



Supporting peacebuilding in times of change

CASE STUDY SWEDEN

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List of Acronyms

CBSD	Capacity Building for Security and Development
CIVSAM	Unit for Support to Civil Society
CRS	Creditor Reporting System
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DDR	Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
EU	European Union
FBA	Folke Bernadotte Academy
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
HUMASIA	Department for Asia, MENA and Humanitarian Aid
IcSP	Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
MOD	Ministry of Defence
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PCIA	Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEK	Swedish Krona
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SIPU	Swedish Institute for Public Administration
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNSC	UN Security Council
UNSG	UN Secretary General
US	United States
USD	United States Dollar

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Executive Summary

This case study looks at trends in political and financial support for peacebuilding in Sweden, from its early engagement in the 1990s to the most recent developments. It aims to understand how political, bureaucratic and organisational factors (both globally and domestically) have either enabled or obstructed Swedish peacebuilding support, over time. It also aims to understand how peacebuilding has been and still is part of the political culture, and what the challenges to fully implement commitments in this field are. It is part of a wider policy-oriented research project on how the environment for people-centred international peacebuilding support is changing in Europe and what the most significant and consistent drivers of change and continuity are. In this way, the project aims to build a solid evidence base and foster debate on the implications for future support for peacebuilding.

Through the analysis of Sweden's strategic political and policy commitments in the last twenty years, the case study finds that people-centred, civilian peacebuilding is part of Sweden's foreign policy DNA. In this relatively peaceful society, characterised by social cohesion and consensus, the overarching goal of 'building peace' cut across various foreign and development policy frameworks over the past twenty years. **Sweden has also been a global leader in development and promoter of peacebuilding at the UN and EU levels.** For instance, in 2001, it drove forward conflict prevention at the EU level during its EU Presidency and it can be argued that Sweden has been the most consistent and long-term supporter of peacebuilding in the EU. **Despite its increased awareness of how the world has changed in the last few years and the new challenges that have appeared, Sweden remains committed to peacebuilding and has a strong rights and value-based foreign and development policy, of which 'human security' is a central concept.** Contrary to other European countries, the language on peace and conflict in Sweden has not been strongly impacted by the recent irregular migration situation, terrorism attacks or narrow security interests, and geographic priorities have not fundamentally changed yet. Support to peacebuilding is a rather consensual topic across almost all political parties. Despite the securitised environment of the last few years, Sweden has engaged strongly in international and, in the past, EU fora. In 2017-2018, it used its membership of the United Nations (UN) Security Council (UNSC) to push and support the sustaining peace agenda. Internally, Sweden has a new strategy for sustainable peace since August 2017.

Furthermore, an analysis of institutional arrangements and financial resources for peacebuilding and their evolution in recent years shows that **Sweden has increased funding in the field of peacebuilding and conflict prevention** - albeit not at the same rate as other consistent supporters of peacebuilding. Sweden has consistently ranked among the top five Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries for civilian peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution, despite it being only 2% of total Swedish ODA. Yet, the increase in Swedish disbursements for this sector was 'only' 55% from 2007 to 2016, compared to 320% in the United Kingdom and 335% in Germany, for instance. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA), Sweden's leading government institution for driving peacebuilding efforts, was able to take various initiatives and increase its financial resources under the Social Democratic and Green (also referred to as 'Red-Green') coalition government (2014-2018). For instance, it drafted the 2017 strategy for sustainable peace and proposed a 48% increase in financial resources for this strategy for 2018. The Ministry of Defence does not engage in support for peacebuilding related issues. Instead, in recent years, it has been geared more towards territorial defence due to the resurgence of Russia, leading to an increase in the defence budget and a reactivation of conscription. Its limited involvement means that **Sweden's peacebuilding policy is overwhelmingly civilian.**

