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EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER

22nd National Report on the implementation of
the European Social Charter

submitted by

THE GOVERNMENT OF SWEDEN

Articles 7, 8, 16, 17, 19, 27, and 31
for the period 01/01/2018 – 31/12/2021

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CYCLE 2023

REVISED EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER

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of the Revised European Social Charter
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Articles 7, 8, 16, 17, 19, 27 and 31 for the period
01/01/2018 – 31/12/2021

Twenty-second report

Submitted by the Government of Sweden

in accordance with the Ministers' Deputies' decisions:

- 2 May 2006 adopted at their 936th meeting (point 4.2),
- 26 March 2008, adopted at their 1022nd meeting (point 4.2),
- 2 April 2014, adopted at their 1196th meeting (point 4.7)

on the measures taken to give effect to the following provisions of the

Revised European Social Charter

Articles 7, 8, 16, 17, 19, 27 and 31 for the period of 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2021.

Articles 7.5, 7.6, 8.2, 8.4 and 8.5 have not been ratified by Sweden.

In accordance with the Charter, copies of this report have been communicated to

- (1) Svenskt Näringsliv (Confederation of Swedish Enterprise)
- (2) Sveriges Regioner och Landsting (the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions)
- (3) Arbetsgivarverket (Swedish Agency for Government Employers)
- (4) Landsorganisationen i Sverige (the Swedish Trade Union Confederation)
- (5) Tjänstemännens Centralorganisation (the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees)
- (6) Saco, Sveriges Akademikers Centralorganisation (the Swedish Confederation of Professional Organisations)

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Introduction

With regard to the report form and the requested information in letter dated 26 May 2022 and in particular with regard to its' appendix whereby it is explained that States are invited to limit report to replies to specific and targeted questions and information for the relevant provisions, the Government of Sweden subsequently would like to submit the following information on article 7§1, 7§2, 7§3, 7§4, 7§8, 7§9, 7§10, 8§1, 8§3, 16, 17§1, 17§2, 19§1, 19§2, 19§3, 19§4, 19§5, 19§6, 19§6, 19§7, 19§8, 19§9, 19§10, 19§11, 19§12, 27§1, 27§2, 27§3, 31§1 and 31§2. Please note that Sweden has not ratified article 7§5, 7§6 and 8§2, 8§4 or 8§5.

Article 7 – The right of children and young persons to protection

Article 7§1

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right of children and young persons to protection, the Parties undertake:

1. to provide that the minimum age of admission to employment shall be 15 years, subject to exceptions for children employed in prescribed light work without harm to their health, morals or education;

Reference is made to the previous report and in particular to article 7§3. The Government would like to add the following information.

It is an important part of the Government's work environment strategy that no one who works in Sweden should have a job that exploits them or wears them out, and no one should have to risk death or serious injury because of work, irrespective of age and sex or other parameters. The Swedish Work Environment Authority (SWEA) have a specific government assignment regarding exploitation of workers and work-related crime regarding occupational safety and health and cooperate closely with other government authorities to uncover irregularities. This is done through i.a. joint inspection activities as well as shared information and analysis in different sectors of work.

Inspection activities are prioritized according to the level of risk. Minors being exploited in the informal sector has not been a specific focus area for the inspection activities, as SWEA have not received information on minors being exploited in sectors normally associated with work related crime, nor have this been observed as a particular problem during inspection activities. This doesn't necessarily mean that the problem does not exist, however SWEA and other relevant authorities (on tax, social insurance etc.) put a lot of resources on uncovering and sanctioning work-related crime in the informal sector, and if the problem should appear this will be detected through the system of inspection and cooperation between authorities.

The number of children (15-19 years of age) working during the reference period is as follows:

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Employment rate, %	24,9	25,6	21,0	21,5
Number employed (in 1000s)	137	145	120	124

Article 7§2

2. to provide that the minimum age of admission to employment shall be 18 years with respect to prescribed occupations regarded as dangerous or unhealthy;

Reference is made to the previous report. The Government would like to add the following information.

SWEA monitor the implementation of the Regulation on Minors' Work Environment (AFS 2012:3) section 11 first and foremost through inspections, which are carried out as part of national or regional campaigns, follow-ups on previous inspections or tips from the public. Apprentices working in i.a. the building industry are supervised – and irregularities are uncovered - through regular inspections in building work, and likewise in other sectors subject to dangerous work tasks. During the period 2017-2022, 32 referrals have been made to AFS 2012:3 section 11 in SWEA inspection reports.

Results are however not merely achieved through surveillance. Easily available information regarding rights and obligations for minors can be found on SWEA:s website, adapted to both employees and workers, and SWEA have also taken part in the Swedish Trade Union Confederation`s information campaign to raise awareness among minors in summer jobs about their rights.

Article 7§3

3. to provide that person who are still subject to compulsory education shall not be employed in such work as would deprive them of the full benefit of their education;

Reference is made to the previous report. The Government would like to add the following information.

The Swedish legislation AFS 2012:3 on work environment for minors is in accordance with Council directive 94/33/EC of 22 June 1994 on the protection of young people at work. This includes the regulation on working time for children who is still subject to compulsory full-time schooling under national law and the possibility of making national legislative or regulatory provisions allow children under certain circumstances pursuing the activities set out in cultural, artistic, sports or advertising activities, as well as children of at least 14 years of age working under a combined work/training scheme provided that such work is done in accordance with the conditions laid down by the competent authority, and children of at least 14 years of age performing light work other than that cultural, artistic, sports or advertising activities. Light work may be performed by children of 13 years of age for a limited number of hours per week in the case of categories of work determined by national legislation.

Applications from employers who engage children for work in the abovementioned sectors are handled by SWEA. SWEA conducts a thorough analysis of all factors involved, and demand i.a. an introduction program, permission from the parents, health and safety information given to the parents, a risk assessment and a statement from the safety representative. Given the fact that most permissions for child work are given as a result of a thorough case management and for a relatively short period of time, and that SWEA mainly perform risk-based and planned inspections, child work permitted by SWEA is rarely subject to inspection activities. SWEA have not received any indications that illegal child work is a big problem in Sweden. In rare cases where SWEA uncover that child work has taken place without permission from SWEA, SWEA files a criminal complaint.

Article 7§4

4. to provide that the working hours of persons under 18 years of age shall be limited in accordance with the needs of their development, and particularly with their need for vocational training; for the enforcement of such regulations by measures of supervision;

Reference is made to the previous report. The Government would like to add the following information.

SWEA monitor the implementation of the Regulation on Minors' Work Environment (AFS 2012:3) first and foremost through inspections, which are carried out as part of national or regional campaigns, follow-ups on previous inspections or tips from the public. Easily available information regarding rights and obligations for minors can be found on SWEA:s website, adapted to both employees and workers.

Inspections have been carried out where violations have been detected and demands to the employer to take action have been issued by SWEA. During the last five years there are requirements that refer to the regulations on minors in 186 supervisory cases. In these cases, 237 demands have been made with legal support in the regulations (see details below).

Inspections AFS 2012:3 on work environment for minors 2017-2022 (to this date)	
Total number of inspections that resulted in demands related to AFS 2012:3	187
Total number of demands related to AFS 2012:3	237
Total number of referrals to AFS 2012:3 in these demands (one demand can have more than one referral)	347

Total number of referrals to AFS 2012:3 in the 347 demands made 2017-2022	
Sections in AFS 2013:2	Number of referrals to AFS 2012:3 in the 347 demands, linked to the individual sections of the regulation
2	3
3	1
4	172
5	1
6	25
7	6
8	2
9	5
10	68
11	32
12	1

14	11
16	3
18	3
19	3
20	3
21	3
22	2
23	1
24	2
Total	347

Article 7§7

7. to provide that employed persons of under 18 years of age shall be entitled to a minimum of four weeks' annual holiday with pay;

Reference is made to the previous report. The Government would like to add the following information.

According to the Annual Leave Act (1977:480) an employer who breaches this act shall compensate the employee for any damage incurred, in addition to any holiday pay or compensation in lieu of annual leave to which the employee is entitled. Cases relating to the application of this act shall be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the Labour Disputes (Judicial Procedure) Act (1974:371) The Swedish model builds on the labour market partners agreeing in collective agreements on employment terms in the labour market, e.g. annual leave. The labour market partners have an important role in monitoring the right to leave from work with pay.

Article 7§8

8. to provide that persons under 18 years of age shall not be employed in night work with the exception of certain occupations provided for by national laws or regulations;

Reference is made to the previous report. The Government would like to add the following information.

According to section 16 AFS 2012:3, an employer may not allow a minor to perform work between midnight and 5am. Violation of this provisions may result in fines.

Violations of the regulations of night work for persons under 18 have not been a specific focus area for national inspection campaigns since the previous report. Inspections have been carried out where violations have been detected. During the last five years, violations have only been detected in 3 cases, which is a clear indication that illegal night work for minors is not a significant problem.

Article 7§9

9. to provide that persons under 18 years of age employed in occupations prescribed by national laws or regulations shall be subject to regular medical control;

Reference is made to the previous report. The Government would like to add the following information.

According to section 5 AFS 2012:3 regular medical controls shall be performed if necessary for risk evaluation of the minor's safety, physical or mental health or development. The intervals between the medical controls are not fixed but shall be adjusted to the nature of the risks and to the minor's health and maturity.

Given the legislation on medical controls for minors, SWEA do not supervise the intervals between medical controls of persons under the age of 18. During the period 2017-2022, merely 1 referral has been made to AFS 2012:3 section 15 on medical surveillance in SWEA inspection reports.

There are however provisions on obligatory occupational medical supervision regarding certain work, irrespective of age and risk assessment. Inspections with demands relating to this regulation do not single out workers according to age, and it is therefore not possible to get an exact number of where demands have been made for obligatory occupational medical supervision for people under the age of 18.

SWEA works strategically together with Occupational and Environmental medicine (OEM) to develop school doctors' competence in performing medical controls.

Article 7§10

10. to ensure special protection against physical and moral dangers to which children and young persons are exposed, and particularly against those resulting directly or indirectly from their work.

Reference is made to the previous report. The Government would like to add the following information.

Prostitution and trafficking in human beings for sexual purposes receive particular attention in the Government's 10-year national strategy for the elimination of men's violence against women (2017-2026), and it is also a prioritized area according to the action program to prevent and combat men's violence against women (2021-2023). In the action programme another area pointed out is Vulnerability to threats and abuse online.

The Gender Equality Agency has the Government's assignment to strengthen and coordinate the overall work against prostitution and THB (trafficking in human beings) in Sweden. The Gender Equality Agency provides training to professionals who may meet children, minors or adults who are exploited or are at risk of being exploited for prostitution or THB. They also have an online course and a national support line for professionals on this topic. The agency is responsible for the Swedish National Referral Mechanism on THB, and continuously develop and update the mechanism.

The Gender Equality Agency convene the operational network National method support team. The method support team consists of the Swedish Police Authority, the Swedish Migration Agency, the Swedish Prosecution Authority, the Swedish Work Environment Authority, the Swedish Tax Agency, representatives from social services (regional coordinators and specialized clinics) and members of the healthcare sector. The team meet four times a year, developing and

coordinating efforts to combat THB, including children. In Sweden children under 15 years of age cannot be punished as criminal offenders. Children between 15 to 18 years of age have an enforced protection in cases concerning all forms of sexual exploitation and trafficking in human beings for all purposes.

