

# Election Manifesto 2006



## Summary

### Everybody to be included.

**Work for all** is the most important goal for social democracy. The high level of economic growth creates many new jobs every working day. Stable prices and low interest rates provide the ground for high increases in real incomes in the future. A disruption in this economic development involves a threat to jobs. Every reform during the coming parliament will therefore be tested against its impact on the economy and on the goal of full employment.

**Justice and security** are the core values of social democratic welfare policy. We intend to use the strong finances of the public sector to employ more people in health services, schools and care. The public sector must act as a model for modern employers in offering attractive jobs with equal pay for men and women. The social insurance system will be strengthened. Welfare comes before tax cuts. Along side these primary goals the social democrats intend to carry through reforms in the coming parliament that provide the basis for a long term modernisation of our country:

1) **A competitive Sweden with modern jobs.** Sweden will take the lead in creating secure jobs, knowledge and new technology. We intend to invest in branches that are of strategic importance for the future and in companies with a potential for growth. By increasing the public funding for research to 1% of the GNP we will lie in the forefront of global competition. Research into stem cells is of particular importance.

2) **Sweden, a model for the green turnaround.** The climate change is the biggest global challenge facing us. Sweden's dependence on oil must be ended by the year 2020. We want to see Sweden increase its production of modern fuels in the forestry and agricultural sectors. Energy efficiency, the production of green electricity and technological development will make Sweden richer and greener. This calls therefore for a nationally coordinated effort in two programmes for development – one for investment and one for research.

3) **The next step in welfare policy involves dental care.** Teeth are part of our bodies. The difference between costs for dental care and health care must be reduced. We want to see a dental care that provides for free care up to the age of 24. An examination will cost a maximum of 200 SEK and the cost for expensive treatment must be substantially reduced.

**4) Sweden will be the best of countries to grow up in.** The choices made by children today will determine the future of Sweden. Schools must provide everyone with knowledge. We intend to reduce the top rate in charges for child care by 300 SEK. and to open the free pre-school to children from the age of three. In order to facilitate children's learning the increase in personnel in pre-schools will be reinforced with 3000 more staff in centres for schoolchildren.

**5) Sweden will be the best of countries in which to grow old.** Everyone must be able to look forward to a rewarding and secure life as a senior citizen. The health care and provision of elderly care must maintain a high standard. 3500 experienced workers in elderly care will be offered the opportunity to work as mentors. During the coming ten years we intend to construct 100 000 more housing units for the elderly, both service units as well as units for specific needs. Those pensioners who are worst-off will be given an increase in housing subsidies.

**6) We all gain from supporting each other.** Unemployment is not the fault of the unemployed. Illness strikes blindly. Those on disability pensions have often a hard working life behind them. When things improve for Sweden we intend to improve things – not worsen things – for those who are most at risk. The highest level in unemployment benefit payments will be raised to the equivalent of 7.5 of the price basic amount on an annual basis. The economic situation for those on disability pensions will be improved.

## Everybody to be included

The Election Manifesto of the Social Democrats 2006-210

**Work for all is the most important goal for social democracy.** Everyone who wants to work and who can work must also be able to get a job. We aim to press back open unemployment to 4 percent during the autumn. After that we intend to press on. Our goal is full employment – no other goal is acceptable to the Swedish Labour movement.

Today Sweden competes successfully in knowledge, security and decent working conditions. The high level of growth creates new jobs every working day. Prices are stable, interest rates are low and wage increases are good. Disruption in economic development entails a threat to jobs. For this reason the goal of achieving a surplus and maintaining a ceiling on spending must be defended. It is for this reason too that every reform during the coming parliament must be considered in terms of its impact on the economy and on the aim of achieving full employment.

**Sweden is doing well but not everyone is doing well in Sweden.** In our country there are many women and men who stand far outside the labour market. Often they are young or they are persons with a foreign background. Some of the older people have been worn out in work, others suffer from some disability, illness or have psychological problems. In some cases it is a question of not managing the pace of work, the requirements for skills and the tough competition. The feeling of inadequacy is reinforced by the sense of being judged as unprofitable in market terms. For us it is self evident that everyone must be included.