Sweden's government agencies work alongside the ministries and have an important role in implementing the government's peace policy. Firstly, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) has attempted to apply a conflict perspective to its work for over two decades and improved its tools for conflict sensitivity in the last two years. Secondly, the much smaller Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), the Swedish government agency for peace, security and development, created in 2002, is now increasingly called upon by the MFA to implement country strategies, alongside Sida, and its expertise in peace and security is increasingly recognised and used by the government. The two agencies remain quite different in practice but their added value and complementarity are recognised and utilised more than before. Our analysis however shows that **the implementation of a whole-of-government approach and the communication between Swedish actors in conflict countries remain not optimal for peacebuilding outcomes**. Non-governmental organisations and research institutes - both domestic and international - are also key actors in the field of peacebuilding in Sweden. They contribute to keeping the issue high on the political agenda, provide expertise to the government, and implement peacebuilding activities in conflict countries, in collaboration with local actors. Overall, **Sweden takes a constructive approach to working with and drawing on external non-governmental expertise**.

Looking closely at the main determinants driving continuity and change in support to peacebuilding, the case study revealed that the international political scene and geopolitical order is an important factor in Sweden's peacebuilding policy. Indeed, **in response to the changing world order, it chose to be even more active internationally**. Within the UN, there is definitely a momentum for conflict prevention, which Sweden has used to advocate for its own agenda in the context of its membership to the UN Security Council, while integrating UN language in its own approach. Being a relatively small European country, Sweden values international organisations and norms and invests heavily in them. Yet this does not mean that Sweden blindly follows any development that takes place at the international level. In fact, it continues to prioritise its values: democracy, human rights, inclusiveness, and multilateralism. Yet, **the shifting geopolitical order could in the future threaten some of Sweden's past work on peacebuilding**. On the one hand, the security environment in Sweden's neighbourhood, namely the perceived risk in light of Russia's militarised foreign and security policy, currently concerns the highest echelons of the government and may have an impact on support for peacebuilding in the future. On the other hand, **Donald Trump's presidency in the US has the potential to bring the different political parties on Sweden's political spectrum closer together due to a shared concern multilateralism may be in danger**.

Moreover, **national politics impacts Sweden's peacebuilding policy and the 2018 elections have shown that its domestic political culture is changing** – albeit slowly. The rise of the Sweden Democrats, the third biggest national party since the September 2018 election, is likely to impact the domestic political debate on issues such as migration, ODA and the EU more broadly in the years to come, as they follow a more ring-wing and populist agenda than traditional Swedish parties. This could weaken the consensual views that have underpinned Swedish support for peacebuilding thus far or provide added impetus to protect them. Furthermore, depending on the government that will come out of the 2018 election, some of the current government's important initiatives might lose traction. Prominent political leaders in the MFA, the extent to which the European Union (EU) or the United Nations (UN) are given priority can also have a significant impact on support for peacebuilding.

The case study concludes by offering future prospects for transforming peacebuilding support. **Peacebuilding internationally appears to be at a crossroads, and a different kind of engagement is needed in order to build transformative support**. On the one hand, Sweden shows different trends to the rest of Europe, as peacebuilding and foreign policy and development policy, more generally, are still very much value-based and informed by international norms, and not as subject to security and

self-interests as in other European countries. On the other hand, the peacebuilding community must not be complacent. It cannot afford to ignore shifts in the geopolitical order or changes in the domestic politics of other countries, which could impact Sweden. **Thus, there is a need to ensure Sweden's current specificities are preserved, but also to engage more actively to anticipate potential shifts in the country's support for peacebuilding.** Internal opportunities for this renewed engagement include the implementation of the strategy for sustainable peace 2017-2022 (which calls for greater integration and coordination of efforts of relevant actors on the ground), a significant aid budget, or the constructive dialogue between civil society and the government.

Internationally, **Sweden has a key role to play at the UN and the EU levels**, having managed to influence the agenda on peacebuilding in these fora in the past, and there are opportunities for this engagement in the near future. **In the unlikely event that Sweden withdraws its global role in supporting peacebuilding, it is unclear who would take over that leadership role in the UN or the European Union.** Several key events such as the negotiation of the new EU budget, a new political leadership in the Europe Union in 2019, and the twenty-year anniversary of the EU Gothenburg Programme of Action for the Prevention of Violent Conflict in 2021 provide some windows of opportunity.

