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## Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

### **Seventh periodic report submitted by Sweden under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant, due in 2021\***

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



## Introduction

1. This reporting is in line with the simplified reporting procedure (A/RES/68/268). The report, which contains detailed replies to the list of issues addressed to Sweden by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in November 2020 (E/C.12/SWE/QPR/7), constitutes Sweden's seventh periodic report under article 16 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
2. On the 28th of September 2021 a discussion forum was held with civil society with the aim of obtaining opinions on the list of questions from the Committee and to provide information about the process. The civil society asked for an improved dialog process with the Government before and after reporting to The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Swedish Government will invite Swedish civil society organizations to a dialogue in December 2021 about enhanced cooperation regarding the report process.

## I. Issues of particular relevance

### Reply to paragraph 2 of the list of issues (E/C.12/SWE/QPR/7)

3. Sweden has no official definition of poverty. Statistics on income inequality, income distribution and poverty are regularly produced and presented by the Government Offices in ex ante and ex post assessment of policy reforms and measures. Regarding poverty statistics presented in the Budget Bill, these include e.g. relative and absolute measures, material deprivation and statistics on the proportion of households receiving social assistance. Additionally, Statistics Sweden produces and publishes various statistics on the proportion of persons with low (and high) income, including both relative and absolute measures. The measure most frequently used is the proportion of individuals whose income is less than 60 per cent of equalized disposable income, which is the same as the agreed EU indicator at-risk-of poverty (AROPE), but based on Sweden's national tax register and with a national equivalence scale. The statistics presented below are based on this measure.
4. Social assistance is temporary financial support from the municipality for those unable to support themselves. The social services in each municipality decide on entitlement to social assistance in each individual case.
5. Social assistance is an income and assets-tested benefit, based on the obligation to exhaust all other means of support and to be actively seeking employment. Under the legislation, social assistance is a right to a certain standard of living if no other means of income can be obtained.
6. Every year, the Swedish Government sets a national norm for food, clothes and shoes, hygiene, leisure and hobbies, child insurance, consumer goods, newspapers, telephone, i.e. living costs. This norm includes an individual portion that depends on the size of the household, the number of children and their ages, whether children and young people eat lunch at home, and whether the adult(s) in the household are single occupants or cohabitants. In addition to the national norm, an individual is entitled to assistance for reasonable costs of housing, electricity, home insurance, journeys to and from work, unemployment insurance and membership of a trade union.
7. Policies addressing poverty include a combination of measures in the areas of active and passive labour market policies, social insurance systems, including pensions, with relatively high coverage and social services including social assistance.
8. Specific policy measures within these areas addressing groups with low incomes and at risk of poverty are:

#### Households with children

9. In 2021, maintenance support was raised for single parents living with children of all ages. This is a total increase of SEK 650 since 2017 for children aged 15 and over.

### Persons with disabilities

10. In March 2020, the Government commissioned the Swedish Consumer Agency, to provide the Swedish Social Insurance Agency, with reference material on the normal cost of living. The aim is to make it easier for the Authority to assess what constitutes reasonable additional costs for persons with disabilities and thus simplify the processing of additional cost benefits and shorten processing times.

11. In November 2020, the Government commissioned the Swedish Social Insurance Inspectorate (ISF) to analyse the outcome of the reformed support for persons with disabilities. The final report will be submitted on 30 September 2022.

### Persons with sickness compensation

12. In 2018, the proportion of housing supplement for individuals receiving sickness compensation was increased and the ceiling for housing costs was increased at the same time. Housing supplement is means tested.

13. The basic level of sickness compensation increased in mid-2018 and from 2018 onwards, individuals receiving sickness compensation received a tax reduction.

14. In the budget bill for 2022, the government proposes to increase the guarantee level and the ceiling of the housing supplement in sickness and activity compensation, to abolish the tax gap for people with sickness and activity compensation and to increase the ceiling in sickness insurance.

### Pensioners and people aged 65 and over

15. In 2018, the proportion of housing supplement for pensioners and the ceiling for housing costs were both increased. A further increase was introduced in 2020. Housing supplement is means tested.

16. In 2020, the guaranteed pension was raised by SEK 200 a month, in addition to the indexation to prices.

17. Support for the elderly was increased to pay for housing and other needs for those aged 65 or older who have no pension or are not eligible for a full pension.

18. Tax on pensioners on low incomes was also cut and harmonised, bringing it to the same level as that for income from gainful employment.

19. On 1 September 2021, a new supplementary pension benefit, income pension complement was introduced at a maximum SEK 600 per month for people with a monthly pension of SEK 9 000–17 000.

Table 1

#### Proportion of persons in household with a disposable income less than 60 per cent of the median, by household type, 2019

|                     | <i>Total</i> | <i>Age 0–19</i> | <i>Age 20 and over</i> |
|---------------------|--------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>15.1</b>  | <b>19.6</b>     | <b>13.8</b>            |
| Born in Sweden      | 11.6         | 15.7            | 10.1                   |
| Born outside Sweden | 31.2         | 54.0            | 27.8                   |

20. The proportion of children living in families with a disposable income less than 60 per cent of the median was 22.7 per cent for children under 6 years of age, 19.6 per cent for 6–12-year-olds and 16.2 per cent for children aged 13 and over in 2019. The difference is found between ages not gender.

Table 2

**Proportion of persons in household with a disposable income less than 60 per cent of the median, by household type, 2019, per cent**

|              | Age 65+ | Age 65–79 | Age 80+ |
|--------------|---------|-----------|---------|
| Single women | 34.7    | 29.9      | 41.0    |
| Single men   | 23.3    | 24.0      | 21.6    |
| Cohabiting   | 5.2     | 4.6       | 7.6     |

Table 3

**Proportion of persons in household with a disposable income less than 60 per cent of the median, by household type, age 20+, 2019, per cent**

|                                      | 2019 |
|--------------------------------------|------|
| All                                  | 13.8 |
| Single women with children aged 0–19 | 38.4 |
| Single men with children aged 0–19   | 22.2 |
| Cohabiting with children aged 0–19   | 10.3 |

Table 4

**Proportion of persons in household with a disposable income less than 60 per cent of the median, by household type, age 20–64, 2019, per cent**

|                | With a foreign background | With a Swedish background |
|----------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>25.1</b>               | <b>8.7</b>                |
| Students       | 40.0                      | 23.8                      |
| Unemployed     | 60.8                      | 42.6                      |
| Sick leave     | 42.7                      | 42.1                      |
| Parental leave | 62.7                      | 23.4                      |

Table 5

**Proportion of persons in household with a disposable income less than 60 per cent of the median, by household type, by year since immigration, 2019, per cent**

|                            | Total       | Age 0–19    | Age 20+     |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>15.1</b> | <b>19.6</b> | <b>13.8</b> |
| Born in Sweden             | 11.6        | 15.7        | 10.1        |
| Born outside Sweden        | 31.2        | 54.0        | 27.8        |
| 1–2 years in Sweden        | 48.5        | 63.6        | 40.6        |
| 3–4 years in Sweden        | 48.3        | 64.5        | 42.0        |
| 5–9 years in Sweden        | 37.3        | 49.4        | 34.0        |
| 10–19 years in Sweden      | 28.7        | 30.4        | 28.5        |
| 20 years or more in Sweden | 19.6        | N/A         | 19.6        |

21. The rate of poverty is lower for those in work compared to the rest of population of active age, indicating that work is an important factor in avoiding relative poverty. The proportion of people in in-work poverty is higher for those with a foreign background compared to those born in Sweden. The statistics above indicate that time since immigration is a factor determining risk of poverty.

22. An important factor behind in-work poverty is low work intensity, i.e. part-time work, which is more common among women than among men. Besides promoting increased working hours, measures taken to address in-work poverty are mainly found in social insurance and social assistance. The social insurance system provides financial compensation for households with low work intensity. The systems that provide this compensation are insurances with a guaranteed level for those on low incomes and compensation according to income. Examples here are sickness benefit, unemployment benefit and parental leave. There are also means-tested benefits to support those on low incomes and/or with a maintenance burden, i.e. housing allowances.

Table 6

**Proportion of persons in household with a disposable income less than 60 per cent of the median, by household type, age 20–64, 2019, per cent**

|              | <i>With a foreign background</i> | <i>With a Swedish background</i> |
|--------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Total</b> | <b>25.1</b>                      | <b>8.7</b>                       |
| Working      | 9.4                              | 2.6                              |
| Non-working  | 52.7                             | 32.8                             |

Table 7

**Reasons for part-time work by women and men in 2020, age 20–64, per cent**

|  |              |              |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| <i>Lack of full-time work/seeking full-time work</i> | <i>Women</i> | 21.6         |
|  | men          | 26.6         |
| Caring for children                                  | women        | 15.7         |
|  | men          | 7.7          |
| Prefer not to work full-time/give no reason          | women        | 11.9         |
|  | men          | 11.4         |
| Illness/reduced working ability                      | women        | 9.6          |
|  | men          | 9.7          |
| Studying   | women        | 12.5         |
|  | men          | 16.2         |
| Physically and/or mentally demanding work            | women        | 9.8          |
|  | men          | 4.1          |
| Multiple jobs  | women        | 5.7          |
|  | men          | 6.9          |
| Care of children and adult relatives                 | women        | 1.9          |
|  | men          |              |
| Other  | women        | 10.9         |
|  | men          | 16.1         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>women</b> | <b>100.0</b> |
|  | <b>men</b>   | <b>100.0</b> |

### Reply to paragraph 3 of the list of issues

23. The possibility of applying for social assistance has not changed in Sweden due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Temporary measures due to COVID-19**

24. The Government introduced a series of temporary reforms aimed at limiting the spread of infection, reducing the burden on health services and reducing the economic impact of COVID-19 on individuals and businesses. Starting 1 of October 2021 several temporary reforms and benefits expired.

25. The deduction from sick pay for a qualifying period was temporarily abolished from 11 March 2020. Self-employed people who have a waiting period at the start of their sick leave can be reimbursed for up to 14 days. Anyone who is unemployed, on parental leave or employed without sick pay receives sickness benefit paid out with no deduction for a waiting period.

26. Since April 2020, the Government has been reimbursing employers for higher than normal sick pay costs.

27. The Government decided in July 2020 on a temporary exemption for people on sick leave from being assessed against work on the regular labour market following day 180 and day 365 of the rehabilitation chain when the insured party's care was postponed due to the effects of COVID-19. This means that people can continue receiving sickness insurance while awaiting treatment or rehabilitation. This temporary exemption is valid until 2021-12-31.

28. The Government has introduced a temporary relaxation of the requirement to provide a doctor's certificate, enabling people who are ill to stay home from work for up to 14 days without a doctor's certificate. The Swedish Social Insurance Agency has also decided not to require applicants for sickness benefit to produce a doctor's certificate until after day 21 of the period of sickness.

29. From 1 July 2020, the Government decided on temporary compensation for people in clinically vulnerable groups at risk of becoming seriously ill from COVID-19.

30. The Government has decided on temporary compensation for people who must take time off work to avoid infecting a close relative in a vulnerable group at risk of COVID-19.

31. An injury caused by COVID-19 is to be considered a work-related injury if the disease was contracted when working in a health care institution, otherwise working in the treatment, health care or social care of an infectious person or when dealing with or handling infectious animals or materials.

32. Temporary parental benefit for the care of a sick child can be paid out if the child's preschool or school is closed to limit the transmission of COVID-19. Valid until 2021-12-31.

33. Parents applying for temporary parental benefit are no longer required to provide a certificate from a nurse or doctor to certify the child's illness on day 8; this is instead required from day 22.

34. The Government introduced a temporary supplementary allowance for families with children who are entitled to housing allowance.

35. The Government has also provided extensive grants for the municipalities to cover expenses caused by COVID-19, including in social services.

36. The Agency for Health and Care Service Analysis has reviewed the impact of the pandemic on municipal social services. The Agency concludes that as at January 2021, the consequences of COVID-19 had been less damaging than initially expected.

37. The Government intends to continue to support government agencies and other public bodies in their efforts to ensure that individuals are treated equally and fairly in line with the rule of law, and to prevent people's access to welfare and security from being affected by factors such as ethnicity, skin colour or religion.

38. The impact of the pandemic on the health of different groups of women and men and girls and boys needs to be followed up, including potential differences between the sexes in terms of access to health care and social care. An intersectional perspective is necessary to identify, disaggregated by sex, potential differences due to gender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation or age.

39. The Government has taken various measures concerning persons with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Among other things, the Swedish Agency for Participation has been commissioned to collect information on the special consequences and challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic has entailed for children and young persons with disabilities. Furthermore, the National Board of Health and Welfare has mapped how the pandemic has affected the opportunities for persons with disabilities to access and participate in services according to the Act (1993:387) concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairment (LSS).

40. For persons with disabilities who are receiving services according to the LSS, the opportunity to participate in daily activities has been important to break isolation and reduce mental illness. Many municipalities have found alternative solutions when the daily activity/day centre has been closed due to the pandemic. The Government also clarified the conditions for the habilitation reimbursement, so that persons participating in daily activities have been given opportunities to receive financial compensation although the daily activity/day centre has been closed.

41. Furthermore, the government has decided on a state subsidy for costs relating to personal protective equipment for personal assistants due to the COVID-19 disease. Thus persons with disabilities who receive support from personal assistants, as well as the assistants, have been somewhat protected against the infection.