Article 8 – The right of employed women to protection of maternity

Article 8§1

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right of employed women to the protection of maternity, the Parties undertake:

1. to provide either by paid leave, by adequate social security benefits or by benefits from public funds for employed women to take leave before and after childbirth up to a total of at least fourteen weeks;

Reference is made to the previous report. The Government would like to add the following information.

During the covid-19 crisis all benefits in connection with childbirth or adoption, pregnancy benefit and parental benefit remained the same as before the crisis. Leave-regulations were not changed, nor compensation rates or duration of pregnancy benefit or parental benefit.

Studies show that pregnant women have a slightly higher risk of becoming seriously ill with COVID-19. In February 2021 the National Board of Health and Welfare stated that they consider serious COVID-19 during the later stages of pregnancy to increase the risk of premature birth. Pregnant women, as of week 20 of the pregnancy, are therefore considered to be a risk group when it comes to covid-19. Employers are always responsible for assessing risks for pregnant and breastfeeding employees according to the Swedish Work Environment Act. As a result of this risk assessment the number of pregnant women being eligible for pregnancy benefit due to exposure to covid-19 rose quickly. Ordinarily about 25 000 women each year receive pregnancy benefit, a minor part for risks in the work environment. In 2021 the number of recipients rose to about 38 000 women.

Article 8§3

3. to provide that mothers who are nursing their infants shall be entitled to sufficient time off for this purpose; or provide advisory and educational facilities for the promotion of health and the encouragement of individual responsibility in matters of health;

Reference is made to the previous report.

Article 16 – The of the family to social, legal and economic protection

With a view to ensuring the necessary conditions for the full development of the family, which is a fundamental unit of society, the Parties undertake to promote the economic, legal and social protection of family life by such means as social and family benefits, fiscal arrangements, provision of family housing, benefits for the newly married and other appropriate means

Reference is made to the previous report. The Government would like to add the following information.

Preventing and combating all forms of violence against women and children, including domestic

violence, continues to be a high priority for the Swedish Government. Since the last report, the Government would like to add the following information on measures taken to reduce all forms of domestic violence against women.

In 2016, the Government adopted a ten-year national strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women. Proposals from both the former National coordinator on Domestic Violence and the former Committee who was tasked to propose a national strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women are included in the strategy. It has four objectives:

Increased and effective preventive work to combat violence.

Improved detection of violence and stronger protection for and support to women and children subjected to violence.

More effective crime-fighting.

Improved knowledge and methodological development.

Since 2017, when the national strategy came into force, the Government's efforts to reduce all forms of domestic violence against women has followed this strategy. For instance, to strengthen protection and support for victims of violence, the Government provided increased support to local women's shelters. Further, the Government has taken several important measures to impose increased penalties and support to law enforcement agencies has been strengthened.

In order to intensify the work, the Government presented a package of measures to prevent and combat men's violence against women in June 2021. The package of measures contains 40 action points. It includes measures to help achieve all four of the objectives in the national strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women. Further, in December 2021, an additional action program was presented for the period 2021–2023. The action program contains 99 measures that concretise the action points presented in the Government's package of measures.

The Government has in the Budget Bill for 2022 proposed that the state subsidies to Women's Shelters and Young Women's Empowerment Centres, their national organisations and other organisations that work with similar support for victims of violence will be increased and made permanent. The subsidies will be permanented at a level of SEK 150 million. The purpose of these grants is to subsidize the important work carried out by NGOs to help and support victims of violence, in addition to the support and assistance given to victims by the social services. The overall purpose is to create stable and long-term conditions for the organisations to combat men's violence against women and provide support to victims.

Stricter legislation

In order to end all forms of violence against women the judicial system must take a severe view of this type of crimes. In 2018, the Swedish sexual offences legislation was reformed. It is now an offence to perform a sexual act with someone who is not participating voluntarily. Negligent forms of rape and sexual abuse were also introduced. Another important legislation that entered into force in July 2021, is the offence violation of a child's integrity. It is now a crime against the child to expose her or him to witness certain criminal acts, such as assault, in a domestic relation. The penalty is imprisonment for a maximum of two years. For gross violation of a child's integrity, the penalty is imprisonment for a maximum of four years. Also, to strengthen the preventive efforts to combat men's violence against women, the Parliament has passed new legislation based on a government inquiry and a government bill. Among other things, the social services have been given the task to promote people who expose or have exposed close relatives to violence or other abuse, to change their behaviour (Social Services Act (2001: 453)). The new legislation entered into force 1 August 2021.

In July 2021, the Government proposed that the minimum penalty for gross violation of a woman's integrity and gross violation of integrity should be increased from nine months to imprisonment for one year (and at most six years). Moreover, the Government proposed that the scale of penalties for breaches of non-contact orders should be amended from a fine or imprisonment for at most one year to imprisonment for (at least 14 days and) at most one year, and that the current rule of freedom from responsibility should be replaced with a provision to the effect that in minor cases the penalty is a fine. The Parliament approved the Government's proposals, and the amendments entered into force on 1 January 2022.

Incidence and conviction rates

The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå), produces and publishes Sweden's official crime statistics. Brå also annually produces the Swedish Crime Survey (SCS). To some extent the data in the survey and the official crime statistics relate to domestic violence against women. Brå has also been commissioned by the Government to conduct a national survey regarding offences in close relationships, which will be published in May 2024.

Table 1 below shows *reported offences* and *person-based clearance-rates* regarding *assault against a woman by an intimate partner* and *gross violations of a woman's integrity* (i.e., repeated offences committed within a close relationship, for example assault, threats, or harassments) between 2018–2021. In early 2020, the Swedish Police's way of registering assaults in intimate relationships was changed, therefore it is not possible to compare the data for 2020 and 2021 with earlier years.

Regarding conviction rates, the official crime statistics on conviction decisions is not gender-disaggregated and does not contain information on the relationship between victim and perpetrator. Furthermore, due to different kinds of computer systems within the Swedish judicial system, the number of reported offences is not comparable to the number of conviction decisions. Against this background, it is not possible to estimate conviction rates on domestic violence against women. The *person-based clearance-rate*, however, can be used as a rough indicator of the ability of the Swedish Police and other criminal investigatory authorities, to prosecute crimes that have been investigated. It accounts for the percentage of processed offences for which at least one suspect has been prosecuted.

Table 1. Reported offences and person-based clearance rates 2018–2021.

		2018	2019	2020	2021
Assault against a woman by an intimate partner	Reported offences	-	-	13 616	13 583
	Person-based clearance-rate	-	-	15%	15%
Gross violations of a woman's integrity	Reported offences	1 744	1 718	1 526	1 391
	Person-based clearance-rate	17%	18%	18%	18%

Another way of estimating the incidence of violence against women is the Swedish Crime Survey (SCS), which is an annual survey on, i.a., victimisation of assault, threat, sexual offences, and harassment in the Swedish population (persons aged 16–84 years old). It should be noted that the SCS does not specify if the crime was committed by an intimate partner. However, follow-up interview studies of the 2018 and 2019 SCS shows that when women stated they had been subjected to assault, the perpetrator was often a present/former intimate partner (about 30 per cent).

Table 2. Self-reported victimisation of assault among women according to the SCS 2018–2021).

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Assault	2,8	2,7	2,2	2,1
Threat	8,9	8,9	8,1	7,6
Sexual offences	9,9	9,4	7,7	7,5
Harassment	-	7,6	6,9	6,7

Preventive work to combat domestic violence

To date, measures have tended to deal with the consequences of violence rather than the causes. The Government's ambition is to shift the perspective and focus on preventing violence. This requires effective measures to prevent both the use and reoccurrence of violence. It also requires broader and more constructive involvement of men and boys than previously and breaking with the norms that justify violence.

A national helpline for adults at risk of using violence against intimate partners was established in 2021. It is operated by the County Administrative Boards and is financed by the Government. The hotline motivates actual perpetrators of gender-based violence to seek professional treatment. The hotline managed to reach a significant number of callers, almost 500 people during the start-up period, who had never previously contacted any service about their violent behaviour.

In the Budget Bill for 2022, the Government proposed that another national helpline, Preventell, was to be permanented. Preventell is operated by Karolinska University Hospital and aims to prevent sexual violence. The target group is people with self-perceived risk behaviour, compulsive behaviour, sexual interest in children and impulsive sexual behaviour. In the package of measures to stop men's violence against women presented in June 2021, the Government announced that it will initiate a national violence prevention program. The national violence program will contain early prevention measures as well as measures to prevent offenders to relapse into violence.

In February 2018, the Government decided on an action plan to prevent and counter prostitution and human trafficking for all purposes. The action plan complements the national strategy on preventing and combating men's violence against women. Several measures have been taken by the law enforcement authorities to improve and streamline investigations of sexual and intimate partner crimes. More resources have been added which has led to a faster processing rate. Standardized working methods and guidelines have also been developed to streamline and to assure the quality of the work and promote that crime victims in different parts of the country have the same opportunities for redress and support.

In August 2021, the Social Services Act (2001:453) was amended so that it is now part of the social welfare board's tasks to work for people who expose or have exposed close relatives to violence or other abuse to change their behaviour. The change in the law means an increased focus on perpetrators of violence in order for them to stop their violent behaviour. The conditions for undergoing treatment for persons who perpetrate violence against a relative must be equivalent across the country through the amendment to the law. For 2021, SEK 30 million was added to the general state grant to the municipalities, and from 2022, SEK 60 million per year will be permanently added to the municipalities to enable them to carry out this task. The county administrative boards and the National Board of Health and Welfare have been tasked with producing information and guidance on the new responsibility for social services to work in relapse prevention. The assignment is about giving social services guidance in carrying out effective relapse prevention work. The National Board of Health and Welfare has been tasked with analysing and submitting proposals on how national coordination and knowledge development regarding relapse prevention work with people who expose relatives to violence can be developed within the authority.

Commissions to authorities

In April 2021, the Swedish Prosecutors Authority received a commission to prevent and combat female genital mutilation of girls and women. Moreover, the Government commissioned the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) to study what measures can be taken to counter violence in close relationships among young people and comprehensively compile what the research says about the causes behind such violence.

In September 2021, The Social and Health Inspectorate received the Government's mandate to strengthen and develop the supervision of the work of social services and health care against men's violence against women. The assignment includes violence in close relationships, honour-related violence and oppression, as well as the violence by or against relatives that children are exposed to or witness. The development must concern how supervision can be more preventive and risk-based and contribute to learning for the actors involved. The assignment must be finalized in 2024.

In November 2021, The Family Law and Parental Support Authority was tasked with promoting the development of violence prevention work through support for parents focused on families in context of honour-related violence. Parenting support interventions can, under the right circumstances, counter norms that justify honour-related violence and oppression and offer alternatives to repressive parenting.

Child benefit is not means-tested. Housing allowance for households with children with a low income is means tested. The size of the allowance depends on housing costs, housing space, household income and number of children. The housing allowance is paid as a provisional benefit based on income as estimated by the applicant. The Swedish Social Insurance Agency compares the estimated income with the final assessed income for the year in which the housing allowance was paid. In 2021 about 130 000 households with children received housing allowance.