Everyone has the right to be included and to create something new together with others, to be needed and to feel that one is needed. No one is so strong that he or she does not need the help of others at some time in life – but neither is anyone so weak that he or she cannot make some contribution. Everyone is needed.

**Politics is a question of the will to change society and to shape the future.** We believe that Sweden has possibilities. Our country has a leading position in many areas. By setting an example we can both shoulder our responsibilities in creating a more secure world and we can hold a leading position in global competition. When the world seeks solutions to climate change, when the demand for new technology increases, when the elderly make up a larger share of the population in the western world and the demand for care increases - then we stand to gain from the fact that our country lies to the fore in the ecological turnaround and in the

field of medico-technological research. When the knowledge, creativity and initiative of people become hard currency – then a welfare and knowledge-based society that has a place for everyone stands to gain.

We social democrats know that people who feel secure are prepared to face risks. Welfare provides for security in the different phases of life which in turn promotes both freedom and creativity. The high level of growth and the fall in unemployment makes our country living proof that security and justice do not hinder development, on the contrary. It is a combination of security and development that makes our country modern and competitive.

**We believe in the Swedish welfare model but we are not satisfied with welfare.**

There remain shortcomings that must be corrected. There are still social divisions between people in our country. There is no greater division than that which divides those who have a job from those who are unemployed. But there is still an altogether too large difference in the distribution of influence, health, working conditions and economic opportunities.

The universal welfare system is an efficient way to redistribute the resources of a society. But the welfare system is not complete. The activities that make up welfare must be such that they can continuously meet the needs of new times.

Health care, schools and care services make up the core of the social democratic welfare policy. We intend to use the strong finances of the public sector to employ more people. The public sector must be a model for modern employers, with attractive wages and equality between women and men in wages.

There is no way in which we can expand welfare services and at the same time carry through large tax cuts. Such a policy results only in higher interest rates and rising unemployment with greater social divisions as a consequence. Here we find the dividing line between left and right in Swedish politics today as always.

**Our goal is clear: everyone is to be included.**

## A competitive Sweden with modern jobs.

**Swedish companies must be world leaders.** We intend to invest broadly in future skills and technology. Public funding in research will be increased to 1% of our GNP. In new areas of research such as those opened by stem cell research we intend to belong to the leading edge. The billion crown effort in strategic branches for the future will be increased and expanded to cover other branches such as the hospitality sector. Sweden's basic industries must enjoy favourable conditions. The state owned Vattenfall (power production) must achieve its twin goals of pushing towards a green turnaround and providing our basic industries with competitive prices for energy.

**Sweden will compete with skills and not with low wages.** The extensive efforts at raising the level of knowledge at all levels of society – from pre-school, through primary and secondary schools as well as secondary education for adults, up to universities and research - will continue. Our aim of ensuring that half of all secondary school pupils will continue into tertiary education remains unchanged. However there is a need for other types of education. The programmes for qualified skilled trades will be expanded. We want to see a concerted effort on skilled trades in secondary schools and new and modern apprenticeship training. Many students find their finances strained. For this reason we intend to raise student grants including the free part of the grant.

**Secure jobs in a modern working life.** We want to see Sweden set an example with modern workplaces where the creativity and ideas of all are made the most of. The employers must shoulder their responsibility for creating a good working environment. We defend the Swedish labour market model with strong, independent parties with the strength to sign comprehensive collective agreements. The number of secure full time jobs will be increased; the number of insecure short term jobs must be reduced. A modern working life makes for new demands. It must be possible for those who have worked some 20 years to change jobs or change to a new branch and perhaps try out something completely different. We want to make it possible for people in mid-life to learn new skills or to start on a longer programme of learning. The level of sickness leave has fallen considerably. The goal of reducing the level of ill-health to half by the year 2008 will be achieved. We intend to cooperate with the parties on the labour market in an investment in company- based health provision and rehabilitation. We intend furthermore to cooperate with the parties on the labour market in reviewing the opportunities for more people to reduce their working hours during the final years

of their employment in order to be able to work until they reach the age of retirement.