42. In the light of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency was tasked with producing information material to support the work of the municipalities and conduct several initiatives targeted towards municipalities focusing on violence against children, violence against young women, honour-related violence and oppression, violence against people with disabilities and violence against the elderly.

43. In 2020, the county administrative boards disbursed SEK 67.4 million in government grants for activities for asylum seekers and others. The funds are aimed at countering passivation during the asylum period, facilitating contacts with the Swedish labour market and encouraging future establishment in the labour market for those granted residence permits, and were boosted in 2021 with a focus on community information efforts.

44. The county administrative boards disbursed SEK 66 million in government grants to municipalities for measures for certain aliens in 2020. The funds aim to strengthen and develop activities with refugee guides and family contacts, thus facilitating establishment in society, creating networks, supporting language learning or providing social support to unaccompanied children.

45. In 2019, the National Board of Health and Welfare disbursed more than SEK 134 million to municipalities, regions, other authorities and civil society organisations to improve the quality of action by social services and the health service to combat domestic violence, etc.

46. In April 2020, the National Board of Health and Welfare was tasked with disbursing just over SEK 49 million in government grants to organisations working with children in vulnerable situations and an equal amount in grants to organisations supporting women, children and LGBTIQI people who have suffered violence, to combat violence in close relationships and to combat honour-based violence and oppression. The grant was aimed at supporting the organisations' efforts to respond to increased vulnerability due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

47. To strengthen the work of the municipalities on acute homelessness, the Government decided on a government grant of SEK 25 million to be allocated annually in the period 2018–2021.

48. The Government has allocated more than SEK 85 million in government grants to help people in particularly socially vulnerable situations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The grant is to be used to strengthen the organisations' operations and respond to the increased need for assistance and support during the pandemic.

49. Pensioners' organisations play an important role in counteracting isolation during the covid-19 pandemic. To strengthen their work, the government has increased the government

grant to the organisations and thus the support for 2021 amounts to a total of SEK 28 million. By 2020, the government has also distributed 67 million to organisations that contribute to counteracting involuntary loneliness among elderly.

## **II. Ongoing implementation of the Covenant**

### **Reply to paragraph 4 of the list of issues**

50. Sweden adheres to the principle that international treaties do not automatically become part of Swedish legislation.

51. International treaties must either be transformed into Swedish legislation or incorporated through a special enactment to become applicable. The traditional procedure for implementing an international agreement is to lay down equivalent provisions in an independent Swedish statute, where such provision does not already exist. The preparation for the ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights included a comprehensive review aimed at ensuring that Swedish law was in conformity with the provisions of the Covenant. This review and the ensuing Parliamentary Bill led to the ratification of the Covenant. The Swedish system is such that the material content of the Covenant is not directly applicable in Swedish courts or at Swedish authorities. However, under Swedish case law – as established by several rulings of the Supreme Court – Swedish domestic legislation and any amendments of it must be interpreted in accordance with Sweden's international undertakings.

52. The Swedish courts are independent and autonomous in relation to the Parliament, the Government and other government agencies. This principle is enshrined in the Instrument of Government. A requirement for a judge to participate in certain training could be considered at odds with the principle of independence, and training is therefore not mandatory. The Swedish Judicial Training Academy, which is independent of the Government and the Swedish National Courts Administration, is responsible for providing voluntary training for judges. A judge is nevertheless expected to have sound knowledge of the legal regulatory system, which includes knowledge of the international instruments by which Sweden is bound.

53. All public authorities, regions and municipalities are, as previously mentioned, bound to comply with the human right conventions that Sweden has signed. Even if the adoption of the convention is at a state- or political level, a big part of the practical work is done by the public authorities, regions and municipalities on behalf which comply to the International covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The government's strategy for the national work with human rights (Skr 2016/17:29) is the political starting point to ensure full respect for Sweden's international commitments on human rights. The strategy concerns coordination and systematic work with human rights in public authorities. For example, shall the regions report on how Sweden's legal commitments on human rights and non-discrimination is considered for fiscal year 2021.

54. Government agencies are regularly assigned mandates in areas related to the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. This takes place within the framework of the Government's governance of agencies.

### **Reply to paragraph 5 of the list of issues**

55. On 9 June 2021, the Swedish Parliament voted in favour of the Government Bill on an Institute for Human Rights. The purpose of the Human Rights Institute is to promote the safeguarding of human rights on the basis of international human rights conventions, among other things. Its tasks include monitoring, investigating and reporting on how human rights are respected and realised in Sweden. The Institute is also to propose required measures to the Government. The Institute will be founded on 1 January 2022.

## Reply to paragraph 6 of the list of issues

56. In 2015, the Swedish Government drew up a new and more ambitious policy for sustainable entrepreneurship, linked to trade and industry policy, and to promotion through the export strategy. In addition to a Communication to the Parliament on sustainable business, Sweden was the sixth country in the world to adopt a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights in line with the UN Guiding Principles. Business and human rights are also included in the new Swedish Trade and Investment Strategy and the platform for International Sustainable Business, both of which were launched in 2019. All these policy documents express a clear expectation on the part of the Government that Swedish companies will act sustainably and responsibly, including by respecting human rights in all their operations, both in Sweden and abroad.

57. The action plan launched in August 2015 marked the beginning of Sweden's work to implement the UN Guiding Principles at national level and contained approximately fifty ongoing and planned measures. The Government has taken several measures to implement the UN Guiding Principles since 2011. We particularly wish to highlight the following results:

- New legislation on sustainability reporting for large companies, which is more ambitious than the EU directive stipulates, tougher criminal sanctions against companies, including raising the corporate fine from SEK 10 million to SEK 500 million, clearer sustainability criteria in the Public Procurement Act, and stronger legal protection for whistle-blowers;
- A sharpened focus on human rights in the governance of government agencies and State-owned companies, e.g. by revising their terms of reference or ownership policy, skills boosting initiatives and following up on the UN Guiding Principles;
- The Government has launched the Global Deal, which seeks to strengthen social dialogue and good labour market relations, including freedom of association and collective bargaining, in order to play its part in decent working conditions, which in turn strengthen enterprise and human rights.

58. The Swedish MFA has launched compulsory online training on sustainable business for employees at Sweden's embassies and foreign missions linked to human rights, working conditions, gender equality, environmental considerations and anti-corruption.

59. Each year, the MFA publishes country reports on the situation regarding human rights, democracy and the principles of the rule of law. The reports have been developed, inter alia, to provide companies with better guidance on the human rights situation in countries in which they operate or intend to operate.

60. Various measures have been undertaken to support businesses to conduct responsible business. A sustainability clause is included in the General Terms and Conditions of all contracts with companies, requiring them to act in accordance with the Code of Conduct, including when participating in delegation trips. Business Sweden has also created "Go Global", a free online tool with a training module for SMEs to encourage sustainable internationalisation. Furthermore, an internal sustainability network and a global sustainability team have been established and trained to assist colleagues and companies in export markets with sustainability risks.

61. The government agency the National Export Credits Guarantee Board (EKN) promotes Swedish exports by issuing state export credit and investment insurance. The Government's terms of reference state that EKN is to ensure that its operations are conducted in accordance with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and that work on sustainability issues is to be stepped up. EKN has issued reports on the sustainability assessments of its transactions.

62. SEK safeguards financial solutions for the Swedish export industry on commercial and sustainable grounds. The State's ownership policy sets out that SEK is to promote compliance with international guidelines within the area of sustainable business relating to the environment, anti-corruption, human rights, working conditions and business ethics. The company's credit decisions address sustainability risks related to issues including human

rights, e.g. labour conditions, corruption and environmental impact. In spring 2017, SEK signed up to the Equator Principles, which seek to ensure that projects are developed in a socially and environmentally responsible manner. SEK works with export companies to implement the UN's Guiding Principles in different sectors.

63. If a company is considered to have breached the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, this can be reported to the Swedish National Contact Point (NCP) for the OECD Guidelines. Sweden's NCP is a tripartite collaboration between the Government, business organisations and trade unions, chaired by the MFA. Sweden's NCP has handled several cases where companies are considered to have violated the human rights paragraphs of the OECD Guidelines and has managed to negotiate a settlement between the parties. Opportunities for strengthening the NCP will be explored further.

### **Reply to paragraph 7 of the list of issues**

64. State-owned companies are to act in an exemplary fashion in sustainable enterprise and otherwise act in such a way as to deserve public confidence. Human rights are an integral part of the State Ownership Policy of the Swedish Government and corporate governance.

65. The State Ownership Policy states that it is particularly important that State-owned enterprises work for a safe and healthy work environment, respect for human rights, including the rights of the child, and good and decent working conditions, among other things.

66. The State Ownership Policy also states that State-owned enterprises must act responsibly and work actively to follow international guidelines on issues including human rights and working conditions. The Government has identified several international principles and guidelines as being important for State-owned companies: The Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.

67. The Government has developed guidance for boards of State-owned companies on the expectations of the companies' human rights work and the role and responsibilities of the board. The companies' work is followed up in the owner dialogue which takes place between the political leadership and representatives of the companies.

68. State-owned companies must prepare a sustainability report in accordance with the GRI Guidelines (GRI Standards) or another international sustainability reporting framework.

69. Several State-owned companies have carried out human rights due diligence or a human rights impact assessment.

70. In 2017, the Government also conducted a survey of how well State-owned companies communicate their human rights work. This analysis has been used to ensure that State-owned companies are able to continue to improve their work on human rights in line with the UN Guiding Principles.

71. SEK and Swedfund are State-owned companies and are thus covered by the requirements in the State Ownership Policy.

72. In addition to the State Ownership Policy, the Government as owner has given specific instructions to the boards of SEK and Swedfund. SEK's owner instructions state that SEK is to promote compliance with international guidelines within the area of sustainable business relating to the environment, anti-corruption, human rights, working conditions and business ethics. SEK applies the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, including the ILO Core Conventions.

73. Swedfund's owner instructions state that the company is to proceed on the basis of and integrate the perspective of the poor in respect of development, a rights perspective, a conflicts perspective, a gender equality perspective and an environmental and climate perspective and ensure that the investments are made in accordance with international norms and principles applicable to sustainable enterprise. The company also has mission objectives from its owner relating to the social sustainability of investments:

- Increased gender equality in the Company's investment portfolio in terms of 2x-Challenge criteria or comparable criteria shall be met in not less than 60 per cent of the Company's investments not later than three years from the date of investment.

74. Compliance by 100 per cent of the Company's investments with decent working conditions in accordance with the ILO Core Conventions not later than three years from the date of investment.

### **Environmental and social due diligence at EKN, the Swedish Export Credits Guarantee Board**

75. In its operations, EKN follows the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, and the UN Global Compact. EKN also follows and further develops its work on responsible business based on the OECD Recommendation on Bribery and Officially Supported Export Credits, the OECD Recommendation on Common Approaches for Officially Supported Export Credits and Environmental and Social Due Diligence (the "Common Approaches") the OECD's Principles and Guidelines to promote sustainable lending practices, and relevant parts of Sweden's environmental quality objectives.

#### **Analysis of business inquiries prior to decision**

76. EKN assesses the risks and impacts of operations in which the Swedish product or service is to be used, and classifies risks relating to the environment and human rights. A means that exports will be used in an activity with risk of significant negative impact, B means a risk of some impact and C means limited or no impact.

77. Unlike many other export credit agencies, EKN takes a risk-based approach to its due diligence process. This means that EKN's assessment focuses on deals with high sustainability risk and impact on the environment, people and society – regardless of buyer, country, transaction size, credit period and type of guarantee product.

78. Risks can arise in all types of activities. EKN screens approximately 1 500 export transactions per year for risks or impacts on human rights or the environment.

#### **Monitoring transactions to high-risk situations**

79. EKN monitors projects where EKN has set special conditions for responsible risk management. For example, EKN monitored ten major projects in 2020, where EKN had set special conditions for responsible management of risks and impacts. Setting conditions and monitoring are carried out in collaboration with other export credit agencies and financiers to maximise opportunities for leverage.

#### **Transparency prior to and following EKN's decisions on transactions**

##### *Applications rejected under EKN's due diligence process*

80. EKN does not participate in transactions to operations with potentially significant negative risks or impacts on people or the environment, where there are no clear plans for responsible management of risks and impacts and where EKN's requirements are not considered. In these transactions, the applicant usually withdraws during EKN's analysis. In some cases of principle, transactions are subject to formal refusal by EKN's board.

81. In 2021 EKN rejected one transaction for a hydropower project and one transaction for a refinery project. EKN also refrained from participating in a transaction for an infrastructure project. The hydropower and infrastructure projects involved large impacts on indigenous people, among others, while plans for managing environmental and social impact according to international standards were non-existent or not implemented according to plan. The refinery project was rejected due to large greenhouse gas emissions in the end-user's operations and the lack of a climate transition plan. EKN also refrained from participating in a transaction where the exported component was to be part of the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction.

82. In 2020, three export transactions related to the extraction of natural gas, LNG, were rejected, as was one related to exports to oil extraction. The applications were rejected due to large greenhouse gas emissions in the end users' operations. EKN also refrained from participating in two transactions for hydropower projects. The projects involved large impacts on indigenous people, among others, while plans for managing environmental and social impact according to international standards were non-existent or not implemented according to plan. In 2020, EKN's Board decided not to issue new guarantees for exports to new fossil fuel extraction. EKN has also decided to cease issuing new guarantees for exports for the extraction of coal (neither new nor existing) or the transport of coal from 31 December 2020 onwards.

