

Opportunities with Sweden's EU presidency in 2023

Ten recommendations to
the Swedish Government



Royal Swedish Academy of
Engineering Sciences

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Foreword

»Support for the EU is strong among the Swedish public. But Sweden's level of engagement needs to increase.«

Sweden has been a member of the EU since 1995. The internal market, also called the single market, and free movement are drivers of growth and development in Europe. More than 70 percent of Sweden's exports go to the EU market.

Russia's war of aggression reminds us of why the EU was formed – as a peace project. EU nations quickly agreed on aid programmes for Ukraine and sanctions against Russia. This has united a union that will have many challenges to tackle in the near future. It is likely to be a major focus of Sweden's presidency.

Support for the EU among the Swedish public is strong, but Sweden's level of engagement needs to increase. It is important for Sweden to initiate, drive and implement proposals that are based on a combination of the interests of Sweden and those of the EU. There is otherwise a risk that Sweden – i.e. our private sector, policies, professional organisations and academic institutions – will be caught off guard by proposals that have gone too far and would seem to run contrary to Sweden's interests.

IVA will endeavour to ensure that Sweden's presidency promotes a forward-looking and engaging debate about how Sweden can position itself earlier and more prominently in EU contexts. We see significant opportunities for Sweden to play a more central role as an initiative-taker within the EU.

Sweden has success factors such as a tradition of cooperation between labour market parties, fruitful research collaboration between private and public sector actors, a consistent line on free trade, sound transition processes that facilitate change, self-regulation and a high level of R&D investment. These success factors are based on approaches that could work throughout the EU. Sweden could and should act with greater confidence and take a more proactive approach within the EU.

The objective of this report is to provide recommendations to the Swedish Government regarding Sweden's EU presidency in 2023 and our approach to EU work going forward. Another equally important objective is to promote a more comprehensive discussion here at home about the EU, what Sweden's goals are with respect to the EU and which actions we as a nation should take within the EU. Bearing in mind the significance of the EU – both as a domestic market and legislator – a more robust dialogue about the EU would be valuable. As Sweden now, for the first time since 2009, takes over the presidency, there is an opportunity for a debate within industry, the political sphere and academia on Sweden's approach, level of ambition and priorities with respect to the EU.

IVA's Executive Council is responsible for this report. The proposal to produce the report came from a working group consisting of *Birgitta Resvik*, Div. II, *Claes de Neergaard*, Div. IX, *Jan-Eric Sundgren*, Div. VII, *Elisabet Salander Björklund*, Div. VIII, *Lovisa Berglund*, Student Council member, and the undersigned. The report author is *Thomas Malmer*.

The report proposal was presented to the Collegium of the Academy and then made available to all of the divisions who were given the opportunity to provide input. The proposal was also presented at the Assembly of the Academy and individual fellows have been invited to submit their input as well. The working group subsequently presented a revised version to the Presidium for adoption by the Presidium at a meeting on 11 November.

Anders Lindberg
Vice Chair



Summary

»Sweden should initiate a process to develop a new strategy for competitiveness with a focus on a clear plan for implementation.«

During Sweden's presidency the Swedish Government should prioritise the following 10 areas:

1. Advocacy to promote increased R&D investments and more R&D collaboration

The objective of EU nations investing 3 percent of their GDP in research – both basic research and research partnerships – is vital for constant knowledge building. The knowledge triangle is essential for participation and knowledge transfer. Sweden should therefore encourage the EU to be more active in connecting its various research funding instruments, including initiatives in education at both the master's and doctoral levels.

Sweden is one of the top countries in the EU in investment in R&D – investments from both the public and private sectors – and in finding partnership models for this. Sweden can leverage this in its presidency role to spread knowledge and good examples.

2. Start work on a new competition strategy

Sweden should initiate a process to develop a new strategy for competitiveness with a focus on a clear plan for implementation. An essential aspect of this should be to use the green transition and digital transformation as a starting point to ensure that the EU recaptures its position as a leader in the global competitiveness of business and industry. It

is also important for the EU to start focusing more on measuring competitiveness – both for each member state and for the EU as a whole. *“Whats gets measured gets done”.*

Sweden is positioned at the forefront in both the green transition and digital transformation. Greater emphasis on a well-developed internal market will provide Swedish businesses with new market opportunities. Swedish technology can also contribute to these transition processes in other countries.

3. Prioritise trade negotiations with the USA and China

The fact that the market is growing for the EU's businesses and consumers is of great value because it means that products and services can be bought from and sold to larger areas. Trade negotiations with the USA should be prioritised, as should finalising the investment agreement with China. Free trade also helps to bring down inflation.

It is highly beneficial for Sweden as a small, export-dependent economy if the EU – which has far greater negotiating power than Sweden – can open up new markets for Swedish companies and consumers.

4. Be vigilant regarding “strategic autonomy”

Even if, after the pandemic and during the war in Ukraine, the EU may be justified in focusing more on protecting

supply and delivery chains within the EU, it is important for this not to become an excuse for increased protectionism, government subsidies and distorted competition.

Sweden benefits the most in an environment of free trade and open markets – both within the EU and between the EU and the rest of the world.

5. Take action to ensure that all new EU proposals are aligned with the interests of the internal market and the four freedoms

To emphasise and provide a constant reminder of the EU's overall mission, all new proposals should be tested to determine how they will impact the internal market and the four freedoms. This approach has been successfully tested in Sweden to align proposals with general principles.

The internal market and the four freedoms are by far the most important aspects of Sweden's EU membership. It therefore benefits Sweden – and the EU – for this never to be overlooked.

6. Work on establishing a consequence analysis requirement and limiting delegated acts

We welcome existing rules stating that the European Commission's reform proposals are to contain consequence analysis. Sweden should require that negotiated compromises between the EU Parliament, the Commission and the Council are also subject to a process of revised consequence analysis before decisions are taken. Sweden should also react to the increased use of delegated acts which allow the European Commission to take important decisions without consulting with the Parliament or the Council.

Making final decisions without a prior process involving consequence analysis, which can be perceived as the Commission trying to circumvent the formal decision-making process, is seen as an objectionable practice and damaging to the EU's legitimacy. This is contrary to the Swedish

public administration tradition and it is in our interest to draw attention to it.

7. Need for supply security goals

Continued development of the energy market within the EU is needed, with a particular focus on a system perspective and the importance of achieving a balance in light of the ongoing increase in weather-dependent electricity production. The EU regulations today require solidarity in any shortage situations that impact supply security, but it is unclear how to manage this in concrete terms. A goal needs to be introduced at the EU level for supply security in the electricity system. It is also important to develop the regulatory framework to achieve a power balance as the share of weather-dependent electricity production increases.

Similar to other EU nations, Sweden is currently experiencing significant fluctuation in electricity prices. Sweden is at the forefront in developing district heating based on domestic bioenergy and combined heat and power plants (CHP). This is an example of the type of baseload electricity production that needs to be increased to achieve a balanced electricity system.

8. Focus on reducing micro-management in the forest industry

As a renewable raw material and fossil-free energy resource, the forest is making a vital contribution to the climate transition. Forests and their products, such as timber, are also a carbon sink. Forests must be regarded as a productive resource contributing to the climate transition in the EU. A balance is required between conservation value, including biological diversity, and production value. The Swedish forest industry and Swedish experience can contribute to the EU's climate efforts without the introduction of EU-wide microregulation.

The Swedish forest industry has for many years worked towards giving production targets and environmental goals equal weight. Environmental considerations such as conservation value are integrated in forest industry production where the entire tree is utilised.



Through a variety of proposals the Commission is increasing EU microregulation of the forest industry.

9. Action to ensure that more Swedes work within the EU

The Swedish Government – with the help of other Swedish actors – should use Sweden’s presidency to encourage more Swedes to apply for leading and expert roles within EU bodies, and to get more companies and organisations to prioritise having a presence in Brussels. Swedish employers need to place a higher value on experience within EU-related activities and organisations. Swedish universities should be encouraged to offer programmes and courses that increase their graduates’ opportunities to secure positions within EU bodies.

More Swedes within EU organisations means that more people will be able to provide Swedish perspectives on the situation in Sweden, which will ultimately advance Swed-

ish positions and improve Sweden’s ability to put forward its points of view.

10. Promote a renewed debate on the principle of subsidiarity

Use Sweden’s presidency to renew and refresh the debate within the EU on the balance between central initiatives and decentralisation and decision-making close to those affected, after a period of centralisation and microregulation within the EU.