Peacebuilding and a value-based foreign and development policy are part of the Swedish political culture and are unlikely to undertake dramatic shifts in the near future. Yet, **in light of the changing world order, the fragmentation of Sweden's political spectrum, and given that the country is becoming more isolated on these issues at the international and European level, political support for peacebuilding should not be taken for granted. A continued engagement with political leaders and the wider public will be necessary** in order to maintain the argument for long-term, context-based, bottom-up, and people-centred peacebuilding, beyond a community of committed experts. This may require some institutional innovations, as well as a new type of communication that transmit complex and context-specific ideas to a wider audience. Finally, all these efforts should take into consideration how the peacebuilding agenda can be better aligned with today's broader foreign policy priorities and shifting geopolitics.

1. Introduction

Today's rising need for effective responses to increasing violent conflict coincides with the most significant changes in the European and global environment since the end of the Cold War. This has raised concerns that political, policy and financial support for peacebuilding, as a normative agenda, will diminish. Yet, there has been limited independent analysis on what drives official political and financial support to peacebuilding in Europe and how this support is evolving.

To respond to this gap, this paper presents the findings of a case study on how Sweden's official support for peacebuilding has been shaped in recent years. It is part of a wider policy-oriented research project on how the environment for support for people-centred peacebuilding is changing in Europe. More specifically, the study has three aims:

- To analyse trends regarding **policy and financial support** for peacebuilding;
- To identify the most significant and consistent **factors driving change and continuity**, over time, in European support for peacebuilding;
- In light of these trends and factors, to analyse **implications for the future support for international peacebuilding**

Today, after over 25 years of international support for peacebuilding, Sweden provides a rich evidence base on which to reflect. For this purpose, this project takes a 'top-down' look at how peacebuilding support, among European governments, has been shaped over the years. It does so on the basis of four case studies, which, next to the current one focused on Sweden, also cover Germany, the United Kingdom (UK) and the European Union (EU) institutions. This selection was made based on the fact that these countries are some of the most consistent and generous supporters of peacebuilding, in recent decades. Therefore, any change in their support for peacebuilding could have significant implications for global responses to violent conflict.

This case study analyses support for peacebuilding at the level of governmental institutions, and the relation of governmental institutions to non-governmental actors in Sweden. Rather than assess the effectiveness or impact of peacebuilding policies and programmes, it seeks to map out how the political and policy framing of peacebuilding has evolved. Furthermore, this case study aims to identify institutional, organisational and meta-level funding trends for peacebuilding activities. This leads us to look at official commitments at the overall foreign and development policy levels. In particular, we examine peace, security and development policies, as well as institutional innovations directly relevant to peacebuilding. Our approach is to analyse why things are, rather than what they 'should' be or what would be ideal for peacebuilding. Hence, our starting point is the political and bureaucratic context in Sweden, rather than the conflict contexts in which it intervened.

The findings are the result of research conducted between January 2017 and June 2018¹, using both qualitative and quantitative research methods. First, they were obtained from an extensive literature review, including government strategy and policy documents, expert analysis and academic literature. Second, the documentary analysis was complemented by interviews, conducted in Stockholm in May-June 2017, with a variety of key experts, government officials and civil society representatives active in the domain of peacebuilding, conflict prevention or related policy domains.² Third, initial findings and documents were presented and discussed during a one-day expert seminar, in March 2018, with key peacebuilding experts on German, Swedish, British and EU peacebuilding policies. The feedback and comments received during this seminar are reflected in the final version of this paper. Qualitative methods were supplemented by a

¹ Some very limited updating was undertaken in the wake of the Swedish general elections in September 2018.

² See Annex 1 for a full list of interviewees.