Maintenance support is a means-tested benefit. If parents cannot agree on child support, maintenance support can be paid out to the parent living with the child by The National Social Insurance Office. The parent that does not live together with the child has to repay the support to the Agency. The size of the repayment depends on that parent's income, but the income of the receiving parent is not taken into consideration. Most parents that do not live together handle child support by themselves or have children alternating between households which means that no child support is needed.

Child-care allowance for children with disabilities is means-tested, but not related to household income. To be eligible for care allowance the child must need special supervision and care for at least six months.

Parental benefit is not means-tested, but the benefit level depends on your income. Out of the total 480 days of parental benefit, 390 are income-related, 90 are paid at a fixed rate. For parents with joint custody the days are distributed evenly between them, 195 each with benefit according to income, 45 at a fixed rate. 90 of the 195 days are non-transferable. If a parent lacks income, the income-related days are paid out at a fixed rate. Temporary parental benefit and pregnancy benefit is only paid out when a parent is insured for work in Sweden, has an income and abstain from work or, in the case of temporary parental benefit, abstains from seeking work due to child-care and loses employment benefit that day.

Social assistance is another form of financial aid that is paid out by the municipality. 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. Social assistance is, according to the legislation, a right to a certain standard of living if no other means of income can be obtained. Social assistance claimants must claim all government financed allowances before claiming municipally assistance.

During the period of 2018–2021, between 4.4–3.8 per cent of the households in the population was receiving social assistance. Accordingly, the proportion was decreasing through the current period.

d) Child benefit in 2021, monthly payment, SEK

2021	Child allowance	Large family supplement
1 child	1 250	
2 children	2 500	150
3 children	3 750	730
4 children	5 000	1 740

From the 5th child on an additional SEK 1 250 is paid out per month.

Housing benefit in 2021, monthly, SEK

2021	Maximum amount of housing allowance	Maximum living sq m.I	Income limit SEK per year (beyond which the benefit is reduced)	
			Single	Co-habiting (for each parent)
1 child	3 400	80	148 000	74 000
2 children	4 200	100	148 000	74 000
3 children	5 200	120	148 000	74 000
4 children	5 200	140	148 000	74 000
5 or more	5 200	160	148 000	74 000

Maintenance support in 2021, monthly, SEK

Age of the child	Full maintenance support
0–11 years old	1 673
11–15 years old	1 823
15–	2 223

The amount paid in social assistance to households during the period of 2018 to 2021 was SEK 8 630 per aid month (prices of 2021).

Reference is made to the previous report regarding the framework for social insurance.

If a person is planning on living in Sweden legally for at least a year, he or she is usually insured for residence based social security benefits such as child benefit. Whether that person or the other parent is working in Sweden or in another country may affect the right to family benefits. The residency of the child can also affect the right to child benefit, parental benefit, housing benefit etc.

The individuals who are legitimately staying in Sweden can apply for social assistance and have their case tried.

The Government decided that a supplement to housing benefit is to be paid out in 2022 to account for higher costs of living in general, among those energy costs, see below.

According to the Social Services Act (2001:453), the municipality has the ultimate responsibility for people living in the municipality receiving the help and support they need. People who cannot meet their needs themselves can get those provided for through social assistance. The support must be designed to strengthen the individual's opportunities to live an independent life. Through social assistance the individual also must be insured a reasonable standard of living. The municipality can help with various things, for instance assistance with various forms of acute and long-term housing solutions based on individual needs.

Every year, the Government sets a national norm (*riksnorm*) for food, clothes and shoes, hygiene and health, leisure and hobbies, child insurance, consumer goods, newspapers, and telephone costs. The norm also covers individual costs for housing, domestic electricity, work-related travel, home insurance and trade union fees, and for example expenses for prescription drugs. The national norm forms the basis for the level of social assistance.

The norm is calculated annually and is separated into one individual part and one household part. The level of the individual part depends on marital status and the age of the child. The level of the household part depends on the size of the household. On top of 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 in trade union. Payment of the assistance usually takes place once a month.

In response to the pandemic, a temporary grant to housing allowance recipients has been paid out, first during July–December 2020 and then during July–December 2021. This was done to protect low-income households and had a real impact on household income. A government inquiry has calculated that the temporary grant compensated for more than fourteen per cent of the loss of income from work that single parents saw during 2020. In total SEK 585 million was paid out in 2020 and in 2021 SEK 540 million. About 120 000 households with children received the benefit each month in 2021, on average the grant was about SEK 750 per month. The average amount of housing benefit in December 2021, (without the extra grant) was SEK 2 750.

The Government has also decided on temporary regulations to give parents temporary parental benefit if they must stay at home with their children because of school closures due to COVID-19. In addition, the Government has taken the initiative for preventive temporary parental benefit for those children who have previously been seriously ill and risk being seriously affected by COVID-19 infection. This allows the parent to stay at home with the child to protect them against infection.

No specific temporary measures during the COVID-19 pandemic were taken concerning social assistance.

Article 17 – The right of children and young persons to social, legal and economic protection

Article 17§1

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right of children and young persons to grow up in an environment which encourages the full development of their personality and of their physical and mental capacities, the Parties undertake, either directly or in co-operation with public and private organisations, to take all appropriate and necessary measures designed:

a) to ensure that children and young persons, taking account of the rights and duties of their parents, have the care, the assistance, the education and the training they need, in particular by providing for the establishment or maintenance of institutions and services sufficient and adequate for this purpose;

b) to protect children and young persons against negligence, violence or exploitation; c) to provide protection and special aid from the state for children and young persons temporarily or definitively deprived of their family's support; with a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to social and medical assistance, the Parties undertake:

1. to ensure that any person who is without adequate resources and who is unable to secure such resources either by his own efforts or from other sources, in particular by benefits under a social security scheme, be granted adequate assistance, and, in case of sickness, the care necessitated by his condition;

Reference is made to the previous report. The Government would like to add the following information

During the period 2018–2021, more than 14 800 stateless persons have been granted Swedish nationality. Nevertheless, Sweden has a relatively large number of stateless persons. Primarily, this is due to the fact that many stateless persons are being granted residence permits on grounds of protection or family reunification. To prevent and resolve statelessness is a hallmark of Swedish nationality policy. Sweden has ratified both the 1954 UN Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 UN Convention on the reduction of cases of statelessness. Further, Sweden has ratified the 1997 European Convention on Nationality. In 2018, the Swedish Parliament voted for the Government's proposal to incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) into Swedish law. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Act (2018:1197) came into force on 1 January 2020. According to article 7 of the CRC, it is the right of the child to be registered immediately after birth and to have a name, a nationality and, as far as possible, to know and be cared for by his or her parents from birth. According to article 8 of the CRC, State Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognized by law without unlawful interference.

Several measures have been taken to facilitate and simplify the acquisition of Swedish citizenship for stateless persons. For example, a shorter residence requirement has been introduced for stateless children. Moreover, stateless adults already benefit from a shortened residence requirement of four years, compared to the normal five years. And in order to prevent new cases of statelessness from arising, the Swedish law on nationality provides that mothers and fathers always transmit their nationality to their children, allows multiple nationalities and prohibits the revocation of Swedish nationality. Renunciation of Swedish citizenship is not allowed if this would lead to statelessness.

Reference is made to the previous report regarding the Strategy for Roma inclusion. The strategy is based on the principle of non-discrimination, and includes initiatives for children within education, employment, housing, health, social care and security, culture and language, and civil society organisation.

As previously mentioned, according to the CRC, which has been incorporated into Swedish law, the child has the right to an identity and to be registered at birth.

The Government's combined initiatives within fields such as the labour market and education, as well as initiatives within economic family policy and social policy, involve measures which – as a whole – help to reduce economic vulnerability among families with children, and thus negative health developments.

Healthcare operations are governed by law and shall offer every child – regardless of where in the country they live – services of equal quality. The fundamental rule is thus that all children should

be offered healthcare on equal terms, regardless of where they live. This also applies to asylum-seeking children and children newly arrived in Sweden, and to children avoiding the enforcement of a decision on refusal of entry or deportation.

During 2018–2020, the Government has encouraged broad development work on child healthcare. SEK 120 million per year has been assigned to the regions to improve access to child healthcare services. This has included providing advice and support on injury prevention measures, breastfeeding and other topical issues relating to children's long-term health.

The Government has also raised the basic level of parental insurance, strengthening households with low or no earned income. In other measures, the Government has raised maintenance support on several occasions and introduced age differentiation to better match costs for children of different ages. As described in Article 16, a temporary grant to housing allowance recipients has been paid out in 2020 and 2021.

Assistance for asylum-seekers for day-to-day life (daily allowance) is set by the Act (1994:137) on the Reception of Asylum Seekers, etc., and the Ordinance (1994:361) on the Reception of Asylum Seekers, etc. The regulations also provide for special grants for costs arising as a result of specific needs. These special grants can relate to costs that are necessary for a tolerable life, such as costs for winter clothing, spectacles, dietary supplements, disability equipment and equipment for babies.

Asylum-seeking children have certain rights according to the Aliens Act (2005:716). They also have the same right to education as other children according to the Education Act (2010:800) but are not subject to compulsory school attendance. They also have the right to preschool on the same terms as all other children in Sweden. The Swedish Migration Agency has information materials aimed at asylum-seeking children. It includes information on the rights of the child according to the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child and explains that asylum-seeking children have the same rights as other children in Sweden. The Agency also provides information aimed at adults about children in the asylum process.

The municipalities in Sweden are responsible for the practical reception of unaccompanied migrant children, i.e. accommodation, daily care, any special support, conservators and schooling. Municipal reception is based on the principle of normalisation. This means that all children staying in Sweden should experience the same care system.

Since 2012, Sweden has had a strategy for Roma inclusion with the aim that Roma turning 20 in 2032 shall have equal opportunities in life to non-Roma. The strategy is based on the principle of non-discrimination, and includes initiatives for children within education, employment, housing, health, social care and security, culture and language, and civil society organisation. The first eight years have involved bridge-building initiatives in schools, with people with Roma linguistic and cultural expertise supporting Roma pupils. There have also been youth organisation initiatives.

During 2018 and 2019, the Government allocated approximately EUR 1,5 M yearly for work within the coordinated, long-term strategy for Roma inclusion. Within the remit of the strategy lies work to combat discrimination and anti-gypsyism. The strategy has a special focus on children and youth. The National Board of Health and Welfare had a specific assignment to promote knowledge about the rights of Roma children within the social services. During the pandemic, the Government presented a subsidy regulation with the aim of supporting the work of non-profit organisations to meet increased vulnerability due to the outbreak of COVID-19. The money was aimed to organisations working with children in vulnerable situations as well as organisations working with abused women, children and LGBTQI people and against violence in close relationships and honour-related violence and oppression.

In 2020, SEK 100 million was set aside for this purpose, and in 2021, another SEK 230 million was set aside for the same purpose. The funds aimed to support the above-mentioned organisations which, due to the pandemic, needed to adapt or strengthen their support activities to meet increased or changed needs. Support activities could include increased online presence to reach out to vulnerable groups.