83. Two transactions were rejected in 2019. One transaction concerned a project including a coal mine and a coal-fired power station and was incompatible with the OECD's Coal-Fired Electricity Generation Sector Understanding. In the second transaction, the export product was to be used in the extraction of oil and gas by hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking. EKN rejected the transaction due to high risk of serious, negative local environmental and social impacts, in combination with high greenhouse gas emissions from fossil extraction.

#### **Analysis of risk of human rights abuses in defence material transactions**

84. In the case of exports of defence materials that require an export licence from the Inspectorate for Strategic Products (ISP), EKN does not make any assessment of whether the transaction is consistent with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. In such transactions, ISP has a specific mandate from the Government to investigate the appropriateness of the export of defence material, including taking into account human rights in the buyer country.

85. In transactions where the buyer or end user is a country's defense force or a company with military assignments and where an export license from ISP is not required, EKN performs the customary risk assessment in relation to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. In 2021, EKN refrained from participating in a transaction in which the exported component was to be included in the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction.

#### **Reply to paragraph 8 of the list of issues**

86. The Swedish Climate Act imposes an obligation on current and future governments to pursue a policy based on the national climate targets and to regularly report on progress. Among other things, the Government is to present a climate report to the Parliament with its Budget Bill each year, to facilitate monitoring and assessment of climate impacts in all policy areas. Furthermore, the report is also to account for the most important decisions made during the year and their effects on greenhouse gas emissions and contain an evaluation of whether there is a need for further measures. The Climate Act also incorporates a requirement that the Government produce a climate policy action plan every four years. The purpose of the action plan is to show how the Government's policy is contributing to achieving the interim targets and the long-term emissions target for 2045. By 2045, Sweden is to have zero net emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and should thereafter achieve negative emissions.

87. The most recent Climate Policy Action Plan was produced in December 2019 and showed that there is a need for stricter governance to achieve the climate goals, both the interim targets and the long-term target. In the emissions scenario that prevailed at the time, emissions in 2045 were judged to be 34–37 per cent lower than in 1990. The action plan therefore presented additional supplementary measures that the Government intends to take.

88. Sweden's territorial greenhouse gas emissions were 50.9 million tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2019, which corresponds to a decrease of 2.4 per cent compared to 2018. In total, Sweden's territorial emissions have fallen by 29 per cent since 1990. Sweden's total emissions in 2020 were 47.4 million tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e, which means a reduction of 6.8 per cent compared with the previous year.

89. Sweden also plays a leading role in international climate financing. Sweden is the largest donor per capita to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Global Environment

Facility (GEF). Sweden is also one of the biggest donors in absolute terms to the Adaptation Fund (AF) and the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF).

90. During the fund's Initial Resource Mobilisation period, 2015–2018, Sweden contributed SEK 4 billion, plus an additional SEK 12 billion in the fund's first regular replenishment, GCF1 2020–2023. SEK 12 billion in total.

91. The overall objective of the Government's Sami policy is to boost the opportunities of the Sami people to maintain and develop their own cultural and community life based on sustainable reindeer husbandry and other Sami livelihoods. Safeguarding the rights of the Sami as an indigenous people sees us simultaneously ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources.

### **Reply to paragraph 9 of the list of issues**

92. The Sami Parliament is the highest decision-making body of the Sami people, through which Sami self-determination is expressed. The establishment of the Sami Parliament in 1993 was one of several important milestones for democracy in Sami society and for the voice and influence of the Sami in the majority society. In the Sami Parliament, Sami parties are actively engaged in democratic dialogue with their constituents and with each other. The Sami Parliament is the Swedish Government's most important dialogue partner on Sami issues.

93. The Government conducts regular dialogue with the Board of the Sami Parliament on the development of Sami policy. The Board of the Sami Parliament comprises elected members of the Sami Parliament's plenary assembly. Here the responsible minister engages in discussions with the Board with the aim of ensuring Sami influence, and it is the Sami Parliament that decides which are the most pressing Sami policy issues that should be discussed.

94. Additionally, a dialogue is conducted between the Government and the Sami Parliament on individual substantive issues. The consultation procedure with the Sami Parliament is about to be strengthened. It is the Government's aim that a system of consultation on issues concerning the Sami people will soon be able to be put before the Parliament. The consultation system will further improve the influence of the Sami people and their participation in matters that affect them.

95. On various occasions, the Sami Parliament has arranged seminars in the Parliament.

96. The Government has announced that a Truth Commission is to be established. Dialogue is in progress with the Sami Parliament, leading to a process this year and in the previous year to obtain the views of the Sami people and gain their backing prior to the establishment of the Truth Commission. The Sami Parliament's report Preparations for a Truth Commission on state abuses against the Sami people was submitted to the Government on 31 March 2021.

97. A Nordic Saami convention is crucial for strengthening the rights of the Sami people to preserve and develop their language, their livelihoods and their community life. The Nordic Saami Convention will be the first regional instrument for indigenous peoples of its kind and will have a major impact in terms of a more coordinated Nordic Sami policy. The Convention sets out certain minimum rights that the States can develop further.

98. The Convention seeks to strengthen the rights of the Sami people such that the Sami can preserve and develop their culture, their language and their community life, impeded as little as possible by national borders.

### **Reply to paragraph 10 of the list of issues**

99. Since the previous report to the Committee, the Government has continued its ongoing work to strengthen the position of the Sami as an indigenous people and a national minority. Strengthening Sami influence and participation is a central element in work to implement Article 1 of the Covenant.

100. The Sami Parliament has a mandate to participate in land use planning and monitor that attention is paid to Sami needs, including the interests of reindeer herding, when land and water are exploited. Among other things, the Sami Parliament participates in reference and working groups, forums and consultation with central and regional agencies.

101. Additionally, proposed amendments to the Minerals Act regarding consultation were also submitted and implemented. Under the new provisions, which have applied since 1 January 2018, a specific environmental assessment is to be carried out, information is to be provided and coordination is to take place in matters regarding the granting of concessions under the Minerals Act.

102. As stated above, it is the Government's intention that a system of consultation on issues concerning the Sami people will soon be able to be put before the Parliament. The proposal means that the Government, government administrative agencies and, at a later stage, regions and municipalities, will be obliged to consult the Sami Parliament before decisions are made on matters that may be of particular importance to the Sami. In some cases, consultation must also be conducted with a sameby reindeer herding area or a Sami organisation. Courts and certain administrative agencies are not obliged to conduct consultations. The basis of the consultation procedure and how it is launched will be regulated in a proposed act.

103. In 2021 the Government appointed a parliamentary committee, which, considering inter alia Supreme Court ruling of 23 January 2020, case no. T 853-18, is to propose new reindeer husbandry legislation. A large number of Sami representatives have been appointed to the committee. Work will thus involve major, broad-based Sami participation and presence. The provisions concerning the sole right of sameby reindeer herding areas in relation to the Government to grant hunting and fishing rights will be addressed rapidly in an interim report to be submitted by 21 November 2022. The final report on the mandate in general is to be submitted by 20 May 2025. At the same time, the Sami Parliament was tasked with working in close dialogue with the sameby reindeer herding areas to analyse how the internal organisation, decision-making and rules of membership of the Sami villages should be designed.

104. The opportunity of the Sami to exercise and exert influence over the use of their economic, social and cultural rights is important to the Government. The Government, has, together with countries including Australia and Canada, contributed both knowledge and financial resources to an OECD study aimed at improving the opportunities of indigenous peoples for economic development. The study, which has been produced in close cooperation with representatives of the Sami community, was presented in spring 2019. The study looks at how existing tools, initiatives and regulations in rural development and regional growth operate for the Sami community and the business community.

105. On 18 March 2021, the Government decided on the Communication National strategy for sustainable regional development throughout Sweden 2021–2030. The strategy sets out the long-term direction of regional development policy and contribute towards the transition to sustainable development in all parts of Sweden.

### **Reply to paragraph 11 (a) of the list of issues**

106. Unit below 60 per cent of the median value for the population has remained relatively stable at around 14–15 per cent over the last 10 years.

#### **Proportion of the population below the poverty line (%)**

| 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 13.8 | 14.4 | 14.8 | 14.5 | 14.9 | 14.6 | 15.2 |

*Note:* The proportion of disposable income per consumption unit below 60 per cent of the median value for the population as a whole.

107. The ratio between the income of the top decile and the bottom 40 per cent has increased over time but decreased between 2017 and 2019. The fluctuations between individual years are largely because realised capital gains vary from year to year and that these are strongly concentrated in the top 10 per cent of the income distribution.

108. The ratio of the total income accruing to the richest decile of the population and the total income of the poorest 40 per cent of the population.

| 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1.09 | 1.16 | 1.24 | 1.27 | 1.28 | 1.20 | 1.22 |

*Note:* Income defined as disposable income per consumption unit. The concept of income includes realised capital gains.

### Reply to paragraph 11 (b) of the list of issues

109. The main revenue of public administration comprises taxes and contributions. On average these have amounted to approximately 86 per cent of the sector's total revenue over the past ten years, which was also the case in 2019.

**Table: Income as a proportion of total incomes**

|  | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Taxes and contributions as proportion of total incomes | 85.2 | 84.9 | 84.5 | 84.7 | 85.8 | 86.4 | 86.9 | 87.0 | 86.4 | 86.2 |

### Reply to paragraph 11 (c) of the list of issues

110. Value-added tax (exclusive of value-added tax on luxury items, tobacco, alcohol, sugary drinks and snacks, and petrol and diesel) and the percentage of total revenue from personal income taxes that is collected from the richest decile of the population.

|                                    | 2012  | 2013  | 2014  | 2015  | 2016  | 2017  | 2018  | 2019  | 2020  | 2021  |
|------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| VAT                                | 25.0% | 25.0% | 25.0% | 25.0% | 25.0% | 25.0% | 25.0% | 25.0% | 25.0% | 25.0% |
| CIT                                | 26.3% | 22.0% | 22.0% | 22.0% | 22.0% | 22.0% | 22.0% | 21.4% | 21.4% | 20.6% |
| Capital income                     | 30%   | 30.0% | 30.0% | 30.0% | 30.0% | 30.0% | 30.0% | 30.0% | 30.0% | 30.0% |
| Labour income (top statutory rate) | 56.6% | 56.7% | 56.9% | 57.0% | 57.1% | 57.1% | 57.1% | 57.2% | 52.3% | 52.3% |

111. Approximately one third of income tax is paid by the wealthiest tenth of the population. The tax share of the top tenth increased by approximately two percentage points in 2013–2015 but has remained broadly unchanged thereafter.

112. The percentage of total revenue from personal income taxes that is collected from the richest decile of the population.

| 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 31.0 | 32.2 | 33.1 | 33.3 | 33.3 | 33.0 | 33.1 |

*Note:* All individuals in the population have been ranked according to their disposable income per consumption unit. The concept of income includes realised capital gains.

### Reply to paragraph 11 (d) of the list of issues

113. Expenditure has remained relatively stable at around 50 per cent of GDP over the past 10 years. In 2019, expenditure amounted to 49.3 per cent of GDP. Over the same period, expenditure on COFOG areas 06–10 amounted to around 34–36 per cent of GDP. Outcomes for this expenditure amounted to 34.9 per cent of GDP in 2019.

|  | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Taxes and contributions as proportion of total incomes             | 85.2 | 84.9 | 84.5 | 84.7 | 85.8 | 86.4 | 86.9 | 87.0 | 86.4 | 86.2 |
| Total expenditure as a proportion of GDP                           | 50.4 | 49.7 | 50.9 | 51.6 | 50.7 | 49.3 | 49.7 | 49.2 | 49.8 | 49.3 |
| Expenditure within COFOG 06–10                                     | 35.2 | 34.4 | 35.5 | 36.2 | 35.9 | 35.2 | 35.9 | 35.3 | 35.4 | 34.9 |
| Social protection adjusted for inflation, SEK billion, 2019 prices | 802  | 785  | 813  | 853  | 874  | 915  | 958  | 959  | 961  | 957  |

*Table:* Expenditure as a proportion of GDP unless otherwise stated. Covers expenditure on the following: housing; health; recreation, culture and religion; education; social protection.

### Reply to paragraph 12 of the list of issues

114. The Government has commissioned an inquiry to review the measures needed to safeguard compliance with the provisions on active measures in the Discrimination Act and to analyse how the provisions in the Discrimination Act regarding the areas regulated by the Education Act can be transferred from the Equality Ombudsman to the Swedish Schools Inspectorate. The inquiry has submitted proposals that are currently being prepared by the Government Offices of Sweden.

115. The inquiry was further tasked with:

- Forming an opinion on how protection against discrimination in certain public activities can be changed to provide as comprehensive protection against discrimination as possible;
- Forming an opinion on whether measures are needed to strengthen protection against discrimination in cases where there is no one single victim;
- Judging whether there is a need for additional measures to protect employees who are discriminated against, harassed or threatened by people who are not employed in the workplace.