**More businesses and more growth in businesses throughout the country.** Future jobs will to a large extent be created in new and expanding companies often in new business sectors. For this reason companies must enjoy favourable conditions. Access to venture capital must be improved, exports encouraged and a new loan for small businesses introduced. Research and development directed towards the needs of small and medium sized businesses must be bolstered. The role of the larger cities as the motors of growth must be developed. The historical investment in infrastructure will be carried through as planned. We intend to make a concerted effort in expanding transport lines of national importance. Roads and railways will be renovated, improved and maintained. Travel to and from work represents a considerable outlay, especially in sparsely populated areas. We intend therefore to improve tax deductions for travel to work. The investment in broadband in every part of the country will be carried through as planned. We want to see a living countryside, green technology and a growing hospitality sector. Thousands of jobs can be created by means of the programme for sparsely populated areas and the structural funds of the EU. Publicly owned companies such as the Swedish Railways and the Post Office will be used to provide a well functioning service throughout the country. We intend to introduce a new system to finance home construction.

## Sweden – a model for the green turnaround.

**The green People's Home will be built.** Sweden will be a country with clean air, clean water and a healthy soil. We intend to preserve the biological diversity. Dangerous chemicals must be phased out. We want to save the sensitive and unique sea environment of the Baltic Sea. More must be done to reduce the excess leakage of fertilisers into and the excess uptake of fish from the Baltic waters. The countries in our part of Europe must cooperate. Sustainable development is a force for renewal, growth and employment.

**Sweden's dependence on oil must be ended by the year 2020.** Storms, flooding, drought and a melting ice cap – the climate threat is frightening. The ongoing global temperature increase can only be prevented if the use of fossil fuels is reduced. At the same time this will reduce the exposure to rises in the price of oil. We intend to phase out the use of nuclear power step by step and in line with employment considerations and welfare and to the extent that it can be replaced by renewable sources of energy and the efficient use of energy supplies. Wind power will be expanded. The efficient use of energy in homes and premises will be

increased. State authorities and companies will set an example in this effort at a turnaround. Public procurement will be used as a lever for the introduction of technologies and transport that are right from an environmental and energy point of view.

**Research and investment for the future.** In order to achieve the ambitious goal of ending dependence on oil we require extensive investment, many trial activities and pilot projects. We intend to launch a broad programme of investments aimed at raising the level of efficient energy consumption in society as a whole and in increasing the production of renewable energy. New opportunities for enterprise and the development of the countryside will be created. There is moreover a need for new knowledge within a wide spectrum of sectors over and above the purely technical aspects of energy production in order to speed up the process of a turnaround. During the coming parliament we intend to start up an extensive research programme within a number of disciplines.

## The next step in the construction of welfare.

**Dental care for all.** Teeth are a part of our bodies. Everyone has the right to good dental health. During the coming parliament the major areas of social reform will focus on dental care. Young people spend more time in education and enter working life later than before. For this reason we intend to extend the period for free dental care, with a first stage involving those up to the age of 24. A cover against high costs in dental care will be introduced to cover everybody. The costs treatment above 2700 SEK will be covered by a subsidy of 70% and costs above 15 000 SEK will be subsidized by 90%. No one will need to pay more than 200 SEK for an examination.

**Health care will be available when you need it.** Swedish health care is of very high quality. Since the introduction of the health care guarantee we have witnessed a dramatic reduction in queues. Our goal is a health care free from queues. However there remains the need to improve accessibility. It must be easier to find the right treatment and to contact the health care services. Health care must be of a high quality throughout the country and be equally good for women and men. Hospitals will not be allowed to transfer to companies run on the basis of private profit. The resources channelled to health care will continue to rise. The system of health insurance will be defended.