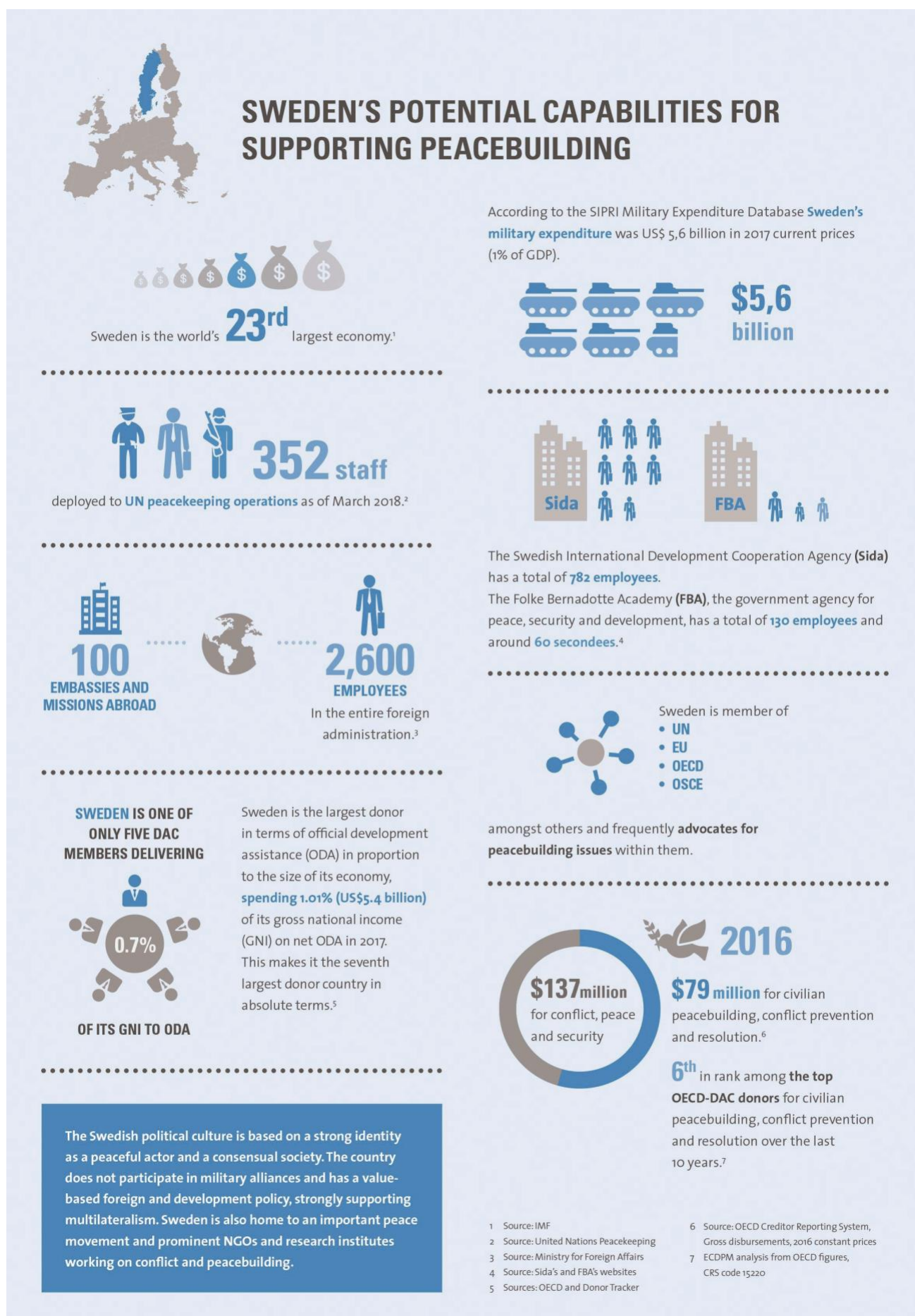
quantitative analysis of OECD Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) data on Official Development Assistance (ODA) flows, with a specific focus on peace-related aid categories.

