

EU Decisions 2014-2018



**All major decisions that affect
Swedish companies**

The Confederation of Swedish Enterprise's views on the EU

Sweden is dependent on exports: they account for around half of our GDP. The competition that Swedish companies face in international markets has driven the development of much-needed efficiency measures and structural changes. This has in turn led to improved productivity and greater prosperity. More than 70 per cent of our international trade is with Europe. The EU has provided us with entirely new opportunities to trade and co-operation within in one of the world's largest integrated economies. The EU's single market offers businesses access to more than 500 million potential customers, and millions of companies, investors and partners. Through the EU, we also gain access to free trade agreements with other countries, enabling us to be present on markets that otherwise would have been difficult to access.

The position of business is unequivocal: Swedish companies need a well-functioning EU, one that is able to tackle the growing number of issues that cannot be resolved at national level. But in a globalised world, competitiveness is the only way to ensure long-term prosperity. If Europe's countries and companies cannot assert themselves internationally, we will not be able to create jobs, growth and social stability.

Analysis of EU decisions 2014-2018

During its most recent mandate period, the EU has wrestled with complex and innumerable crises both internally and externally but has overcome them all and still managed to deliver. The cohesion between the remaining 27 states following the UK's decision to withdraw from the bloc has strengthened and popular support for the EU has increased in virtually all member states. However, considerable differences in opinion persist over the future direction of the EU.

The Confederation of Swedish Enterprise (Svenskt Näringsliv, SN) can now present an evaluation of the key decisions taken by the EU in the past five-year period. Despite these being intensive years with crises such as Brexit, the migration crisis and the trade war with the US have coming in quick succession, the Confederation found that 24 of the 57 decisions (legal acts) that we studied were positive for Swedish companies. Almost the same proportion were judged to be acceptable. Unfortunately, however, a number of decisions, primarily relating to the labour market, were negative. To maintain a strong EU that is able to address major global challenges, a clearer focus is required on competitiveness through a dismantling of obstacles to the four freedoms and a continued proactive trade agenda.

Free trade

During the mandate period, the EU managed to champion the cause of free trade despite many other countries turning inwards and looking to protectionism as refuge from a world in flux. In such a turbulent environment, it is more important than ever that the EU can deliver on its trade agenda and that companies can trust that Europe will stand up for a global trading system underpinned by clear rules.

- Very positive, because the EU has reached trade agreements with Canada, Japan and Mexico, and is finalising agreements with Singapore and Vietnam. These are highly significant deals for Sweden and for Swedish companies.

The EU Single Market

At the last European Council of 2018, all European leaders expressed support for the EU Single Market, the importance of its continued development and that obstacles to it should be dismantled. Despite this, we have seen very little progress in terms of legislative proposals that would have achieved this during the mandate period. The European Single Market is the world's largest integrated market, and one of the most important cornerstones of the EU: it provides vitally important market access to Swedish companies and it is critical to making Europe an attractive trading partner for the rest of the world. Protecting and improving the Single Market must be a priority for the incoming EU Commission.

- Not good enough because we know that the EU can do better. We also know that the Single Market currently represents the most significant driver of employment and growth in Sweden.

The Digital Single Market

When the EU Commission launched its strategy for a digital single market (DSM), the Confederation considered this a positive development and hoped that it would lead to Swedish companies gaining access to a larger market and consumers, and thereby a greater range of products and services. Three and a half years later, and we can say that focus has often been placed on new regulations, while the wishes and competitiveness of business have not been prioritised. Data protection rules are an example of this. Even if Sweden has fared well in a digitalisation context, Europe has failed to strengthen its global position, which is cause for concern. In addition to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the DSM strategy, during the period the EU Commission, initiated a plan for artificial intelligence (AI) and a review of how data sharing within the EU could be encouraged. Our hope is that the EU and its member states are capable of taking advantage of the opportunities that this technology offers, allowing us to use the factors of scale that the Single Market provides in terms of business opportunities, data access, research and innovation.

– Not good enough. The Commission has failed to strengthen companies' opportunities in the Single Market. We had hoped that the EU could agree a regulatory framework that reduced fragmentation in the DSM without hampering innovation; unfortunately, this was not entirely successful. The Free Flow of Data Regulation is the most positive initiative to be adopted, while GDPR was difficult to implement and costly. The EU's geo-blocking regulation is an example of an unnecessarily complicated regulation that has only succeeded in increasing companies' regulatory burden.

Energy, climate and environment

During the mandate period, the EU set a rapid pace in its work on energy and climate policies. In 2015, the EU Commission defined the energy and climate issues it would tackle during the period. The Energy Union, based on five areas of equal importance, would ensure a balance between these areas to formulate successful policies. Work focused on modernising existing legislation and adapting it to new political ambitions. Meanwhile, there was a shift towards greater emphasis on detail and less focus on the effectiveness of control. This has resulted in several targets that are not co-ordinated, and detailed rules that are not adapted for the circumstances of all member states. One positive milestone during the mandate period was the Paris Agreement, in which the EU took a leading role.

– Acceptable, but with some concerns. It is positive that the EU Commission has had a clear focus and attempted to establish a holistic approach to energy and climate issues. Although the negotiations caused concern at times, the end results in most cases have been relatively good or acceptable with the potential to contribute to the fulfilment of shared goals. Unfortunately, some of these proposals and targets counteract rather than complement each other, making it a confusing legal environment for companies.

In 2015, the EU's circular economy package was launched, which resulted in a raft of different initiatives, including a number of proposals relating to plastic. An assessment of the Waste Directive was also carried out.

– Acceptable, with some concerns. European coordination of environmental policy is welcome. At the same time, there are elements of these decisions that are not good, for example the requirement to register especially hazardous substances in a product base, the benefit of which is doubtful and creates more administration.

The EU labour market

In recent years, the EU institutions have increased their focus on legislation relating to the labour market. When labor market legislation is co-ordinated across the EU, it is important that these be adapted to the Swedish labour market model that entails self-regulation of labour market stakeholders. A social Europe is a Europe characterised by high employment as a basis for a high standard of living.

– Negative. We are concerned about the Swedish labour market model, and we are convinced that it is competition and balanced economies that create jobs and growth, not additional social regulation.

Better Regulation

Finally, there is concern among many entrepreneurs and companies that the EU is set on a course towards increasing the regulatory burden of companies, rather than removing obstacles to trade and investment. Much of this can often be blamed on member states' implementation of EU rules, but this nevertheless undermines trust in the bloc. The major and important work to improve and simplify regulations that the EU Commission led during the mandate period must be applied and continued going forward. Crucially, additional measures must be drafted and implemented so that improvements and simplifications are followed through and implemented on the ground.