**Culture enriches.** Sweden must have room for creative arts, education and community activities. Libraries, theatres, museums, stages for music and dance, places to experience culture – must exist throughout the country. Museums have

an important task in providing popular education and in conducting research. The reform removing entry charges has led to more than a doubling in the number of visitors. We want to see the county museums allowed to share in and exhibit national collections free of charge. We intend to build a Nobel Museum, extend the Swedish National Museum and create a museum of design. We intend to invest in more places for public meetings, and to make substantial increases in the support to voluntary adult educational organisations and to people's high schools. Sweden needs more people to work with cultural activities. We intend to double the number of individuals receiving the state salary for artists. We intend to carry out an extensive investment in children's culture.

**The Handshake with the sports movement has been a success.** We intend to extend the agreement with the sports movement and to support the education of the next generation of trainers and leaders. To this end the sports movement will be given two billion crowns for the period covering 2007 – 2010. We want to see government together with the business community and the municipalities work more actively to attract more of the larger sports galas to Sweden.

**Crime and its causes must be combated.** Everyone must be able to feel safe in their everyday lives. Over the recent years crime has changed and become harsher. In some areas organised crime has gained a foothold. People are the victims of crimes of hate on account of their opinions, their origins or their sexual preferences. Everyday crimes make for insecurity for many people. For this reason the efforts put into the courts and criminal system will continue. We need more police and better means to investigate crime and the opportunity to use modern techniques. The police force will cooperate with schools and social services and be visible throughout the country. But we will never get rid of crime unless we tackle its causes.

**Sweden will be the best of countries to grow up in.**

**Pre-school for all children.** Pre-school is the first step in the process of life-long learning. By the year 2007 we will have reached our goal of employing 6000 new staff in our pre-schools. Staff density is increasing and the size of the children's groups is being reduced. During the coming parliament we intend to reduce the top rate for pre-school fees by 300 SEK to 960 SEK. No one will pay more than 2% of the household income for the first child and 1% for the second child in pre-school. The fee for the third child will be abolished. We intend to introduce, free of charge, three hours of pre-schooling for all children from the age of three.

**All children have the right to quality learning.** Too many children leave school without the proper skills in core subjects. This must not be allowed to continue. The goals of learning must be clear and the process of following up results must be reinforced. We intend to make special efforts to improve skills in maths and in Swedish, in part by investing in the further training of teachers. There must be a sense of security and an atmosphere conducive to studies in our schools. Common rules of conduct will be drawn up by pupils, parents and staff together. We have introduced legislation to combat bullying and demeaning treatment. But more is required, a spirit of respect. Respect for teachers, for pupils, between pupils and for learning as such.

**The same opportunity calls for different resources.** Children are all different and every school faces a different situation. We intend to direct resources to those school with the toughest problems by among other things employing 1000 resource staff. We want to see a integrated school as a meeting place for children from different social backgrounds, cultures and one that is accessible for children with disabilities. Opt-out schools offer alternative pedagogical programmes. But the monitoring of opt-out schools must be sharper. The establishing of more opt-out schools must not be allowed to lead to poorer teaching for children in municipal schools or to increased segregation. The rights of municipalities in having a say on the setting up of opt-out schools must be strengthened. Any profits arising must be used in the school and not paid out as a dividend to shareholders. All pupils have the right to an objective and all-round education. We are opposed to opt-out schools based on denominational principles. We intend to improve transparency by sharpening the regulations for and the monitoring of opt-out schools. The bottom line must be that public funding for opt-out schools can be withdrawn.

**Quality investment in centres for school children.** The opportunity to get help with homework and leisure time activities is especially important or those children who get least help from home. Staff density in centres for school children has fallen. The number of children per group is too large. We intend to improve the quality of these centres by employing 3000 more trained staff as well as other personnel. The top charge for a place in a centre for school children will be cut from 850 SEK to 500 SEK for the first child.

**Children – with the right to security.** Children's allowance and the supplementary benefit for additional children were raised less than a year ago. We intend to underline the value of child allowance. Over and above this there is the need for improvements for those families with strained economic circumstances. This is very much the case with single parent families. The social services for children and young people will be bolstered. Eating disorders, drugs, steroids and self-

destructive behaviour are serious indications that young people need to be seen and to be taken seriously. Sometimes it can be a question of professional help. During the coming parliament we intend to make a special effort in the field of psychiatric care for children and young people. The municipalities have a special responsibility to provide centres for school children and meeting places that are drug free for young people.

