport Plan that had been revised during the chairmanship. In late September 2019 Barents Rescue was arranged in Kiruna with the purpose of strengthening rescue services cooperation in the region. On the environmental side, an updated action plan on climate change was adopted in autumn 2017. The environment ministers of the

Barents countries met in Luleå in February 2020. The ministers approved the exclusion of four particularly polluted areas (*hot spots*) in northwest Russia. Cooperation on biodiversity and the climate was also on their agenda, as was a visit to SSAB Hybrit.

In conjunction with the meeting of foreign ministers in Umeå in October 2019, Västerbotten took over the two-year chairmanship of the Barents Regional Council. Västerbotten's chairmanship programme builds on the national chairmanship and has a strengthened focus on the environment and climate, gender equality and children and young people. This helps to secure the long-term impact of Sweden's priorities for Barents cooperation.



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