– Acceptable, but needs focus on results. It is important to highlight the fact that a whole series of simplifications for companies has been introduced, with the REFIT and REFIT Platform, at the same time the EU Commission, in contrast to Sweden, has stepped up its efforts to improve regulations, in the shape of more improvements, better quality proposals and better processes for those involved.

Method

All decisions in this report are based on decisions taken within the EU Commission's 10 political guidelines, announced in 2014 for the coming five-year mandate period (2014–2019). The Confederation has considered all these policy areas and selected the most important decisions taken by the EU Commission up to and including 9 December 2018, as well as those decisions that are expected to be finalised during the current mandate period. Decisions on each policy area have been retrieved from The Legislative Train website, which is the European Parliament's portal for all ongoing and completed EU initiatives. The decisions are in turn linked to respective regulations/directives. For those EU decisions that have been taken during Juncker's mandate period that are of particular interest for Swedish companies and Sweden, we have chosen to rate them according to a colour code: green (good), yellow (ok) or red (bad), and provided the Confederation's comments justifying each rating. All decisions in the sample have been quality checked by relevant experts at the Confederation. All these decisions have been approved by the Swedish government in the legislative process.

This report includes a total of 57 decisions chosen for their impact on Swedish companies. Of the 57 decisions, 24 are judged to be positive, 22 acceptable, and 11 negative. There is no weighting of decisions between one another, rather they have been judged on their individual merit.

Evaluations or reviews of EU policy are often associated with important legal principles such as subsidiarity. Naturally, these are important considerations, but for this report the Confederation has chosen not to include these issues other than when they have a specific bearing on a given issue.




Contents




The Digital Single Market.....	1
Trade.....	4
Better regulation.....	7
Justice and fundamental rights.....	8
Labour market, freedom of movement.....	10
Migration.....	12
Tax policy.....	13
The EU Single Market.....	15
Company law.....	20
Energy, climate and environment.....	22
Industrial defence co-operation.....	26





The Digital Single Market

The goal of the Digital Single Market was to establish the free movement of goods, people, services, capital and data, where private individuals and companies gain access to goods and services online easily and fairly, irrespective of where they live or come from.

Decision	On the use of the 470-790MHz frequency band in the Union
Significance	High-speed connection capacity with the 470-790MHz frequency across the EU to enable the development of innovative services on the audio-visual and mobile markets. Use of the frequency will also pave the way for new services in cities and rural areas, for example e-health with the support of mobile phones, patient monitoring equipment and other wireless equipment.
SN rating	
SN comments	Important to allocate a portion of the frequency to wireless broadband and invest in Europe's development of 5G networks.
Decision	Free flow of non-personal data
Significance	The regulation should, in principle, ensure the free flow of data in the EU, and thereby reduce obstacles to a competitive data-driven European economy. The proposal supports the borderless free flow of data in the EU with the aim of creating a more competitive and integrated single market for data storage and management.
SN rating	
SN comments	Addresses fragmentation of the market in data storage and cloud services. This means that movement of data effectively becomes a fifth freedom of the single market.
Decision	Single Digital Gateway - on establishing a single digital gateway to provide
Significance	A single digital gateway will offer substantial economic and social benefits to private individuals in Europe. It provides centralised access to all information that private individuals and companies need when they exercise their right to freedom of movement in the EU, a non-discriminatory on-line process. That means that if a service is available for a citizen in a certain member state, it must also be available for users from other member states. Larger companies can recruit specific staff to compile information and carry out such services. For SME and start-ups, this can represent a major challenge. Member states will be forced to offer a number of important services entirely online and make them available for cross-border use in the EU.
SN rating	
SN comments	A step towards removing barriers to the single market that will benefit Swedish companies and citizens.

Decision	The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
Significance	The General Data Protection Regulation affects all companies in the EU and introduces stricter obligations on companies to inform customers about why they retain personal data, which data they hold and how they are managed. Data may only be used with consent and personal details may not be used for any other purpose than that which an individual has consented. Companies and authorities must be able to show how they manage data securely and correctly. Every company/authority must have a data protection director and certain companies are required to have a personal data officer.
SN rating	
SN comments	Intention to harmonise privacy protection: positive. Balance between protection and enabling innovation skewed: negative). Member states have added different national lex specialis, which inhibits harmonisation. Overall, the regulation is yellow, and we do not know yet whether its implementation will be red, yellow or green.
Decision	Cyber security reform
Significance	The proposal includes new initiatives that seek to create a more effective EU agency for cyber security, introduce an EU-wide certification system for cyber security and enable a rapid implementation of the NIS-Directive.
SN rating	
SN comments	Acknowledgment of a national certification system for the whole of the EU for a holistic view of cyber security.
Decision	A digital single market strategy for Europe
Significance	Brings down national barriers in telecom legislation, copyright and data protection legislation, as well as radio wave management. The aim is to avoid deterring retailers in the single market from cross-border trade due to differences in binding national consumer and contract law. The Commission wants to improve price information for intra-EU shipping. Furthermore, the strategy was a targeted reform of regulations for e-commerce, fairer compensation to copyright holders and stronger cross-border access to broadcast services in Europe, support for European content and protection of minors and advertising rules.
SN rating	
SN comments	The digital dimension of the single market is an important priority. Unfortunately, several initiatives, such as geo-blocking, have been symbolic rather than getting to the root causes of the fragmentation of the single market. Others have been important steps on the creation of a more liberated internal market, for example the regulation on free data flows. It would be desirable to have greater focus on liberalisation in the Commission's continued work on the single market, digitally and physically.

Decision	Portability for digital services
Significance	The regulation applies to all paid online content services. Previously, obstacles to cross-border portability for online services have primarily related to content broadcast rights being protected by copyright, and often licensed on a territorial basis. Providing cross-border portability should not attract additional charges.
SN rating	
SN comments	For suppliers, these rules primarily represent a cost. This is a measure directed at consumers.

Decision	Geo-blocking regulation
Significance	From 3 December 2018 consumers and companies may visit and buy from websites throughout the EU. The regulation on unjustified geo-blocking and other forms of discrimination in terms of pricing, sales and payment terms for the purchase of products and services in another EU country. The main rule is that blocking or limiting of customers' access to e-commerce sites is forbidden.
SN rating	
SN comments	Following widespread criticism from business, the regulation was amended so that it no longer applies to pricing and no longer requires companies to ship to customers anywhere in the EU. Companies are, however, always obliged to sell to customers.




Trade

As President of the European Commission, Juncker presented a new trade and investment strategy named 'Trade for All: towards a more responsible trade and investment policy'. Trade strategy was to be focused on completing major ongoing negotiations, for example the WTO's Doha Round, TTIP, a free trade agreement with Japan and an investment agreement with China.