The legitimacy of and support for Swedish EU membership is closely linked to whether the EU is perceived as focusing on the right things and leaving the things best taken care of at the national level to be dealt with there. In several contexts – such as wage structures, forest-related issues and corporate governance – Sweden has had broad consensus with respect to its actions and reactions to what are perceived as deviations from the principle of subsidiarity.



Introduction

»IVA believes that Sweden's EU presidency will provide an opportunity to reboot Sweden's commitment to the EU and encourage more actors to be involved.«

In recent years the EU has been focusing more and more frequently on issues such as economic crisis management and the climate. The restart package under which the EU lends money to cover costs, and industrial alliances to strengthen new partnerships within the Union, represent a new approach. Today around 30 percent¹ of new legislation in Sweden originates from the EU. In the area of the environment, it is estimated at around 80 percent. Active participation in work at the EU level is thus increasingly important.

The Green Deal, which was introduced by the European Commission's Chair Ursula von der Leyen, has set the agenda for the EU's work and the Environmental Directorate has taken firm control of many initiatives.

From a Swedish perspective the EU's budget may seem large. Still, the EU's annual budget is only 50 percent more than the Swedish national budget or just under a third of the German federal budget. Around two thirds is allocated for agricultural policy, the European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund and one third to prioritised areas, including the Horizon Europe research programme.

For Sweden's presidency, the Government has chosen to prioritise five areas:

1. Create security for the EU's citizens and strengthen the EU's role in the world (incl. migration)
2. Stop organised crime
3. Accelerate the climate transition (conclude Fit for 55 during the presidency)
4. Make the EU more competitive for jobs of the future (incl. safeguarding free trade)
5. Safeguard the EU's fundamental values (i.e. the rule of law as a constitutional principle)

These are commendable priorities that IVA shares. During the Swedish presidency it is also important for Sweden to drive and advance ongoing processes such as Fit for 55, REPowerEU and the restart package. The war in Ukraine and its effects on energy and the economy are likely to have a strong influence on efforts during Sweden's presidency.

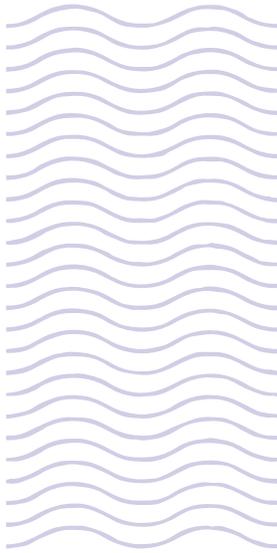
IVA believes that four additional areas are of sufficient importance that they deserve to be emphasised by Sweden during the presidency. The areas that this report is focusing on are the EU's role in strengthening:

1. Research and education
2. Business competitiveness
3. Access to energy
4. Access to raw materials

In addition to these areas, IVA is also highlighting an aspect of EU membership that deserves greater attention, namely safeguarding the principle of subsidiarity and the original idea behind this principle.

IVA believes that Sweden's EU presidency will provide an opportunity to reboot Sweden's commitment to the EU and encourage more actors to be involved in exploring how the EU can be a greater asset for the whole of Europe as well as for Sweden. It could also be argued that IVA has not paid enough attention to the EU either. But through renewed efforts, IVA can contribute by serving as an independent platform for dialogue on Swedish positions on the issues that IVA focuses on – competitiveness, knowledge, education and research. By bringing actors together to discuss issues that come up within the EU, we can raise awareness about what is going on and therefore get more actors to act and take a stance on EU-related matters.

1 Sieps 2019:10p



The EU's role in supporting research and education

»To achieve competitiveness in business and industry we need, among other things, more science and technology graduates.«

Universities and research institutions play a key role in the development of society through the knowledge and expertise they generate, above all through education but also through the brand new knowledge created. The competitiveness of the private as well as the public sector is highly dependent on this. Meanwhile the issues to address are becoming more and more complex and this requires new approaches in terms of which education programmes are needed and how research is carried out.

Knowledge and expertise is often needed from a variety of fields and actors to solve important problems. The development of the Covid-19 vaccine is a clear example of academia, the private sector and the political sphere working together. But we also know that individuals play a vital role in research, education and innovation.

Free movement and the possibility of studying in other countries within the EU are important. Student exchange programmes and research collaboration increase contacts and interactions within the Union, resulting in the development of networks and new forms of cooperation. This can provide a boost for both research and industry.

The EU needs a higher education sector that can handle this new reality – in both research and education. During Sweden's 2009 presidency the so-called *Lunda Declaration* was produced to draw attention to the global challenges as a vital point of departure for the EU's future research policy. It also highlighted the need for cooperation. This declaration was revisited at a meeting in Lund in 2015, but Sweden should still continue to drive these issues with an even more clearly defined link to education and the talent supply.

The EU has many excellent universities. 20 percent of all scientific articles published in the world originate in the EU, even though the EU accounts for only 7 percent of the pop-

ulation. However, this trend in the percentage of scientific articles is declining, mainly due to China's significant expansion in research. In global rankings of the world's universities – rankings that, granted, could be questioned – universities in Europe place well, even though the lists are still dominated by universities in the USA and to an increasing extent in Asia. This trend is an indication that competition is getting tougher.

The EU's goal of EU member states investing 3 percent of their GDP in R&D in 2020 has not been met. In 2020 EU-27 was at 2.27 percent, which is below the OECD average of 2.7 percent and lower than China which is at 2.4 percent. Sweden, however, remains at the high level of 3.5 percent. The private sector accounts for 70 percent of Sweden's R&D investments.

Horizon Europe, the EU's research programme with an annual budget of just over EUR 10 billion, is important in providing a boost to research in Europe but also in increasing both research utilisation and collaboration within Europe. The three pillars of the programme: Excellent Science, Global Challenges & European Industrial Competitiveness, and Innovative Europe contain a number of instruments. These pillars, particularly the second one, are entirely in line with the Lunda Declaration. Horizon Europe will be evaluated mid-way through the programme and no later than 2025² and the result will provide an important foundation when designing the next programme after 2027.

Safeguard the 3 percent target for research

With toughening global competition and the need to develop solutions for energy and the climate, more research

2 https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/support-policy-making/shaping-eu-research-and-innovation-policy/evaluation-impact-assessment-and-monitoring/horizon-europe_en

is needed. It is also important to be able to provide high-quality education. Sweden therefore needs to continue to encourage EU member states to reach the 3 percent target for research. R&D related to the climate goals needs to increase at an even faster pace.

Develop a knowledge triangle

Since education is without doubt the universities' most important mission for the development of society, Sweden should continue to emphasise the concept of the knowledge triangle, i.e. the interplay between education, research and innovation, and for university programmes to have an academic foundation but also be designed to meet the needs of society.

To achieve competitiveness in business and industry we need, among other things, more science and technology graduates. A logical development that Sweden should encourage is for the EU, to a greater extent, to connect its various research funding instruments with education initiatives at both the master's and doctoral levels. The European Institute of Technology (EIT) is one of the EU instruments that works with the knowledge triangle. More such initiatives are needed, not least in the EU's missions, which constitute an important part of the Global Challenges pillar.

Strengthen and develop the European Research Council

As society develops in increasingly complex ways and in light of the great societal challenges we are facing, cooperation between actors is key. EU instruments such as part-

nership programmes and industrial alliances³ have a clear emphasis on cooperation, but also on solving the challenges societies are facing. Individual excellence also plays an important role in driving and advancing research. The European Research Council (ERC) has a vital role to play in this regard. In addition to the ERC helping to generate excellent and top quality research through its grants, evaluations show that research funded by ERC is helping to generate a large number of patents as well.⁴ The ERC is also instrumental in the progress of research at universities within the EU and thereby also in promoting these institutions' global status. Sweden should continue to be a clear advocate for developing and strengthening the ERC.

