



Sweden and immigrants mostly get on well

Opinion piece by Minister for Justice and Migration Morgan Johansson in Wall Street Journal, March 1, 2017.

Jimmie Akesson and Mattias Karlsson of the Sweden Democrats Party inaccurately paint a picture of Sweden as a country with a particularly high rate of violent crime, which they claim is due to the number of asylum seekers that Sweden has taken in ("Trump Is Right: Sweden's Embrace of Refugees Isn't Working," op-ed, Feb. 23). The Sweden Democrats are an extreme right-wing, racist party with Nazi roots.

Like all countries, Sweden has problems with violent crime. The government is taking measures to fight such crime and its causes. But the idea that the situation is worse in our country is entirely erroneous. The risk of falling victim to lethal violence in Sweden is very low by international standards and has declined overall in the last 20 years, despite our high levels of asylum immigration.

The claim that Sweden welcomes terrorists "with open arms" is completely false. On the contrary, we have tightened our anti-terrorism legislation. The phenomenon of individuals travelling to the Middle East to fight for Daesh has more or less ceased completely.

Sweden has given protection to 143,000 Syrian men, women and children since 2011. We are proud of that, because many of these people might otherwise have perished in Homs or Aleppo. Now these people must get a good start in Sweden. The number of jobs has increased by more than 150,000 since 2014. Unemployment has fallen, growth is high and our public finances are sound.

Members of Muslim faith communities make up approximately 1.5% of the Swedish population. Laying the blame for every problem with this small

minority is absurd and dangerous. Baseless accusations against ethnic and religious minorities must not be allowed to dominate the political conversation.

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Strengthen the right of LGBTQ people to be themselves

Opinion article, Newspaper Expressen, 8 february 2016
Legislation must keep pace with developments in society. The Government therefore plans to implement changes that aim to offer the same conditions for everyone, regardless of their choice of partner and type of family, write five government ministers.

People have the right to be themselves in all areas of life. This includes the right to live with the person you love and to have your family formation treated with respect. Efforts to break old norms that limit people from fully living their lives must continue. This applies particularly to policies for the rights of those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ people).

Proactive organisations in civil society and courageous politicians before us have helped to move the situation of LGBTQ issues in the right direction. Society is constantly evolving, and perceptions of parenthood, family, gender and the rights of the child in the family evolve with it. Today, there are numerous family constellations other than the traditional nuclear families: single, friends with children, step-families or families with several mothers or fathers. Our social systems must also meet the needs of these families.

Legislation and its application must keep pace with developments in society. It must accommodate various ways of forming a family and ensure the right of all people to good health. The Government is therefore planning to implement changes that aim to offer the same conditions for everyone, regardless of the choice of partner and type of family that each of us chooses to live with:

- Parental support and family law issues in social services need to be more modern, equitable and gender equal. Family constellations vary and have

different needs. In light of this, the Government has concentrated responsibility for these issues at the Family Law and Parental Support Authority. An important task for the Authority is producing knowledge support for relevant actors so that these, in turn, can provide better support and guidance to parents and children.

- Families can take many different forms, but when the parental insurance system was designed, it was still based on the idea of a nuclear family with two co-habiting parents. The living conditions of families with children have changed over time.

More than one in five children grows up in a family constellation other than one including both their biological parents. The inquiry on parental insurance that is now to be conducted has therefore been tasked with identifying problems and investigating possibilities for facilitating the use of parental insurance by different family constellations.

- There are currently large health disparities between different groups in society. To close the avoidable health gaps within a generation, the Government has appointed a commission for equitable health. We know that LGBTQ people in general have poorer health and young LGBTQ people are particularly vulnerable with regard to mental health. In its work, the commission will therefore take into account health disparities between LGBTQ people and the rest of the population.
- The treatment of LGBTQ people in health and medical care is unequal across the country. Unfortunately, in their contacts with different authorities, individuals are sometimes doubted and treated ignorantly. This leads to LGBTQ people in some cases refraining from seeking care.

The National Board of Health and Welfare has been tasked with analysing care and treatment of intersex people (persons whose gender cannot be determined due to biological reasons) and implementing measures in the various areas of activity of social services. The objective is to raise awareness of LGBTQ people's living conditions and the various forms discrimination can take. The National Board of Health and Welfare and the Public Health Agency of Sweden will also review how issues concerning the health of young transgender people could be highlighted within the framework of other mental health initiatives.

- There have been several high-profile cases where information was registered in the population registration regarding a person who had

changed gender in such a way that the link between individuals, such as a child and a parent, was lost. The Swedish Tax Agency has now been tasked with describing what has been done or will be done to prevent problems that may arise.

- Current regulations regarding paternity and parenthood are based on heterosexual marriage. There is reason to review whether the regulations should be updated and for this reason, the Government intends to appoint an inquiry in the spring to conduct a review of the legislation.