In October 2020, The Ombudsman for Children was tasked with compiling knowledge about children's and young people's exposure to racism, based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This included mapping their exposure to racism based on their own perspectives. The aim was to produce an overall picture of how racism against children and young people is expressed and in which contexts, how children's and young people's living conditions are affected by racism and how their exposure to racism can be counteracted and prevented. In December 2021, the Ombudsman published the report *About children's and young people's exposure to racism (Om barns och ungas utsatthet för rasism)* that was based on this government assignment.

In 2020, the Government gave the Swedish Agency for Participation the task of collecting and presenting information about the special consequences and challenges that the pandemic entailed for children and young people with disabilities and for their families. The assignment also included showing how different situations and decisions have affected the target group and identifying both challenges and solutions with the aim to learn from and increase the awareness of various actors about the challenges a disability can pose during a pandemic.

Additionally, in 2021, the Government announced the Strategy for systematic follow-up of the disability policy during 2021–2031. According to the strategy, government authorities must, among other things, report on the measures that have been taken due to the fact that the national goal for the disability policy must contribute to increased equality and see to that the children's rights perspective is taken into account.

As previously mentioned, since 1 January 2020, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Act (CRC) was incorporated into Swedish law. In its bill on incorporating the CRC, the Government presented a package consisting of an act regarding the CRC, a guidance document, a knowledge boost and continued systematic transformation work to ensure the CRC's impact in practical application.

The Ombudsman for Children, which is tasked with representing the rights and interests of children and young people based on the CRC, monitors compliance with the CRC within society and drives its implementation in government agencies, municipalities, and regions. The Ombudsman shall note shortcomings in the CRC's application and propose amendments to legislation and ordinances. The Ombudsman also has specific remits within the field through i.a. its assignment within the Government's knowledge boost for the rights of the child and disseminating guidance.

The Government's knowledge boost for the rights of the child began on 1 January 2017, aiming to raise awareness and strengthen competence regarding children's rights/the CRC within government agencies, municipalities, and regions. The aim was to enhance the practical application of children's rights/the CRC among the public sector. Since 2017, the Ombudsman for Children has been tasked with offering support to a number of government agencies in their work to develop the practical application of the CRC in their operations. To date, 29 government agencies have been involved, including the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare, the National Agency for Education, the Agency for Participation, the Police Authority, the Civil Contingencies Agency, the Swedish Social Insurance Agency, the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, and the Public Health Agency.

The agencies have been tasked with analysing and identifying development needs and taking appropriate actions based on their analyses and conclusions. Certain agencies have also been given continuation assignments focusing on particularly urgent children's rights issues. With the framework of the support offered by the Ombudsman for Children to the public sector, the Ombudsman has developed digital process support which includes various tools for implementing the CRC, e.g. online training on the CRC and methods for assessing the best interests of the child and right to be heard. This digital support can now be used by all public sector actors.

As part of the Knowledge for children, the Ombudsman for Children was tasked during 2017–2019 with supporting municipalities and regions to ensure the CRC's application within central operational areas. Since June 2019, the county administrative boards have been tasked by the Government with working with the Ombudsman to coordinate and develop their application of children's rights, and to support the work to ensure the application of children's rights in municipalities and regions. The aim is to contribute to ensure the application of the rights of the child in practice to a greater extent at municipal and regional levels.

The Ombudsman for Children holds regular dialogues with children and young people to obtain knowledge of their conditions and opinions on relevant issues. Through reports from the Ombudsman and other actors, and the dialogue with the Children's Rights Delegation, a forum for dialogue between the Government and civil society organisations in Sweden, the Government can identify which groups of children are particularly vulnerable to rights infringements.

Studies in which children have participated also represent important data, such as the Ombudsman for Children's annual report on the CRC during a societal crisis published in 2021. The report is based on interviews with over a hundred children who talk about their rights and how the pandemic has affected them. Furthermore, the Ombudsman's annual report published in 2019 was based on interviews with 35 children in social care and a quantitative investigation using a survey with 260 responding children at youth detention centres.

In order to have opportunities for participation and influence, children must also know about their rights. The BO continues to develop and publicise the minarattigheter.se-portal, a knowledge support on the CRC for children of all ages.

Since 2001, Statistics Sweden has investigated the living conditions of children 12–18. This is a central, unique source for monitoring economic family policy and child rights policy, and for research into children's living conditions. The study asks questions about issues such as children's physical and mental health, economic circumstances, housing, social relationships, and leisure activities. A review of the study is currently being carried out to improve surveys for children and to find out more about children in particularly vulnerable situations, such as children with single parents, children from foreign backgrounds and children with disabilities.

The social welfare committee is responsible for working to ensure that children and young people grow up under secure conditions, which involves preventive work. In cases where children and young people risk coming to harm, the committee is responsible for them receiving the protection and support they need. Social services conduct outreach field operations, particularly in large cities, in which social workers try to support and help children who spend time outdoors, especially during the evenings and at night.

During 2020 and 2021, The Ombudsman for Children, was tasked with supporting agencies in their work to disseminate information and knowledge related to COVID-19 to children, and to analyse the consequences of the pandemic for children and young people in Sweden. This has included surveying and reporting on children's and young people's experiences of the pandemic, focusing on children in vulnerable situations and with special needs.

As mentioned previously, in connection with the pandemic, the Government earmarked SEK 330 million to non-profit organisations' work with children in vulnerable situations, and with women, children and LGBTQI people subjected to violence, and violence in close relationships.

Article 17§2

2. to provide to children and young persons a free primary and secondary education as well as to encourage regular attendance at schools.

Reference is made to the previous report. The Government would like to add the following information.

Preschools, schools, and other educational activities which are regulated by the Education Act (2010:800) are to be free from bullying, harassments, and discrimination. Hence, the Education Act states high requirements on education organisers and schools regarding measurements to prevent and act upon such actions.

In addition to the existing requirements, work has been done to introduce new legislation in the field (came into force in August 2022). These regulations derive from a governmental decision based on suggestions by The Swedish School Commission. They proposed an assignment to the Swedish National Agency for Education to give suggestions on measurements for a secure learning environment that promotes peaceful study. The assignment was presented in October 2018. Furthermore, The Ministry of Education and Research presented in May 2021 a National Plan for the schools' work with security and a peaceful study environment.

The new regulations include for instance both the school's work with prevention, the systematic quality development work and the staff's right to intervene in certain situations, including if a pupil is violent.

As part of the work with prevention, each school is obligated to have a local code of conduct. The new regulations states that the pupils, besides from being included in the work with formulating these rules, also should be involved when they are followed up and, if needed, changed.

As stated above, the new regulations also include clarifications on the organisers' and schools' systematic development work. Furthermore, the National Agency for Education have been given the right to award regulations about both the preventative measures to achieve a secure learning environment that promotes peaceful study and how the systematic development work shall be exercised.

In 2018, the Government decided on changes in the curriculum for the compulsory school, pre-school class and the leisure-time centre, the curriculum for the Sami school and the curriculum for the upper secondary school to increase the basis for the pupil to meet a secure learning environment that promotes peaceful study. The changes implied clarifications upon the principal's responsibility regarding security and a peaceful environment conducive to learning. The curricula were also supplemented to mark that all pupils must show respect and regard toward the school's staff and other pupils. The importance of that the pupil, by own effort and participation, takes responsibility for his or her learning and contributes to a good learning environment was also emphasized. The changes came into force on the 1 July 2019.

The Government has also mandated the Equality Ombudsman to, in collaboration with the Child and Student Ombudsman at the National School Inspectorate, carry out special information efforts on where children, students and guardians can turn to when someone has been subjected to discrimination or abusive treatment at school.

The Education Act states that children must be continually engaged to take an active part in the further developing of the education and be kept informed in matters concerning them. The information and the form of influence should be adapted to their age and maturity. The pupils must always have the opportunity to take the initiative on issues that must be dealt with, within the framework of their influence over the education. The students and the student organisations work with matters of influence must also be otherwise supported and facilitated.

As mentioned previously, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) has been incorporated into Swedish law, and in its bill on incorporating the CRC, the Government presented a package which included a knowledge boost.

The School Inspectorate, the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools (SPSM), and the National Agency for Education were in 2018 and 2019 part of the Government's knowledge boost for the rights of the child and were given the task of reviewing how the practical application of the CRC could be strengthened within their area of work.

Furthermore, SPSM was tasked to examine what support material school organisers, principals and pre-school managers need to create an accessible learning environment. This includes that all children and students are given the opportunity for a high degree of participation. SPSM reported the assignment in December 2018.

In 2021, the Ombudsman for Children was also commissioned by the Government to investigate the needs for development and efforts needed to make schools a safer and more inclusive place for young transgender and non-binary people. The assignment was partially reported in March 2022 and will be finally reported in March 2023. The report published in March 2022 was based on a survey study and an interview study with children and young people.

During the pandemic, the Government made it a top priority that students would receive the education that they have the right to. The general guideline was to make schools and preschools the last establishments to close and the first ones to open. This was highly important for several reasons. Preschools and schools are safe environments for children and pupils and are important for their health and wellbeing as well as everyday life. Closed schools might lead to great learning losses that could have negative effects for a long time and affect possibilities later in life and long-term health.

To monitor the effects of the pandemic, the Government commissioned the Swedish National Agency for Education in cooperation with other actors and the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education to follow up and evaluate the effects of the pandemic on the school system and on post-secondary higher vocational education. Results from these reports are fed into the policy-making process on measures to alleviate or dampen any negative consequences of the pandemic. This has been an ongoing effort that will continue for some time.

The Swedish school authorities have furthermore provided support materials for principals and teachers to help them evaluate pupils' learning losses and gaps and improve their teaching, not least their distance teaching.

In March 2020, the Parliament enacted a new law that allowed the Government to temporarily close school activities if needed. This law was not put into practice. A new temporary regulation made it possible for schools and upper secondary schools to be more flexible when it came to where, how, and when education would take place, in order to minimize the spread of infection. Some exceptions were also made that allowed a limited number of students to enter a closed school, for example with regards to students that have special needs and therefore require personal contact with teachers.

Those who already face challenges in school, such as pupils with special needs, who come from socioeconomically vulnerable homes or who learn Swedish for immigrants, are the ones who have the most difficulties to profit from remote teaching. Many pupils have been negatively affected by the pandemic and not least those who are in their final year of upper secondary school and are preparing to enter the labour market or higher education. To remedy their situation, the Government has made it easier for pupils that finished upper secondary school in 2020 or 2021 to contest their final grade and ask for a re-examination by lowering the cost for doing so (from SEK 500 to SEK 150). In 2021 and 2022 the municipalities received higher state subsidies. In addition, the municipalities received additional state funds directed to education, the so called "School billion" (Skolmiljarden), to ensure that children and students receive the education that they have the right to, despite the pandemic. The funding is distributed proportionally based on the number of children and young people aged 6–19 in the municipality.

The Government has commissioned the Swedish National Agency for Education to carry out efforts to support education providers, principals, teachers, and other staff during the pandemic with the aim of facilitating their work situation. The Swedish National Agency for Education provides additional support on distance learning via its website. It focuses on providing teachers with knowledge and guidelines on how to improve distance learning. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education has provided support on distance learning for higher vocational education providers and other post-secondary education providers. The Government also proposed additional funds to enable the Agency to develop further its support on distance learning.