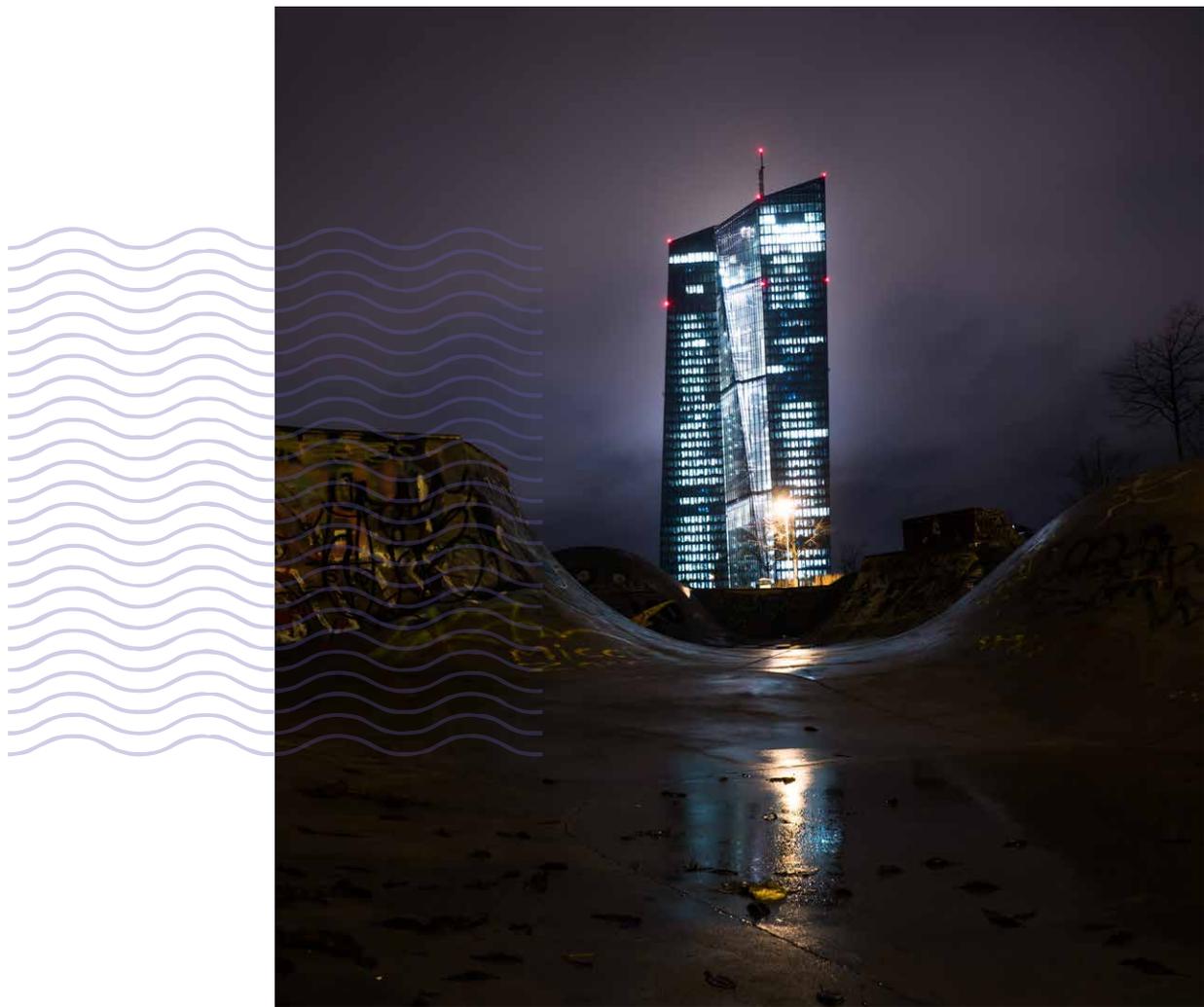
Develop cooperation around research infrastructure as well as testing and demonstration facilities

As research is required to address increasingly complex issues, the need for advanced research infrastructure is also growing. One example is synchrotron light facilities to analyse materials. To get research discoveries out into the market more quickly we also need testing and demonstration facilities, not least to speed up the green transition. Sweden has invested substantially in research infrastructure initiatives nationally through, for example, MAX IV and one of the largest joint research initiatives in the EU, the European Spallation Source (ESS) located in Lund. Sweden should therefore continue to be a driver to ensure that ESS is run professionally and funded as effectively as possible, not only in terms of investment but also its operation. These facilities also need directives and strategies to optimise their utilisation, not only by academic institutions but also by industry and the public sector.

3 Industrial alliances are partnerships within industries or value chains of companies, political bodies etc. They do not receive any funding and they make their own decisions. https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/industry/strategy/industrial-alliances_en

4 <https://sciencebusiness.net/news-byte/erc-grants-and-horizon-2020-projects-ict-and-energy-generate-flurry-patents>





The EU's role in making companies more competitive

»Ensure the EU's global competitiveness based on the green transition and the digital transformation.«

As more and more regions in the world are becoming increasingly high tech, the EU is losing ground relative to China and the USA in areas such as the 5G rollout and the share of high tech exports. China has also overtaken the EU in R&D investment.⁵ The EU needs to provide better conditions to promote competitiveness in business and industry. This means above all ensuring that the internal market functions even more effectively, investing in knowledge development, creating good conditions for enterprise and entrepreneurship, and ensuring that the EU has well-developed digital infrastructure. Over the next few years the energy supply needs to be stabilised and price levels need to become more normalised to make European energy-intensive industries better able to compete again.

More attention should be paid to the significant problems of global warming, eutrophication and threats to biodiversity. Part of the solution is provided by technology, innovation, research and methods that can help to reduce emissions, provide clean water and save the natural environment while also contributing to better health. There are numerous researchers and startups working in these areas as well as established corporation. The green transition in northern Sweden is a good example of this.

The EU's roll is primarily to create the right market conditions by developing the internal market and by continuing to emphasise facilitating the essential green transition and the digital transformation. The latter is also essential for an effective green transition. The EU's internal market is one of the Union's greatest assets even though – 30 years after its creation – it is not yet fully developed. The market's size is, for example, crucial for fast upscaling of new technology and the ability of many companies to compete globally as well. For Sweden as a small open economy, it is vital for business competitiveness that the opportunities for upscaling and trade are as good here as they are in the USA and China.

The EU has emphasised the issue of competitiveness on many occasions, the first time in the Lisbon Strategy in 2000. It set a goal for Europe to be the most competitive and dynamic, knowledge-based economy in the world with the ability to create sustainable growth and with more and better jobs, as well as greater social cohesion. Some new initiatives have been taken since then, including the Europe 2020 strategy adopted in 2010. The EU has without doubt set its ambitions high, but it has also found it difficult to get the necessary measures implemented to achieve the results fast enough. This is in part due to the fact that implementation of the strategies was largely the responsibility of member states and they in turn have different problems and priorities. A large portion of the EU's budget is tied up in structural funds and agricultural policy, which makes it hard to fund new initiatives.

Today there are several relevant initiatives aimed at making the EU more competitive, including by improving the competitiveness of the internal market, managing dependencies and reducing dependence on other countries through "strategic autonomy".

It is, however, important to be vigilant regarding the EU's economic policy development. Microregulation is increasing in multiple areas and there is a desire to "secure" supply chains by subsidising production of strategic products within the EU. The trend of semiconductor production being heavily subsidised in Asia, the USA and the EU is a cause for concern. Increased public funding for certain industries could disrupt the market by making it less dynamic and thereby reducing economic renewal over time. There is also a risk that IPCEI projects⁶ will go mainly to larger member states that are better able to co-finance such projects.

Innovation requires constant knowledge development and ensuring that the knowledge gained by entrepreneurs and

5 European Competitiveness and Industry, Benchmarking Report 2022, ERT

6 Important Projects of Common European Interest (IPCEI) – decided on by member states and receive financial support, for example battery and hydrogen gas projects. https://competition-policy.ec.europa.eu/state-aid/legislation/modernisation/ipcei_en

companies is converted into goods and services. So the question is: What is the best way for the EU to contribute? The EU's annual budget is only around 50 percent more than Sweden's national budget. Around two thirds of the EU budget goes to regional development and agricultural policy. This means that money is not the means by which the EU can have the most influence.

The EU does, however, make decisions on laws and is responsible for the internal market and aspects of trade policy. As the EU's authority has increased in areas such as the environment, agriculture and transport, so too has the amount of legislation connected to the EU. Today around 30 percent of new Swedish laws and ordinances originate from the EU.⁷ There is, however, significant variation between areas. In agriculture, for example, the share is 58 percent, while in education it is just 4 percent.⁸

Having a fully functional internal market and developing free trade agreements with third countries are extremely important for Sweden as a small, trade-dependent nation. This is even more important in times of high inflation because trade also has a price-reducing function.

Develop the internal market and international trade

IVA believes that the focus of work at the EU level should be on areas where the EU has influence and can have a significant impact. Safeguarding and developing the internal market and trade with third countries is a core task of the EU. According to a survey conducted by the European Round Table for Industry (ERT),⁹ European companies consider the internal market to be 75 percent "ready". The ERT points to the fact that many market obstacles remain and more harmonisation of national regulations is needed. This is a balancing act between removing nations' special

requirements and not overregulating or regulating things that are not needed for the internal market.