The investment plan paves the way for fresh negotiations in key regions such as Asia Pacific and contains plans for a deepening of the EU's ties with its African partners, and a modernisation of applicable free trade agreements with Mexico and Chile, and a customs union with Turkey.

Decision	Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between Canada and the EU
Significance	Scraps 98 per cent of the customs duties on products between the EU and Canada, while also granting EU companies the opportunity to submit tenders in Canada's public procurement processes – not only at federal level, but also in the provinces and at local level. The trade agreement creates new opportunities for EU farmers and food producers, at the same time as the EU's sensitive sectors are fully protected.
SN rating	
SN comments	An important step in scrapping customs duties between countries and at the same time open more ways in to Canada's market for Swedish companies. Also, this is the first evidence that the EU is able to negotiate such a broad trade agreement. Positive effects on trade flows between EU-Canada were achieved as early as last year.
Decision	New anti-dumping measures
Significance	The purpose is to make the EU's trade defence instruments more predictable by applying them equally to all third countries, and to improve the basis for decisions on protection measures through more objective criteria for evaluating market distortions.
SN rating	
SN comments	The purpose is positive, but certain difficulties exist in terms of evidence and implementation to demonstrate distortions. Companies have the burden of proof, which can cause difficulties.

Decision	Dispute resolution mechanism for foreign direct investment (ICS)
Significance	After heavy criticism directed at the Commission over the dispute settlement mechanism for foreign direct investment that was part of the TTIP (under the acronym ISDS, Investment to State Dispute Settlement), the Commission chose to introduce a new system known as the Investment Court System (ICS). Criticism of ISDS was focused on the risk that states may regulate in such a way as to avoid key issues such as far-reaching consumer protection, robust environmental standards and progressive labour law with the aim of seeking compromise with companies to avoid dispute resolution. ICS, which the Commission has now negotiated agreements on with Canada, Mexico, Singapore, and Vietnam, is, according to the Commission a more balanced system that allows states and companies the same options to pursue cases against each other. Another objective of the system is that it would be a preliminary step towards an introduction of a multilateral system within the framework of the WTO.
SN rating	
SN comments	This new system does not give companies the same freedoms as the previous one (ISDS) to lodge complaints about a country if it chooses to discriminate against foreign companies when operating in the host country. Discrimination can take place through, for example, expropriation, sudden evasion of certain agreed benefits etc. Particular criticism was directed towards how judges are appointed, (national and therefore “compromised” judges instead of neutral judicial experts), possibilities to appeal (which benefits resource-rich states), loser-pays-principle etc.

Expected decisions




Expected decision	Trade and investment agreement between the EU and Singapore
Significance	The trade agreement between EU and Singapore is set to remove virtually all duties on goods from the EU, simplify customs procedures and establish higher requirements and rules. The trade in goods such as electronics, food products and drugs will thereby be simplified at the same time as green growth is stimulated.
SN rating	
SN comments	After many years' wait (for a ruling from the EU court on how the agreement shall be approved) the EU has reached its first trade agreement with an ASEAN country. Singapore's markets are relatively open, so for Sweden the biggest gains will flow from the simplification of imports.

Expected decision	Trade and investment agreement between the EU and Vietnam
Significance	This trade agreement will remove more than 99 per cent of customs duties on trade in goods between the countries. Vietnam will cut import tariffs on goods from the EU by 65 per cent when the agreement enters force and gradually remove the remainder over a 10-year period. The agreement will allow EU companies to bid for public sector contracts from Vietnamese authorities and state-owned companies on the same terms as domestic companies.
SN rating	
SN comments	Significant improvements in terms of tariff levels and improved access to Vietnam's public sector market for Swedish companies. An agreement between EU and a developing country was finally secured approval despite several bumps along the road. In recent years, the issue of sustainable chapter in trade agreements has grown in importance, and this issue was one of the toughest in the EU-Vietnam talks.
Expected decision	Economic partnership agreement between the EU and Japan
Significance	For the EU and its member states this trade agreement will abolish the bulk of customs paid by EU companies, that currently amount to EUR 1 billion annually. The agreement will also open the Japanese market for agricultural exports from the EU and increase opportunities in a large number of different sectors. The economic partnership agreement is expected to increase EU exports and create new opportunities for small and large European companies, their employees and consumers.
SN rating	
SN comments	The largest trade agreement the EU has ever negotiated, which covers more than 30 per cent of global GDP. Substantial savings for Swedish companies that export to Japan, and new markets for agricultural products.



Better regulation

The ambition was to create a more democratic legislative process. Better regulation is about reforming EU rules and processes so that they achieve desired outcomes as efficiently and effectively as possible. Key aspects of this was the creation of the REFIT platform that evaluates existing legislation.


Decision	REFIT - Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH)
Significance	REACH commits industry to compile chemical safety information and to use this information to develop and apply appropriate risk management measures. Following a REFIT evaluation, several areas were identified where legislation could be improved, for example: in the event of flawed registrations and simplification of authorisation processes. This affects Swedish manufacturers, importers and distributors that import or manufacture at least 1 tonne per year of a given type of chemical. These simplifications make it possible to simplify the existing legislation for Swedish industry.
SN rating	
SN comments	A simplification of the rules without cutting any standards.
Decision	REFIT - EU passenger ship safety legislation fitness check
Significance	Evaluation of legislation regarding safety on passenger ships. Affects all companies active in the Swedish maritime sector. Lack of clarity in regulations, definitions and requirements hamper the compliance of companies. Unnecessary amounts of international rules for small ships that likely will only ever sail in Swedish waters. If the proposed rule improvements are introduced, they will reduce administrative burdens without negatively affecting safety standards.
SN rating	
SN comments	A rule simplification without reducing safety standards.
Decision	Better regulation
Significance	An inter-institutional agreement that deals with different areas where legislative processes can be improved, to better achieve established political goals. Examples of improvements include co-ordination, transparency, simplification and follow-up. Rationalisation of various EU institutions has the potential to impact all Swedish companies positively as over time they can streamline EU co-operation in general.
SN rating	
SN comments	An important step towards involving all EU institutions in work on improving legislation.



Decision	The REFIT platform
Significance	The Refit platform was established to evaluate existing legislation. Representatives of EU countries' authorities and stakeholders have met to assess rule improvement proposals submitted by governments, business and private individuals. This has given all Swedish companies an opportunity to influence which legislation is reviewed and it also offers a platform on which they can express their views. As a result, there are more opportunities for companies to influence legislation in specific areas.
SN rating	
SN comments	A unique forum where concrete proposals for rule improvements are discussed by stakeholders together and where the EU Commission is challenged to implement proposals or explain why they choose to not do so.