Compulsory school pupils are entitled to a place in a municipal school based on proximity but may choose another municipal school (usually within the municipality) or private school (regardless of location), subject to capacity. Private providers have their own admission systems, which need to be non-discriminatory. The usual admission criteria are siblings already admitted and the time of application (first-come-first-served). Upper secondary admission is based on compulsory school grades, and not limited by municipal borders. Rules guiding private schools are designed to create a level playing field between public and independent schools. Independent schools can be freely established following approval by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate that they fulfil the criteria of the Education Act. They follow the same rules as public schools and teach the same curriculum (except for international schools), and they are subject to the same inspection regime as municipal schools.

Municipalities are obliged to finance compulsory and upper secondary education of resident children, including children attending a private school or a school run by a different municipality. Funding of resident children attending schools other than those run by the municipality is based on the actual cost of provision or the cost of organising the same programme in public schools in the home municipality. Schools (independent and public) are not allowed to charge tuition fees (except for independent international schools).

The Swedish National Audit Office has reviewed whether the regulations for funding of the independent schools contribute to an equivalent education for students. Their summary assessment is that the regulations in some respects work against an equivalent school and therefore need to be changed. The National Audit Office's assessment is that the current regulatory framework causes difficulties both for the organiser's (both municipality organiser and organisers of independent schools) ability to plan their operations and for an efficient allocation of resources. This is due, among other things, to the fact that organisers of the independent schools must be compensated on equal terms but have different conditions for their school operations than the municipal schools. At the same time, the private providers find it difficult to assess whether they are receiving the right compensation. In addition, the cost of receiving or losing students at the margin is not reflected in the design of municipality grants.

Article 19 – The right of migrant workers and their families to protection and assistance

Article 19§1

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right of migrant workers and their families to protection and assistance in the territory of any other Party, the Parties undertake:

1. to maintain or to satisfy themselves that there are maintained adequate and free services to assist such workers, particularly in obtaining accurate information, and to take all appropriate steps, so far as national laws and regulations permit, against misleading propaganda relating to emigration and immigration;

Reference is made to the previous report. The Government would like to add the following information.

The independent Inquiry on Labour Immigration was assigned by the Government on 6 February 2020. The Inquiry's interim report *Ett förbättrat system för arbetskraftsinvandring (An improved system of labour immigration)*, SOU 2021:5, was submitted on 2 February 2021, in which the overall goal was to improve the present regulations on labour immigration while upholding the current system of labour immigration. The Inquiry's terms of reference also stressed the importance of good terms of employment prevail and that the labour immigration system is not abused.

The Inquiry's final report was submitted on 2 November 2021, *Ett förbättrat system mot arbetskraftsexploatering m.mm. (An improved system against labour exploitation)*, SOU 2021:88, [Ett förbättrat system mot arbetskraftsexploatering m.m., SOU 2021:88 \(regeringen.se\)](#) A summary in English is included in the report (page 25).

Both reports were circulated to relevant parties, organizations and authorities for formal consultation. The results, e.g., amendments to legislation, will be included in Sweden's next report. In the final report (SOU 2021:88), the Inquiry describes the need of information to immigrant workers and information campaigns. It also highlights good examples of information efforts by trade unions and employer's organizations (page 204).

Article 19§2

2. to adopt appropriate measures within their own jurisdiction to facilitate the departure, journey and reception of such workers and their families, and to provide, within their own jurisdiction, appropriate services for health, medical attention and good hygienic conditions during the journey;

Reference is made to the previous report.

Article 19§3

3. to promote co-operation, as appropriate, between social services, public and private, in emigration and immigration countries;

Reference is made to the previous report.

Article 19§4

4. to secure for such workers lawfully within their territories, insofar as such matters are regulated by law or regulations or are subject to the control of administrative authorities, treatment not less favourable than that of their own nationals in respect of the following matters:

- a) remuneration and other employment and working conditions;
- b) membership of trade unions and enjoyment of the benefits of collective bargaining;
- c) accommodation;

Reference is made to the previous report. The Government would like to add the following information.

The Swedish regulation regarding posted workers applies to postings to Sweden regardless from which country they are posted (even from outside EU). The Posting of Workers Directive (96/71/EC) is transposed to Swedish regulation by the Posting of Workers Act (1999:678) and the Posting of Workers Ordinance (2017:678).

In Sweden, there is no national labour authority that supervises labour law. The employee organisations (trade unions) and hence, collective agreements play a significant role. The employee organisations are to enforce terms and conditions for workers by, for example, industrial action when deemed necessary. No difference is made between posted workers and Swedish employees since the terms are the same. The government does not intervene. Any disputes related to labour law/working conditions are solved in the court system and the possibility to complain is the same for posted workers as for Swedish employees.

The commission assigned by the government in 2012, which among other things had a task to evaluate the enforcement of the changes of the Posting of Workers Act after the Laval case (C-341/05), delivered a report in September 2015. Meanwhile, the Enforcement Directive 2014/67/EU was adopted and due to this, yet another commission was assigned to propose how to transpose the directive into Swedish law. This commission also reported in 2015. Both commissions proposed legislative amendments to transpose the Enforcement Directive and to safeguard the Swedish labour market model and status of collective agreements in situations involving posted workers. Thus, several amendments have been made in the posting regulation since the Committee's conclusions in 2015 and decision on the merits in complaint no. 85/2012.

Among other things, the possibilities for Swedish employee organisations to take industrial action was extended in 2017 due to amendments in the so called "lex laval", which was one of the proposals from the above-mentioned commissions. The legislative amendments essentially means that employee organisations will always be able to demand a Swedish collective agreement regarding posting employers, ultimately by means of industrial action. Before, there were limitations to when industrial action was allowed due to the level of current terms and conditions for the worker. Furthermore, an employer posting workers must now, upon request, appoint a representative who is authorised to negotiate and conclude collective agreements. Since 2017, the legislation also stipulates that the employee organisations must provide the Swedish Work Environment Authority with their collective agreements for posted workers. Information on wages and other conditions in the collective agreements for posted workers are published on a webpage by the Swedish Work Environment Authority. Furthermore, a posted worker is free to join an employee organisation in the same way as Swedish employees, but even a posted worker that is not bound by an existing collective agreement enjoys rights from it. For further information on this, see the 17th report regarding article 6 § 4.

The latest changes from 2020 have been described in the 21st report, as regards the transposition of Directive (EU) 2018/957 (among other things the change of *the minimum rates of pay to remuneration* instead, and additional set of terms and conditions in situation of long-term postings exceeding 12 months). As described in the 21st report, the possibilities for Swedish employee organisations to take industrial action aimed at bringing about a regulation by collective agreement of the terms and conditions for posted workers was extended. Now, for example, accommodation for posted workers is one of the conditions that can be enforced by industrial action.

Wages and other labour conditions are stipulated in collective agreements negotiated by employer- and employee organisations. The content of the collective agreements for posted workers follows the conditions of the Posting of Workers Directive and the Enforcement Directive (2014/67/EU), i.e., the conditions which are allowed to have for the member states. Posted workers have a right to holiday according to the regulations on annual leave and the regulations on parental leave also apply to them. Posted workers may also have a right to compensation for travel, room, and board during the posting in Sweden, as well as a right to accommodation.

When it comes to health and safety, the Swedish Work Environment Authority conducts inspections regarding posted workers as well as Swedish employees. A posted worker has the same right to a good and safe working environment as Swedish employees. The posting employer must comply with the Swedish Work Environment Act and all the Swedish Work Environment Authority's regulations. The Working Hours Act also applies to posted workers.

Concerning the request of information on any measures implemented to increase access to employment for migrants and combat discrimination in the workplace and in recruitment practices SE reports the following information. In December 2020, the Inquiry on certain provisions in the Discrimination Act submitted an interim report (SOU 2020:79) with proposals that aim for more effective supervision of the provisions on active measures in the Discrimination Act (2008:567). In October 2020, the inquiry was tasked through supplementary terms of reference to among other things to assess whether there is a need for further measures to protect employees who are discriminated, harassed and threatened by non-employees in the workplace. In December 2021, the inquiry submitted its final report (SOU 2021:94). The proposals have been circulated for consultation.

Article 19§5

5. to secure for such workers lawfully within their territories treatment not less favourable than that of their own nationals with regard to employment taxes, dues or contributions payable in respect of employed persons;

Reference is made to the previous report.

Article 19§6

6. to facilitate as far as possible the reunion of the family of a foreign worker permitted to establish himself in the territory;

Reference is made to the previous report.

Article 19§7

7. to secure for such workers lawfully within their territories treatment not less favourable than that of their own nationals in respect of legal proceedings relating to matters referred to in this article;

Reference is made to the previous report.

Article 19§8

8. to secure that such workers lawfully residing within their territories are not expelled unless they endanger national security or offend against public interest or morality;

Reference is made to the previous report as well as to information on Art 19§1 above.

Article 19§9

9. to permit, within legal limits, the transfer of such parts of the earnings and savings of such workers as they may desire;

Reference is made to the previous report.

Article 19§10

10. to extend the protection and assistance provided for in this article to self-employed migrants insofar as such measures apply;

Reference is made to the previous report.

Article 19§11

11. to promote and facilitate the teaching of the national language of the receiving state or, if there are several, one of these languages, to migrant workers and members of their families;

Reference is made to the previous report.

Article 19§12

12. to promote and facilitate, as far as practicable, the teaching of the migrant worker's mother tongue to the children of the migrant worker.

Reference is made to the previous report.

Article 27 – The right of workers with family responsibilities to equal opportunities and equal treatment

Article 27§1

With a view to ensuring the exercise of the right to equality of opportunity and treatment for men and women workers with family responsibilities and between such workers and other workers, the Parties undertake:

1. to take appropriate measures:

- a) to enable workers with family responsibilities to enter and remain in employment, as well as to re-enter employment after an absence due to those responsibilities, including measures in the field of vocational guidance and training;
- b) to take account of their needs in terms of conditions of employment and social security;
- c) to develop or promote services, public or private, in particular child day care services and other childcare arrangements;

Reference is made to the previous report. The Government would like to add the following information.

Concerning the workforce, everyone who could be recommended by Folkhälsomyndigheten (the Public Health Agency of Sweden) to work from home, no differences were made due to family responsibilities.

In 2021 preschool and pedagogical care comprised 87% of all 1–5-year-olds. Almost 522,000 children were in preschool education and pedagogical care in 2021, where approximately 110,000 adults are employed. The number of children per worker was 5.1 children. In 2020 the total cost of preschool was SEK 82 billion (€ 7.6 billion).

Article 27§2

- 2. to provide a possibility for either parent to obtain, during a period after maternity leave, parental leave to take care of a child, the duration and conditions of which should be determined by national legislation, collective agreements or practice;

Reference is made to the previous report. The Government would like to add the following information.

No changes have been made concerning the right to parental leave due the Covid-19 crisis, but there was a temporary extension of the rights to temporary parental benefit.