During its presidency, Sweden should focus on accelerating development of the internal market and, of course, also on continued development of free trade with third countries, above all the USA, but also concluding the investment agreement with China.

Initiate work on a new strategy for competitiveness

Sweden should initiate a process to develop a new strategy for competitiveness with a focus on a clear plan for implementation. An essential aspect of this should be to use the green transition and digital transformation as a starting point to ensure that the EU recaptures its position as a leader in the global competitiveness of business and industry. It is also important for the EU to start focusing more on measuring competitiveness – both for each member state and for the EU as a whole. *"What gets measured gets done"*.

Strategic autonomy must not turn into protectionism

Strategic autonomy may sound like a good idea in an increasingly uncertain world with disruptions in value chains and logistics chains. Autonomy can be achieved in various ways and should not involve the EU preventing the market from being dynamic by, for example, imposing export tariffs or through large subsidies for certain companies in specific markets. Good security can be achieved through a combination of guaranteeing domestic production capacity and diversified imports so that the EU is not unilaterally dependent on a few undemocratic countries.

7 EU i riksdagen, Sieps 2019:10p.

8 Ibid

9 https://ert.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/ERT-Single-Market-Stories_WEB-low-res.pdf

Important Projects of Common European Interest (IPCEI)¹⁰ has been created to strengthen the EU's strategic autonomy and ability to invest in new technology, such as hydrogen gas, batteries and microelectronics. The instrument means that market forces can to some extent be disrupted by individual countries which, with the help of government subsidies, support certain areas. This is likely to primarily benefit the EU's largest member states. The instrument should only be used in specific situations where market forces are not functioning as they should.

Simplify rules to promote development of small and medium enterprises

Entrepreneurship and development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) is key for economic renewal. Regulating enterprise is largely a national concern but despite this, as mentioned above, there are multiple EU regulations that impact business competitiveness.

Many EU initiatives involve targeted support for business/innovation. The Swedish National Audit Office, which reviews innovation funding, states the following: "The assessments carried out of the effects fairly unanimously show that the funding has no or very limited statistically significant effects".¹¹ Having generally good conditions for enterprise is, in other words, often more important for companies than receiving targeted funding. The EU should therefore focus on reducing the burden of regulation and on simplifying processes. Two examples where simplification is needed and that Sweden should push for are directives that impact environment impact assessments and legislation for mergers and acquisitions.

Avoid micromanagement and make decision processes more transparent

The EU's goal of net zero carbon emissions requires a common definition of what is sustainable from this perspective. IVA has previously pointed out that the taxonomy for sustainable investment is an innovative tool with great potential.¹² But it is important for the tool to be implemented on a solid scientific basis and to ensure that the screening criteria are not counterproductive. As the taxonomy can have a highly restrictive effect on activities, decisions on it should be made in politically open and transparent processes and not via so-called delegated acts.

The European Commission is using delegated acts more and more these days, for example in connection with the EU taxonomy. Delegated acts¹³ are proposed and adopted by the Commission after consultation with teams of experts. The European Council and Parliament then have two months to put forward any objections before the act enters into force. In order not to undermine the EU's legitimacy, delegated acts should be used with great caution and only in small areas.

The EU currently conducts consequence analysis when the Commission puts forward proposals, but does not do so after the proposals have been negotiated with the Council and the Parliament, even though the original proposal may have been amended significantly. One way to ensure that the EU focuses on its core tasks is to subject all proposals in their final form to a test based on alignment with the four freedoms (free movement of goods, capital, services and persons). This could be a way of highlighting the consequences of proposals for various actors and also linking them to the EU's core tasks.

¹⁰ https://competition-policy.ec.europa.eu/state-aid/legislation/modernisation/ipcei_en

¹¹ Swedish National Audit Office, Government support for innovation and enterprise, RIR 2016:22. There are also arguments in Questioning the Entrepreneurial State: Status-quo, Pitfalls, and the Need for Credible Innovation Policy (Wennström and Sandström, IFN).

¹² <https://www.iva.se/publicerat/iva-provides-feedback-on-recommendations-for-the-eu-taxonomy/>

¹³ https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-making-process/adopting-eu-law/implementing-and-delegated-acts_sv#implementing-acts



The EU's role in securing access to energy

»The most important objectives for the EU's energy policy are: supply security, competitiveness and ecological sustainability.«

It is no understatement to say that the energy sector and the energy markets in the EU are facing gigantic challenges geopolitically, economically and from a climate perspective. Industries and the transport sector throughout Europe are making substantial and important investments in connection with the ongoing climate transition, with electrification being an important part of the solution. Energy consumption is, for example, expected to double over the next 20 years in Sweden and this will most likely happen in many other member states as well. The challenge for the entire EU energy system is that it needs to be fossil free and at the same time grow significantly, while also being globally competitive. The EU energy policy objectives are:¹⁴

- Diversifying the EU's sources of energy, ranging from fossil fuels, nuclear power to renewables (solar, wind, biomass, geothermal, hydro-electric and tidal) to ensure energy security.
- Realising a fully integrated, efficient internal energy market without technical or regulatory barriers.
- Improving energy efficiency and the interconnection of energy networks, and cutting emissions.

- Moving towards a low-carbon economy in line with the commitments set out in the Paris Agreement.
- Promoting research in low-carbon and clean energy technologies, and prioritising research and innovation to drive the energy transition and improve competitiveness.

In 2020 the EU accounted for just 42 percent of its own energy production, while 58 percent was imported. The EU's energy mix consisted of oil 35 percent, natural gas 24 percent, renewable energy 17 percent, nuclear power 13 percent and coal 12 percent.¹⁵ There is thus a high dependence on fossil energy.

In both Germany and Sweden the percentage of base-load electricity production has decreased and Germany has become more dependent on Russian gas. The war in Ukraine and the sanctions against Russia have caused uncertainty with respect to a large proportion of the EU's energy imports, which has led to significant price increases. It is therefore urgent to reduce fossil energy dependency even faster and to secure the short-term energy supply. The European Commission's plan of action called REPowerEU, the objective of which is to end dependence on fossil energy from Russia, is placing great faith in rapid growth in hydrogen gas use, which requires a significant increase in access to electricity.

14 https://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/chapter/energy.html?root_default=SUM_1_CODED%3D18&locale=sv

15 <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/infographs/energy/bloc-2a.html>

The most important objectives for the EU's energy policy are: supply security, competitiveness and ecological sustainability. According to the EU, these objectives will be most effectively achieved through an integrated European energy market. Work on a common internal energy market began at the beginning of the 1990s. At that time a number of energy market reforms were passed to create a division between power producers and grid owners, and to promote competitive energy trading. Development of the regulatory framework has continued and has, in many ways, contributed to more efficient trading and more interconnected electricity transmission infrastructure. There is, however, plenty of work left to do in adapting market models and increasing transmission capacity between and within countries, the latter not least in Sweden.

Continued development of the energy market within the EU is needed, with a particular focus on a system perspective and the importance of achieving a balance in light of the ongoing increase in weather-dependent electricity production in the EU.

Need for supply security goals

The EU electricity market is not fully functional today. Harmonisation of the basic regulations is needed at the EU level, but the regulations may also need to be adapted regionally. The EU regulations today require solidarity in any shortage situations and regional agreements regarding supply security, but it is unclear how to manage this in concrete terms. A goal is needed at the EU level for supply security in the electricity system.

The increasing share of solar energy and wind power production in Europe means that there is an even greater need for power transmission from neighbouring areas. The increased flow between member states requires a more advanced regulatory framework to find ways to maintain a power balance that is aligned with the electricity market.

To create a stable electricity system that provides supply security, we need to ensure that the share of baseload electricity production from hydropower, bioenergy or nuclear

energy, or various forms of stored energy, is available in relation to the weather-dependent share.

