



MINISTRY FOR  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
A BRIEF PRESENTATION



Photo: Sofia Nahringer

# Swedish Foreign Service

**THE MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFA)** is responsible for Sweden's relations with other countries and international organisations, and for development cooperation policy and international trade policy. The MFA together with more than 100 missions abroad make up the Swedish Foreign Service. A mission abroad may be an embassy, consulate-general, delegation or representation. The MFA is part of the Government Offices and is the largest ministry.

**THE MFA WORKS** to develop and implement Sweden's foreign and security policy, international trade policy, the promotion of Swedish interests abroad, international development cooperation, and to provide assistance to Swedes abroad.

**THE SWEDISH FOREIGN SERVICE** has around 2 600 employees, of whom 750 work at the MFA in Stockholm. More than 500 posted officials work with 1 300 locally employed staff at our missions abroad.

**Photo:** Detail from the Prince Royal's Palace, the MFA's main building.

# Foreign representation

## CONCURRENTLY ACCREDITED AMBASSADORS

In countries where Sweden does not have an embassy, it is common to appoint a Swedish ambassador in a neighbouring country as a concurrently accredited ambassador. This means that the ambassador is Sweden's remote representative and promotes relations through regular visits. Another alternative is to manage relations via a section office.

## STOCKHOLM-BASED AMBASSADORS

In some thirty countries, Sweden's relations are managed by ambassadors in Stockholm. They make regular visits to the countries to which they are accredited.

## HONORARY CONSULATES

In addition, there are about 330 honorary consulates. An honorary consul normally lives in the city where the consulate is located. An honorary consul may be a Swedish or a foreign citizen. The assignment of honorary consul is non-remunerated.

**Photo:** Interior of the Swedish Embassy in Berlin.



Photo: Ake Esson Lindman



# The MFA's political leadership

## **ANN LINDE**

Head of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Minister for Foreign Affairs

## **PETER ERIKSSON**

Minister for International Development Cooperation

## **ANNA HALLBERG**

Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs

## **ROBERT RYDBERG**

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

## **PER OLSSON FRIDH**

State Secretary for International Development Cooperation

## **KRISTER NILSSON**

State Secretary for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs

Photo: Kristian Pohl, Nimni Andersson (Robert Rydberg)





## MFA departments

**THE MFA's DAY-TO-DAY** work is conducted by a number of departments. These departments process and prepare business prior to government decisions. Another task is to represent Sweden in international negotiations and promote Swedish foreign policy and economic interests.

**THE MFA's DEPARTMENTS** assist the political leadership in compiling and analysing the information necessary for taking policy positions. This is done by preparing and presenting background material for government decisions, government bills, replies to interpellations and questions in the Riksdag.

**THE DEPARTMENTS** also represent Sweden in international negotiations, promote Swedish foreign policy and economic interests, and liaise with the MFA's agencies and missions abroad.

**Photo:** Olof Skoog, Sweden's ambassador to the United Nations in 2015–2019, consults with colleagues ahead of a Security Council meeting on UN peacekeeping operations and the situation in Central Africa.

# MFA areas of responsibility

## **FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY**

Foreign policy is about Sweden's relations with, and policies towards, other countries. Preventing risks and threats is central to security policy, which is part of foreign policy. Swedish policy is pursued through direct relations with other countries and also through bodies such as the European Union and the United Nations. These relations are based on international law, which consists of all international agreements and rules that regulate how states and other international actors should cooperate and how they should or should not behave towards one another.

## **DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

Human rights are universal and apply to everyone. They establish that all human beings, irrespective of country, culture and context, are born free and equal in dignity and rights. Democracy includes general elections, measures to strengthen and protect the opportunities for individuals to influence, and measures to promote and guarantee respect for human rights. Human rights, democracy and the rule of law must permeate all Swedish foreign policy.

## **INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION**

Sweden has a long tradition of being generous and ambitious in the assistance it provides. Development cooperation is about creating opportunities for poor people to improve their living conditions. Swedish development aid is often channelled through international organisations such as the United Nations and the European Union. Humanitarian assistance refers to Sweden's contributions to save lives, alleviate suffering and uphold the human dignity of those affected by natural disasters, armed conflicts or other crises.

## **TRADE POLICY AND PROMOTION**

The purpose of Swedish trade and promotion policy is to promote Sweden's economic interests and the image of Sweden abroad, and in turn facilitate export from and foreign investment in Sweden, and encourage trade with other countries.

**Photo:** The United Nations Headquarters in New York.



## The ten focus areas of the political vision

The political vision for 2019–2022 is formulated in ten focus areas in line with the MFA's Strategy 2022, with the aim of strengthening and highlighting synergies between policy areas. The policy areas therefore recur in several focus areas.

### FOCUS AREAS:

- 1 A strong and cohesive EU
- 2 Drive for Democracy
- 3 Shared responsibility for peace and security
- 4 A strong rules-based multilateral world order
- 5 Sustainable development to combat poverty and oppression
- 6 Active diplomacy
- 7 Enhanced feminist foreign policy
- 8 Free, fair and sustainable global trade
- 9 Export initiative for more jobs throughout the country
- 10 Enhanced consular assistance abroad



# Assistance to Swedes abroad

**AN IMPORTANT** role of the MFA and Sweden's embassies and consulates is to help Swedes who have run into difficulties abroad. This is known as consular work and involves providing assistance in cases where, for example, people are involved in accidents, are robbed, assaulted, imprisoned, become sick or die abroad. The MFA's efforts are primarily a matter of helping and providing advice to the person in distress or their close relatives to sort out the situation.

**THE MFA** and the embassies are prepared to act in the event of a major crisis, and they carefully monitor events around the world. The embassies provide general travel information about different countries. The MFA is responsible for advising against travel based on the security situation in different countries. The MFA's travel advice not only serves as guidance for Swedish travellers, but also for the work of travel agencies and insurance companies. For example, when the MFA advises against travel to a country, travellers can receive a refund on booked package tours.

**TRAVEL INFORMATION** is available on the MFA and embassy websites, on UD Resklar (the MFA's travel app for mobile telephones) and via social media.





Photo: Taimi Koster

# Careers and internships in the Swedish Foreign Service

**KNOWLEDGEABLE AND SKILLED** staff are the MFA's most important resource. The MFA regularly recruits university graduates to the Swedish Diplomatic Training Programme and the Foreign Service Administrator Programme, as well as new staff for the Clerical Officer Programme. The diplomatic career includes job rotation at the MFA in Stockholm and at missions abroad. The MFA also recruits staff for special tasks and positions when specialist qualifications are required.

**RECRUITMENT** to the Swedish Diplomatic Training Programme, the Foreign Service Administrator Programme and the Clerical Officer Programme takes place once a year. Places are advertised under 'Lediga jobb' on the Swedish version of the Government Offices website: [regeringen.se](https://www.regeringen.se).

**Photo:** The Prince Royal's Palace at Gustaf Adolfs Torg in Stockholm.

Do you want to find out more about the MFA?  
Information is available from:

- [ud.se](http://ud.se)
- [swemfa.se](http://swemfa.se)
- [swedenabroad.se](http://swedenabroad.se)
- [twitter.com/Utrikesdep](https://twitter.com/Utrikesdep)
- [twitter.com/SweMFA](https://twitter.com/SweMFA)
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**MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
/ UTRIKESDEPARTEMENTET**

103 39 Stockholm, Sweden  
+46 8 405 10 00



**Government Offices of Sweden**  
**Ministry for Foreign Affairs**

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