### Reply to paragraph 12 (a) of the list of issues

116. The table shows the proportion of reports, tip-offs and complaints divided by area in the period 2017–2020.

|   | 2017 | 2018 | 2019    | 2020 |
|---|------|------|---------|------|
| Working life  | 489  | 555  | 626     | 988  |
| Education   | 458  | 540  | 527     | 586  |
| Goods and services  | 334  | 297  | 359     | 427  |
| Health and medical care                                       | 130  | 138  | 129     | 193  |
| Social services, etc.   | 132  | 148  | 144     | 191  |
| Treatment in the public sector                                | 75   | 99   | 132     | 118  |
| Social security, unemployment insurance, study grants         | 44   | 44   | 56      | 72   |
| Housing   | 61   | 70   | 57      | 67   |
| Employment services and other labour market policy activities | 49   | 35   | 45      | 58   |
| Other areas   | 223  | 197  | 179 205 | 344  |

117. Statistics on reports, tip-offs and complaints broken down by area and grounds for discrimination are reported annually in a separate annex.

### **Reply to paragraph 12 (b) of the list of issues**

118. The Equality Ombudsman is engaged in long-term work to tackle identified problems linked to discrimination and risks of discrimination by concentrating on prioritised focus areas. Since 2017 the focus areas have been working life, housing and social services:

- The aim of efforts in the working life focus area is to get employers to conduct effective prevention and promotion work to combat discrimination and otherwise work to ensure equal rights. The work conducted by the Equality Ombudsman has focused on increasing awareness of the legislation and strengthening employers' own capacity to work on active measures;
- Work in the focus area of housing seeks to help to increase the transparency and predictability of housing agency systems, eliminate discriminatory letting criteria and help to ensure that letting criteria are not applied in a discriminatory manner. Measures by the Equality Ombudsman include launching a digital guide in Swedish geared towards landlords to help improve their ability to provide and rent out housing without the risk of discrimination;
- The Equality Ombudsman's work in this focus area concentrates on the work of social services. The aim of the work of the Equality Ombudsman is to help to ensure that the efforts, procedures and working methods in the work of social services in cases of suspected mistreatment of children and adolescents and in custody, accommodation and access investigations are not discriminatory and are consistently based on individual assessment.

### **Reply to paragraph 12 (c) of the list of issues**

119. The Equality Ombudsman regularly submits views and recommendations to the Government Offices of Sweden in its role as a consultation body in legislative processes. The Equality Ombudsman draws attention to the aspect of discrimination and submits extensive views in consultation responses on the legislative proposals that may have an impact in terms of discrimination. In the period 2017–2020, the Equality Ombudsman has issued a total of 293 consultation statements.

120. The Equality Ombudsman also submits special communications on specific discrimination aspects. These communications also contain recommendations to the Government. The Discrimination Ombudsman has submitted three such special communications of relevance to the reporting period. The communications address the following issues:

- The need for effective and deterrent sanctions regarding certain breaches of the Discrimination Act (2008:567) etc;
- The need to strengthen protection against age discrimination in working life by amending the Employment Protection Act (1982:80);
- The limitation of the protection afforded by the Discrimination Act to individuals against discrimination in contact with public sector employees.

### **Reply to paragraph 13 of the list of issues**

121. Sweden has the highest labour force participation rate in the EU and this has been maintained at a high level during the pandemic. It is an important reason why unemployment in Sweden has increased in relation to many other countries. Sweden's level of employment is also high from an international perspective.

#### **Establishment programme for newly arrived migrants**

122. The Swedish Public Employment Service (SPES) is responsible for coordinating integration ("establishment") initiatives for certain newly arrived immigrants and provide support and encouragement to the parties affected. The establishment programme is geared towards newly arrived immigrants over the age of 20 and under the age of 65 who have been granted a residence permit as a refugee or person in need for protection and certain members of their family. The purpose of the establishment programme is to facilitate and accelerate participants' integration into working life and the life of society. The number of participants in the establishment programme is continuing to fall because of a reduction in refugee immigration and thus in the programme's target group. However, the proportion of women continues to increase, reaching 60 per cent in 2020 (23 856 women, 15 967 men).

#### **Compulsory education for people with limited education**

123. The obligation to attend compulsory education was introduced alongside the establishment programme in 2018 and means that participants with a limited educational background who are therefore not judged to be able to be matched with a job during their time in the programme, are to be brought closer to the labour market by engaging in regular education.

124. In 2020, 18 442 people were covered by the compulsory education obligation, 64 per cent women and 36 per cent men (2019: 21 893 people, 61 per cent women and 39 per cent men, 2018: 14 740 people, 54 per cent women and 46 per cent men).

#### **Fast Track for newly arrived immigrants in shortage occupations**

125. Since 2015 there has been an opportunity for newly arrived immigrants with education or experience in a shortage occupation to participate in the Fast Track for newly arrived immigrants. The Fast Track is a chain of interventions incorporating validation and supplementary training to reduce the time spent unemployed and contribute towards skills supply in shortage occupations.

126. The Intensive Year for newly arrived migrants seeks better integration and for the migrants to be more rapidly established in the labour market. The Intensive Year gives new migrants who have the right abilities and motivation up to a year to engage with initiatives that run in parallel or in rapid succession at a fast pace. As previously reported, Swedish labour market policy features two guarantee programmes geared towards the long-term unemployed. Fundamental elements in these guarantee programmes are the right to pay and

a requirement that participants are actively seeking work and participating in education, work experience placements and other activities:

- The Job and Development Guarantee is a programme for those who have been unemployed for a long time. In October 2014, the Government tasked SPES with preparing the introduction of a 90-day job guarantee for young people. The guarantee introduces an upper limit for how long a young person may be unemployed before they are offered a job, an initiative that leads to a job or education or training.

127. In 2014, the Government set up Delegation for the Employment of Young People (Dua) to ensure that labour market policy initiatives to combat youth unemployment would make a greater impact at local level. In 2017, Dua's remit was expanded to also cover newly arrived migrants, and the name was changed to the Delegation for the Employment of Young People and Newly Arrived Migrants.

- In February 2016, the Government decided to commission government agencies to provide work experience placements in the public sector for newly arrived jobseekers and jobseekers with disabilities that entail a reduced capacity to work;
- Between 2016 and 2020, more than 200 government agencies were tasked with making work experience placements available to SPES and assigning work placements to newly arrived migrants and people with disabilities that entail a reduced capacity to work. The Government has now extended this remit until 2023. The 100 Club was launched by the Government in October 2015 within the remit of the Sweden Together initiative. The 100 Club urged employers to offer newly arrived migrants work experience placements or employment with employment support. Those employers who undertook to offer placements to at least 100 newly arrived migrants within three years then became part of the 100 club. In total, this covered more than 3 700 newly arrived migrants, 36 per cent women and 64 per cent men. Measures in 2021;
- Support for short-term work means an agreement between unions and employers that employees' working hours and pay may be cut for a limited period due to an economic crisis. One of the Government's measures due to the pandemic is to introduce reduced working hours with Government support. This means that an employer can receive support from the state to reduce the working hours of their employees;
- The Swedish Government has taken powerful steps and introduced structural labour market reforms to combat long-term unemployment, such as support for reduced working hours, support to change career, more vocational training places at Komvux, higher vocational education, universities and higher education institutions and folk high schools;
- Support for reduced working hours has been strengthened by the Government meeting 75 per cent of the cost of reducing working hours from March 2020 until the first half of 2021. The ordinary level is 33 per cent. The Government proposes extending the support for a further three months until September 2021;
- In Budget for 2021, investments in labour market policy amount to more than SEK 9 billion. SPES has been granted an additional SEK 1 billion to safeguard local presence and tackle increased unemployment. Additionally more than SEK 2 billion is being invested to increase the number of participants in procured matching services, labour market training and initiatives geared towards employers looking to employ long-term unemployed people and newly arrived migrants who need extra support to enter the labour market (introductory jobs) or initiatives geared towards public sector operations in which the employer receives financial compensation for employing the long-term unemployed or newly arrived migrants (extra positions);
- Additionally, in the Spring Amending Budget, the Government has injected almost half a billion Swedish kronor to get more unemployed people to engage with services such as matching services, extra positions or introductory jobs;
- In November 2020, the Government expanded the opportunity for unemployed people to enrol in compulsory and upper secondary level education while retaining their

benefits. In June 2021, the opportunity was also expanded to study part-time in parallel with participation in the labour market policy framework programme, the Job and Development Guarantee, geared towards the long-term unemployed;

- The Swedish Government has also decided that the temporary relaxation of the requirement of six months' unemployment to receive the education entry grant will continue to apply throughout 2021.

### **The disproportionately high incidence of unemployment among persons with an immigration background**

128. In recent years, to 2019, more newly arrived migrants have been able to find work more quickly. Of those newly arrived migrants who came to Sweden in 2014, 51 per cent were in paid work in 2018, i.e. after four years in Sweden. This can be compared with 29 per cent in work after four years for those who arrived in 2010.

129. Before the pandemic, when the level of unemployment was still rising in 2018–2019, SPES asserted that around seven to ten new jobs were expected to go to those born outside Sweden, where most of the available labour is found. In 2017, those born outside Sweden accounted for approximately 90 per cent of job growth in education, health care and the social care sector plus private services. In industry, those born outside Sweden were responsible for the entire increase in jobs.

130. In 2017, the Government introduced a new government grant for early intervention for asylum seekers and others. The funding was directed towards civil society organisations and municipalities.

131. To make the most of the time spent on parental leave, the Government has earmarked funds for language training and to create places where parents and children from different backgrounds can come together. The target group is mainly newly arrived migrants but may also include asylum seekers.

132. The Government has expanded and improved civic orientation for newly arrived migrants, including by placing greater focus on gender equality and human rights. Teaching has been increased from a minimum of 60 hours to a minimum of 100 hours.

### **Undeclared employment**

133. Since 2017, The Swedish Tax Agency has been conducting special audits of labour-intensive industries, such as cleaning and construction companies, to detect undeclared work and organised crime. The aim is to check that companies are not evading taxes. The audits also cover cases concerning joint government agency efforts to combat organised crime, cases concerning foreign employment agencies and cases concerning foreign companies only operating in Sweden.

134. In a report from February 2020, the Swedish Tax Agency notes that there has been no increase in undeclared work as a proportion of GDP in the past 13 years. However, today, undeclared work takes place in other sectors compared with the situation in the past. Nevertheless, according to the Swedish Tax Agency, this result should be interpreted with caution, and further studies are needed to determine the results or identify a certain trend.

135. The Tax Agency has estimated income from undeclared work between 2010 and 2016 based on the changes made in the Tax Agency's audits. Changes in audits amount to an average of SEK 900 million per year. For the economy, this figure would total SEK 91 billion in unaccounted income. As a proportion of GDP, SEK 91 billion corresponds to 2.3 per cent, while representing 6 per cent of total labour income. When the Swedish Tax Agency estimated undeclared work income in 2006, the sum amounted to SEK 71 billion, equivalent to 3 per cent of GDP and 7 per cent of total wages and salaries.

### **Workers in underemployment**

136. A person employed in Sweden works an average of 38 hours per week. Of all employed people (aged 20–64), 82 per cent work full-time, i.e. 35 hours or more. Part-time work is 3 times more common among women than among men: 3 in 10 women and 1 in 10

men work a maximum of 34 hours a week. Highly educated women were less likely to work part-time in 2019, while there was no significant difference for highly educated men. Since 2009, the proportion of women working part-time has decreased from 34 to 26 per cent, while the proportion of men has remained unchanged.

137. Part-time work is more common among the youngest and oldest workers for natural reasons (education and retirement). The difference between women's and men's part-time work is partly since women still take more responsibility for unpaid domestic work.

138. Failure to find a full-time job is the most common reason for working part-time; 22 per cent of women and 27 per cent of men working part-time say they are looking for a full-time job. The second most common reason given by women is childcare and by men is studying.

### **Non-traditional forms of employment – Platform work**

139. The number of people working via platforms is difficult to estimate accurately, and different studies produce different results. The Inquiry on changing working life (SOU 2017:24) estimates that approximately 4 per cent of the Swedish workforce works for a platform company at least once a month.

140. There are several collective agreements in place, e.g. the Swedish Transport Workers' Union – Foodora, Unionen – Instajobbs, JustArrived, Gigstr.

141. The capacity of the Swedish model to rapidly adapt means that Sweden is well placed to respond to the changes taking place in the labour market. In Sweden, pay and working conditions are primarily regulated by the social partners. The Swedish model and Swedish labour market policy are founded on a clear allocation of responsibilities between the Government and the social partners, The social partners taking great responsibility for labour market regulation and adapting terms and conditions to circumstances in different sectors is an important part of the Swedish model. This also applies to the platform economy.

142. Certain amendments to the Employment Protection Act (LAS) entered into force on 1 May 2016. The most significant change was the introduction of a further rule on the transformation of general fixed-term employment into indefinite-term employment. In addition to this additional rule on conversion, all the conversion rules, including the rule covering the grounds for fixed-term employment when covering for an existing employee, were transferred to a new provision, section 5a, LAS.

143. In 2019, the proportion of employees aged 20–64 on a fixed-term employment contract amounted to 14 per cent of all employees. In the past five years, the trend has been slightly downward, which can be explained by a gradual improvement in the economy.

144. The Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, the salaried employees union the Swedish Council for Negotiation and Cooperation (PTK), the industrial workers' union IF Metall and the Swedish Municipal Workers' Union have entered into an agreement in principle on security, restructuring and employment protection. The intention of the parties has been to take a holistic approach to factors that, in combination, can create flexibility, adaptability and security in the labour market. They have jointly requested that the Government draw up proposed legislation to reform labour law in line with the agreement in principle.