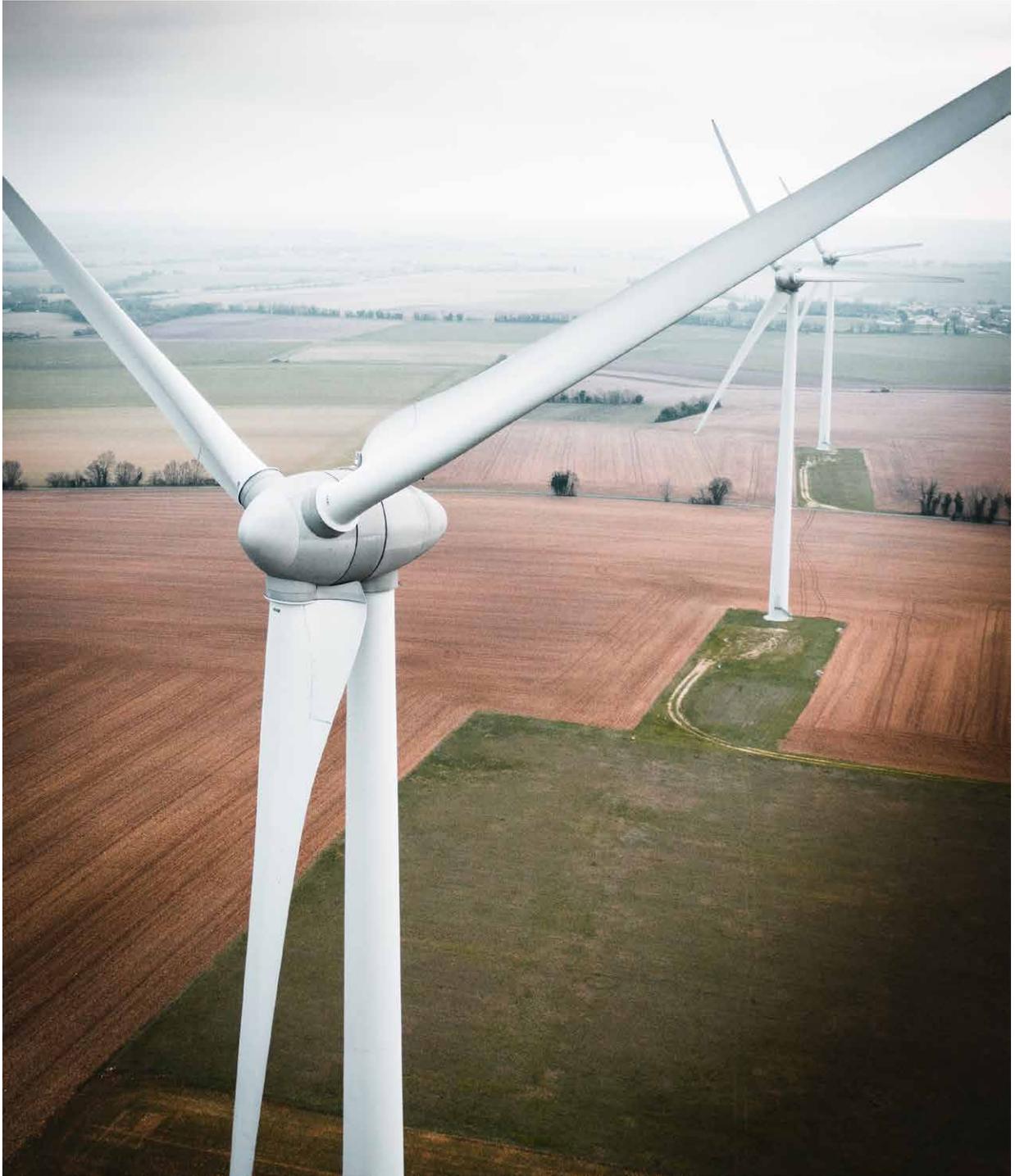
Analyse the consequences of different paths based on a comprehensive systems approach

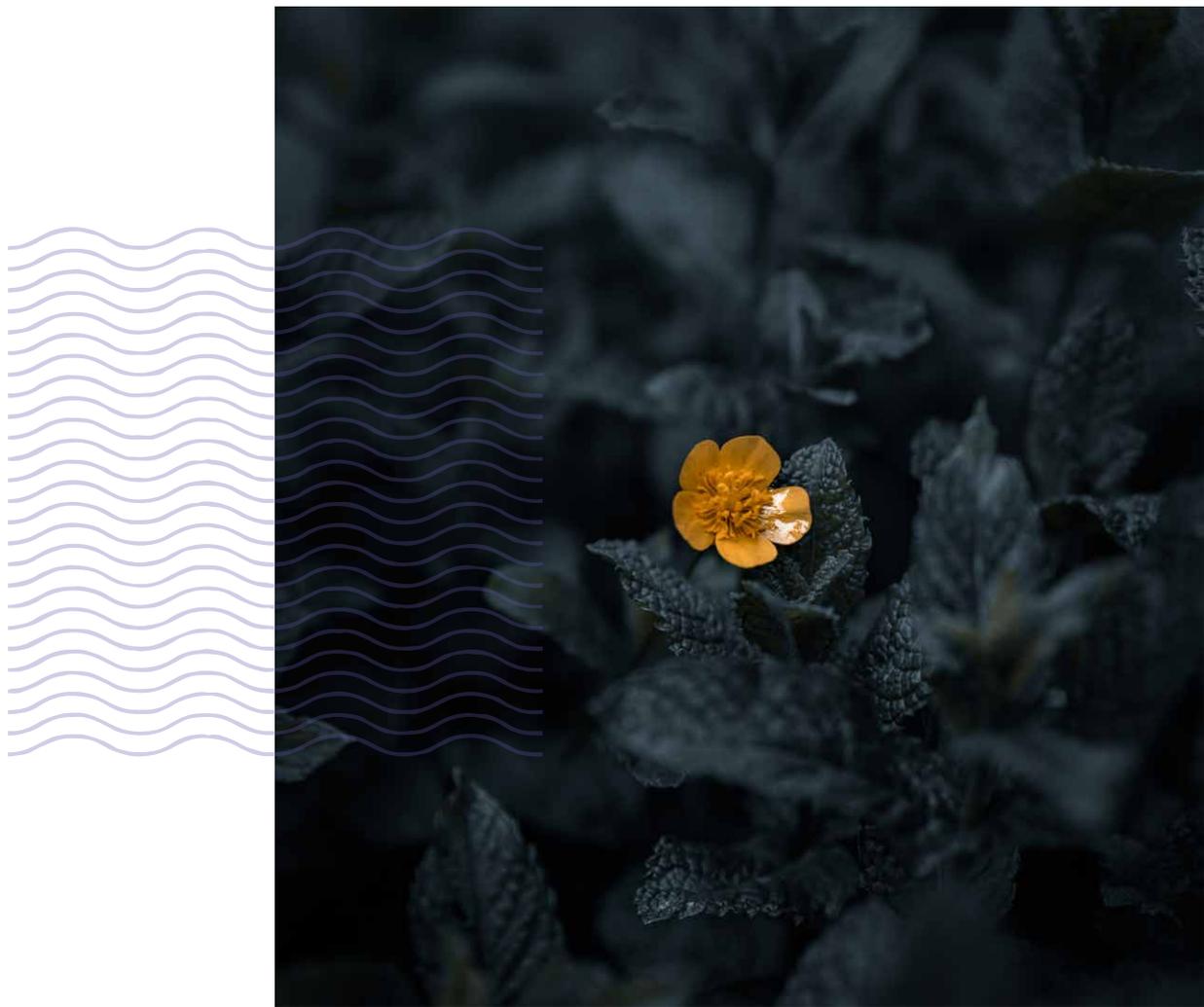
According to the principle of subsidiarity it is the responsibility of the individual member states to design their own energy mix, depending on local conditions in each country – from both a market perspective and based on geographical conditions. This should continue to be the case, but the EU could take a more active role by, for example, analysing the consequences of the different paths taken by the member states at an overall systems level to develop the EU's energy policy in a systematic way.

An increased focus on energy efficiency measures in areas such as heating is also a means by which the EU can generate less dependence on fossil energy imports into the EU. The EU needs to create opportunities as quickly as possible for the member states to improve efficiency and adapt their market models to their local conditions.

Include bioenergy in REPowerEU

It is worth noting that REPowerEU does not promote bioenergy as a tool. Sweden is at the forefront in developing district heating based on domestic bioenergy and combined heat and power plants (CHP). Lithuania has followed this example and has ended its dependence on Russian energy. Sweden's experience in this area should be leveraged to ensure that bioenergy is included in REPowerEU.





The EU's role in improving access to raw materials and inputs

»The forest is a strategic resource that provides renewable raw materials and fossil-free energy, both of which contribute to the climate transition.«

The pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine have caused disruptions in many global value chains. This has also created problems within the EU in the form of component shortages and long delivery times. The EU is therefore discussing concepts such as "strategic autonomy" to ensure access within the EU to specific inputs (such as semiconductors) and raw materials (such as cobalt and lithium), and energy. The EU's focus on how to secure delivery chains in uncertain times is a positive development, but the question is: What is the best way for the EU to do this without changing the market conditions or disrupting markets?