**Young – with the right to be an adult.** Leaving home is a big step in life. The feeling that one can manage on one's own, without the direction or care of parents. But today many young people end up in a circle of temporary jobs and subletted accommodation. Security of employment must be improved and the responsibility of municipalities in providing housing for young people will be sharpened. Young people who lack a secure income will be offered a rent guarantee.

## Sweden will be the best country to grow old in.

**All the elderly must be able to live well and in security.** Over the coming ten years we intend to build 100 000 new housing units for the elderly. We intend therefore to launch a programme in part for new housing and for extensions of special housing, and in part for good housing for the elderly – with decent rents, access to common facilities and simpler forms of service. The supply of housing for people with special needs will be increased sharply in order to meet the needs.

**More staff in elderly care.** Being there, caring and helping demands time. A decent and secure elderly care depends on competent staff. We intend to use the increase in the resources available to the municipalities in the form of higher tax revenues and state grants to increase staff density in services for the elderly. Elderly care will be organised as modern workplaces in order to attract a new generation of staff. Home help services and health care in the home will be strengthened.

**More skills for higher quality.** A programme for mentors and skill improvements in services for the elderly will contribute to raising the quality of the services. 3500 experienced care workers will be offered the opportunity to become mentors for new employees and to share with them their knowledge and skills. We intend to invest in the care of the dement. Swedish care services for the dement are at the leading edge and will be provided with new resources. Older persons who wish to look after their spouses will be given support and the opportunity to be relieved of their responsibilities in order to relax.

**Increased housing subsidies for pensioners.** We intend to improve the housing supplement to pensioners. The rate will be raised from 93 to 95% and a ceiling set at 5000 Skr.

## We all gain from supporting one another.

**The top rate for unemployment benefit will be raised.** The pace of change and adaptation on the labour market is very high. Everyone runs the risk of losing their job at one time or another and finding it difficult to get a new job. It is in situations like this that unemployment benefit provides income security. We intend to raise the top rate for unemployment benefit so that it corresponds to roughly 7.5 times the price basic amount. This will mean that the top rate will rise by around 200 SEK per day and that most people will then receive around 80% of their previous income. It is important that a broad majority of wage earners are covered by an acceptable level of insurance also in the future.

**Every one, even those who are farthest from the labour market must be included.**

No one gains from people being socially disadvantaged. Everyone who can and who wishes to contribute to development with a work effort of their own must be able to do so – even if it does not entail full time work or if it requires an adaptation in the working conditions. This is the most important task for our labour market policy during the coming parliament. The work done by the state owned company providing jobs for the disabled, Samhall, will be developed. Wage support, secure jobs and other forms of wage subsidies will be extended. We want to see voluntary organisations getting a share of the subsidies directed at creating jobs.

**Those on disability pensions will get better terms, not poorer.** The typical person on a disability pension is a woman in her sixties who has worked hard all her life in health care and other services. Many of them who have been forced to leave working life before they reach the age of retirement have a strained economy. We intend to raise the level of housing benefits so that persons on disability pensions or job-support have the same level of benefits that old age pensioners receive.

**Homelessness is unworthy of a welfare state.** Many people find themselves outside society because of drug abuse or mental ill-health. We intend to improve the care provided to drug abusers, strengthen the resources of psychiatric care and draw up a common plan of action for the state and the municipalities together: no one needs to be homeless. This cannot be achieved without the construction of more housing units with social services in the municipalities.

**Sweden must be a country of equality between men and women.** We social democrats refuse to accept the over-ordering of men and the under-ordering of women in society. Strong measures are required to make the labour market more equal for women and men. The same wage for the same work must be the rule. The public sector must set an example and eliminate unfounded wage differentials. Today many women work part time despite the fact that they want full time jobs. We intend to introduce legislation to ensure that full time employment is a right and part time employment a possibility. The new law will come into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2007 and have full effect by 2010. The violence of men towards women and children must be combated. Every municipality must shoulder its responsibility in protecting those women and children who are the victims of violence and sexual abuse. Protection for women and children who are at risk will be strengthened. The struggle against trafficking will be intensified.