145. A memorandum has been drawn up at the Ministry of Employment, proposing the legislative amendments needed to reform labour law in line with the agreement in principle between the parties in terms of employment protection. This includes proposing that the form of employment general fixed-term employment be abolished and replaced with the new form of employment: specific fixed-term employment. However, the rules for specific fixed-term employment mean that the employment will be converted into indefinite term employment considerably more rapidly. The switch takes place once the employee has been employed in specific fixed-term employment for a total of more than twelve months during a five-year period or during a period in which the employee has had fixed-term contracts in the form of specific fixed-term employment, covering for an existing employee or seasonal work and these employments have been consecutive. The proposal that a worker who has been employed on a specific fixed-term employment contract for a total of more than nine months in the past three years should have a preferential right to be re-employed on a new specific

fixed-term employment contract will also contribute to a faster transition. Furthermore, a specific rule on the calculation of length of service is proposed. If an employee has had three or more specific fixed-term employments during one and the same month, the time between the employments must also be counted in the term of employment. An employer may not employ a worker to cover for an existing worker to circumvent this rule. This will particularly benefit employees with many short fixed-term contracts and lead to a more rapid transition to permanent employment. It should continue to be possible to derogate from the rules on fixed-term employment set out in legislation through collective agreements.

### **Reply to paragraph 14 of the list of issues**

146. Since the Government took office, a higher level of ambition for work environment policy has been a key priority. Resources in this field have been significantly enhanced; the Swedish Work Environment Authority has been granted additional resources for more inspectors and a greater presence in workplaces, and extra funding has been provided for working life research and to establish the Swedish Agency for Work Environment Expertise.

147. Between 2015 and 2018, the Government increased the Swedish Work Environment Authority's appropriations by approximately SEK 110 million to enable the Authority to employ more inspectors and increase its presence in workplaces. This increase has resulted in the Swedish Work Environment Authority employing more than 150 new inspectors and increasing the number of inspections conducted. In recent years, special inspection efforts have been made in the construction, manufacturing, transport and staffing sectors.

148. The number of inspections continued to increase in 2019. This is due to the Swedish Work Environment Authority having more trained inspectors working than in previous years. The average number of actions carried out by each full-time inspector within the space of a year also increased slightly in 2019. Over 1 000 more inspections were held in 2019 compared with 2018.

149. On 30 July 2020, the Government tasked the Swedish Agency for Public Management with conducting an analysis of the Swedish Work Environment Authority. The Swedish Agency for Public Management's analysis shows that the Swedish Work Environment Authority has increased its supervision. The Authority has employed more work environment inspectors and more inspection lawyers. The Swedish Work Environment Authority also carried out more inspections in 2016–2019 than before the increase in resources. The efficiency of its supervision has also improved.

150. In the Budget Bill for 2018, the Government announced that SEK 18 million per year was to be allocated to strengthen efforts to ensure good order in the labour market in 2018–2020 in the form of commissioning the Swedish Work Environment Authority to coordinate the development of methods for multi-agency supervisory initiatives.

151. Eight government agencies were tasked with developing methods for multi-agency checks to combat cheating, non-compliance and crime at work. The methods developed are to be integrated into the agencies' operations such that agency collaboration works well after 2020.

152. Multi-agency efforts to combat cheating, breaches of regulations and crime at work have produced good results. More than 2 000 checks were carried out in 2019. More than one in ten of the companies checked were forced to shut down all or part of their operations due to the shortcomings identified, and sanction fees to the tune of more than SEK 10 million have been paid. More than 1 000 checks were carried out in the period 1 January – 30 November 2020.

153. The Swedish Work Environment Authority's funding has been increased by SEK 30 million per year from 2021. This will increase the Authority's ability to work with other agencies with a focused and joined-up approach to continue to curb cheating, non-compliance and crime at work.

154. The Government has decided on a Work environment strategy for 2021–2025. The strategy sets out the Government's long-term policy focus in this area over the next five years.

155. In February 2020, the Swedish Government appointed a Committee to review parts of the Swedish labour migration system. They will present their final report in November 2021, including presenting measures aimed at preventing abuse of the labour migration system and exploitation of workers.

### **Reply to paragraph 15 of the list of issues**

156. In 2019, there were 36 work-related fatalities compared with 50 in 2018. Fatal accidents at work are much more common among men than among women. Of those who died in 2019, 31 were men and 5 women. The number of accidents among men is the lowest it has been in the 2000s.

157. Out of all fatal accidents occurring at work, 34 were employees and 2 were self-employed workers. Compared with 2018, there were 5 fewer fatal accidents among employees and 9 fewer among the self-employed.

158. In 2019, fatal accidents at work were most common in the construction industry. The sectors with the highest number of work-related deaths in 2010–2019 are construction, manufacturing, transport and warehousing, plus agriculture, forestry and fishing.

159. In 2019, the number of work-related accidents that did not result in absence was approximately 15.8 per 1 000 women in gainful employment and around 12.5 per 1 000 men in gainful employment.

160. The number of reported occupational accidents resulting in absence from work remains largely unchanged in 2019 compared to 2018. Reported occupational accidents leading to absence are more common among men than among women. In 2019, approximately 7.7 occupational accidents involving absence were reported per 1 000 men in gainful employment. Equivalent figures for women were 6.3 reported cases per 1 000 women in gainful employment.

161. The most common reason for occupational accidents with absence for men was accidents caused by loss of control of stationary machinery, hand tools and vehicles. Among women, falls were the most common reason for absence. In 2019, the highest accident rate was among young men aged 16–24.

162. The number of reported occupational diseases in 2019 is equivalent to approximately 2.9 reports per 1 000 women in gainful employment and approximately 1.5 reports per 1 000 men in gainful employment. It continues to be more common for women to report occupational diseases than men.

163. The most common causes of reported occupational diseases in 2019 were organisational and social factors (40 per cent) followed by ergonomic strain (33 per cent). The proportion of occupational diseases due to organisational and social factors was higher among women (49 per cent) than among men (22 per cent). For both women and men, the majority of reported occupational diseases per 1 000 people in gainful employment are in the municipal sector.

164. The Government's Work environment strategy states that there is to be a zero vision for fatal accidents and that concrete measures are necessary to prevent accidents at work.

165. In June 2019, the Swedish Work Environment Authority was commissioned by the Government to carry out an analysis of the circumstances preceding the fatal occupational accidents that occurred in 2018 and the first half of 2019. The Authority reported on its remit in February 2020. The report shows the importance of functioning systematic work environment efforts and a good safety culture. There is a need to ensure that efforts to improve safety at work continue. In its report Feedback – Government mandate on the industry expertise of inspectors, the Swedish Work Environment Authority reported on how the Authority is ensuring that inspectors have sufficient industry expertise.

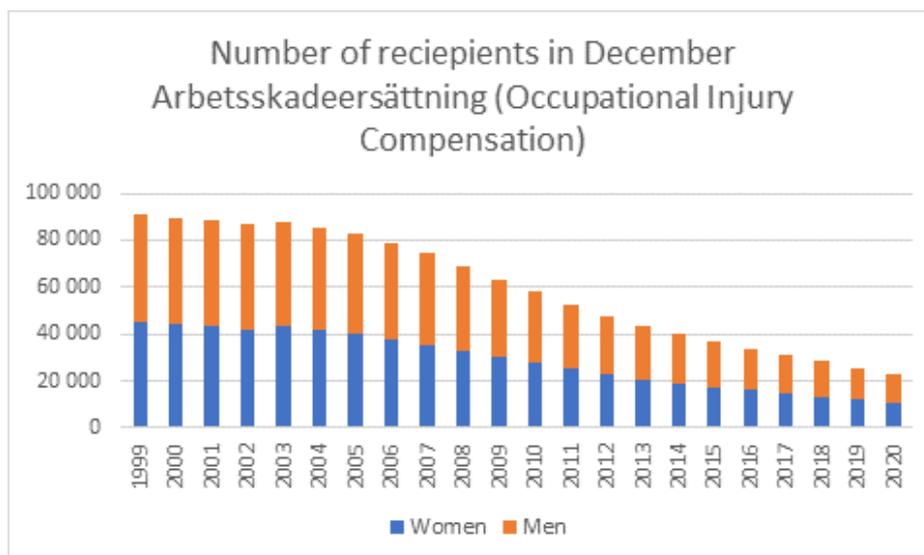
166. Since mid-2019, the Swedish Work Environment Authority has had a zero-vision project set to run until December 2021. The project is to disseminate knowledge, methods and tools to increase workplace safety. The project will also inspire and encourage

collaboration between actors and produce a plan at the Authority for further work to prevent fatal accidents.

Table 5.1  
**Number of actions and inspections carried out by the Swedish Work Environment Authority**

| Number Year          | 2016   | 2017   | 2018   | 2019   |
|----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Number of actions    | 21 200 | 22 010 | 27 154 | 28 429 |
| of which inspections | 18 100 | 21 177 | 26 602 | 27 715 |
| Number of actions    |        |        |        |        |

### *Statistik arbetsskador*



Källa: Försäkringskassan

### **Sickness insurance reforms**

167. In the past year, the Government has launched several inquiries and reforms aimed at making things easier for the individual, strengthening the insurance protection of individuals and putting in place appropriate social insurance for actors involved. The inquiries and reforms cover different aspects of social insurance and some of the proposals reported are currently being prepared.

168. Certain legislative amendments have been made to strengthen health insurance coverage since the previous report. The legislative amendments can be summed up as contributing to increased perceived and actual financial security and facilitating return to work.

### *Examples*

- On 1 February 2016, the time limit for health insurance was abolished. Sickness benefit, rehabilitation benefit and sickness benefit and rehabilitation allowance in special cases can now be granted without any time limit;
- On 1 January 2018, the law was amended to increase security for the individual by requiring that an insured person should normally be notified of consideration of a decision to reject an application for sickness benefit and the possibility, to a greater extent than before, to grant sickness benefit provisionally during the period of investigation pending a final decision;
- Since 1 July 2018, the employer's responsibility for adaptation and rehabilitation has been made clearer by a new statutory requirement under which the employer is to

draw up a return to work plan no later than the date on which an employee's capacity to work has been reduced for 30 days;

- On 1 January 2019, the qualifying day was replaced by a deduction for everyone with income from employment;
- On 15 March 2021, the provision on assessment against normal work from day 181 was amended so that exceptions can be made where there are overriding reasons for returning to work to the same extent as before the illness by day 365.

### **Reply to paragraph 16 of the list of issues**

169. The bill has been adopted by the Parliament, and the legislative amendment entered into force on 1 August 2019. The amendment is based on the agreement between the social partners.

170. The Government Bill states that the Government's proposal will implement the agreement of 2018 between the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO), the Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO), the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (Saco) and the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise on changed rules for industrial action in the Swedish labour market. The proposal means that the rules under main agreements and established practice that the labour market partners have long followed will be incorporated in the Employment (Co-Determination in the Workplace Act).

171. The bill proposed that an employee's right to take or participate in industrial action against an employer bound by a collective agreement may only be exercised under certain conditions. It was proposed that the first condition be that the industrial action must have been decided in due order. The second proposed condition is that the industrial action is to seek to achieve compliance with collective bargaining in relation to the employer. The third condition is that the parties must first have negotiated on the requirements set. The fourth proposed condition is that requirements must not be made whereby the collective agreements that the employee organisation wishes to attain supersedes the existing collective agreements of the employer. The proposal does not mean any increased obligation to refrain from industrial action in relation to an employer that does not have a collective agreement for the work in question. The Government Bill also proposed that it should not be permitted for an employer or an employee to take or participate in industrial action to exert pressure in a legal dispute. The proposal does not affect the right to take or participate in sympathy action, collection blockades or political industrial action.

### **Reply to paragraph 17 of the list of issues**

172. Act (2016:752) concerning temporary restrictions on the granting of permanent residence permits in Sweden, which entered into force on 20 July 2016, ceased to apply on 20 July 2021. During the period of validity of the temporary act, the right to family reunification was guaranteed by the provisions of the temporary act, which had been drafted taking into account the obligations arising from EU law and Swedish Convention commitments, especially Council Directive 2003/86/EC of 22 September 2003 on the right to family reunification and the right to respect for private and family life, as provided for in Article 8 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. During the period of validity, approximately 57 000 family members of former asylum seekers were granted residence.

### **Reply to paragraph 18 of the list of issues**

173. Social housing, i.e. housing for households with limited resources or which otherwise require public measures to gain access to suitable housing, does not exist in Sweden. In 2016, investment funding was introduced to increase the supply of rented and student housing with relatively low rents compared to other newbuild housing.

174. The housing built using investment funding is not specifically targeted at any particular group of housing consumers, but a combination of a “rent ceiling” and restrictions on the income criteria that landlords receiving investment funding are allowed to impose on potential tenants make this housing financially accessible for a large number of households.

175. In conjunction with a number of amendments implemented in 2020, a requirement was also added whereby housing developments built using investment funding and covering at least ten dwellings had to offer one in eight homes (12.5 per cent) to the municipality, either to be assigned to a young person – under the age of 31 – under their own tenancy, or to use for a period of at least five years to rent out to people in a disadvantaged social situation to help them (re)enter the housing market. To prevent disadvantaged people congregating in one building, the landlord may offer housing in the existing stock instead of in the housing built using investment funding.