These are some of the initiatives the Government is now implementing. We know there is a lot left to do. Discrimination, inequitable treatment and violence are still part of daily life for many LGBTQ people all around the country. This is never acceptable. The Government will continue its efforts to strengthen the possibility for LGBTQ people to fully be themselves in all areas of life.

Gabriel Wikström
Minister for Health Care, Public Health and Sport

Åsa Regnér
Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality

Morgan Johansson
Minister for Justice and Migration

Alice Bah Kuhnke
Minister for Culture and Democracy (Green Party)

Annika Strandhäll
Minister for Social Security (Social Democratic Party)

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Neues Patentrecht in Europa nutzt der Wirtschaft

Börsen-Zeitung 29th May 2015. The article is also published in Ny Teknik (in Swedish).

Vor zwei Jahren erhob Spanien vor dem Europäischen Gerichtshof Nichtigkeitsklagen gegen die beiden Patentverordnungen der Europäischen Union.

Am 5. Mai wies der Gerichtshof diese Klagen ab und verlieh damit der laufenden paneuropäischen Patentreform einen frischen Impuls.

Mit diesen Gerichtsentscheidungen wurde die letzte Hürde für die dringend notwendige europäische Patentreform genommen. Es wird daher ein Reformpaket auf den Weg gebracht, das einen einheitlichen Patentschutz und das Einheitliche Patentgericht umfasst. Dies ist eine gute Nachricht für den Binnenmarkt.

Die Entscheidungen sind ein Aufruf an die teilnehmenden Mitgliedstaaten, ihre Vorbereitungen abzuschließen und das neue System schnellstmöglich zu verwirklichen. Schweden und Deutschland arbeiten eng zusammen, um eine nutzerfreundliche und rasche Umsetzung des Pakets zu erreichen.

Ende der Fragmentierung

Mit der Reform wird das fragmentierte europäische Patentsystem angegangen.

Derzeit müssen vom Europäischen Patentamt erteilte Patente in jedem Land gesondert validiert werden, und zwar nach Rechtsvorschriften, die von Land zu Land unterschiedlich sind. Außerdem kann eine Streitigkeit über ein europäisches Patent derzeit durch eine Vielzahl von Gerichten in verschiedenen Ländern entschieden werden, mit der Gefahr unterschiedlicher Verfahrensausgänge und uneinheitlicher Rechtsprechung.

Das derzeitige System ist vergleichsweise teuer. Zudem ist es für Nutzer, die ein europäisches Patent in mehreren Ländern erlangen, verteidigen oder angreifen möchten, kompliziert und rechtlich unsicher. Die nachteiligen Bedingungen in Europa bestärken innovative Branchen darin, stattdessen in konkurrierende amerikanische oder asiatische Märkte zu investieren, wo das Bruttoinlandsprodukt schneller wächst und die Patentsysteme einfacher zu handhaben sind.

Das neue System bietet dagegen einen paneuropäischen Patentschutz durch ein einheitliches Verfahren mit nur begrenzten Übersetzungserfordernissen. Darüber hinaus wird mit ihm ein gemeinsames, hochspezialisiertes Gericht geschaffen, das die ausschließliche Zuständigkeit für die Beilegung von Streitigkeiten im Zusammenhang mit europäischen Patenten besitzt. Erreicht wird damit eine Vereinfachung, eine Kostenreduzierung und Rechtssicherheit.

Diese umfassenden Verbesserungen werden Wettbewerbslücken gegenüber anderen Teilen der Welt schließen und zum Unternehmenswachstum im gesamten Binnenmarkt beitragen. Neue Investitionen bedeuten Marktwachstum und die Schaffung neuer Arbeitsplätze. Um seine politischen Ziele zu erreichen, muss das System so umgesetzt werden, dass die Anwender sein ökonomisches Potenzial auch nutzen können. Bei unseren Vorbereitungen müssen wir die Inanspruchnahme des Systems fördern, indem wir die Erwartungen der Nutzer erfüllen und das System attraktiv machen.

Das laufende Verfahren zur Festlegung der Gebühren für den einheitlichen Patentschutz ist dabei von großer Bedeutung. Das Gebührenniveau muss für ein ausgewogenes Verhältnis sorgen es muss für Nutzer verschiedener Größen attraktiv sein und gleichzeitig in der Lage sein, die finanzielle Stabilität des Patentsystems sicherzustellen.

Aufruf zur Ratifizierung

Das neue System wird erst in Kraft treten, wenn die gemeinsamen Vorbereitungen abgeschlossen sind und 13 Mitgliedstaaten das Übereinkommen über ein Einheitliches Patentgericht ratifiziert haben. Als die Verordnungen angenommen wurden und das Übereinkommen unterzeichnet wurde, verpflichteten sich die teilnehmenden Mitgliedstaaten, diesen Anforderungen schnellstmöglich nachzukommen. Wir bekennen uns ausdrücklich zu dieser Verpflichtung und werden auch weiterhin Verantwortung für die Umsetzung dieser wichtigen Reform übernehmen.

