

# Everybody is entitled to a good home

General election day, September 17th, is the day when Sweden's future is to be decided, and it will be up to you and me to cast our vote. We all share the same responsibilities, and all votes are equal. Should we further and improve our welfare system, or should we downgrade by taking one out of every five tax krona out of the public coffers? Should we continue developing the Swedish welfare model – or should we abandon it?

For us, the Social Democrats, a good home is a social right. In Sweden, everybody must be able to live safely and well at reasonable cost. The housing environment is an important tool in ensuring decent, egalitarian living conditions for all. This means that political measures are needed in the housing market, not just market-based solutions. Housing policies must include everyone. For our ambitions to succeed, special measures will sometimes be needed, e.g. to provide young people, the elderly and homeless with better chances of finding a home of their own.

We cannot claim that the housing market functions particularly well when many people, especially women and the elderly, feel insecure in the areas where they live and when many young adults are forced to continue living at home with their parents. As you become an adult and want to move out, good housing must be available at reasonable cost.

## **Rent guarantee gives better chances of finding a first home**

One of the problems preventing young people from moving away from home is that landlords sometimes fear that they will be unable to collect rent from young people without permanent employment. However, even young people with the financial resources to pay for accommodation of their own may find it difficult to meet all the formal demands that a potential landlord may put on them.



To make it easier for young people to find a home of their own, we want to introduce state support for local authorities prepared to make use of a “rent guarantee”. This means that the local authorities will guarantee that the rent will be paid in the event of problems.

### **More affordable new homes**

During the election campaign of 2002, we, the Social Democrats, promised to build 120,000 new homes during the following term of office. Not only will that promise be kept, but we will exceed our original target. However, that’s not enough. To enable us to still further satisfy people’s needs, we want to continue building new homes – in particular rental accommodation.

To enable us to build homes at reasonable cost, the Swedish economy must be in good order and interest rates must be low. a financing system must be put in place enabling everyone to pay rent, interest charges and fees – now and in the future. It must become cheaper to build new homes. We want to combat monopolies and cartels in the building trade. We also want to make more national and municipal land available for new building, shorten the planning stage and give local residents increased opportunities of participating in the planning process.

### **Improvements to homes and the areas where we live**

Even though our accommodation standards are high in comparison with other countries, there is still more that we can do. Segregation is difficult to get to grips with. Many families with children, not least among Swedes of foreign extraction, live in cramped conditions. There is also severe need for restoration and revitalisation, which is why over the next fifteen or twenty years more than half a million flats and detached houses will be renovated, especially in areas associated with the “Million Programme” housing initiative of the sixties and seventies. While repairs are going on, old buildings will also be adapted to make more efficient use of energy.

### **Rental accommodation available to everyone**

If we are to get rid of segregation, it is important that our residential areas are made up of all types of dwelling: rental accommodation, tenant-owner flats, rental cooperatives and privately owned single-family houses.

Looking for a home must be easy, and the rules that apply must be clear and easy to understand. Efficiently run home-seekers’ services should be available in every municipality, and firm measures will have to be taken to prevent discrimination on the housing market. Everyone must be able to rent a flat. That’s why we want to continue developing municipally owned housing – not sell it off to private owners. Municipally owned housing guarantees that rental accommodation will be available, especially in our big-city regions.



### **The alternative**

Against our policy of ensuring good homes for everyone stands the Moderate-dominated right-wing alliance and its policy of market rents, sale of rental accommodation and cuts in public support for new building. The Moderates and their right-wing allies stand for a policy of dwindling public commitment and a housing market increasingly subjected to the demands of the market.

In the Sweden of the right-wing alliance, only profitable homes will be built where only profitable tenants will ever be able to live.

**In our Sweden, everyone is welcome. Which Sweden will you choose?**