This paper is structured as follows after this introduction: Section 2 discusses the conceptual approach to 'peacebuilding' taken in this project. Section 3 describes the origins of Swedish peacebuilding policy, how it evolved over the years, and how it relates to other policy domains. Subsequently, Section 4 looks at how governmental peacebuilding policy commitments have been translated into dedicated governance structures, operational mechanisms, financing instruments and funding flows. It also presents observations on the role of civil society and the expert community in shaping the policy dialogue. Building on the previous sections, Section 5 offers an analysis on the main determinants (both domestically and at the global level) that are influential in shaping Swedish peacebuilding support. Finally, Section 6 offers a brief overview of future prospects. In addition, it identifies key risks, opportunities and questions to debate, which shape future peacebuilding support, in a radically changing domestic and global environment.

This paper is a product of a project conducted by the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), under its European External Affairs and Security and Resilience Programmes, and is financed by the foundation Humanity United and ECDPM itself. In addition to the current paper, which presents the case study on Swedish support for peacebuilding, three separate papers will be produced, which present the findings and conclusions of case studies focused on German, UK and EU institutions' support for peacebuilding, respectively. Moreover, a synthesis report titled '*Supporting peacebuilding in times of change*'³ has been published in September 2018, which presents crosscutting findings and conclusions from the four cases.

³ Available from: <http://www.ecdpm.org/changingpeacebuilding>

Figure 1: Sweden's potential capabilities for supporting peacebuilding



2. Conceptual approach to peacebuilding

One of the main challenges from a policy analysis perspective is the absence of a universally accepted definition of the term ‘peacebuilding’. Part of the analysis presented in this paper therefore looks at how peacebuilding is understood in the Swedish context and how the term has evolved over time. In order to do so, this section offers a few conceptual considerations, which provide the basis for a working definition of ‘peacebuilding’.

The origins of the term ‘peacebuilding’ can be traced back to the academic work of Johan Galtung in the 1970s, which builds on the distinction between ‘negative’ and ‘positive peace’ (Galtung, 1976). Yet, the concept only entered policy discourse in 1992, when the United Nations (UN) Agenda for Peace aimed to adapt the UN’s role as a global peace and security actor in the post-Cold War era. An increasing share of violent intrastate conflicts, with the majority of casualties being civilians, led the UN to place greater emphasis on direct intervention, within UN member states, to end conflicts and rebuild conflict-affected countries. ‘Peacebuilding’, in this context, aimed “to solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict” (Boutros-Ghali, 1992, p. 5). Later on, the 2000 Brahimi report, as well as other actors, such as North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) (NATO, 2003), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development -Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) (DAC, 1997) and various donor countries, picked up the term (Smith, 2004).

Table 1: The spectrum of meaning in peacebuilding terminology

	
Focus on post-conflict time span	Focus on all stages of conflict
Narrow focus on specific kinds of activities	Wide focus on a range of activities including peacekeeping, human rights monitoring, mediation, development, education, governance, etc.
Immediate focus on ending direct violence	Long-term focus on addressing root causes of violence, including structural injustices
Outcome-oriented focus on solutions	Process-oriented focus on transformation
Focus on the role of outside experts “intervening” in local conflicts	Focus on the role of insiders and increasing their capacity for building peace
Focus on high level national and international interventions	Focus on all levels of interventions, from the community, regional, and national levels
Focus on military peace operations	Focus on non-military approaches to building peace and security

Source: Schirch (2008)

Nevertheless, the meaning and scope of peacebuilding remains ambiguous. In fact, various spectrums exist, according to which definitional approaches to peacebuilding can be identified, as illustrated in Table 1. For example, while the initial use of the term by the UN saw peacebuilding as a post-conflict activity, more recent conceptualisations focus on the full conflict cycle (United Nations, 2016; United Nations Security Council, 2016). In addition, recent approaches to peacebuilding have shifted away from the ‘liberal peace’ model focused on the pursuit of rapid democratisation, free and globalised markets, and the rule of law, through external intervention, towards more locally grounded and participatory approaches to peacebuilding (Lederach, 1997).