No lock-down was issued in Sweden during the Covid-19 pandemic and therefore school and preschools remained open. During short periods, such as a few days or a few weeks, some schools, and pre-schools, shut down due to high sickness rates. Temporary rules on temporary parental benefit was put in place during the pandemic. If a guardian needed to refrain from gainful employment because the school or pre-school in which the child normally participated was closed completely or partly because of the pandemic, he or she could be entitled to temporary parental benefit, which gave the possibility of leave from work and compensation for loss of earnings. This was applied to children under 12 and in some cases also older children. This right could also be transferred to another person who abstained from work instead of the parent. This type of temporary parental benefit was not widely used. But at the same time the cost for temporary parental benefit for taking care of a sick child increased during the pandemic. In total, just under 8.4 million days of temporary parental benefit were paid out to caregivers in 2021.

Since the last report the number of reserved days in parental benefit has increased from the previous 60 days each for parents with joint custody to 90 days each. The reform was introduced in 2016. Since the last report the basic level of parental benefit, paid out to parents that do not have a qualifying income, has been raised from 225 SEK a day to 250 SEK a day. The reform was introduced in 2016. In August 2022 reserved days was also extended to parental benefit at the basic level.

Article 27§3

3. to ensure that family responsibilities shall not, as such, constitute a valid reason for termination of employment.

Reference is made to the previous report. The Government would like to add the following information.

No changes, nor any exceptions, to the prohibition of dismissals on the ground of family responsibilities were made due to the pandemic.

No ceiling on compensation for unlawful dismissals on the ground of family responsibilities was applied.

Article 31 – The right to protection against poverty and social exclusion

Article 31§1

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to housing, the Parties undertake to take measures designed:

1. to promote access to housing of an adequate standard

Reference is made to the previous report. The Government would like to add the following information.

In 2021, Statistics Sweden presented statistics showing that sixteen percent of Sweden's population lives in overcrowded housing. This result was reached using Eurostat's definition of overcrowding. However, in 2020 the Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning (Boverket) delivered a report concerning the concept of housing shortage. In this report, Boverket estimates that 9.9 per cent of the households are overcrowded, i.e. two thirds of the report from Statistics Sweden, showing the importance of the definitions used for the result. 1.2 per cent of all households suffer from a combination of being overcrowded and having a strained housing expenditure.

An investment aid scheme for rental housing and homes for students was introduced in 2016. According to the regulation, the housing developer need to offer one in eight homes (12.5 per cent) to the municipality, either to be assigned to a young person, 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.

Since the implementation of the investment funding – up to and including 31 December 2021 – housing developments containing more than 52 400 dwellings across Sweden have been approved for investment funding. Of these, almost 28 700 homes (i.e. 55 per cent of those granted funding) have been completed. Due to the decisions of the Swedish parliament, no applications for this grant that have been received by the relevant authorities after 31 December 2021 will be approved.

There are several additional rules regulating adequate housing standard, and thereby indirect protecting tenants. Some examples of such regulations are the Housing Management Act, the Land Code, and the Planning and Building Act. These codes make it possible for authorities to demand specific measures from landlords providing housing of inadequate standards. In addition to these regulations, the Swedish Environmental Code contains regulations which protect the environment and people's health and the Ordinance on environmentally hazardous activities and health protection (No. 1998:899) specifies what standards a housing must maintain in order to prevent health hazards. A tenant living under inadequate housing standards can seek assistance from the local Environment and Public Health Committee. Furthermore, a tenant can submit a report according to the Swedish Environmental Code applying to get help to force a landlord to a remedy and improve the housing standard. This process is cost-free for the tenant.

The Swedish tenant association, an organisation with over 500 000 members, represents tenants and give advice and legal support to members, work with community development and advocate for tenant rights as well as negotiations with landlords. If there is a conflict between a tenant who is a member and a landlord, the Tenant Association's legal advisor can give advice and support in how to resolve the issue.

In 2020, the Government appointed two investigators to find solutions on how the housing market can become more socially sustainable and proposals to make it easier for first-time buyers in the housing market. The Government has received several proposals from the investigators. For example a new housing supply act, a mandatory requirement for municipalities to provide rental guarantees to families with children, an obligation for landlords to justify the requirements they place on new tenants, better possibilities for housing agencies (owned by the municipalities) to distribute housing with social consideration and enable public housing companies to act without applying the public procurement act. The Government also received a proposal that makes it easier for first-time buyers. The reports have been sent out for consultation.

There are rules for what in Sweden is considered the lowest level of housing standard. These rules can be found in different regulations, for example in Chapter 3 Section 17 in the Planning and Building Ordinance. To fulfil the requirements of suitability of the intended purpose, pursuant to Chapter 8, Section 4, first paragraph, item 7 of the Planning and Building Act (2010:900), a building which contains dwellings must be designed and constructed in such a way that the dwellings to a reasonable extent have separable spaces for sleep and rest, social contact, cooking, meals, hygiene, and storage. The dwellings must, with regards to their use include facilities and equipment for cooking and hygiene.

In 2016, a grant was introduced to encourage renovations and energy efficient measures while holding back rent increases. The grant specifically targeted multi-dwellings buildings in vulnerable or distressed areas. The number of applicants for the support was low and no financing was permitted in the state budget for 2019.

Amongst the data presented in the Boverket report were the result from a questionnaire from Statistics Sweden in 2018 in which people were asked about their housing standard. According to this, 7.8 per cent of all households live in a dwelling reported that they have problems with leaking roofs, damp walls/floors/frame, rot in window frames or floors, sundry walls or cracks in windows. According to the same report, 5.3 per cent of the households are considered to have a "strained housing economy" (according to the calculations of Statistics Sweden). Also, Boverket estimates that 9.9 per cent of the households are overcrowded. Finally, 1.2 per cent of all households suffer from a combination of being overcrowded and having a strained housing economy.

The Housing Provision Act, in which the responsibilities of local authorities to plan for housing provision ("bostadsförsörjningslagen") is stated, has been amended to make it compulsory to

include figures on the number of households having difficulties to find adequate housing on the market in local plans. Boverket has been assigned to supply the local authorities with such figures, based on statistics on overcrowding, housing costs etc. This amendment entered into force 1 October 2022.

During the pandemic no additional measures were taken by the Government targeted to housing for specifically vulnerable groups, specifically targeting Roma or other vulnerable EU citizens. However, the Government did, during several occasions 2020–2022, add funds to support organisations within civil society that conduct activities aimed at people who are in socially particularly vulnerable situations. To the extent that the organisations conduct activities that include housing solutions, these funds could also be used for that purpose. However, the funds have not been set aside specifically for housing solutions or for certain groups of vulnerable people. The funds have been handled by the Authority for Youth and Civil Society Affairs. The funds were added to organisations that conduct activities that target people in socially particularly vulnerable situations.

In the budget bill for 2022, new funds were added to the government's strategy for Roma inclusion. The purpose of the grant is to promote the health of Roma. The grant also aims to give civil society and especially Roma organisations better conditions to work with health promotion initiatives aimed at Roma. Grants may be made for projects that contribute to promoting Roma health through information, education, activities and the like and in which people with Roma language and cultural competence participate.

Every year, the Equality Ombudsman (EO) receives around sixty reports of discrimination relating to housing. Many of the reports are about discrimination in the provision of rental housing. During the years 2017–2021, EO has therefore focused part of the authority's work on countering discrimination in the rental housing market.

EO has produced the report *Discrimination in the provision of rental housing* (report 2021:3). The report states that there is discrimination in the rental housing market. Regarding asylum seekers, EO has not been able to find any statistics that shed light on the question of how many individuals may be affected by this, according to the report. On the other hand, it is mentioned that the county administration's housing report from 2018 states that the requirement for a coordination number can be an obstacle for asylum seekers to get a home.

EO believes that there is a lack of both knowledge and research in the housing area about what can constitute discrimination in the provision of rental housing and therefore suggests that the Government give the relevant authorities tasks that can contribute to increased knowledge.

The Discrimination Act provides protection against discrimination based on gender, gender identity or expression, ethnic affiliation, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation, and age. The protection applies to a large number of social areas, i.e. access to housing. EO supervises that the law is followed and can take individual cases of discrimination to court. EO also has a promotional mission to work to ensure that discrimination does not occur in society. In addition to this, EO has produced a digital guide for landlords in the area of residence called *Your guide against discrimination when renting housing*.

Housing issues are indicated as a core aspect in Roma inclusion. In the earlier mentioned long-term strategy for Roma inclusion, housing is one of the prioritised areas. 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.

On two occasions, Boverket has been involved in status reports on the current situation for Roma in a total of ten 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 neighbors' 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.

There is a need for more knowledge to work further on issues related to discriminatory behaviour against Roma in the Swedish 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. 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.

In November 2017, the National Board of Social Affairs and Health, 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.

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. 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 CRC and the Social Services Act. 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.

As mentioned previously in the report, a temporary grant to housing allowance recipients has been paid out, first during July–December 2020 and then during July–December 2021. This was done to protect low-income households and had a real impact on household income.

Statistics on the expenditure for providing adequate housing

The Committee noted in a previous report that there are no comprehensive statistics on the expenditure of the state and municipalities aimed at providing adequate housing to those who are not able to get access to housing in the market without public support. The Committee asked the Swedish authorities to provide such statistics in the next report.

There are no such statistics published regularly. However, in 2015 Boverket delivered a report as a consequence of a request from the Government (Kommunernas kostnader för boendelösningar till personer utanför den ordinarie bostadsmarknaden (The costs of the municipalities for housing solution for person outside the regular housing market], Report 2015:31). Boverket estimated that the cost for:

- the municipalities' housing solutions for people outside the regular housing market to 5.3 billion per year, corresponding to SEK 240,000 per person.
- the secondary housing market, i.e. for “social” and “municipal” leases, for the municipalities to 1.8 billion annually, corresponding to SEK 140,000 per person.
- the accommodation solutions within substance abuse dependency care: a total of 2.6 billion per year, corresponding to SEK 550,000 per person.
- the administration: SEK 440 million per year.

Evaluation of the changes in legislation from 2011

Boverket was commissioned by the Government to follow the consequences of all the different aspects of the changes in the legislation that came into force on 1 January 2011, with the aim of a full-scale evaluation. In its conclusion from the previous report, the Committee asked for information on the outcome of this evaluation.

The overall conclusions in the Boverket report were the following.

“[...] the legislation introduced on the first of January 2011 does not seem, by most accounts, to have led to any sweeping changes, either for the housing stock companies affected by the new legislation or for the rental housing market in general. Having said this, however, it must be remembered that the most recent the years have been quite exceptional in the Swedish housing market with a population increase – driven by high immigration – that lacks counterpart in modern Swedish history. This has, of course, affected the public housing cooperatives and the municipalities' management of these.

The focus has probably not been on possible conflicts between business interests and public interest, but rather on trying to manage more urgent problems. To this can be added the exceptional interest rate situation. In one more "normal" situation, it is not impossible that legislation could get greater effects on both the municipal housing stock companies and the rental housing market in general.”

(Boverket 2017: Allmännyttiga kommunala bostadsaktiebolag - utvärdering av tillämpningen av gällande lagstiftning, p. 6)

Municipal Housing Companies (MHC's) must balance between existing for and fulfilling a public purpose and operating according to marketlike principles. According to the evaluation, the vast majority of public benefit municipal housing stock companies believes that it is neither more difficult nor easier to promote housing provision with MHC's introduction. However, just under a fifth believe that it is more difficult. The difficulties that are likely to exist seem preferably to be linked to new investments and commercial return requirements for these investments according to Boverket.