176. Since the implementation of the investment funding – up to and including 31 May 2021 – housing developments containing more than 47 000 dwellings across Sweden have been approved for investment funding. Of these, almost 23 000 homes (i.e. 48 per cent of those granted funding) have been completed.

177. In May 2020, the Government decided to appoint an inquiry aimed at facilitating a socially sustainable housing supply to ease the housing situation for households finding it difficult to find housing on market terms. The inquiry is to look at the distribution of tasks within the public sector and is expected to propose how certain housing policy instruments can be rendered more effective. The inquiry is to submit its report by 31 March 2022.

178. In December 2020, the Government decided to appoint an inquiry tasked with investigating and submitting proposed measures to make it easier for first-time buyers to enter the housing market. The remit includes proposing how a Government starter loan for first-time buyers should be designed. The inquiry is to report its results by 31 March 2022.

179. Several measures have been implemented to improve household resilience to the risks associated with household indebtedness. Some examples of such measures are provided below.

180. In autumn 2010, the financial supervisory authority Finansinspektion (FI) decided on general advice for loans using the home as collateral; the mortgage cap means that a new loan should not exceed 85 per cent of the market value of the home.

181. An amortisation requirement was introduced by FI for new mortgagees with the entry into force of the relevant regulations on 1 June 2016. The requirement means that new mortgagees must repay 1 per cent a year if the loan-to-value ratio is higher than 50 per cent and 2 per cent a year if the loan-to-value ratio is higher than 70 per cent.

182. The amortisation requirement for mortgages was tightened up by FI from 1 March 2018 for households that had taken out new mortgages that are high in relation to household income. The requirement means that all new mortgagees with debts above 450 per cent of gross income must repay 1 per cent a year in addition to the previous repayment requirement.

183. As a result of the financial consequences and uncertainties brought about by the coronavirus, in spring 2020, FI decided to make it clear that mortgage companies are able to grant a time-limited exemption from repayments to both new and old mortgage holders subject to repayment requirements.

184. Anyone who is not able to meet their own needs or to have them met by other means has the right to assistance from social services to be ensured a reasonable standard of living.

185. In 2018–2021 the Government decided on government grants of SEK 25 million a year to the 10 municipalities with the highest number of acute homeless to improve the situation and combat homelessness and exclusion from the housing market. In the same period, the Government decided on SEK 120 million annually in government grants to boost the efforts of non-profit organisations to combat homelessness among young adults. The funds will be used to tackle homelessness among young adults where mental illness may be a contributing factor to homelessness.

186. In 2020–2021, the Government has also tasked the county administrative boards with supporting the municipalities in their efforts to prevent evictions.

187. On 26 November 2020, the Government commissioned the National Board of Health and Welfare to submit an analysis and proposals for measures to combat and prevent homelessness. Among other things, the National Board of Health and Welfare is to propose measures to support the municipalities' introduction of the Housing First initiative.

188. The National Board of Health and Welfare is also to propose measures to increase outreach work aimed at people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and suggest measures to improve local work to prevent evictions. The Board is also to propose measures to ensure that people who have been in refuges due to violence are able to make the transition to permanent accommodation.

189. In a specific survey week in 2017, the National Board of Health and Welfare conducted a national survey of the extent of homelessness and exclusion from the housing market. National surveys of homelessness in Sweden have previously been conducted in 1993, 1999, 2005 and 2011.

190. In the 2017 survey, a total of approximately 33 250 people were reported as being homeless, as defined by the National Board of Health and Welfare. The definition is based on the housing situation and has four categories: acutely homeless people

191. Of the people who were homeless in the survey week, 62 per cent were men and 38 per cent were women. The average age was 40. 46 per cent were born outside Sweden, which was more common for women (48 per cent) than men (40 per cent). One third of the people who were homeless in the survey week had children under the age of 18, which means that more than 24 000 children had a parent who was in one of the four homelessness categories at the time. Of the approximately 33 250 people who were homeless in the survey week, 16 241 (49 per cent) were living in one of Sweden's three metropolitan regions. 7 247 of these homeless people were in Greater Stockholm, 5 097 in Greater Gothenburg and 3,897 in Greater Malmö.

### **Reply to paragraph 19 of the list of issues**

192. The Government has commissioned Boverket (the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning) to analyse and assess whether there are any disadvantages that could constitute discrimination when housing is allocated. Boverket's remit included, for example, analysing how rental housing with and without security of tenure is allocated and the requirements landlords impose on prospective tenants.

### **Specific information on Roma and housing**

193. In February 2012, Sweden decided on a long-term strategy for Roma inclusion with the overall goal that those Roma who will be 20 in 2032 must have the same opportunities in life as non-Roma. Housing is one of the areas prioritised in the strategy, and housing issues are indicated as a core aspect in Roma inclusion. Housing conditions affect individuals' opportunities to obtain work and education and children's rights and opportunities to stable schooling. One objective of the strategy is to work for reduced discrimination in the housing market and to ensure that Roma have equal access to housing to the rest of the population.

194. On two occasions, Boverket has been involved in status reports on the current situation for Roma in a total of 10 different municipalities (in 2014 and 2018). Boverket notes that discriminatory behaviour towards Roma is found in the municipalities studied, partly in that Roma are disadvantaged when renting housing but also in that neighbours' lodge complaints against Roma which can lead to them losing their housing. However, interviews with Roma show that many of those who suffer discriminatory behaviour do not report it because they do not want to lose the home they have. Many Roma choose to conceal their Roma identity to improve their situation in the housing market.

195. To achieve the goal of equal opportunities in the housing market for Roma, housing market actors need to understand and accept that they have a responsibility in collective

efforts on Roma rights. There is a need for more knowledge to work further on issues related to discriminatory behaviour against Roma in the housing market. Boverket has therefore been commissioned to produce guidance for property owners and landlords with the aim of increasing awareness of the situation of Roma in the housing market and counteracting discrimination. Boverket has also produced informative videos that can be used to market the online training further. 309 people completed the training in 2018–2020. Additionally, five regional training sessions open to the public have been arranged at which people in housing companies and people who work on housing issues in various ways have been represented.

196. In November 2017, the National Board of Health and Welfare published guidance for municipal social services working with vulnerable EU/EEA citizens with no right of residence in Sweden, on behalf of the Government. The main starting point of the guidance is the obligations and opportunities offered by EU law and Swedish legislation for social services in their dealings with EU/EEA citizens.

197. Provisions regarding the ultimate responsibility of the municipality for providing support and assistance under the Social Services Act (2001:453) apply to everyone in Sweden. Everyone therefore has the right to apply for financial or other assistance under the provisions of the Social Services Act in the municipality in which they reside and have their case examined and determined in a formal decision. Obligations to aid persons without a legal right to stay in Sweden or to those EU/EEA citizens who are unable to support themselves in their first three months in Sweden are limited. Normally, these people are only entitled to emergency assistance, such as temporary accommodation, money for food and a ticket home.

198. If the application for assistance involves children, the principle of the best interests of the child must be considered in the assessment in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Social Services Act. The municipality's ultimate responsibility for support and assistance under the Social Services Act applies to all children, regardless of whether they have the right to stay in Sweden or how long they have been here.

199. For example, this means that permanent accommodation in cars, caravans, shelters and similar makeshift accommodation are considered to be unacceptable living conditions for children, regardless of the legal status of their parents.

200. Under the Social Services Act, municipal social services are obliged to carry out outreach activities and other preventive work to prevent harm to children and young people. Many municipalities are actively working to help vulnerable EU/EEA citizens. Depending on local conditions, some municipalities run outreach work themselves while others work in partnership with non-profit organisations. Outreach work increases opportunities to identify particularly disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals such as children, female victims of violence and people with physical or intellectual disabilities.

201. Unauthorised settlements as such are not the responsibility of municipal social services, but the situation of people living in unauthorised accommodation is. Social services have an important role to play in providing support when people are evicted from their homes, especially where children are involved. If those to be evicted do not have right of residence in Sweden, and are therefore not resident in Sweden, the responsibility of social services is generally limited to relieving a temporary emergency situation. If there are children in the accommodation in question, as a rule social services should already have been informed of this via the municipality's outreach work or by being informed of an impending eviction by the Enforcement Authority or the Police Authority.

202. Evictions and removals are carried out by the Enforcement Authority. The process at the Enforcement Authority is a two-party process in which the Authority is the guarantor for the rule of law in the procedure and where enforcement must be carried out objectively and impartially. The rules on removal were introduced in 2017, while the rules on eviction are of long standing.

203. As a main rule, the defendant must be given the opportunity to make a statement before eviction takes place. The defendant must be informed before removal. In both eviction and removal, there must be reasonable consideration of the defendant's situation, and the eviction or removal must be prepared to avoid unnecessary harm. Furthermore, the Enforcement Authority must inform the social welfare committee when a case for eviction is

submitted to the Authority. Regarding removal, the Enforcement Authority must inform the social welfare committee of when the removal is to take place. The notification must also state whether it can be assumed that the removal will involve children.

### **Settlements**

204. Stockholm County Administrative Board's final report in January 2020 on the Government remit on national coordination regarding vulnerable EU/EEA citizens without right of residence in Sweden reaches the conclusion that most people in the target group come from Romania and Bulgaria. The county administrative board reported that the larger, more permanent settlements that used to exist in several places in Sweden, mainly on the outskirts of major cities, have become increasingly rare. Instead, temporary settlements have become more common. The trend has been for the target group to choose to live in vehicles rather than in temporary settlements such as huts, tents or shacks.

205. The county administrative board also reported that fewer applications have been received by the Enforcement Authority from landowners and owners of property requesting special assistance since the Police Authority, the Enforcement Authority and municipalities started working together on the problem of informal settlements.

### **Support to the target group from civil society organisations**

206. Several civil society organisations in Sweden provide support to the target group of vulnerable EU/EEA citizens. Examples of support include serving food, laundry, showering facilities, clothing, hygiene items, shelters, and advice on health issues, etc.

### **Reply to paragraph 20 of the list of issues**

207. Sweden has had a statutory national health care guarantee since 2010. The health care guarantee obliges the regions to provide health care within certain time limits and sets out the maximum time a patient should have to wait for an appointment, treatment or surgery in primary and specialist care. Although the national health care guarantee is regulated in law and applies throughout Sweden, there are still major regional differences in health care waiting times. The Government has worked in various ways to improve good accessibility nationwide.

208. Within the remit of the agreement on increased accessibility in health care, the Government disburses funding to regions that reduce their waiting times, which are measured based on the national health care guarantee. Initiatives under the agreement also aim to improve the regions' strategic work on accessibility. In 2021, the Government has earmarked SEK 2.9 billion for this purpose. For several years now, the Government has also implemented measures to boost cancer care, including introducing standardised care pathways in cancer care, which is judged to have had a positive impact on accessibility and equality in cancer care. Since 2015, the Patient Act has also been in force, where one of its aims is to improve patients' opportunities to seek outpatient care nationwide. The Government has also set up a Delegation for Increased Accessibility in Health Care, with a specific focus on reducing waiting times. The Delegation is to support the regions in implementing regional action plans for greater accessibility.

### **Health care for asylum seekers and others**

209. The starting point of the Health and Medical Services Act (2017:30, HSL) is that a Swedish region is obliged to offer health and medical care to those residents in the region. The concept of health and medical care covers both measures to prevent illness and actual health care, including psychiatric care.

210. Foreign citizens who have a residence permit or right of residence in Sweden can be entered in the population register and thus have full access to subsidised health care. The groups for whom access to health care is particularly regulated are asylum seekers and people residing in Sweden without a permit (undocumented migrants). Access to health care for these groups is regulated in the Act (2008:344) on health care for asylum seekers and others

and the Act (2013:407) on health care for certain foreigners residing in Sweden without the required permits. For both asylum seekers and undocumented migrants, children up to the age of 18 have the right to health care to the same extent as people resident in Sweden, in line with the definition above. Adult asylum seekers and undocumented migrants, on the other hand, have limited access to health care. The regions' responsibility to provide such health care to these groups is limited to health care that cannot be deferred, maternity care, abortion care and contraceptive advice.

### **Mental health**

211. The Government enters into annual agreements on mental health with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR). The purpose of the agreements is to improve the work of the Swedish regions and municipalities in the field of mental health.

212. The agreements include continuing investment in strengthening frontline care for children and young people, with youth clinics as an important arena. The aim is to ensure that children and young people with mental illness are offered good quality, local health care that meets their needs within a reasonable time. Improving frontline care can help to increase access to children's and young people's psychiatric services by ensuring that children who do not need specialised psychiatric care receive care in primary care, at youth clinics or via some form of counselling clinic, for example. The regions must work together with schools and student health services to facilitate prevention and promotion initiatives. Where necessary, there must also be collaboration on remedial interventions. This may, for example, include general health promotion initiatives, as well as preventing and identifying mental illness. SEK 380 million will be disbursed to the regions for initiatives that seek to strengthen children's and young people's psychiatric services, promote mental health and combat mental illness in children and young people.

### **Reply to paragraph 21 of the list of issues**

213. The Government has introduced many measures since the outbreak of the pandemic. The measures are intended to provide greater security for those affected by the crisis and protect people's lives, health and ability to earn a living. The health care measures are set out below.