Another challenge is the existence of various partially overlapping terms. These include ‘statebuilding’, ‘addressing fragility’, ‘conflict prevention’, ‘conflict sensitivity’ and ‘crisis management’. More recently, ‘stabilisation’ and ‘resilience’ have been gaining traction in European policy-making. While all of these terms relate to responses to violent conflict, they tend to vary in their practical application and focus, e.g. the extent to which they emphasise short-term re-establishment of security over long-term and transformative ambitions. Indeed, some are more oriented towards state institutions than the socio-economic dynamics of peace. Despite the diverse uses of ‘peacebuilding’, a degree of consensus has been established on a number of features that help define it. In order to review these elements, this paper uses the approach to peacebuilding from the original OECD DAC Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation as a working definition:

“Peacebuilding and reconciliation focuses on long-term support to, and establishment of, viable political and socio-economic and cultural institutions capable of addressing the root causes of conflicts, as well as other initiatives aimed at creating the necessary conditions for sustained peace and stability. These activities also seek to promote the integration of competing or marginalised groups within mainstream society, through providing equitable access to political decision-making, social networks, economic resources and information, and can be implemented in all phases of conflict [...] Peacebuilding involves both long-term preventive measures and more immediate responses before, during and after conflict.” (DAC, 1997, p.86 and p.113)

While the document dates back to 1997 and is influenced by a development perspective, this definition forms a good basis for our analysis because it combines short- and long-term perspectives, has a broad thematic scope, focuses on all stages of conflict, includes prevention, and pursues conflict transformation, rather than focusing on just reconstruction or conflict resolution. Furthermore, it is appropriate as all the case studies in this project (EU institutions, Germany, Sweden and the UK) are members of the DAC, and it was agreed at the start of the timespan of our research. Therefore, this definition will inform our analysis, as presented in the following chapters. At the same time, we will explore how the terminology, thinking and emphasis have evolved.

3. Understanding the concept of peacebuilding: evolutions and trends

3.1. Peacebuilding is part of Sweden’s foreign policy DNA

Sweden’s international profile as a peaceful actor

Sweden has a strong identity as a peaceful actor with a value-based foreign and development policy. There is a wide belief, among Swedes, that it has a moral obligation to be a strong actor in peace and development because it is a rich country, which has enjoyed peace dividends for many years, and it is conscious of the cost of violent conflict. This perspective has been explicitly noted in policy statements for some time (Ministry for Foreign Affairs Sweden, 2001). Furthermore, Sweden is viewed by others – and considers itself – as a peaceful society. Social cohesion and consensus are part of Swedish political culture. This is reflected in how it values the organised civil society’s contribution and the systematic attention to democratic culture, in all spheres of social life. In the **2016 Statement of Foreign Policy**, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, Margot Wallström claimed “Sweden’s many years’ experience of peace, gender equality and international solidarity have generated a curiosity about our country and what we stand for” (Wallström, 2016).

Sweden notes a clear relationship between preventing violent conflict and international law. In **1999**, the **Swedish action plan for preventing violent conflict** stated that “[f]or a small, militarily non-aligned state,

safeguarding international law and international cooperation are especially important concerns” (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 1999, p. 12). A few years later, the **2003 Policy for Global Development** emphasised that “upholding international law, including human rights, and promoting the global role of the UN are two of the most fundamental principles of Sweden’s foreign policy” (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2003). An illustration of this commitment is the fact that Sweden aligns with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) or Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions only if they are covered by a UN mandate (Hauck and Rocca, 2014).

Sweden has also produced high profile personalities in the field of peace. The Folke Bernadotte Academy, the Swedish agency for peace, security and development, is named after Count Folke Bernadotte, who was the UN's first official mediator to succeed in negotiating a truce in the first Israeli-Arab war, in 1948.⁴ Dag Hammarskjöld was the second United Nations Secretary General from 1953 to 1961. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his service posthumously. Hammarskjöld's most notable achievements as Secretary General include restructuring the UN to make it more effective, creating the basis for UN peacekeeping operations, and successfully implementing his “preventive diplomacy”, in crises from the Middle East to China.⁵ Another important figure in Sweden is Anna Lindh, who was Sweden's Minister for Foreign Affairs between 1998 and 2003. She was one of the Swedish government's leading pro-European Union (EU) figures, at the time, as well as a champion for international law and human rights. Furthermore, she was an ardent supporter of international cooperation through the United Nations and the European Union (The Telegraph, 2003). Carl Bildt, Sweden's Prime Minister from 1991 to 1994 (when he negotiated Sweden's EU accession) and foreign minister from 2006 to October 2014, is another important personality, as he served as EU Special Envoy to the Former Yugoslavia, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, UN Special Envoy to the Balkans, and Co-Chairman of the Dayton Peace Conference.