Strategic autonomy can be achieved in a variety of ways and it is important to prevent it from turning into protectionism, which would negatively impact the EU's internal market and global trade. In the area of energy the focus is on reducing dependence on Russian gas and oil. To succeed in this, incentives are needed to invest in all types of fossil-free energy and to ensure that permit processes are made more efficient and permits processed faster.

The rising consumption of electricity in green basic industries and for transport will significantly increase the demand. The electricity society means transitioning from fossil-dependence to an increased dependence on specific raw materials, in particular lithium, cobalt and rare earth metals that are needed for transmission, electronics components and batteries.

Sweden is one of the EU's leading mining nations and the green transition in Europe is entirely dependent on many metals and also minerals. The EU has for many years and to a large extent relied on importing these. Some unclear aspects in the legislation and regulations have made it difficult to invest in this area. With legislation and regulation that is more relevant and appropriate, Sweden can help to promote increased extraction of, for example, rare earth metals – both in new mines and through recovery from ex-

isting slag products, scrap metals and other residual products in so-called urban mining.

When Sweden entered the EU it was assumed that forest policy would be a domestic issue. This is still the case in theory, but not in practice. Different sections of the European Commission have gradually become more interested in the forest. This is mainly manifested in the form of directives on the environment, climate and energy, but also for finance. The local conditions for running forestry operations are vastly different among the EU member states.

Turning back the clock on development is not a realistic ambition as there are strong interfaces with policy areas and EU competence. When it comes to the forest, it is therefore important to aim for an acceptable compromise based on ensuring that forest policy itself continues to be adapted to local conditions, while recognising that decisions in other areas will also impact the forest. These decisions in turn need to take into account what is involved in running a forestry enterprise.

The forest is a strategic resource that provides renewable raw materials and fossil-free energy, both of which contribute to the climate transition. It is necessary to see the forest as a productive resource in the EU and to maintain a balance between conservation value, such as biological diversity, and production value. Sweden has a long tradition of balancing these interests and this needs to be emphasised in work at the EU level, including by Sweden adapting its reporting so that it is done in the same way as in other EU nations. The Swedish forest industry can contribute to the EU's climate efforts without the introduction of EU-wide microregulation.

The forest as a carbon sink is part of the EU's climate policy. Sweden should work to ensure that the EU also measures and recognises carbon sinks in materials.



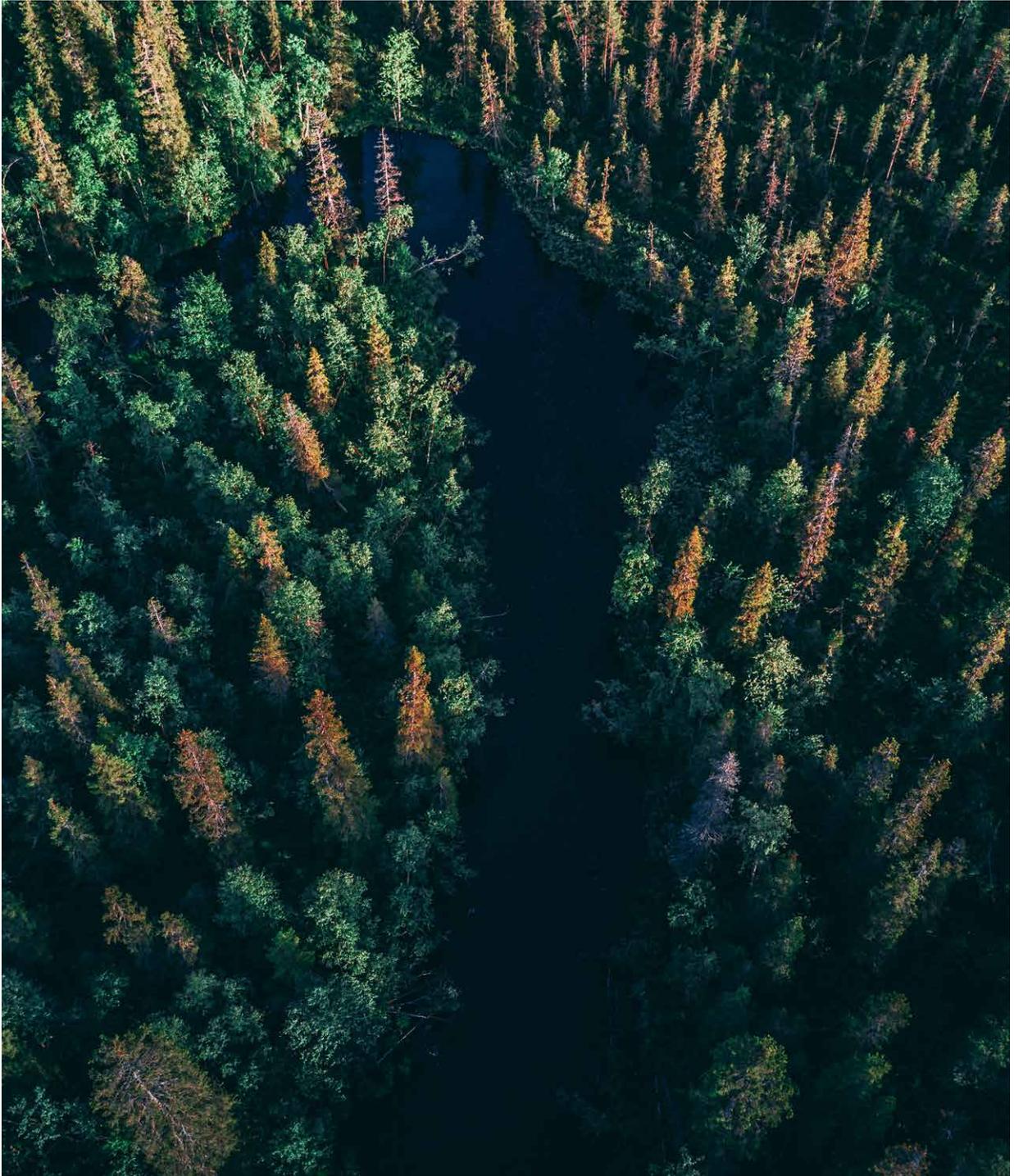
Develop the EU's environmental legislation and harmonise Sweden's implementation with the rest of the EU

Environmental impact assessment is currently perceived as a significant challenge when, for example, establishing a new enterprise. A discussion is needed on how the EU's environmental legislation can be more effectively applied. The discussion should address both the structure and how Sweden is implementing and applying directives. Sweden should address the obstacles that current legislation presents, for example through exemption options in the framework directive for water and adapting other legislation to facilitate faster permit processes.

Alongside working within the EU on this, Sweden needs to review how existing EU legislation has been implemented and applied and how it can be simplified.

Efforts to reduce micro-management of the forest

The Swedish forest industry has for many years worked to ensure that production targets and environmental goals, including biodiversity, carry equal weight. Environmental considerations are integrated into forest industry production, which uses the entire tree and is only ultimately used as energy. Sweden and other forest countries such as Finland and Austria need to increase awareness within the EU on the significance of forestry, both for the EU in general and for the climate. With different climate zones, geology and historical use of the forest, the conditions for running forestry operations vary within the EU. The Government should therefore aim to increase knowledge about forestry and reduce micromanagement of the industry.





Safeguard the principle of subsidiarity and increase involvement

»It is crucial for the EU to focus on issues where the EU adds value for the member states that is difficult for the states themselves to create.«

Safeguard the principle of subsidiarity

The EU has expanded substantially and added many new member states. Integration and cooperation have deepened in several areas, often with a focus on the internal market. The EU has, for example, common environmental regulations, trading in emissions allowances, a common currency etc., all of which are facilitating the way the market works.

But despite the common market and a partial common currency, there are big differences between member states in terms of their economy, culture and ecology. The principle of subsidiarity is therefore important. It states how the EU can exercise its authority at a level that is as close to the citizens as possible:

In areas in which the EU does not have exclusive competence, the principle of subsidiarity seeks to safeguard the ability of the Member States to take decisions and action and authorises intervention by the Union when the objectives of an action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States, but

can be better achieved at Union level, "by reason of the scale and effects of the proposed action".¹⁶

It is, in other words, crucial for the EU to focus on issues where the EU adds value for the member states that is difficult for the states themselves to create, such as the internal market and free trade with other parts of the world.