Ebenso sind wir weiterhin bestrebt, die Anliegen der Nutzer aufzugreifen und effektiv auf ein Patentsystem hinzuarbeiten, das zu Innovation, Wachstum und Beschäftigung in der EU beiträgt.

Morgan Johansson, Minister für Justiz und Migration, Schweden
Heiko Maas, Bundesminister der Justiz und für Verbraucherschutz,
Deutschland

The article in English: [Member States meet users in patent reform](#)
The article in Swedish: ["Sverige och Tyskland driver på för patentreform i EU"](#)

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Sweden producing new strategy for Syrian crisis

Dagens Nyheter 3 februari 2015 Today, there are almost 50 million displaced people in the world. This is the highest number since the Second World War. They are fleeing from oppression, war and terrorism.

There are many trouble spots around the world, but the current situation in Syria and Iraq looks increasingly like the worst humanitarian disaster of our time. The civil war and the ISIL reign of terror have so far claimed 200 000 human lives. There are more than 10 million displaced Syrians, almost half of the country's population. Seven million remain in the country, but more than three million have managed to leave. Most are in the neighbouring countries of Jordan, Iraq, Turkey and Lebanon.

Around six per cent, or 200 000, of the Syrian refugees have come to Europe. Around 60 000 people have sought asylum in Sweden.

When we meet United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres on Tuesday, our main messages will be that the world must come together to find a solution to the conflict and help the people fleeing from it. This is a human duty. We vow that Sweden will continue to take constructive action in this respect through our foreign policy, aid policy and migration policy. The work of the High Commissioner for Refugees deserves every support.

Only a political solution can end the conflict. The new Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura has our wholehearted support. He has taken a more localised approach and wants to de-escalate the violence levels and 'freeze' the conflict, starting in Aleppo. In addition, the efforts of the international community to cut off support to terrorism continue, for example by preventing the financing of terrorism and stopping people from travelling as foreign terrorist fighters.

At the same time, ISIL ravages must be stopped so that people are not forced to flee. The flow of weapons, personnel and money to the terrorist sect must be cut off. Those travelling from other countries, such as Sweden, to fight for ISIL must be stopped. Obviously, the conflict and the war are the root problem and the cause of people being forced to flee.

The world has a clear humanitarian responsibility to help the people affected. It is chiefly Syria's neighbours who are now taking that responsibility. Sweden is providing considerable support to alleviate the suffering of people in and outside Syria who are affected by the hell of war. Since the conflict started in 2011, Sweden has contributed more than SEK 1.5 billion. We are now also one of the largest donors to both the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).

Unfortunately, a political solution in Syria seems remote and the prospects of refugee repatriation are currently small. Hundreds of thousands of children in the region are growing up in camps where most cannot attend school. Families are living under extreme financial pressure and humanitarian conditions with little means of support. The frustration and vulnerability is hitting women and children hard. A generation risks being lost and the seeds of future problems are being sown.

The situation is exerting severe pressure on the neighbouring countries. Lebanon alone, which is the same size as Skåne, has taken in more than one million refugees. This creates unease and instability. It is evident that the humanitarian operations are inadequate. They must be linked to long-term support – to neighbouring countries, too. This is something the UNHCR has persistently pointed out to the leaders of the international community. Sweden supports the UNHCR appeal and the Government is now producing a new strategy for the Syrian crisis that covers both the urgent needs and the long-term measures to create better living conditions and support to public services in the neighbouring countries.

For decades, Sweden has offered protection to many people fleeing war and oppression. We have a tradition of solidarity that we should be proud of. We are still keeping up this tradition as 30 000 Syrians sought asylum in Sweden in 2014.

Sweden also works closely with the UNHCR on resettlement of quota refugees directly from refugee camps, in for example Jordan and Lebanon, to western countries. Resettlement provides protection to individuals and also relieves the pressure on the neighbouring countries receiving large

numbers of refugees. Sweden, via the Swedish Migration Board, very successfully led this work in 2014. More than 50 000 Syrians were offered a place of refuge in one of the 24 countries participating in the initiative.

This was positive, but more countries need to take responsibility for the reception of refugees. The Government is therefore working actively to encourage all EU Member States to participate in the resettlement initiative. In the EU, we are also pushing for more countries to receive refugees in a humane and legally secure manner. We welcome Mr Guterres's new proposals that all UN Member States should collectively fund part of the important work of the UNHCR through compulsory contributions.

There is no simple solution to the catastrophic situation of the world's refugees or to the bloody conflict in Syria. In order to really make a difference, taking responsibility is required within all of our respective areas of responsibility. Sweden will continue to be a close and strong partner of the UNHCR in its important work for the world's refugees. Our country will actively stand up for those people who are subjected to war and oppression, wherever they are.

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs
Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation
Morgan Johansson, Minister for Justice and Migration

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