Labour market, freedom of movement

The ambition was a new policy on legal migration. Ensure that the EU remains an attractive destination for migrants now that populations in EU member states are shrinking.




Decision	Establishment of a European small claims procedure and regulation creating a European order for payment procedure
Significance	An update of two regulations: 1, establishment of a European small claims procedure that applies to cross-border private claims that are disputed and to uncontested claims, where the claimant's value does not exceed EUR 2,000. 2, a regulation on the introduction of a European payment system.
SN rating	
SN comments	The Confederation considers positive measures that simplify and reduce the cost of managing cross-border legal action, which is what this decision should do. However, a greater number of small-scale European cases in Swedish courts risks lengthening courts' processing times of national dispositive disputes, which would be unfortunate because these are already long. Shortcomings in impact assessment means that it is difficult to judge how large this increase will be.



Decision	Provision of emergency support within the EU
Significance	Includes mutual assistance and support in the event of natural or man-made disasters. Such crisis support can only be provided if the exceptional scale and consequences of a disaster is such that it results in severe and widespread humanitarian consequences in one or more member states. This support should complement affected member states' own measures.
SN rating	
SN comments	The severe fires that ravaged Sweden in the summer of 2018 highlight the need for international co-operation in the wake of natural disasters.
Decision	Whistleblowing Directive
Significance	The issue of whistleblower protection is handled most effectively at national level. No specific legislation for infringement of EU law should be introduced at EU level. The decision therefore deviates from the principle of subsidiarity. Furthermore, the decision deviates from basic legal principles in this area, including loyalty in employment relationships. Affected companies risk being severely damaged by, for example, baseless allegations or allegations made through disloyalty. The decision may also create disputes, lead to legal uncertainty and increase companies' costs and administrative burdens.
SN rating	
SN comments	The issue of whistleblower protection is handled most effectively at national level. No specific legislation for infringement of EU law should be introduced at EU level. The decision therefore deviates from the principle of subsidiarity. Furthermore, the decision deviates from basic legal principles in this area, including loyalty in employment relationships. Affected companies risk being severely damaged by, for example, baseless allegations or allegations made through disloyalty. The decision may also create disputes, lead to legal uncertainty and increase companies' costs and administrative burdens.



Labour market, freedom of movement

The ambition was a new policy on legal migration. Ensure that the EU remains an attractive destination for migrants now that populations in EU member states are shrinking.



Decision	ICT Directive
Significance	Regulates the conditions for entry and residence of third-country nationals within the framework of companies' relocation of staff (and their families) who will remain in a country for more than 90 days. The Directive applies to managers, specialists and trainees. The rules are aimed at facilitating companies' opportunities to move staff within the same company from one member state to another.
SN rating	
SN comments	We are critical of the Swedish Migration Agency's demands that employers must take out insurance for employees to a greater extent than is required by the Directive. Ambiguities remain over how the Directive is applied which need to be resolved.
Decision	Seasonal Workers Directive
Significance	Regulates the conditions for entry and residence of third-country nationals for seasonal employment and defines the rights of seasonal workers. The Directive also specifies the differences between applying for permits for periods shorter or longer than 90 days. The nature of employment determines whether the Swedish Migration Agency considers a job seasonal. The permit period for a seasonal employment in Sweden has been limited to six months per year.
SN rating	
SN comments	We are critical of the fact that the Swedish government limited the maximum time for work permits for seasonal work to six months. The directive gave the opportunity to grant permits for seasonal work for up to nine months a year.
Decision	Students and Researchers Directive
Significance	Regulates the conditions for entry and residence of third-country nationals for research, study, internships, volunteer work, participation in student exchange programmes and training schemes and au pair work.
SN rating	
SN comments	No comments, as we do not yet know how this will be implemented in Sweden.

Decision	Revision of the Posted Workers Directive
Significance	The Directive deals with the conditions of workers posted in a member state other than the one in which they are employed. Under the rules, member states are required to guarantee posted workers some of the mandatory conditions to which domestic workers are entitled. This includes salary, working hours and holiday allowances. The Directive is a central part of the regulatory framework of the EU's single market for services and is intended to balance opportunities of providing services with the level of protection for employees who are posted in other countries.
SN rating	
SN comments	Changes made to the Directive benefit neither companies nor employees working in the EU single market. Rather, they favour companies that want to insulate their domestic service markets from competition. The new rules are unclear, complicated and administratively burdensome to apply. The time limits that have been introduced for postings will have a negative impact on opportunities for longer postings and hamper major projects that often take longer to implement. Overall, the changes will lead to significant uncertainty for the affected companies and those who hire them. The increased business risk and increased costs that the new rules entail for foreign service companies run the risk of further aggravating the shortage of skilled labour in many sectors. This may hit, among others, the Swedish construction sector and house building.
Decision	European Pillar of Social Rights
Significance	The European Pillar of Social Rights ('the social pillar') is an initiative which aims to intensify the EU's work for a fairer and truly pan-European labour market. The pillar is intended to act as a catalyst for greater convergence, but also as a reference framework for examining member states' employment and social policy and for accelerating the reform process at national level within European planning structures. The pillar is designed as a 20-point programme of principles formulated as rights in three policy areas: equal opportunities and access to the labour market, fair working conditions and adequate and sustainable social security. Since its launch, various initiatives have been taken to implement these principles. In a 2018 keynote speech, Jean-Claude Juncker called for the content of the pillar to be made legally binding.
SN rating	
SN comments	In addition to these issues being better regulated at the national level, where responsibility for costs and enforcement lies, the starting point for several of these initiatives are legal conventions that are not based on autonomous social parties with significant responsibility and freedom of contract. As a result, the Swedish labour market model risks being undermined, with major disruption to existing collective agreements resulting in uncertainty for Swedish companies.



Migration




The EU's ambition was to introduce a new policy for safer and more legal migration.



Decision	Establishment of the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS)
Significance	Establishment of a more robust and smarter IT information system for border security, to improve border management, law enforcement and counter-terrorism. Applies to third-country nationals who are exempt from the visa requirement when crossing the EU's external borders.
SN rating	
SN comments	Advantages and disadvantages. Entails administrative burden for travellers. However, this needs to be balanced by the need for increased security.
Decision	EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan
Significance	A joint action plan between the EU and Turkey on the return of migrants/refugees from EU member states to Turkey. This includes all third-country nationals arriving in the EU from Turkey. To date, no large numbers of people have been sent back to Turkey.
SN rating	
SN comments	A decision that was taken when the EU's was under severe pressure due to a high number of migrants and refugees arriving at the same time. A compromise.