Increased involvement early on in EU processes

The strong public support for the EU is not necessarily reflected in the public debate.¹⁷ An example of this is that the number of Swedish journalists who cover Brussels has decreased significantly since Sweden joined the EU.¹⁸ Swedish politicians/political parties and Swedish organisations need to be more proactive in creating their EU agendas and forming alliances. It is important, for example, when responding to "open reports circulated for comment" to submit input early on in the EU processes, and not, as in the Swedish procedure, wait for finished proposals. Based on Sweden's own EU agendas, a dialogue is needed to present Swed-

16 <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/sv/sheet/7/subsidiaritetsprincipen>

17 In for example Eurobarometer 94.2 (Dec. 2020) 68 percent of Swedes stated that Sweden's EU membership is a good thing, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/files/be-heard/eurobarometer/2020/parlemeter-2020/factsheets/se-sv-factsheet-parlemeter-2020.pdf>

18 <https://omeuropa.se/om-oss/>



ish positions early on ahead of consultation, strategies and legislation proposals from the Commission.

Although officers serving in the EU institutions do not represent the countries, it is one way for various EU bodies to gain an understanding of national conditions, i.e. what makes an issue important for a nation or not. With just 1.9 percent of the employees in the three EU institutions, Sweden is underrepresented in relation to our share of the population of the EU (2.3 percent).¹⁹ Interest in working within the EU is clearly not as big in Sweden as in, for example, Denmark and Finland.

The Swedish Government should use Sweden's presidency to encourage more Swedes to apply for jobs and for lead-

ership and expert roles within EU bodies, and to get more companies and organisations to prioritise having a presence in Brussels. It should also encourage Swedish employers to place greater value on experience in EU-related organisations. Swedish universities should be encouraged to offer programmes and courses that increase their graduates' opportunities to secure positions within EU bodies.

Increasing Sweden's presence has been talked about for a long time, but it does not seem to be happening. Increased discussion in Sweden about the EU's development should result in more organisations in Sweden being more interested in working with the European Commission and being present in Brussels.

19 <https://www.europaportalen.se/2020/02/svenskar-underrepresenterade-i-eu>



IVA can help to promote a deeper Swedish EU discussion

Through renewed efforts, IVA can help by acting as a platform for dialogue about Swedish positions in IVA's focus areas – competitiveness, knowledge, and education and research. By bringing various actors together to discuss issues that come up within the EU, we can raise awareness about what is happening and therefore get more actors to consider developing positions on EU-related issues. IVA is currently exploring how these efforts can be intensified.

The goal does not always need to be achieving consensus, but rather to explore issues of importance for Sweden and to stimulate dialogue. It is beneficial for this to be done in cooperation with other actors such as the European Commission in Sweden, various government agencies and professional organisations.

Increased Swedish involvement in work at the EU level can help to further develop the EU. It is important, however, to focus on how Sweden as a more active EU member can unite Swedish interests with those of the EU, and thereby promote both free trade through the internal market and more free-trade agreements, and address global environmental issues through EU-wide implementation of GHG emissions reductions.

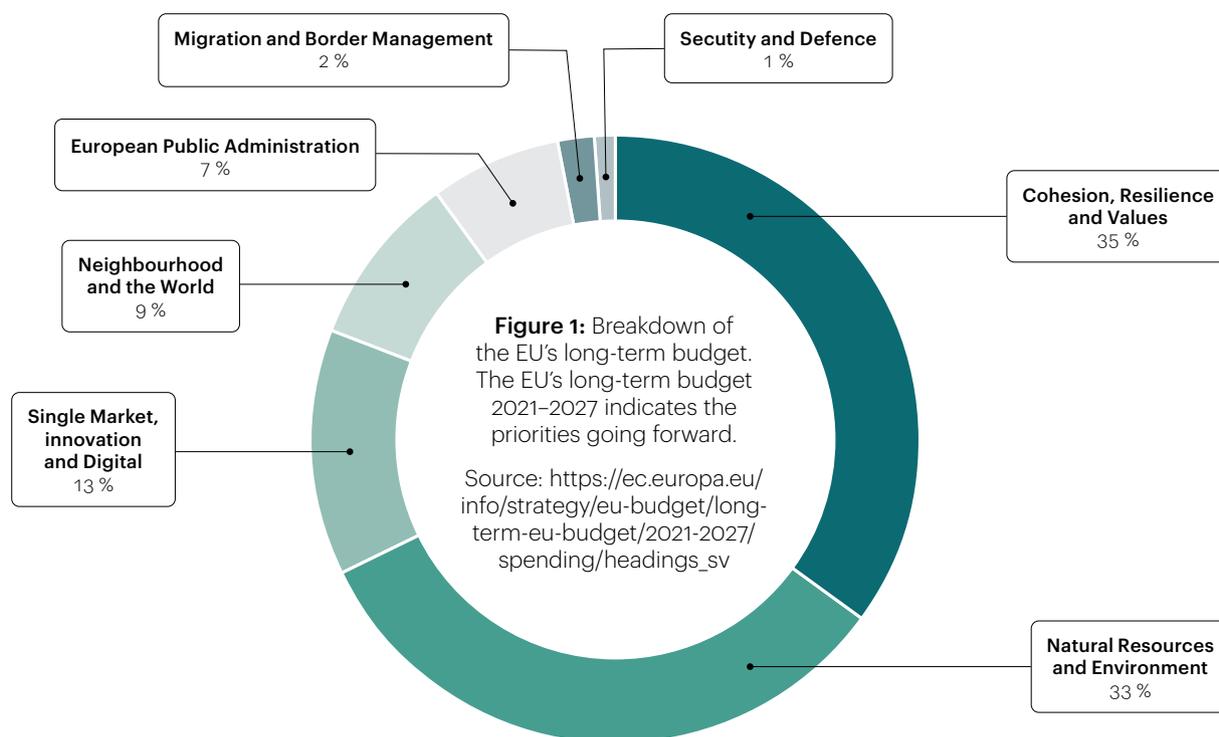
The Swedish presidency can be a starting point for longer, greater and more strategic commitment in the EU. This can increase Sweden's influence, and the benefits of EU membership will become more obvious.



Appendix

Appendix 1: The EU's overall budget and priorities

Appendix 2: References



Appendix 1: The EU's overall budget and priorities

Although the EU allocated significant funds during the pandemic to stimulate recovery and resilience, most of the money is still remaining for agricultural policy and Cohesion Policy (the Regional Development Fund and the Social Fund).

The EU's long-term budget for 2021-2027 is EUR 1,212 billion plus NextGenerationEU of around EUR 750 billion (2018 price level). From a Swedish perspective the EU's budget may seem large. Still, the EU's annual budget is only 50 percent more than the Swedish national budget or 10 percent of the German federal budget.

Figure 1 shows the breakdown of the long-term budget in

different policy areas (read more about these in the source reference).