However, according to the evaluation above, approximately half of the companies believe that the new legal requirement had an impact on how they conduct their business.

“[...]there are several who express that the business is now conducted based on clearer financial requirements. These requirements have among other things contributed to the companies increasing their own capital and contributed to increased cost efficiency. Economic considerations are generally considered to weigh more heavily in different decision situations compared to before.

However, a number of companies highlight - as mentioned above - that the requirement for business principles had an impact on investment decisions relating to new production. Tightened yield requirements along with the requirement for market valuation and write-down requirements are considered in these cases to have made the calculations more difficult the conditions for new construction, especially in smaller towns/weaker housing markets.

The housing authority can state that the non-profit housing corporations seem to have a slightly lower yield requirement than the market average. This means however, this does not mean that these companies would therefore not act in a business-like manner. Such an assessment is much more complex and must, among other things, be taken into account what risk profile the company has. However, it can be stated that a majority of the housing units meet the requirements set by the owner.

The Act is not a precisely formulated piece of legislation, which is why all municipal housing stock companies – and their owners – to a large extent have to arrive themselves at a reasonable interpretation of the law, i.e., a balance between the public purpose and business principles.

(...)

The big change in the rent setting system that was made in parallel with the introduction of the Act regulation the MHC's was that the rent-setting role of the municipal housing companies was replaced by a rent-setting role for collective negotiated rents.

Prior to the introduction of the new legislation, there was concern about sharp rent increases, as a result of which the so-called staircase rule was introduced.

In Boverket's first follow-ups, a relatively large emphasis was therefore placed on the rents. However, it has been shown that the concerns that existed have not been realised, therefore the rent issue has received a relatively small place in this evaluation.”

(Boverket 2017: Allmännyttiga kommunala bostadsaktiebolag - utvärdering av tillämpningen av gällande lagstiftning, pp. 7-8)

Article 31§2

2. to prevent and reduce homelessness with a view to its gradual elimination;

Reference is made to the previous report. The Government would like to add the following information.

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. 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.

Between 2018 and 2021, the National Board of Social Affairs and Health allocated funding each year to the municipalities with the most people in acute homelessness. This funding aimed to strengthen the municipalities' work to combat homelessness and exclusion from the housing market and has i.e. been used for housing guides who support families with children in uncertain living situations.

According to the Swedish Social Services Act, the municipality has the ultimate responsibility to ensure that individuals receive the support and help they need. Everyone who stays in Sweden is covered by the provisions on the municipality's ultimate responsibility for support and assistance. Everyone therefore has the right to apply for financial or other assistance in the municipality where they are staying and to have their case tried and decided by a formal decision. Anyone who cannot meet their needs themselves or can have them met in another way has the right to assistance from the social welfare board for their livelihood (maintenance support) and for their way of life in general. In connection with the economic crisis following COVID-19, the Government decided to increase the child-related element of housing benefit.

In the case of persons who are only staying temporarily in a municipality or who have no right of residence in Sweden, these persons only have the right to assistance in acute emergencies. This means assistance to remedy an emergency that cannot be solved in any other way. What constitutes such emergency assistance is determined in each individual case. For example, it can relate to aid for food and accommodation.

The housing built in Sweden 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 to a large number of households. Also, according to the regulation the housing developer need to offer one in eight homes (12.5 per cent) to the municipality, either to be assigned to a young person 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.

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 proposed measures to support the municipalities’ introduction of the Housing First initiative. The Board proposed measures to increase outreach work aimed at people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and suggested measures to improve local work to prevent evictions. Additionally, the Board proposed measures to ensure that people who have been in refuges due to violence are able to make the transition to permanent accommodation.

Additionally, the Government has presented a national strategy on homelessness (presented in 2022). The purpose is to clarify the direction of the Government's efforts to reduce the number of adults and children who are homeless as well as efforts to prevent people from becoming homeless. This is done through several measures to counteract homelessness and exclusion from the housing market, such as prevention and outreach work, measures against acute homelessness and an investment in the Housing First method. The strategy also includes strengthening the social perspective in community planning. The Government gave the County Administrative Boards the remit to support the municipalities in their work to combat homelessness. The assignment must contribute to the goals of the Government's National Homelessness Strategy. Furthermore, the Government gave the National Board of Health and Welfare the task to plan and prepare a national homelessness survey. The intention is to find out the extent and nature of homelessness in order to carry out the survey itself in 2023. To ensure the realization of the goals of the Government's National Homelessness Strategy, the National Board of Health and Welfare has been instructed to work for the coordination of assignments and efforts that will contribute to the homelessness strategy.

In its conclusions from 2015, the Committee requested a follow-up on the report presented by the Homelessness coordinator in 2014. Based on the learnings and experiences that the mission generated, the homelessness coordinator assessed that the organisation of the issues could also be focused in the future on national and regional coordination, with regional training initiatives and the dissemination of knowledge as support to municipalities, as well as knowledge and method development via assignments to a number of different government agencies. According to the report, a new national comprehensive strategy to combat homelessness, exclusion from the housing market and evictions, should form the framework for the overall work on combating homelessness.

Reference is also made to the answer given in Article 31§1. There is no information on the COVID-19 crisis having an impact on the prevention of homelessness. However, as mentioned previously in this report, the Government strengthened the civil society's opportunities to make efforts for people in vulnerable situations during the COVID-19 pandemic with SEK 330 million. Organisations that received these grants were largely about organisations that work with homeless people. The organisation grant could be applied for from the National Board of Health and Welfare and the Authority for Youth and Civil Society Affairs by non-profit organisations in civil society as well as certain religious communities, collaborative organisations, or congregations.

The right to assistance according to the Swedish Social Services Act is the society's ultimate safety net and each person has the right to have their application individually examined.

In 2018–2021 the Government decided on government grants of SEK 25 million a year to the ten 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 was aimed to tackle homelessness among young adults where mental illness may be a contributing factor to homelessness.

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. The Government has also 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 organisation's operations and respond to the increased need for assistance and support during the pandemic.

Establishment programme for newly arrived migrants

The Swedish Public Employment Service 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.

Compulsory education for people with limited education

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. 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).

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.

The latest national mapping of homelessness in Sweden was carried out in 2017 by the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare commissioned by the Government. More than 33 250 individuals were found in one of the four situations associated with homelessness. Almost half (15 900) of the individuals had some type of long-term housing arrangement. Most common were apartments with social or municipal contracts, where the municipality had a contract for the housing and sublets it. These housing arrangements should follow regulations for standards for adequate housing.

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 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.

No moratorium/prohibition on evictions was implemented during the pandemic. In 2021 the Swedish Enforcement Authority evicted 2 672 households. 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. As a main rule, the defendant must be given the opportunity to make a statement before an eviction takes place. The defendant must also 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. In the case of an eviction, the tenant has a chance to redress the decision. If the basis for the eviction application is unpaid rent, the tenancy can be recovered by paying the rent within the three-week recovery period from the time the defendant received the rent demand from the landlord. When the recovery period has expired, the only possibility to prevent eviction is to reach an agreement with the landlord. When there is a legally enforceable title of execution, the applicant can submit an unlimited number of postponements of the execution. When the postponement lasts more than six months from the date of the application, the application expires, unless there are special reasons for accepting a further postponement. If necessary out of consideration for the defendant, the Enforcement Authority can grant a postponement of the eviction. This can be done regardless of whether the applicant consents or not. A maximum of two weeks can be granted.

According to article 27 in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which as mentioned previously has been incorporated into Swedish law, every child has the right to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

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 the 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, 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.

In 2020–2021, the Government has tasked the county administrative boards with supporting the municipalities in their efforts to prevent evictions. The Government has also tasked the county administrative boards with supporting the municipalities in their work to prevent evictions of families with children. The Swedish Enforcement Administration has produced method support to assist housing companies and municipalities in their work to prevent evictions.

If a landlord demands that the tenant moves out, this must follow certain procedures. In some types of cases, chapter 12 in the Land Code¹ stipulates that the Rent Tribunal can examine whether the tenant has the right to stay. There are also other types of cases that are tried by a district court.

¹ A chapter in the Land Code often referred to as "the Rent Act".

In its previous conclusion (2015), the Committee asked for this report to inform on the cost of legal representation in rent tribunals. There is no statistics over the cost of legal representation in rent tribunals. The proceedings are free of charge and the need for a legal counsel is limited. The idea is that a tenant should be able to manage without a legal counsel. By asking questions the chairman contributes to the fact that the circumstances which are important for the dispute are presented. If the party would like to engage a legal counsel, the costs is borne by the party. To pay the cost of a legal counsel, a party must primarily use the legal protection cover that is included in his or her home insurance. If the party does not have a home insurance, he or she may be entitled to legal aid in certain circumstances according to the Legal Aid Act.

A basic requirement is that the applicant's annual income does not exceed SEK 260 000. The applicant must be in need of legal help, and it must also be reasonable that the state contributes with legal aid. Receiving legal aid does not mean that the state automatically pays all costs for a legal counsel. The basic idea is that the party pays a part of the cost in the form of a legal aid fee. Legal aid includes part of the cost for the lawyer for up to 100 hours (in the case of persons under the age of 18 who have no income or wealth, the full cost could be covered). Legal aid can be increased if there are special reasons.

Water and heating are normally included when renting an apartment in Sweden. The main rule for heating is that the landlord is obliged to keep the apartment in a fully usable condition during the rental period. A residential apartment's minimum acceptable standard includes that it is equipped with continuous heating. The Public Health Agency of Sweden's recommendation on indoor temperature is between 20 and 24 degrees.

New requirements for the installation of meters for heat and domestic hot water at apartment level in certain apartment buildings came into effect on 1 July 2021. This is a measure to conform to the EU directive on energy efficiency. Individual metering and billing mean that heating and domestic hot water are measured separately at apartment level and that the cost is separated from the heating rent in apartment buildings. This means that, over time, an increasing number of tenants will be paying their heating and water bills separately.

Having the electricity cut off has serious consequences for tenants. When a tenant has not paid their electricity bill this is considered a material breach of contract and can lead to households being cut off from electricity. A consumer has an extended protection according to Chapter 11, Section 4 of the Electricity Act (1997:857). When the time for payment has expired the consumer/tenant, after given reasonable time to make a correction, is presented a formal request to pay. This is to be done within three weeks. Social services in the municipality where the tenant lives must be notified at the same time as the electricity transmission will be interrupted. A company has no right to turn off the electricity if this is not done. This has been tried in the General Complaints Board. In the named case the company was instead liable for damages to the tenant. Social services can help a person pay for their electricity bills by giving a subsistence allowance. This should cover living expenses and be sufficient for other costs such as rent and utility bills.

Evictions from shelters/acute accommodations

There is no law forbidding evictions from shelters per se. However, evictions from shelters are very rare. The reason for eviction from shelters is hardly ever for financial reasons often the reason is that the accommodation does not suit the person's needs.

When an eviction of this kind occurs, the most common situation is that the person is offered an alternative accommodation. If the person to be evicted is in need of any other kind of support, for example health care, the person will be offered hospital care or treatment in a relevant institution.