Tax

The EU's ambition was to create a balanced and well-functioning financial policy.

Decision	VAT Directive
Significance	Seeks to create a uniform tax system where the normal tax rate for value added tax should not be less than 15 per cent. This includes the entire EU and affects companies and private individuals.
SN rating	
SN comments	The Confederation has no issue with a standard tax rate limit of 15 per cent.
Decision	E-commerce Directive
Significance	Proposals to modernize VAT rules on cross-border e-commerce. Builds on regulations introduced in 2015 on telecommunications, broadcasting and electronic services. Implemented in two steps, with minor changes in threshold values in 2019 and 2021 relating to all distance sales of goods.
SN rating	
SN comments	The Confederation welcomes the proposed changes, subject to certain improvements in areas such as the right to deduct within the MOSS system and that the MOSS system should be compatible irrespective of companies' business systems. Further to the implementation of the new rules, there are also question marks about brokering concepts and definitions of platforms/marketplaces.
Decision	Lower VAT on e-publications: books, newspapers and periodicals
Significance	A Directive that sets a lower VAT rate on electronic publications, for example books, newspapers and periodicals. This includes all companies that manage different types of publications.
SN rating	
SN comments	The Confederation supports the proposed changes to the VAT Directive. However, we have been calling for a simple and clear EU rule regarding the assessment of the primary principle and sharing principle. It is especially important to simplify views on this issue in general, in the wake of digitalisation and the increasingly blurred lines between goods and services.


Decision	Amendment of Directive 2006/112/EG relating to harmonisation and simplification of certain rules in the VAT system for the taxation of trade between member states
Significance	Directive aimed at simplifying EU VAT rules regarding four specific areas within the framework of ongoing VAT reform.
SN rating	
SN comments	The Confederation supports the removal of the requirement of a “certified taxable person” so that all companies have the opportunity to take advantage of the decision. However, some question marks remain over the decision’s practical significance regarding proof of intra-community transactions, where the stated simplifications are not considered to actually facilitate for companies.
Decision	Anti-tax Avoidance Package
Significance	Measures to increase transparency and promote the fight against tax evasion. The package includes: increased use of the connection between rules against money laundering and rules on tax transparency. Improves information exchange on actual ownership. Increases supervision of those who enable and promote aggressive tax planning and improves whistleblower protection. Applies to all Swedish companies.
SN rating	
SN comments	The Confederation generally supports measures against tax evasion but has been critical of several of these proposals. For example: automatic exchange of advance notice, country-by-country reporting and the Anti-tax Avoidance Directive (ATAD), as we believe the rules are too far-reaching and significantly increase the administrative burden on companies. In addition, we have criticized the fact that the EU goes further and harder than is justified by the OECD’s BEPS proposal.






The EU Single Market




The single market, with its freedom of movement of goods, services, capital and people has contributed and continues to contribute to stronger economic growth in the EU. This is in line with increased globalisation. The Single Market contributes to economic growth in all member states and creates new opportunities for companies and consumers.


The objective of the Capital Markets Union is to achieve stronger capital flows across borders, simplify companies' access to funding, create a variation in funding sources and reduce fragmentation of financial markets. Consumer legislation must be adapted to a digital society, which means that consumer protection must be strengthened for goods, services and food products. The EU also needs improved market surveillance and to improved quality of information made available to consumers.



Decision	Commission regulations on which of certain categories of support are deemed compatible with the internal market under articles 107 and 108 of the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)
Significance	The regulation includes special provisions for various categories of support: regional aid, support for SMEs, access to finance for SMEs, research, development, innovation, training, disabled workers, environmental protection, damage caused by some natural disasters, transport for people in remote areas, cultural heritage, ports, broadband infrastructure, regional airports, sports and multifunctional recreational infrastructure.
SN rating	
SN comments	This is an extension of GBER that means several pre-approved support measures do not need to be notified and approved by the EU Commission. This frees-up resources to focus on illegal and harmful support instead. A pure efficiency measure.

Decision	Regulation (EU) 2015/2283 of 25 November 2015 regarding new foodstuffs
Significance	The regulation covers goods released on the market within the Union, including new foods imported from third countries. Foodstuffs intended for technical use, cloned animals and GMO are not covered by this regulation. It seeks to review, clarify and update the categories of foods that are new foods, including nanomaterials. This regulation should therefore state that a food is to be considered new if it is produced by a production process which was not used in the Union before 15 May 1997. New foods from a third country are to have been consumed in that country for at least 25 years as part of a standard diet.
SN rating	
SN comments	<p>The old regulatory framework for new foods entailed complex and often extremely time-consuming administration to get a product or process approved within the EU. This has been a clear example of EU legislation with an inhibitory effect on research and innovation and has resulted in competitive disadvantages for European companies in relation to the rest of the world.</p> <p>There has long been a general consensus that the rules need to be updated to accelerate approvals and stimulate research and innovation in the food industry. The updated regulation means that the approval process is centralized at EU level with clear deadlines, as well as special rules for foods that are already used safely in third countries. The ambition behind the new legislation is thus commendable, although it remains to be seen what differences will arise in practice, (entered force on 1 January 2018 so it is too early to judge its effectiveness).</p>

Decision	Amendment of Regulation (EG) no 1370/2007 concerning the opening of the market for domestic passenger transport services by rail
Significance	The regulation is intended to complete the Single European Rail Area (SERA) to promote the development of rail transport as a credible alternative to other transport options. If member states open domestic passenger traffic by rail, this should have a positive impact on the SERA. The obligation to provide transport services should be in line with public transport policy. When preparing public transport policy documents, interested stakeholders such as transport companies, infrastructure managers, employee organizations and users of public transport should be consulted in accordance with national law. Social protection for employees, long-term financing and competitive tendering are just some of the examples of the regulation's established framework for domestic passenger traffic.
SN rating	
SN comments	A step towards removing obstacles to the internal market that will benefit Swedish and EU companies and citizens.
Decision	Amendment of Directive 2012/34/EU as regards the opening of the market for domestic passenger transport services by rail and the governance of rail infrastructure
Significance	A common European railway area with common rules has not kept pace with developments as the number of personnel traffic has increased. This Directive introduces additional requirements to ensure the infrastructure manager's independence. Member states should have the freedom to choose between different organizational modes, ranging from complete structural separation to vertical integration. Furthermore, member states should establish a national framework for assessing conflicts of interest. The directive creates a framework for, among other things, infrastructure managers and that regulatory bodies should be empowered to prevent the occurrence of discrimination.
SN rating	
SN comments	A step towards removing obstacles to the internal market that will benefit Swedish and EU companies and citizens.
Decision	Single market strategy - to improve the single market - improved opportunities for individuals and companies
Significance	The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that valuable natural resources are preserved while promoting competitiveness, innovation and job creation in design, manufacture, use, repair and recycling of goods, as well as in waste management, creating protection for individuals and a better functioning market. A fairer single market where people can be certain that their rights as workers are underpinned. The package includes economic measures (that give Europe a competitive advantage), worker mobility (supporting labour mobility through improved co-ordination of social security systems and a special appraisal of the posted workers Directive) and a simplification package (for SMEs regarding e-commerce). Furthermore, the strategy will improve conditions for newly started companies in the EU (to meet statutory requirements) and create a new fund for start-ups.
SN rating	
SN comments	A step towards removing obstacles to the internal market that will benefit Swedish and EU companies and citizens.