**Sweden must be a country based on equality.** The basis for integration is a job for adults and a good school for the children. During the coming parliament we intend to improve the reception process for new arrivals. It will be quicker to get into work. We intend to strengthen language training in Swedish for immigrants. There will be a system with a personal contact for all newly arrived asylum seekers based on clear rights and obligations. Every effort made must be adapted to providing the individual with the support he or she requires. Special efforts are required in the suburbs of large cities and in socially depressed areas. There is a specific need for special assistance for children in schools. Intolerance and prejudice must be combated. All forms of discrimination are unacceptable regardless of whether they are based on sex, ethnicity, disability, sexual preferences, religion or age. We want to see a national uniformity in standards when it comes to the costs for the equipment which the disabled need in order to cope with everyday life and working life.

## A just world is possible.

**Sweden is part of the world – in dependence and in responsibility.** National borders play a diminishing role. People travel and meet together; information and knowledge flow freely with new technology, trade and cooperation are developing. Never before has international cooperation been greater.

Sweden belongs to those who win from globalisation. But for us just as for other nations globalisation entails very real challenges. A strong international capital requires us to build strong democratic counterbalances. The alternative is that globalisation will lead to greater divisions and increased injustices. We want to see globalisation serving the needs of all. For this reason we social democrats support the struggle for trade union rights both at home and on the international scene. Together with progressive forces in other countries we work for a world at peace, for justice and for solidarity.

Through our membership of the EU we have greater opportunities to influence development in Europe. Today we have an extended EU that takes a greater responsibility for employment, justice and a sustainable development than what was thought possible ten years ago. We social democrats want to see Sweden as an active and constructive member of the EU. The EU must stand on the side of the people and the environment and be a powerful voice for peace and solidarity in the world.

**Sweden must take a stand when human values are challenged and solidarity gives way.** Our voice must be heard in the struggle against aggression, torture and trafficking. We want to see a strong and reformed UN. Human rights, international law, disarmament and the struggle against weapons of mass destruction will continue to be the cornerstones of our foreign policy.

The conflict in the Middle East is a tangible threat to our common security and development. A social democratic government will make an active contribution to achieving a peaceful solution based on international law. We work for an independent Palestine, a secure Israel and a reconstruction of Lebanon at peace. Sweden is and will remain free from military alliances. We intend to carry through the reform of our defence and to create a modern high technological defence force that can be used both in national and in international peace-keeping efforts. Our policy on asylum seekers must be humane and based on solidarity. Those in need of protection will find refuge in our country. Everyone will have the right to an individual and just legal consideration of their rights to asylum.

The struggle for peace is just as much a struggle for bread, water, good health care and democracy. Free and fair trade is decisive if poor countries are to have power over their futures. The WTO negotiations must be resumed. We will work for a sustainable write-off of debt. During the coming parliament we intend to make a number of efforts directed at the needs of women at risk. Africa will be at the centre of our attention.

Sweden is the only country in the world that has achieved the goal of 1% of the GNI in foreign aid. This gives us a special position and real opportunities to challenge other nations to shoulder their share of the responsibility.

Sweden's role in the world as a leading proponent for development and peace will be further strengthened. We intend to set aside a billion for peace from our foreign aid to strengthen the work of conciliation, handling conflicts and preventive efforts to secure peace.

## Vote on the 17<sup>th</sup> of September!

We social democrats intend to build a Sweden in full employment with security and welfare for all. We are convinced that our country will be all the stronger for the fact that everyone is included.

We ask for the trust of the voters in a Sweden that holds together.

Such a society cannot be built on low wages and poorer working conditions. It cannot be built on large tax cuts and poorer terms for the unemployed and the sick.

The choice is yours.

Is everyone to be included?

Vote for the social democrats.



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