Swedish non-alignment

Historically, Sweden had been a neutral country up until 2009, when it entered into mutual defence agreements with the EU and Nordic countries. Indeed, **non-alignment** has been a guiding principle of Sweden's foreign policy for the last 200 years. As stated in the **2017 statement of foreign policy**, “our non-participation in military alliances serves us well, and contributes to stability and security in northern Europe” (Wallström, 2017a, p. 3). This policy is backed by relatively strong national defence capabilities, as well as increased defence cooperation, with other countries (e.g. Finland).⁶

Although Sweden is not a member of **NATO**, it cooperates closely with NATO through the programme “Partnership for Peace”, since 1994. In addition, it entered into a “host country support agreement” in 2016, and is part of a strategic dialogue on Baltic Sea Security with 28 NATO members (The Economist, 2017; Government Offices of Sweden, 2017b). Thus, it is worth noting that becoming a member would merely have a political impact (although a significant one), as Sweden and NATO are cooperating increasingly. Swedish forces have taken part in peacekeeping, military exercises and certain NATO-led missions since the 1990s. Indeed, as Sweden is part of a still volatile region, more than two decades after the Cold War ended, it has joined regional and international forces to reduce its vulnerability (Los Angeles Times, 2015).

On the other hand, its non-alignment should be balanced by the fact that it is an important **arms exporter** – even sometimes in countries involved in armed conflict or countries that violate human rights – which is a controversial issue in Sweden (Béraud-Sudreau, 2017; Nordström, 2018). This has led some actors to point out the lack of policy coherence and the discrepancy between Sweden's discourse about its value-based foreign and security policy, and its arms trade.

⁴ Source: <https://fba.se/en/about-fba/history-of-folke-bernadotte/>

⁵ Source: <http://www.daghammarskjold.se/about-hammar skjold/dag-hammar skjold/>

⁶ See different Statements of Government Policy in the Parliamentary Debate on Foreign Affairs

Sweden's commitment to preventing conflict and peacebuilding

Sweden has a long history of commitment to conflict prevention and was one of the first countries to develop an explicit commitment in the post-Cold War period. Unusually for governments at the time, Sweden had developed its policies in close collaboration with non-governmental expertise. As the **1999 Swedish action plan for preventing violent conflict**⁷ put it, “[s]eeking means to prevent violent conflict has long been a cornerstone of Swedish policy both on the domestic front and in the international arena. This policy, the fruit of long, cumulative experience, has not only led to greater economic wellbeing and social harmony in our country but also to peaceful relations with the outside world” (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 1999, p. 12). It started with the **collective security agenda**, in the 1970s, and later evolved into the concept of ‘**common security**’. In 1982, the Palme Commission⁸ issued the **report, Common Security**, which argued that, while both the East and the West have legitimate security needs, in the long run, no country could obtain security simply by taking unilateral decisions about its own military deployment. In the words of the Palme Commission's report, “[s]tates can no longer seek security at each other's expense; it can be obtained only through cooperative undertakings” (Palme Commission, cited in SIPRI 2013). The concept still features in Sweden's statements of foreign policy: “common security – building security in collaboration with other countries and organisations – is a cornerstone of Sweden's security policy” (Wallström, 2017a).