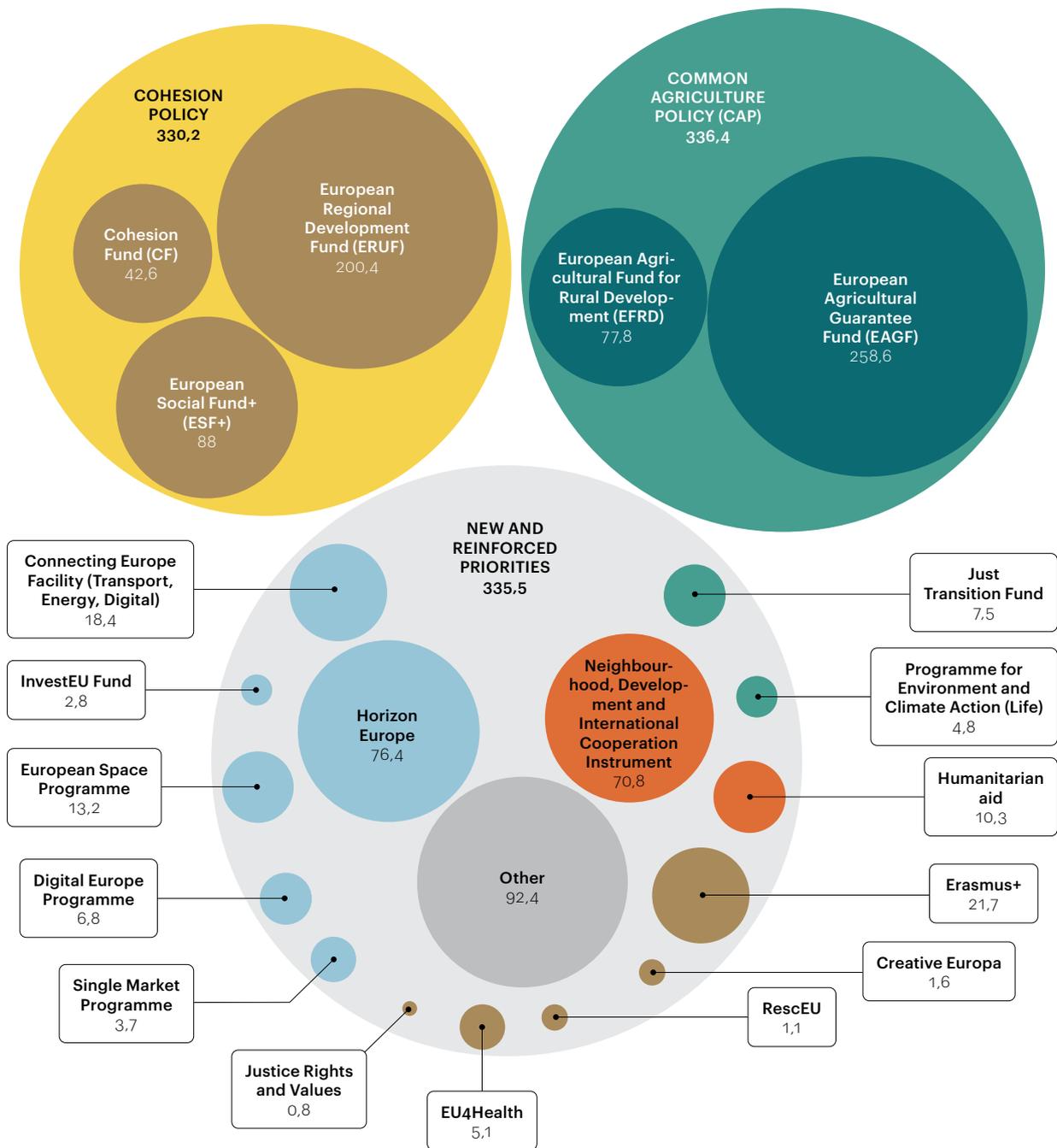
Implementation of the ambitions within these policy areas takes place in various programmes and funds that break down as shown in the figure above.

As shown in Figure 2, EUR 330 billion goes to Cohesion Policy (regional/social development), EUR 336 billion to agricultural policy (CAP) and EUR 335 billion for "new programmes and strengthened priorities" (2018 prices). The latter includes the Horizon Europe research programme in the amount of EUR 76 billion.²⁰

The temporary research programme called NextGenerationEU is allocated EUR 750 billion in addition to these

20 <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/sv/infographics/mff2021-2027-ngeu-final/>

Figure 2: The most important programmes and funds in the long-term budget (amounts in EUR billion, 2018) prices). Source: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/sv/infographics/mff2021-2027-ngeu-final/>



funds. Most of this consists of loans (EUR 385 billion) and grants for reform and investment in member states as relief for the economic and social consequences of the coronavirus pandemic. The main initiative is through “The Recovery and Resilience Facility”. Its aim is to accelerate economic recovery and increase commitment to the climate and digitalisation. The target is for at least 37 percent of the outlay in the Recovery and Resilience Facility to be linked to the climate and 20 percent of the budget to be linked to digitalisation.²¹

The Commission has encouraged the member states to produce investment and reform plans in several “flagship areas” that can receive support from the Recovery and Resilience Facility. These are clean tech and renewable, energy-efficiency in buildings, sustainable transport and charging stations, expansion of broadband, public sector digitalisation, cloud solutions and sustainable processors, as well as retraining and professional development.

NextGenerationEU also contains increased funding for the Horizon Europe research and innovation programme of EUR 5.4 billion and the InvestEU fund of EUR 5.6 billion.²²

Current general initiatives within the EU

Of the EU’s six priorities for 2024, three have a bearing on competitiveness: a European Green Deal, a Europe fit for the digital age and an economy that works for people.²³ The other priorities are a stronger Europe in the world, promot-

ing a European way of life and a new push for European democracy. A few important current initiatives with a bearing on competitiveness are:

NextGenerationEU – A Recovery Plan

The temporary recovery instrument, NextGenerationEU, is intended to contribute to the member states’ investments and reforms to ease the effects of the pandemic. A large share of the money is aimed at the green transition and digital transformation. The budget is EUR 750 billion and Sweden can receive SEK 33 billion in grants.

Fit for 55 is the Green Deal

The concept of Fit for 55 is the EU’s climate package to reduce the EU’s greenhouse gas emissions by 55 percent by 2030, compared with the 1990 level.²⁴ The Green Deal aims to achieve this by ensuring, among other things, that 30 percent of investments under NextGenerationEU are linked to reducing net emissions of greenhouse gases, decoupling economic growth from resource use, and the principle of no person and no place left behind.

The Digital Compass – digital transformation

The digital economy is about digital transformation in Europe. The EU’s vision for this called the “Digital Compass” has targets in four areas:²⁵

- Skills – including 29 million IT specialists and more people with basic digital skills.
- Secure and sustainable digital infrastructure – including fast internet for all and 5G everywhere.

21 https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/recovery-coronavirus/recovery-and-resilience-facility_sv#faciliteten-och-nextgenerationeu

22 https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/recovery-plan-europe_sv#nextgenerationeu

23 https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024_sv

24 Communication from the European Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Regional Committee, 55% package “Fit for 55”: delivering the EU’s 2030 Climate Target on the way to climate neutrality COM/2021/550 final

25 Communication from the European Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Regional Committee 2030 Digital Compass: the European Way for the Digital Decade COM/2021/118 final

- Digital transformation of businesses – including more companies using cloud services, more unicorns, and SMEs to have a basic level of digitalisation.
- Digital public services – including 100 percent online provision of key public services and 80 percent of citizens using a digital ID.

To reach the targets the Commission wants to expedite projects where companies are working together and that combine investments from the EU, member states and businesses within, for example, the recovery programme where at least 20 percent is to go to digitisation. This does not, in other words, involve specific funding for digitalisation.

Industrial strategy

There are also some more specific EU initiatives to improve competitiveness and which are described as the updated industrial strategy.²⁶ This involves making the internal market more resilient and managing dependencies, i.e. how to create open, strategic autonomy in practice (reduce dependence on other countries).

REPowerEU

Although there is currently rapid growth taking place in weather-dependent electricity production in much of Europe, to meet the challenge of also replacing fossil fuels, primarily from Russia, even more needs to be done. For a secure supply in the longer term, the European Commission has presented a plan it calls REPowerEU²⁷ to determine how to end the EU's dependence on Russian fossil fuels well in advance of 2030, with natural gas as the first target.

REPowerEU is a plan consisting of three parts:

- Diversifying the gas, oil and coal supply.
- Accelerating the energy transition to renewable energy such as biogas, hydrogen gas, solar energy and wind power, with an emphasis on hydrogen gas.

- Saving energy and improving energy efficiency.

Many of the initiatives have no funding of their own but are instead financed through other initiatives such as the Green Deal, which is largely funded by the recovery programme. The EU's long-term budget provides a good indication of what the EU is focusing on.

With respect to the gas market, the European Commission²⁸ sees a need to diversify the gas supply through increased imports of LNG (liquefied natural gas) and pipelines from non-Russian suppliers, and to increase the percentage of biomethane, mainly from agriculture, as well as green hydrogen gas. The Commission has great faith in the rapid growth of hydrogen gas use. But development of bioenergy and electricity from nuclear power are barely mentioned in the EU plan.

The plan also includes measures to curb rising energy prices in Europe, with a proposal for price regulation and if possible a redistribution of profits. These proposals need to be studied carefully and analysed as they could have significant consequences for the market and private capital investment willingness.

Strategic autonomy

The Versailles Declaration²⁹ adopted by EU leaders in March 2022, focuses on bolstering defence capabilities, reducing energy dependencies and building a more robust economic base. Strategic autonomy is a means of securing the supply of critical raw materials, semi-conductors, health, digital technology and food. The instruments for implementation indicated are the Important Projects of Common European Interest (IPCEI) and industrial alliances, as well as strengthening the EU's research and innovation capabilities.

At the global level the EU wants to continue developing trade agreements and standards, and supplementing the

26 https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/communication-industrial-strategy-update-2020_en.pdf

27 Press conference on the REPowerEU Communication (europa.eu)

28 https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:71767319-9f0a-11ec-83e1-01aa75ed71a1.0005.02/D0C_1&format=PDF

29 <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/54773/20220311-versailles-declaration-en.pdf>

toolbox with instruments to address the distortive effects of foreign subsidies on the internal market to protect against coercive measures by third countries and to ensure reciprocity in opening up public procurement with trading partners.

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