Decision	Directive on the amendment of Directive 2014/59/EU on loss-absorbing and recapitalisation capacity of credit institutions and investment firms
Significance	New banking crisis legislation (BRRD and SRMR). Further steps towards more stable banking systems. In short, the regulations mean that states may take control of a bank that has such serious problems that they threaten financial stability.
SN rating	
SN comments	A more stable banking system, good!
Decision	Regulation on amendment of Regulation (EG) no 924/2009 on certain cross-border payments in the Union and currency exchange fees
Significance	PSD2 is a new payment services directive that promotes competition in the payment services market so that for example fintech companies are able to compete with traditional banks. PSD2, also known as the Second Payment Service Directive, should facilitate cross-border payments and other financial services within the EU and increase competition in the sector by promoting new innovative payment solutions.
SN rating	
SN comments	Good in principle with increased competition. However, various question marks regarding the security of payment services, payment initiation services and account information services etc.
Decision	European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) to stimulate research and innovation in Europe
Significance	EFSI is part of an overall strategy to address the uncertainty surrounding public and private investment in Europe. This is about sourcing investment finance, ensuring investment reaches the real economy and improving the investment climate in the Union. The strategy should promote competitiveness and recovery, reduce unemployment and strengthen competitiveness. EFSI will support strategic investment but also the single market, transport, telecommunications and energy infrastructure projects.
SN rating	
SN comments	<p>The thinking behind EFSI is good, as are the goals that have been set. It is also positive that EFSI will prioritize the financing of small companies, and that it will primarily work with co-financing with other actors to achieve greater levels of exchange.</p> <p>However, doubt remains partly due to the lack of impact assessment, partly because different EU efforts are hard to monitor. It is unclear how EFSI will be linked to investment protection/ stabilization initiatives etc. that are now being discussed.</p>



Decision	Directive (EU) 2016/943 of 8 June 2016 on the protection of undisclosed know-how and business information (trade secrets) against their unlawful acquisition, use and disclosure
Significance	There are differences between member states' legislation in terms of protecting trade secrets from being illegally acquired, exploited or disclosed by other persons. Not all member states have adopted national definitions of trade secrets. Knowledge about the scope of protection is not widely available and the scope of protection differs between member states. Furthermore, there is no civil legal redress available in the event of illegal acquisition of trade secrets. This leads to fragmentation of the single market. The Directive creates a uniform definition of trade secrets, legal remedies consisting of preventing disclosure of trade secrets (does not include information relating to the public interest), preventing illegal exploitation or disclosure of a trade secret, etc.
SN rating	
SN comments	<p>Expanded harmonization of the protection of trade secrets is desirable in its own right. The main differences between the protections provided in member states represent considerable challenges. These result in increased transaction costs due to differences resulting from different types of confidentiality agreements in all member states.</p> <p>However, the Directive has several shortcomings. One is that core issues are not covered at all. These include employees' responsibility for what they do with the employer's trade secrets. According to Swedish implementation, workers have much less overall responsibility than in other member states. Harmonization in this regard would have been desirable.</p> <p>Another shortcoming with the Directive is the definitions. In member states, there were previously large differences in interpretations of what is considered a trade secret. The Directive does not provide any guidance in this regard, which leads to significant legal uncertainty. We simply have to wait for decisions from the European Court of Justice before we know what is covered by the term. Since the concept is absolutely crucial for the application of the Directive, this is unfortunate.</p>
Decision	Directive on credit servicers, credit purchasers and the recovery of collateral
Significance	Proposals for the management of distressed loans/non-performing loans.
SN rating	
SN comments	Good ambition but unclear how this will look in detail.


Decision	Strengthening of competition authorities
Significance	Since 2003, national competition authorities have significantly stepped up their enforcement of EU competition and antitrust rules. However, losses of EUE 181-320 billion occur annually, which arise from undiscovered cartels, increasing prices of between 17 and 30 per cent on average. In March 2017, the Commission proposed a new Directive to equip all competition authorities with effective investigation and decision-making tools. Such reinforcement will introduce prohibitive fines and offer incentives and sufficient resources to independently apply EU competition rules.
SN rating	
SN comments	The process of this Directive has been entirely behind closed doors. Business has been completely excluded despite calls for greater transparency from the Confederation and BusinessEurope. This has led to a situation where the powers of the national competition authorities have been significantly strengthened compared to previously and where there is a general lack of consideration for the needs of the business sector and the situation on the ground. The Confederation supports clear and uniform supervision, but this must be conducted in a proportionate manner. These strengthened powers risk an imbalance. In addition, there have been reinforced rules regarding fines that are very far-reaching, which may also hit business organizations in addition to individual companies. However, it is positive that Sweden secured an exception for the Swedish rule requiring consent to bring material etc. from companies.
Decision	Directive (EU) 2015/2302 of 25 November 2015 on package travel and linked travel arrangements
Significance	Package travel relates to consumer rights and tourism. Differences in traveller protection rules between different member states discourage travellers in one member state from purchasing package travel and linking travel arrangements in another member state. These differences also discourage travel providers and retailers. The purpose of this Directive is to adapt the scope of protection to take account of this development and to improve legal certainty for travellers and traders, to contribute to the proper functioning of the single market and to achieve a uniform level of consumer protection, in particular a framework for the provision of information to travellers.
SN rating	
SN comments	<p>The Directive is costly and difficult to interpret for consumers and companies.</p> <p>In many cases, it is unclear what is covered by the terms “interconnected travel arrangements” and “click-through booking”. This means that many consumers do not understand their legal rights in this area, because explanatory information that must be provided to consumers also needs to be extensive.</p> <p>This information problem is placed on companies. Moreover, companies that are recipients of click-through bookings cannot be certain whether an overall booking genuinely constitutes a package tour (package travel) or not (consumer legislation). This causes great uncertainty about companies’ obligations in individual cases, for example: what applies to a specific consumer’s cancellation. In addition, this is an added regulatory burden that generates costly administrative work for the affected service providers in the hospitality industry.</p>



Company law

The ambition has been to create an effective corporate law system to foster a positive business climate in the single market across the EU. The purpose of harmonizing company law has been to promote the freedom of establishment and to implement the fundamental right enshrined in Article 16 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU.

