



REGERINGSKANSLIET

Government Offices
of Sweden

The Globalisation Council

FACT SHEET

Ministry of Education and Research

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The Swedish Government has established a Globalisation Council to promote a deeper knowledge of globalisation issues, draw up economic policy strategies and broaden public dialogue about what needs to be done to ensure that Sweden can compete successfully in a world marked by continued rapid globalisation. The Council's work is expected to lead to proposed measures whose purpose, broadly defined, will be to boost Sweden's competitiveness and attractiveness on the international scene. The Council, which is chaired by the Minister for Higher Education and Research, Lars Leijonborg, and whose Principal Secretary is Pontus Braunerhjelm, has been set up as an interdepartmental working group within the Government Offices. Its Secretariat is based at the Ministry of Education and Research.

Background

The ongoing process of globalisation is probably the greatest challenge Sweden has faced in recent times. World trade is expanding, economies are being integrated, information exchange is growing and communications are continually improving. Millions of people have been lifted out of poverty into prosperity. Countries previously closed to the outside world have opened their doors.

Globalisation affects Sweden in a number of ways: the country's increasing dependence on the world around it is compounded by growing international competition for capital, company relocation and labour. The question is whether Sweden's policies are designed to ensure that the country can take advantage of the potentially immense welfare-enhancing impact inherited in the globalisation process. The second industrial revolution (1860–1920) saw Sweden's emergence as a leading industrial player on the global stage. Is the country's competitiveness on a comparable footing today? Is it equal to the global restructuring currently taking place? What economic policy changes are needed, and what can be done to widen the current debate and discussion on the consequences and mechanisms of globalisation? The Globalisation Council has been expressly established to come up with answers to these and other questions.

Tasks

Although the Council's terms of reference are broad, emphasis is placed on factors decisive for Sweden's future competitiveness and attractiveness. Thus, an important task will be to assess the opportunities and challenges presented by the global economy to a small, open country like Sweden. Central issues for the Council include Sweden as a future knowledge society and production base, business sector renewal and development capacity, and the ability of the labour market and the Swedish model to adapt and modernise in a world characterised by increasingly multi-dimensional competition.

Working methods

In addition to regular Council meetings, background reports will be written by independent researchers and other experts. These will be quality assessed by reference groups composed of representatives from academia and the Government Offices and by leading economists on the Council's Advisory Board. The work of the Council, which must be completed well before the 2010 general election, will be documented in a final report along with economic policy recommendations. Plans are also being drawn up for a number of external activities, such as conferences and seminars.

Activities to date

The Globalisation Council's inaugural meeting, held on 12 February 2007, addressed Sweden's role in a globalised world. Three further meetings have subsequently been held. These focused on the pharmaceutical industry and biomedical sector and perspectives on the research climate in Sweden, competitiveness and opportunities for Sweden in the global economy with the emphasis on actors in the information and communications sectors, and the importance of education and training to growth and prosperity. Actors with relevant knowledge and expertise in the areas concerned were invited to comment. Although Swedish participation – from researchers, entrepreneurs and other decision-makers – predominated, other international authorities also contributed their views. The meetings, which were extremely well attended and marked by constructive discussion and a desire to promote change, generated a number of concrete proposals. The task of reviewing and acting on the policy implications of these proposals rests with working groups – with which the Council Secretariat is in constant contact – within the ministries concerned.

Although the Globalisation Council normally meets behind closed doors, a large external conference was held in the Stockholm Concert Hall in conjunction with the Council meeting in March. The key speakers at

the conference, which was devoted to the theme “The welfare state open to competition?” were the highly regarded economics professors, Richard Baldwin and Hans-Werner Sinn.

Forthcoming meetings

The following themes will be addressed at forthcoming meetings of the Council:

- The driving forces and impact of globalisation
- The dynamics and renewal of the business sector: entrepreneurship, small enterprises and innovation policies
- Prospects for the Swedish environmental technology sector
- Schools and education
- Migration
- Basic industries and raw materials
- The BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China)
- The dynamics and renewal of the business sector: large enterprises, ownership and investment
- The Swedish service sector: global competition for private and public undertakings
- Globalisation and labour market policy: technological development, low-wage competition and flexibility
- Swedish social security systems – hindrance or success factor?
- The Swedish tax system and global competition
- Two Council meetings will also be devoted to a discussion of the final report.

External activities

Planning is under way for a series of open, external activities. These will take place throughout the country, from Malmö in the far south to Haparanda in the north. The Council Secretariat has initiated several joint projects involving a number of actors and leading to a series of conferences scheduled to begin in the autumn of 2007. One example of an external activity is the Globalisation Dialogue, a meeting place for Swedish opinion- and decision-makers. Its purpose is provide a forum for discussion of key issues affecting Sweden in a globalised world. Dialogue sessions will take place once a month in premises in the Government Offices. The first meeting will be addressed by Göran Rosenberg, who will speak on the theme “Does globalisation foster extremism?”.

The Globalisation Council has its own website, at www.regeringen.se/globaliseringsradet. Key features include abstracts, reviews, newsletter and presentation material. Information in English is presented at www.sweden.gov.se/globalisation.

The Globalisation Council Secretariat

The Council Secretariat is headed by Principal Secretary Pontus Braunerhjelm, who also holds a part-time appointment as a professor at the Royal Institute of Technology. Secretariat staff include a programme coordinator, trend analyst/communicator, a secretary, a special expert and a coordinator responsible for liaising with the political executive.

Council members

The Council comprises representatives from the business sector, the Government, social partners, the government administration, the media and the research community. It is chaired by the Minister for Education and Research, Lars Leijonborg. The Principal Secretary is Pontus Braunerhjelm. The other members are:

- Kristina Alsér, CEO, Mercatus Engineering AB
- Hans Bergström, columnist and reader in political science
- Carl Bildt, Minister for Foreign Affairs
- Urban Bäckström, Director-General, Confederation of Swedish Enterprise (Svenskt Näringsliv)
- Lars Calmfors, professor of international economics
- Per Carstedt, project leader, Bio Fuel Region
- Dilsa Demirbag-Sten, journalist, author
- Anna Ekström, Chair, Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (SACO)
- Lars Leijonborg, Minister for Education and Research
- Sven Otto Littorin, Minister for Employment
- Wanja Lundby-Wedin, President, Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO)
- Karin Markides, President, Chalmers University of Technology
- Elisabeth Nilsson, President, Swedish Steel Producers' Association (Jernkontoret)
- Aina Nilsson Ström, Head of Design, AB Volvo
- Sture Nordh, Chair, Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO)
- Mats Odell, Minister for Local Government and Financial Markets
- Maud Olofsson, Minister for Enterprise and Energy and Deputy Prime Minister
- Carl-Henric Svanberg, President and CEO, Ericsson
- Lena Treschow Torell, President, Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences (IVA)
- Harriet Wallberg-Henriksson, President, Karolinska Institutet
- Marcus Wallenberg, Chair, International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)
- Olle Wästberg, Director-General, Swedish Institute (Svenska Institutet)



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