- Many municipalities and regions have been hard hit financially due to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak. The Government has taken several steps to support regions and municipalities, including SEK 20 billion in targeted government grants to the regions for additional costs relating to COVID-19;
- Two key government agencies working on the pandemic are the Public Health Agency of Sweden and the National Board of Health and Welfare. Both agencies have been granted additional funding in 2020 and 2021 for their ongoing work on the pandemic;
- The Government has taken the initiative to introduce several different types of targeted interventions and measures to tackle the backlog of care needs in the health care sector. The purpose of the Government's investments is to ensure that the necessary resources are in place and that efficient and appropriate measures are taken to meet the total health needs of the population. SEK 6 billion. 2022;
- In 2020, the regions also shared SEK 2 896 billion under the agreement on Increased access to health care 2020 and the follow-up agreement. In late 2021, the regions will be able to access additional funding under the agreement, based on their performance on reducing waiting lists.

214. Additionally, the Government has issued several mandates to government agencies with reference to the health care backlog and the need to increase accessibility.

- The National Board of Health and Welfare has been tasked with analysing the backlog of health care needs that has arisen as a consequence of the virus that causes COVID-19. The National Board of Health and Welfare has been commissioned to set up a

coordination function to support the regions in coordinating access to intensive care beds nationwide. This is due to the outbreak of COVID-19;

- The National Board of Health and Welfare has been commissioned to support the coordination of the regions' health and medical care resources due to COVID-19. The Public Health Agency of Sweden has been commissioned to regularly provide updates on scenarios for how the coronavirus outbreak might develop in the future;
- The COVID-19 outbreak has meant a heavy workload for staff in the health sector. To help them process their experiences of the pandemic, Sweden's municipalities and regions were granted SEK 500 million in 2020 for emergency support, counselling or trauma support;
- The Government has undertaken to meet the costs of all testing of people with the symptoms of active infection. The Government has also compensated the regions for the use of rapid tests and earmarked funding for infection tracing and outbreak management.

### **Reply to paragraph 22 of the list of issues (E/C.12/SWE/QPR/7)**

215. In Sweden, personal use of narcotics constitutes a minor drug offence and under established practice is only punishable by a fine. More severe penalties are reserved for more serious crime. There are no plans to review the legislation on personal use. People with substance abuse and addiction issues have access to health care and support via the Swedish health care system and, for those convicted of more serious crime, within the sanction system.

216. Those sentenced to probation may, if deemed justified, be prescribed substance abuse treatment. This is provided by the Swedish Prison and Probation Service. Within a prison sentence, people with substance abuse and addiction issues must be offered and encouraged to participate in activities to prevent relapse. For example, an inmate may undergo residential treatment in a treatment facility on the outside at the end of their custodial sentence. Convicted drug addicts may be placed in special facilities for drug addicts. There are prisons specialised in treatment, but other prisons also have treatment facilities. One of the aims of the Swedish Prison and Probation Service is for the client to voluntarily continue the treatment following conditional release.

217. The municipality where the individual is registered in the population register is responsible for providing support and help during custodial sentences. The home region is responsible for health care services. People sentenced to penal sanctions have the same right to care, support and help from municipalities and regions as everyone else.

218. The interventions in Sweden to reduce harm from drug-related problems are being developed and are reaching larger numbers of users. One relatively new initiative which has had a wide reach in Sweden is making the opioid-inhibiting nasal spray naloxone available to patients. Between 2019 and 2020, the number of regions carrying out such systematic work has increased from 13 to 18. Several areas have been developed in recent years with the aim of ensuring that prevention and health promotion initiatives reach people who inject drugs. The spread of hepatitis C is considerably more widespread in this group than HIV, highlighting the importance of drawing attention to the combined needs for different interventions. Over time, treatment for hepatitis C has reached increasing numbers of people who inject drugs. To meet the need for prevention, regions and city municipalities can run low-threshold operations based on local needs. Other strategic arenas for prevention are the Swedish Prison and Probation Service, the health service, social services, etc. Primary preventive activities may include testing, advice, counselling, vaccination against hepatitis B, needle exchanges, midwife visits and contraceptive advice.

219. On 1 March 2017 several amendments to the Act on exchange of syringes and needles (2006:323) entered into force with the aim of improving access to needle exchanges across Sweden. The number of regions with needle exchange services has increased from eight to 16 out of a total 21 regions since the legislative amendment entered into force, which means that a larger proportion of people who inject drugs have access to the measures that the services can offer. In 2019, 4 817 people had attended one of the 26 needle exchange services

that were available in 16 of Sweden's regions in that year, an increase of 30 per cent compared with 2018.

220. Based on the regions' annual reports from 2018, it can be confirmed that no transmission of HIV or hepatitis B has been found among participants in needle exchange programmes. All the services offer participants testing for HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C. Transmission of hepatitis B can be effectively prevented by vaccination, which all the services offer their users. According to the reports, three services also offer treatment for HIV. Seven services stated that they offered treatment for hepatitis C in 2018. Two services referred their users on to treatment and two services decided to start offering treatment in 2019.

## **Reply to paragraph 23 of the list of issues**

### **Compulsory education**

221. All children resident in Sweden have an obligation to attend education. Compulsory education covers nine years, and most children start year 1 in the autumn term of the year in which they reach the age of 7. Only a very few per cent of students who complete year 9 do so without final grades, i.e. without a pass grade in any subject. The proportion of students who finish compulsory education without final grades has only varied by 0.1 percentage points in the period 2016/17–2019/20.

222. Students need to meet eligibility requirements to proceed to national programmes in upper secondary school. The eligibility requirements differ between the different national programmes. To be eligible for upper secondary school vocational programmes, students need a pass grade in eight subjects, and to be eligible for upper secondary school programmes that prepare students for university, students need a pass grade in 12 subjects. Students who are not eligible to study on a national programme at upper secondary school can study on an introductory programme.

223. In spring 2020, 85.6 per cent of students were eligible to study on vocational upper secondary school programmes, which is an increase of 3.1 percentage points since spring 2017. The proportion of students eligible for higher education preparatory programmes was 84.4 per cent (Arts programme), 82.9 per cent (Business Management and Economics, Humanities and Social Science programmes) and 81.5 per cent (Natural Science and Technology programmes) in spring 2020. This is an increase of 2.7 percentage points, 2.8 percentage points and 2.2 percentage points respectively since spring 2017.

### **Upper secondary school**

224. Not all students who apply to national programmes at upper secondary school are eligible to enrol on them. Before the 2020/21 academic year, 87 per cent of students were eligible for their first choice of national programme (94 per cent for higher education preparatory programmes and 74 per cent for vocational programmes). Nor are all eligible applicants accepted onto the first-choice programme or by the first-choice school to which they have applied. Before the 2020/21 academic year, 59.1 per cent of applicants to a vocational programme and 71.1 per cent of applicants to a higher education preparatory programme were accepted onto their first-choice programme and by their first choice school. Since 2016/17, this proportion has remained between 70–72 per cent for higher education preparatory programmes and between 55–63 per cent for vocational programmes. The table below shows the proportion of applicants to upper secondary school national programmes who were admitted onto their first choice programme and by their first choice school, broken down by sex, migrant background and socioeconomic status (parents' highest level of education) for the 2020/21 academic year. A higher proportion of girls were accepted by their first choice than boys. The proportion was also higher among applicants born in Sweden with at least one parent born in Sweden compared with applicants born in Sweden with parents born abroad, but predominantly in comparison with applicants born abroad. The proportion accepted by their first choice for the 2020/21 academic year was also higher among applicants with parents with post-upper secondary education compared with applicants with one parent with upper secondary education and one with compulsory education only. This pattern, based

on sex, migrant background and socioeconomic status, has largely remained the same since 2016/17.

225. National programmes at upper secondary school are intended to be completed within three years. In 2020, 78.2 per cent of the students who enrolled on a national programme in autumn 2017 qualified within three years (79.8 per cent for higher education preparatory programmes and 74.3 per cent for vocational programmes). The proportion of students qualifying within three years has increased continuously since 2016.

226. In upper secondary school, i.e. including the introductory programmes as well as the national programmes the proportion of students in 2020 who qualified within three years was significantly lower (66.3 per cent). The proportion of students in upper secondary education in 2020 who qualified within five years was 72 per cent. Thus in 2020, 28 per cent of the students who started their studies in the 2015/16 academic year left upper secondary school without a qualification after five years of study. This is partly due to a low qualification rate after five years among students on the introductory programmes.

### **Municipal adult education**

227. Municipal adult education (Komvux) is to support and stimulate adults in their learning. Komvux is run in the form of courses at basic and upper secondary level, in Swedish for immigrants (sfi) and as special education at basic and upper secondary level. A total of 400 000 students studied basic or upper secondary level courses or sfi at Komvux in 2020, which is equivalent to 7 per cent of the population aged 20–64. The number has increased by 13 000 students since 2019, which can partly be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. Of those studying at basic and upper secondary level and studying sfi at Komvux in 2020, 60 per cent were women and 40 per cent men. At basic level, 95 per cent of students were born abroad while those born abroad made up over 46 per cent of students at upper secondary level. In sfi, virtually all students are born outside Sweden.

228. Of the total course participants who completed or dropped out of a course at Komvux in 2020, 69 per cent passed the course, 9 per cent completed the course but failed and 22 per cent dropped out. The dropout rate in total differed relatively little compared with 2019, but there was variation between the different types of school.

### **Higher vocational education**

229. Higher vocational education is a post-upper secondary form of education, which combines theoretical studies with strong links to the world of work. The courses are designed and run in partnership with companies and employers and seek to meet the need for a qualified workforce. In 2020, just under 78 000 people were students in higher vocational education, 53 per cent women and 47 per cent men. The median age was 30 and 77 per cent were born in Sweden and 23 per cent born abroad.

230. In 2019, 14 500 people qualified from a higher vocational education programme that provides a qualification. This is a qualification rate of 71 per cent.

### **Higher education**

231. Higher education comprises courses at undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral level. Higher education and research in Sweden is largely conducted at state-funded universities and higher education institutions. State-run higher education institutions are government agencies directly subordinate to the Government. There are also private, non-state-run education providers, the majority of which are small and provide education in only one or a couple of areas.

### **Higher number starting higher education**

232. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to greater pressure on higher education. To tackle the expected pressure, the Government has invested in extensive expansion of higher education. In the autumn semester of 2020, a considerably larger number of people applied to higher education institutions, especially younger applicants. 19-year-olds increased by

almost 30 per cent compared with the previous year. In total, 384 500 students were registered in higher education in the autumn semester of 2020.

### Higher number of graduates

233. The number of students at undergraduate and postgraduate level in the 2019/20 academic year was almost 72 000, which was a major increase compared with the previous academic year. This reinforces a long-established trend for increasing numbers of students to graduate each year. Ten to fifteen years ago, approximately 52 000 people graduated with bachelor's or master's degrees each year.

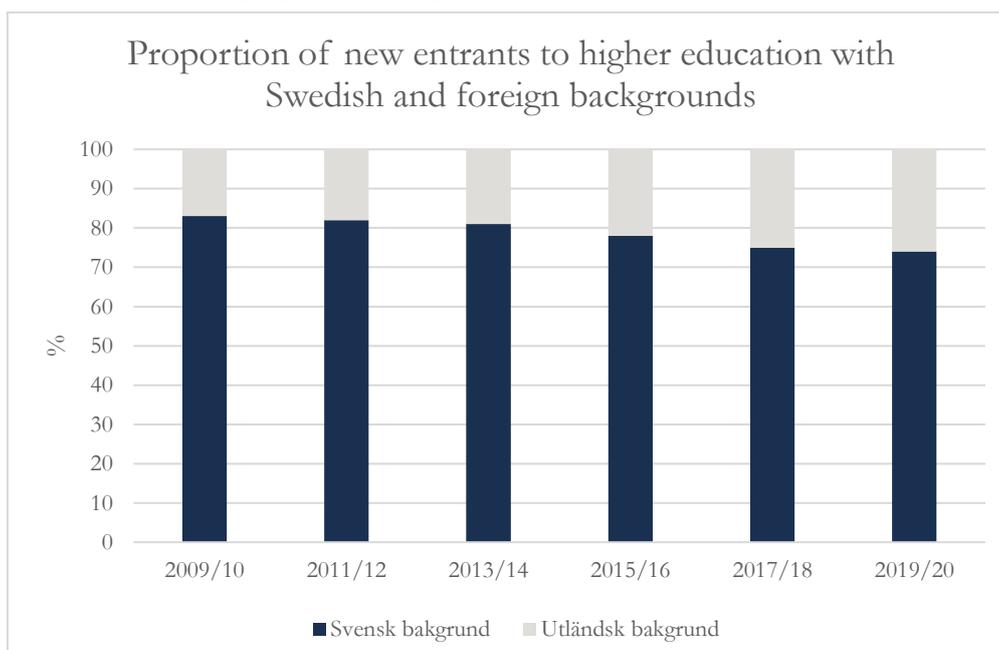
### University entrants with a foreign background

234. The proportion of new entrants to higher education with a foreign background has increased over recent years. At the same time, the proportion of people with a foreign background has also increased in the population over the past ten years. In the 2018/19 academic year, 26 per cent of new university students (not including international students) had a foreign background.

### Diagram 3

#### The Government's initiatives in higher education for people with education from third countries

235. In recent years, the Government has increased its investment in supplementary higher education courses for people with foreign education.