The arrangement for an alternative accommodation (or a move to hospital/institution for a treatment) is organised and decided at municipality level within accordance with the law. In this regard it is important to know that the exercise of authority or the application of law in the decision making at municipality level is without interference by the Government. All municipalities in Sweden have an independent position in this regard and any intervention by the Government is prohibited. This also means however that both the Government and the municipalities have a responsibility to respect individual rights and human rights in their decision-making.

There is not a specific law forbidding evacuations from emergency accommodations without the provision of alternative accommodation. Instead, there are rules and/or local guidelines at municipality levels to meet these needs. As a result of the municipalities' independency, guidelines regarding arrangements for alternative accommodation varies among the municipalities.

And important to point out, if children are involved the Social Services will be present and see to the child's care and rights. This responsibility is stated in the Social Services Act, and the social services are according to this law obliged to have a strong child perspective. This obligation also includes active preventive work and therefore evictions of families with children who stay in a shelter is most often avoided. Reference is also made to answers given in Article 31§1.

In April 2020, the Swedish Financial Supervisory Authority (Finansinspektionen) gave the banks the possibility to give all new and existing mortgage borrowers a temporary exemption from the amortization requirements due to the spread of the coronavirus and its effects on Swedish economy. The exemption has given mortgage borrowers the opportunity to pause repayments through August 31, 2021. The aim was to provide greater financial leeway for mortgage borrowers during the crisis. Around twelve per cent of Sweden's mortgage borrowers used the exception.

The pandemic did not have an impact on the right to shelter. The municipalities have the responsibility to plan for the construction of housing within the municipality. The Social Services Act governs the social service work in Sweden. The social services aim is to promote the economic and social security, equality in living conditions and active participation in society. According to this law, municipalities are required to provide support and assistance to anyone staying in the municipality and are ultimately responsible for ensuring that these persons receive the support and assistance they need. For example, housing, economic support, emergency accommodation, protection of children, treatment for substance abuse or other social problems. If a person is staying only temporarily within the municipality, the responsibility of the social services is limited only to emergency support, which can be for example money for food and overnights stay at a shelter.

More explicitly the Social Services Act states that a person who cannot see to his or her own needs, or in another way is unable to care for him- or herself, has the right to assistance for his or her provision and life in general. The legislation has a strong individual perspective and assistance should be designed to strengthen the individual's ability to live an independent life. When families with children are involved, the best interest of the child must be taken into account.

Since it is the municipality's responsibility to govern the social service work within its geographical borders, different measures were taken to prevent vulnerable people from getting ill during the pandemic. For example, organisations working in municipalities in the south of Sweden prioritised their open operations so that people could continue to have access to emergency help in the form of food, clothing and rest/accommodation. They kept their open meeting places open, but with extra focus on hygiene and limited contact areas between employees as well as guests and participants, and also made sure that there were never too many

people in the premises. In case of suspected infection, the municipality's social services were contacted, who could provide temporary places in isolation accommodation.

EU and EEA-citizens who use their right to free movement, who are staying temporarily in Sweden and who lack the right of residence, have limited rights to social support during their temporary stay. For the first three months they are considered as tourists and a visitor and are not normally entitled to assistance other than in emergency situations.

Important to remember is that an EU-citizen or any other person with the right of residence, for example an employee, has the same rights to assistance as other residents in Sweden.

According to article 22 in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which as mentioned previously has been incorporated into Swedish law, the refugee child has the right to receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance and help if he or she comes alone or together with parents or another person. According to article 27 in the CRC, as previously mentioned, every child has the right to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral, and social development.

The municipalities in Sweden are responsible for the practical reception of unaccompanied migrant children, i.e. accommodation, daily care, any special support, conservators and schooling. Municipal reception is based on the principle of normalisation. This means that, as far as possible, all children staying in Sweden should experience the same care system.

Article 31§3

3. to make the price of housing accessible to those without adequate resources.

Reference is made to the previous report. The Government would like to add the following information.

In 2014, the Committee expressed the importance that the affordability ratio of the poorest applicants for housing is compatible with their income. The available statistics does not show the affordability ratio for housing for different income groups. However, as stated in previous answers, amongst the data presented in a report from Boverket, 5.3 per cent of the households are considered to have a “strained housing economy” (according to the calculations of Statistics Sweden) and 1.2 per cent of all households suffer from a combination of being overcrowded and having a strained housing expenditure.

As mentioned in previous answers, an investment aid scheme for rental housing and homes for students was introduced in 2016. However, due to the decisions of the Swedish parliament, no applications for this grant that have been received by the relevant authorities after 31 December 2021 will be approved.

In 2019, the Government appointed two investigators to find solutions on how the housing market can become more socially sustainable and proposals to make it easier for first-time buyers in the housing market. The Government has received several proposals from the investigators. For example, a new housing supply act, a mandatory requirement for municipalities to provide rental guarantees to families with children, an obligation for landlords to justify the requirements they place on new tenants, better possibilities for housing agencies (owned by the municipalities) to distribute housing with social consideration and enable public housing companies to act without applying the public procurement act. The Government also received a proposal that makes it easier for first-time buyers. The reports have been sent out for consultation.

During the pandemic many people worked from their homes, which increased the demand for larger dwellings and higher prices in the markets for home-ownership/owner-occupation and tenant-ownership. However, as rents for rental dwellings are mainly collectively negotiated and the “fairness” of the rent for a specific dwelling always can be contested at the Rent Tribunal, this did not affect the rental market.

In Sweden, there is no social housing. The rental housing market consists of many different landlords. According to Statistics Sweden, in 2021, of the about 1.5 million rental dwellings, about 43 per cent (832 000 units) were owned by Municipal Housing Companies, (MHC's). However, though the MHC sector generally have a larger share of low-income households than private landlords, these companies has never been seen as social housing but as an instrument to provide good housing for all groups, thus the Swedish term “allmännyttig” (public utility). Furthermore, rent legislation, as well as other regulations concerning the rental housing sector, is the same for all, irrespective of ownership. Thus, there are no data to provide for social housing as this sector, as stated, is non-existent. However, it should be added that there is a phenomenon called “social leases” or “municipal leases”. This is when the municipality (the social services) provides dwellings to vulnerable people as part of the responsibilities of the social services. The individuals or households who get such a dwelling can have different problems, and the length of stay is very varying, though it is meant to be a temporary solution. The most common solutions are second-hand contracts (subletting) with limited tenure security, where the accommodation is linked to supervision or special conditions or rules. The housing solutions are based on aid decisions according to the Social Services Act (2001:453). These dwellings are mainly rented from private or municipal landlords by the municipality (though sometimes the municipality have bought tenant-ownership dwellings) and sublet to a person or a household in a vulnerable situation. The municipality often formally charge a rent but to a large degree the rent is covered by the municipality, partly or wholly, depending on the situation in each case.

The target groups for housing solutions with special conditions, granted under the Social Services Act, can be everything from people with substance abuse problems who need to "train" themselves to manage having their own home, to newly arrived people with children who have suddenly become homeless because they can no longer live with relatives or acquaintances. Second-hand leases can thus be granted to people with difficulties in obtaining rental contracts themselves, for example due to mental illness. In some cases, the municipality helps those who are motivated and have ongoing treatment for addiction, but who cannot get their own contract during the treatment period. Then they can get a short-term social contract. Homeless families with children can also receive a short-term social contract to arrange their situation.

There are approximately 17 500 sublet apartments that have been granted with the support of the Social Services Act. This can be compared to last year's housing market survey, when the municipalities answered that they had a total of 19 594 apartments with special conditions. However, it is somewhat uncertain to what extent apartments that are sublet are used for target groups with social assistance decisions or new arrivals. Some municipalities keep no statistics at all on which of these contract holders are not approved on the housing market or have received help with a rental contract on other grounds.

According to Boverket, it has in recent years become more common for a municipal body other than social services to step in as a substitute primary tenant on behalf of those in need of housing. When asked if there are secondary housing solutions without an aid decision according to the Social Services Act, 76 municipalities answer yes. The question of how many of this type of housing existed on 1 January 2022 has been answered by 62 municipalities. Overall, the municipalities' responses show that about 6 865 dwelling are sublet by municipalities without an aid decision. Of the total of 6 865 apartments reported as housing being sublet the municipalities without aid decisions 5 733 (82 per cent) are rented to designated new arrivals.

According to Boverket, if the municipal sublet apartments according to the Social Services Act and the municipalities' other sublet rentals are added together, the total ends up at just over 24 360. This means that 1.74 per cent of the country's total rental market consists of apartments where the municipality is the primary tenant and where the tenants have social subcontracts.

There are three types of housing benefits within the social security scheme; housing allowance for families with children and for households without children aged 18–29, housing supplement for people that receive activity compensation or sickness compensation and housing supplement for people that are 65 years or older and are receiving full old-age pension. Appeals do not necessarily compare to the year the refusal was made.

Housing allowance

Recipients in December each year		2018	2019	2020	2021
Households without children	Women (single household)	19 574	18 182	18 889	18 972
	Men (single household)	26 226	25 711	26 158	24 712
	Co-habiting (two applicants)	1 015	889	1 170	1 155
Households with children	Women (single household)	100 531	99 721	101 078	99 372
	Men (single household)	17 928	17 866	18 909	19 062
	Co-habiting (two applicants)	61 206	58 724	57 385	52 983

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Applications (the first year a decision was made)	259 520	258 305	286 304	261 476
Requests refused (percent)	15	17	21	20
Appeals determined (at Administrative Court)	x	433	601	510
Decisions changed (percent)	x	10	11	13

Housing supplement for people receiving activity compensation or sickness compensation

		2018	2019	2020	2021
Number of recipients in December each year	Total	118 928	115 999	115 105	113 086
	<i>Women</i>	63 219	61 370	60 512	58 969
	<i>Men</i>	55 709	54 629	54 593	54 117
Requests refused		9 371	10 184	10 263	8 659

There is no information on appeals available.

Housing supplement for people 65+ that receive full old-age pension

		2018	2019	2020	2021
Number of recipients in December each year	Total	290 608	289 960	290 362	295 160
	<i>Women</i>	<i>217 016</i>	<i>214 554</i>	<i>212 270</i>	<i>213 411</i>
	<i>Men</i>	<i>73 592</i>	<i>75 406</i>	<i>78 092</i>	<i>81 749</i>
Requests refused	Total	27 435	21 043	26 794	19 844
	<i>Women</i>	<i>13 735</i>	<i>11 391</i>	<i>14 522</i>	<i>10 893</i>
	<i>Men</i>	<i>13 700</i>	<i>9 652</i>	<i>12 272</i>	<i>8 951</i>
Appealed (at the Swedish Pensions Agency, no statistics available on appeals to Administrative Court)	Total	2 792	2 999	3 057	2 176
	<i>Women</i>	<i>1 940</i>	<i>2 031</i>	<i>1 967</i>	<i>1 413</i>
	<i>Men</i>	<i>852</i>	<i>968</i>	<i>1 090</i>	<i>763</i>
Decisions changed in percent of appeals	Total	5,5	6,5	10	10

As regards question on measures taken throughout the country in relation to access for Roma and travellers to social housing reference is made partly to the above as Sweden do not have social housing, partly to previous answers on Article 31§1.