Decision	Money Laundering Directive
Significance	This Directive (the Fourth Anti-Money Laundering Directive) aims to strengthen the framework for combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism. It includes rules for increasing transparency of who ultimately owns or controls legal entities. The purpose is to make it harder for legal persons to be used for money laundering or financing of terrorism. Legal persons are required to submit information about their actual legal identity to a central national register. Authorized authorities in member states and those able to demonstrate a legitimate interest will be granted access to information on the register.
SN rating	
SN comments	The Confederation has previously opposed the introduction of a central shareholder register due to the significant risk of such a register being abused for criminal purposes, that persons on such a register become more vulnerable to kidnapping, extortion or other crime if information on ownership is gathered in one place and especially if it is public. It also carries with it an increased risk of infringement of individual privacy. These reasons remain valid. It is doubtful whether rules of use for data are sufficiently restrictive to avoid their spread or illegal use.
Decision	Shareholder rights Directive
Significance	The overall objective of the Directive is to increase shareholders involvement in companies. To achieve this, member states must, under the Directive, introduce legislation that imposes obligations on and between intermediaries and limited liability companies and rules on shareholder rights to vote on listed companies' remuneration policies, on information in remuneration reports and on transparency and approval of related party transactions.
SN rating	
SN comments	We have no objection to active corporate governance, increased openness and measures that promote shareholder engagement across national borders. However, since no market failures have been demonstrated in Sweden in the areas covered by the Directive, there were fears of significant risk associated with new administrative burdens and increased costs for companies on the securities market without any corresponding benefit. These risks have been realized with the introduction of the Directive, which includes highly demanding and detailed regulation, in some parts is incompatible with the successful Swedish corporate governance model. The Confederation is also critical of the Commission implementing Regulation (EU) 2018/1212 laying down minimum requirements implementing the provisions of the Directive , and its draft guidelines for remuneration reports.




Decision	Market Abuse Regulation (MAR)
Significance	MAR is directly applicable in member states and replaces previous EU Directives. It includes comprehensive rules on the prohibition of insider trading, market manipulation and illegal disclosure of insider information, as well as detailed rules on the disclosure of insider information and requirements for administrative sanctions in addition to criminal sanctions. Its purpose is to further harmonize and streamline member states' regulations in this area.
SN rating	
SN comments	The Confederation has been highly critical of, for example, definitions, the exorbitantly high penalty fees and the fact that the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) has been given such wide-ranging powers to introduce Level 2 rules with many burdensome detailed regulations. A recent ESMA report shows that within the EU, sanctions were imposed for market manipulation in 35 cases in 2017, of which the Swedish financial authority (Finansinspektionen) accounted for 29 (83 per cent). For non-insider infringements and market manipulation, sanctions were imposed in 107 cases in 2017, of which Finansinspektionen accounted for 77 cases (72 per cent).






Energy, climate and environment




The EU strives for environmentally sustainable, competitive and secure energy supply. On climate, the EU's ambitions are at the forefront of global efforts incorporating high ambitions and well-developed framework regulations. Energy and climate policy is interlinked and in recent years these areas have become increasingly intertwined.

The Energy Union is a framework strategy for some 40 different initiatives in the energy and climate area and has been one of the EU Commission's flagship initiatives during the mandate period. The EU has worked on environmental issues for many years and has gradually created a common ground for member states. In recent years, the focus has primarily been on resource efficiency and the circular economy.

Decision	Implementation of the Circular Economy Action Plan
Significance	Includes a wide range of areas and an action plan with measures to maintain the value of materials and products as long as possible, reduce waste, meet future resource needs and contribute to reduced climate impact. Work on the circular economy is expected to increase employment and improve the competitiveness of European industry through innovation.
SN rating	
SN comments	We are positive towards the Commission outlining a roadmap for the circular economy and that it is structuring its work in this area. The package includes a wide range of issues that are now being studied in detail and in turn lead to more detailed measures and proposals for legislation. We will monitor this work and comment on various issues going forward.
Decision	Decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
Significance	The Paris Agreement was concluded at the UN Climate Change Meeting in 2015. It replaces the Kyoto Protocol in 2021 as the primary international climate framework. The Paris Agreement includes a long-term goal of keeping global temperature increases below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and commits signatories to take steps to limit increases to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. To achieve this goal, the parties will prepare, announce and maintain successive nationally agreed contributions. From 2023 onwards, the parties to the Paris Agreement must conduct overall assessments every five years based on the latest scientific findings and progress achieved. These reviews include assessments of progress and an evaluation of commitments for emission reductions, adaptation and support.
SN rating	
SN comments	We support the Paris Agreement and welcome the EU's rapid ratification of the agreement and its work on drawing up the legislation needed for its implementation.
Decision	Decision on the Air Quality Package
Significance	Member states have been instructed to limit emissions of NO _x and particles at various levels. Based on these limits, national governments decide how respective sectors of their economies should limit their emissions.
SN rating	
SN comments	The national emission limits for Sweden was broadly fair.

Decision	Directive on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources
Significance	The EU has a target for the share of renewable energy in overall energy use. The EU institutions have agreed that this target should be 32 %. The Directive aims to create conditions for achieving this goal and to address existing obstacles such as administrative hurdles and the need to improve cost efficiency by, for example, developing common rules on support systems. Measures and solutions at member state level would probably lead to distortions and hamper the integration of the internal energy market. The directive also establishes targets for the proportion of renewable fuels in the transport sector and a sustainability criteria for bioenergy.
SN rating	
SN comments	<p>The negotiated Directive includes acceptable/favourable and less favourable aspects.</p> <p>Positive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was considerable concern over how sustainability criteria for biomass would be defined. These were ultimately relatively favourable and are considered to have only modest impact on Swedish companies. • The Commission's proposals included a number of detailed rules for the formation of support schemes of which we were critical. Many of these were toned down during negotiations and ultimately became acceptable. <p>Less positive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have long been critical of specific target for renewables as it is primarily a means for other goals and leads to sub-optimization. During the negotiations, this target was increased, which further reinforces this sub-optimization. • Ceilings on crop-based biofuels that risk leading to an increase in the cost of conversion towards a fossil-free transport sector in Sweden.
Decision	Directive on amending Directive on energy efficiency 2012/27/EU
Significance	A Directive aimed at promoting more efficient energy use in the EU and ensuring that the EU targets for energy efficiency are achieved. Increased energy efficiency can reduce energy costs for users, reduce the EU's import dependence on energy and reduce the environmental impact from energy production and use. The Directive includes targets for energy efficiency at EU level and imposes requirements on energy savings in member states. When reviewed, only some sections of the Directive have been revised.
SN rating	
SN comments	<p>The new Directive does not include any major changes from the previous Directive, which worked relatively well in Sweden with the exception of some isolated areas. How Sweden chooses to implement the new rules will determine the impact of the new Directive.</p> <p>The part of the Directive that we have previously been most dissatisfied with (Article 8 on energy mapping in large companies) was not included in the revision.</p> <p>We have long been critical of the fact that the EU has a specific goal for energy efficiency, because energy efficiency is a means to achieve other goals and rapidly risks resulting in sub-optimization. The EU target also sets a ceiling for energy in the EU, which risks hampering growth. During the negotiations, the target was further increased, which amplifies this effect.</p>