236. The prospects of finding work in Sweden following supplementary training are good; according to the Swedish Higher Education Authority, 75 per cent of those who completed a supplementary training course in the academic years 2014/15–2016/17 had entered the labour market within a year of completing the course.

237. A comparison of all graduates, including those with a Swedish background, on equivalent ordinary higher education programmes, shows that people with supplementary education had a slightly lower employment rate three years after the training.

### Social bias in higher education admissions

238. For a long time now, there has been social bias in higher education in Sweden following the same pattern according to the Swedish Higher Education Authority. The higher level of education the parents have, the more common it is for their children to embark on higher education, start studying on a long vocational programme and complete medical studies.

239. This applies to both women and men. However, at the same time, the level of education in the population has long been rising.

240. Statistics Sweden finds that at the age of 25, a total of 46 per cent in the cohort born in 1994 had started higher education. In the cohort born in 1994, only 24 per cent had started higher education by the age of 25 if their parents' highest level of education was compulsory education. The corresponding figure was 83 per cent if the parents had a doctorate.

#### **Government initiatives**

241. The Higher Education Act was amended in 2001 such that it states that universities and higher education institutions are to work to broaden admissions, and many initiatives and activities have been carried out since that date. This statutory requirement means that higher education institutions are to work to reduce social bias in admissions to higher education to increase diversity.

242. In 2019, the Swedish Higher Education Authority was commissioned by the Government to evaluate the work of universities and higher education institutions in widening admissions. A report is to be submitted in 2022.

#### **Gender equality**

243. Regarding gendered educational choices, a report by the Swedish Gender Equality Agency describes how several higher education institutions state that gendered educational choices are difficult to tackle, as gendered choices made as early as compulsory education have consequences for choices in higher education. The distribution of students between subjects has remained similar in recent academic years. The proportion of women is higher than the proportion of men in most areas. The proportion of men is only higher in science and technology.

#### **Government initiatives**

244. In 2016, the Government commissioned the Swedish Gender Equality Agency to support universities and higher education institutions in their work on gender mainstreaming. This remit was renewed in 2020. The Government judges that the remit should continue to ensure that work on gender mainstreaming is sustainable in the long term.

#### **Students with disabilities**

245. Regarding students with disabilities, the Government's actions remain unchanged since the previous report. As described in the previous report, higher education institutions are responsible for ensuring that students are not discriminated against at a higher education institution, and the institutions are to work on active measures to combat discrimination, including against students with disabilities. This is set out in the Discrimination Act.

246. In summer 2018, UHR was tasked with disseminating best practice in terms of measures already carried out, with the aim of combating discrimination against students with disabilities and increasing accessibility. Approximately 23 000 students with disabilities in a study situation received educational support in 2020. In the past three years, the number of students receiving support has risen by approximately 2 500 a year. In 2020, the highest proportion of students granted support were students with dyslexia and different neuropsychiatric variations.

#### **Higher education and the national minority languages**

247. In Sweden there is a shortage of teachers at all levels of education able to teach and to teach in the five national minority languages (Finnish, Yiddish, Meänkieli, Romani Chib and Sami). The Government has therefore taken the following action:

248. The previous mandate to certain higher education institutions to build up and develop subject teacher training in various minority languages has been revised as of 2021; A broader description of the mandate regarding teacher training in general gives the higher education institutions greater opportunities to adapt their education provision to the different challenges of the national minority languages.

249. A new feature for 2021 is that Yiddish is also covered by the mandate to work towards teacher training.

250. UHR is commissioned to follow up, analyse and report on its internally and externally focused efforts based on the objectives of minority policy.

#### **Actions/investments in education**

251. To strengthen the education of newly arrived migrant children, new provisions were introduced in the Education Act (2010:800) on 1 July 2018 and apply to education commenced after 1 July 2019. According to provisions in the Education Act, the knowledge of a newly arrived student is to be assessed when the student enters the language introduction programme, unless such an assessment is clearly unnecessary.

252. Since 2015, the Swedish National Agency for Education has been tasked with carrying out systematic initiatives in various ways to strengthen the education authorities' capacity to offer newly arrived migrant children and students an education of high and equal quality in the short and the long term. Since 2018, the Government has introduced a socioeconomically weighted grant amounting to approximately SEK 6.2 billion for comprehensive schools. The purpose of the grant is to increase equality of outcomes in schools. One factor in disbursement is the year in which the student immigrated to Sweden.

*Comment: There are no internationally comparable statistics available on the enrolment rate and completion rate and we have therefore based our report on official Swedish statistics. Sweden does not gather data on ethnicity.*

#### **Reply to paragraph 24 of the list of issues**

253. There are major differences in the circumstances affecting the minority languages in terms of the number of speakers, for example, which also affect access to teachers and the feasibility of providing textbooks and other teaching materials. The recruitment base for studies in certain minority languages at higher education level is thus also limited, which has led to some of the courses having no applicants. There are regulations at national level governing education in national minority languages within the education system that give students the right to teaching in compulsory education and equivalent school forms and in upper secondary schools and upper secondary school for students with learning disabilities, but the practical issues involved in putting this teaching in place mean there are often shortcomings.

254. The Government has tasked the National Agency for Education with submitting proposals for how national coordination of teaching in national minority languages in the education system can be organised to improve minority language teaching. Based on the circumstances of the five national minority languages and the different school forms, the National Agency for Education is to propose a national organisation able to help improve access to and better-quality teaching in the national minority languages.

255. The Sami Education Board is a government agency tasked with providing Sami education to children and students up to year six inclusive. The aim is to equip students with a Sami background to boost the opportunities of the Sami as an indigenous people to preserve and develop their Sami identity as part of Swedish society.

256. There is a shortage of teachers with knowledge of Sami. To increase knowledge of Sami, the Swedish National Agency for Education has offered in-service training in Sami for teachers since 2017.

257. In addition to the Sami Education Board running preschool activities and schools in five locations, the Board also offers integrated teaching and remote learning. With the aim of strengthening and including more children and students in Sami teaching, the Sami Education Board gained increased funding in the most recent Government budget to produce teaching materials and for integrated teaching. Integrated teaching is aimed at strengthening students' knowledge of Sami culture.

### **Reply to paragraph 25 of the list of issues**

258. Sweden has ratified the following conventions in this area:

- Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, UNESCO 1954 (ratified 1985);
- Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, UNESCO 1970 (ratified 2003);
- Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects, UNIDROIT 1995 (ratified 2011).

259. The Swedish Museums Act states that museums are themselves responsible for their collection management and are instructed to assess if there is reason to dispose of items by repatriation. Following an official request by an external party regarding claims for return (or self-initiated), the museum makes its assessment based on both legal and professional criteria. If the museum considers that an item should be returned, the museum sends a petition to the Ministry of Culture. After the case is prepared by the Ministry of Culture, the Swedish Government decides whether the object should be returned. If the Government approves the request, the museum may decide to return the item.

260. Each individual museum has steering documents in line with the Guidelines on Deaccessioning of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), including repatriation questions. However, the Swedish National Heritage Board, the agency that supports the public museum system, has also produced guidelines:

- The Swedish National Heritage Board's Guideline on collection management practice;
- Guidelines for Museums in Return and Repatriation;
- Guidelines for Management of Human Remains in Museum Collections;
- 20 years with the Washington Conference Principles (on Nazi Confiscated Art, 1998 and The Terezin Declaration, 2009).

261. On 19 February 2021, the National Museums of World Culture received a request from the Government of Mexico for the return of 24 objects made and/or used by the indigenous Yaqui people, including the ceremonial deer head Maaso Kova. The objects were acquired during scientific fieldwork in Mexico in 1934–1935.

262. In this case, after investigating, the National Museums of World Culture have reached the conclusion that there are no legal grounds for repatriation based on the circumstances in which the objects were acquired. However, in dialogue with the UN body the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) and other parties concerned, the National Museums of World Culture have made the assessment that repatriation can instead take place under Article 15 of UNESCO's 1970 Convention, and Article 12 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

263. The recommendation of the National Museums of World Culture to the Government is to grant the request from the Government of Mexico and to repatriate all 24 objects to the Yaqui in Mexico. This recommendation is based on a considered assessment founded on an extensive investigation and constructive multi-party dialogue. The conclusion is that the importance to the Yaqui in Mexico of regaining the objects and being able to decide on their use themselves outweighs the National Museums of World Culture's mandate as a museum.

264. The National Museums of World Culture has requested the Government's consent to relinquish the above objects by repatriating them to the Yaqui in Mexico. The matter is now being prepared by the Government Offices of Sweden.

### **Reply to paragraph 26 of the list of issues**

265. To increase the value of research, it needs to be disseminated in both the scientific community and to society in general. The Government therefore considers that scientific

publications which result from research that has been publicly funded must be immediately open access with effect from 2021. Regarding research data, the switch must be completely implemented by 2026 at the latest. To speed up the switch to an open scientific system, the Swedish Research Council and the Royal Library have been given a clearer mandate to promote and coordinate work to introduce open access to research data and scientific publications. A new mandate to develop work on open science has also been given to universities and higher education institutions. Statistics for 2020 show that 57 per cent of the scientific articles registered with Swepub, a search service for scientific publications at Swedish higher education institutions, were immediately openly access. This is an increase from 2017, when 33 per cent of the published articles were immediately open access.

266. The Royal Library has a remit to establish and manage a national digital platform for open access to Swedish scientific periodicals. The Swedish Research Council has reported that national coordination on data management plans and requirements in calls for proposals for data management plans have constituted initial initiatives to promote good data management.

267. The Swedish Government has assigned the National library of Sweden to map and analyze the use of open educational resources as well as public engagement in research.

268. The Government strongly emphasises the importance of close cooperation between universities and higher education institutions and the rest of society. The Higher Education Act (1992:1434) states that the role of higher education institutions includes working in partnership with surrounding society, keeping it informed about their work and ensuring that their research results are use. The Swedish Research Council informs the public of current research and research results via the internet site forskning.se and publications. The Swedish Research Council also initiates and coordinates different events to increase awareness of the content of research and to encourage dialogue between researchers and the rest of society.

269. A non-governmental organisation “Science and Society” receives government funding to encourage the exchange of information between the public and the research community.

### **III. Good practices**

#### **Reply to paragraph 27 of the list of issues**

270. On 1 January 2019, the Act on National Minorities and National Minority Languages was strengthened. Fundamental protection for the national minority languages and culture is now stronger, with expanded rights in the administrative areas for Finnish, Meänkieli and Sami. Municipalities and regions are to set goals and guidelines for their work on minority policy. According to the Act on National Minorities and Minority Languages, administrative agencies must give the national minorities an opportunity to exert influence in questions that concern them. The amended act clarified the import of consultation with the national minorities, including by requiring a structured dialogue. The intention is for this to lead to higher quality and long-term work.

271. In February 2012, a coordinated and long-term strategy for Roma inclusion in 2012–2032 was also decided. The twenty-year strategy must be reinforcing the minority policy that covers the five national minorities: Jews, Roma, Sami, Sweden Finns and Tornedalers. The Government has earmarked approximately SEK 58 million in 2016–2019 for measures for Roma in addition to the ordinary funding available for the national minorities. The overarching objective of the twenty-year strategy is for Roma who reach the age of 20 in 2032 to have equal opportunities in life to those who are non-Roma. The strategy’s target group is predominantly Roma who suffer social and economic exclusion, with women and children being a particular priority. The strategy contains goals and measures in areas such as education, work, housing, health, social care and security, culture and language and the organisation of civil society. Monitoring and evaluation of the strategy and of Roma access to human rights at local, regional and national level takes place on an ongoing basis.

272. According to the report Roma inclusion, Annual report 2020 the Strategy for Roma Inclusion is an important complement to national minority policy, but permanent long-term funding will be needed to achieve the objective of the strategy.

273. The 2020 Annual Report states that municipalities have an important role to play in making the strategy a reality at local level and that the Government grants to the municipalities that have engaged in pilot and development activities have been an important tool in achieving success. Roma inclusion is now part of the ordinary structures of these municipalities, partly by employing bridge builders and implementing measures to improve women's health, along with initiatives for young women and girls to motivate them to study.

274. Several agencies plus the Swedish Film Institute Foundation have carried out initiatives to strengthen the language and culture of national minorities. This includes the following:

- The Sami Language Centre has continued to develop methods and work on incentives to stimulate and promote the increased use of the Sami language;
- The Swedish Institute for Language and Folklore has allocated approximately SEK 5 500 000 to 59 language revitalisation projects focusing on children and young people and passing on language between generations;
- The Swedish Arts Council has allocated operating grants and project grants amounting to approximately SEK 15 000 000 to national minority organisations focusing on activities judged to be of importance to national cultural policy and children's and youth activities;
- Since 2018, the Swedish National Agency for Education has continued initiatives to increase access to qualified teachers of Sami. The number of participants is approximately 20 per training session;
- The Swedish Film Institute Foundation has set up two new grants to promote access to film for children and young people in the national minority languages.

275. Many authorities have had assignments in 2020, which have resulted in the following, among other things:

- Arbetsförmedlingen has developed new consultation procedures to ensure the influence and participation of minorities;
  - Boverket has further developed the online training course to combat discrimination against Roma on the housing market and made it accessible to the public;
  - MUCF has provided a more solid foundation for the participation of Roma youth organisations in public life.
-