Decision	Directive on amending Directive 2003/87/EG to promote cost-effective emission reductions and low-carbon investment
Significance	<p>The Directive that regulates the EU emissions trading system, the EU ETS. The EU emissions trading system is divided into trading periods. The current period ends after 2020, which is why a revision was necessary. It was also necessary to align the Directive with the 2030 climate target that the European Council agreed on in 2014. Examples of changes to the Directive include details on the proportion of allowances that may be auctioned on the market, and how large a proportion is to be allocated free to energy-intensive industries that are exposed to the risk of carbon leakage. Rules for the allocation of free emission allowances to industry were also changed. In 2015, it was decided that a market stability reserve would be established in 2019 to remove surplus emission rights arising from the market, after which rules on transfer to the reserve and cancellation of emission rights to the reserve have been added.</p>
SN rating	
SN comments	<p>Reaching an agreement on the EU ETS was lengthy and challenging. A number of proposals were made during the negotiations of which the Confederation was very critical. However, many of these proposals fell away during the negotiations. Given that, the final result was relatively acceptable.</p> <p>The Confederation is broadly positive towards the EU ETS, because it is a cost-effective way to reduce emissions according to a predetermined roadmap. It should therefore continue to be the central climate control tool for stakeholders.</p> <p>A worrying trend during the negotiations was a greater focus on price, rather than allowing the trading system to operate as the cost-effective market-based policy instrument it is.</p> <p>Although negotiations have been concluded, work is continuing on completing the regulatory framework for the industry's free allocations, which are also important. Exactly what the outcome of this will be remains unclear. It remains to be seen what the effects of the automatic cancellation of emission allowances will be.</p> <p>Positive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The industry continues to receive free allocation to ensure competitiveness. • Flexibility regarding the proportion of allowances that are allocated to auctioning and free allocation, which was a major issue for the industry. <p>Negative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of market stability reserve and automatic cancellation of allowances in the reserve. • No success in compensation for the industry's indirect costs related to electricity prices that the system gives rise to.

Decision	Decision on amendment of the Waste Directive (part of the circular economy package)
Significance	These changes include amendments regarding by-products and when waste ceases to be waste. The Directive also stipulates that the European Chemicals Agency, (ECHA), is to produce a database for reporting the production and import of especially hazardous substances for the recycling industry and consumers.
SN rating	
SN comments	Changes regarding, for example, by-products are welcome and support the transition to a more circular economy. Other parts of the Directive are also good. Conversely, we are critical of the database that was decided on in the trialogue and has not been subject to an impact assessment. The database will entail large amounts of administration for companies for unclear benefit. The recycling industry claims that it will not be able to use this information.
Decision	The Plastic Strategy (part of the circular economy package)
Significance	The strategy aims to reduce plastic waste, with a particular focus on marine littering, reduce the use of single-use plastic, increased recycling and increased use of recycled plastic. The strategy also includes a list of actions. In 2018, considerable emphasis was placed on producing a Directive on single-use plastic, which includes prohibiting certain single-use plastic items, producer responsibility for additional products, etc.
SN rating	
SN comments	Overall, it is positive that the EU takes a comprehensive approach to the issue of plastic and manages the problem of littering. The issue of single-use plastic has been tackled heavily and without proper impact assessments. A Disposable Plastics Directive was agreed on 20 December 2018.
Decision	Regulation on binding annual greenhouse gas emission reductions by member states from 2021 to 2030 contributing to climate action to meet commitments under the Paris Agreement and amending Regulation (EU) no 525/2013
Significance	By 2030, EU emissions of greenhouse gases are to be reduced by at least 40 per cent. This objective is divided between the sectors included in the EU emissions trading system (the EU ETS) and sectors that are not included, the so-called non-trading sector. The targets of the non-trading sectors are, distributed among EU member states through binding emission reduction targets at national level. The sectors included in the non-trading sector are, for example, buildings, agriculture, waste management and transport.
SN rating	
SN comments	<p>It would have been preferable if responsibility had been distributed more evenly between EU member states, instead of the considerable differences that currently exist. For example, Sweden has been set a goal of 40 per cent, while Bulgaria does not need to reduce its emissions by 2030 at all. A greater focus on cost effectiveness and a principle that all countries should contribute more equally would have been desirable.</p> <p>At the same time, Sweden's 40 per cent goal is considerably lower than the national target of 63 per cent that Sweden has set itself. Therefore, the effects for Sweden are judged to be small and we did not actively engage in these negotiations.</p>



Industrial defence co-operation

The EU's crisis management abilities must be developed. Civil and military resources should contribute to building up a common security and defence policy.

Decision	Regulation on the establishment of a European defence industrial development programme to support competitiveness and innovation capacity of the EU defence industry
Significance	This regulation establishes an industrial development programme for European defence. An additional aim of the initiative in particular is to deepen co-operation between companies in the different member states. A measure should only receive funding under the auspices of the programme if it is to be conducted by a consortium consisting of at least three companies that are based in at least three different member states. The Commission is to establish a two-year work programme in accordance with the objectives of the programme. This programme is assisted by a committee with representatives from member states.
SN rating	
SN comments	<p>The proposal was not optimal from our perspective because a condition for taking advantage of research grants was that all involved parties should be in the EU – and from a Swedish perspective it would have been desirable to have had third countries involved such as the US and in future, the UK (if Brexit becomes a reality).</p> <p>The trends towards “Fortress Europe” and ”Strategic Autonomy” run contrary to our interests, as our continued success is dependent upon international co-operation with leading international technology players.</p> <p>However, Sweden has a relatively large defence sector, so the fund is positive in its own right.</p>