According to Margot Wallström (2015), Sweden strongly believes in ‘global peace policy’. In the 1990s and 2000s, Sweden started following a policy that placed development cooperation, conflict prevention and (UN) peacekeeping at the core of its external action. Sweden's long history of endorsing peacekeeping and its well-known support for peaceful conflict resolution made it a **credible norm entrepreneur on the issue of conflict prevention** (Björkdahl, 2013). Soon after joining the European Union in 1995, a crucial step for Sweden's foreign policy, it started to support the development of a European-level conflict prevention approach and managed to keep it on the EU agenda, at a time when support for crisis management grew stronger (Hauck and Rocca, 2014; Björkdahl, 2013).

During its EU presidency in 2001, Sweden was instrumental in the adoption of the **EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts, at the Gothenburg Summit** (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2001). Seventeen years later, Sweden, together with Germany and Finland, actively led the development of a strengthened civilian capacity for conflict prevention and management, at the EU level, to balance recent advances in EU military cooperation with non-military capabilities. Yet, its engagement in the EU is not of the level of 2001 where it drew together an innovative coalition for higher level action and framing of overarching policy commitments. Furthermore, Sweden was a leading driver in the development of the **New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States**, one of the Busan ‘development effectiveness building blocks’⁹, and took a lead role in the New Deal pilot in Liberia (International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, 2011; OECD, 2013).

The country also co-chaired the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, which brings together donor countries, fragile states and civil society, and has developed ways to support peacebuilding and statebuilding in fragile states. Ms Lövin, the Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate, hosted an international, high-level meeting in Stockholm, in the first half of 2016. At this meeting, participants adopted the **Stockholm Declaration** and committed to increasing measures to

⁷ Sweden was credited by the Director at the United Nations Department of Political Affairs with being “the only country that has adopted conflict prevention as a major plank of its foreign policy and supported it with an Action Plan”. See Björkdahl (2013).

⁸ The Palme Commission was an Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues whose chairman was Olof Palme, former Prime Minister of Sweden.

⁹ The eight building blocks were adopted at the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan December 2011, together with the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. Some of the other building blocks include results and accountability, South-South and triangular cooperation, climate change finance and development effectiveness and effective institutions and policies.

address the root causes of war and conflicts (International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, 2016; Government Offices of Sweden, 2017a).

On 1 January 2017, Sweden took up its seat at the **UN Security Council**. This was seen as a historic step in the country and is a very important aspect of Sweden's work for peace. This is why, in the months leading up to the membership, it stepped up its commitments in this field. It particularly focused on strengthening the UN's conflict prevention approach, the UN's effectiveness and the women, peace and security agenda. In addition to holding the UN Security Council seat, Sweden is currently chairing the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, until December 2018 (Government Offices of Sweden, 2017a). Globally and at the EU level, Sweden has been the most consistent supporter of peacebuilding.

3.2. The overarching goal of 'building peace' and safeguarding human security across policy frameworks

No peace without development and no development without peace

The most important changes, in the terminology of peace, date back to the end of the Cold War and the 1990s. During this time, the concepts of **conflict prevention** and **peacebuilding** became increasingly popular as a consequence of the United Nations' failure to prevent tragedies, such as the Rwandan genocide and the conflict in the former Yugoslavia.

The concept of '**human security**' also became prominent in Sweden's foreign and development policy in the 1990s and the 2000s (Hauck and Rocca, 2014). In 2000, in a government communication on preventing violent conflict, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (2001) explained that "[h]uman security is a precondition for the social stability that is crucial to regional and international peace and security." As such, 'human security' is a central concept in most of Sweden's development and conflict-related frameworks. The concept is based on the principle that people's security comes before state security, that no people should have to live under deprivation and in insecurity, and that everyone has the right to have their basic needs met (Sida, 2016).

Hence, the emergence of this concept was concomitant with the **broadening of the concept of security** and the **promotion of a holistic approach that focuses on the security of both the state and the individual**. In the **late 1990s**, this led to the development of an **integrated approach to the prevention of violent conflicts**, including democratic governance, respect for human rights, gender equality, economic and social development and the strengthening of international cooperation, and combining economic, political, legal and military instruments (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2001).

Thus, in order to analyse Sweden's 'peacebuilding policy', it is important to start by looking at its policy frameworks for development, which all acknowledge the fact that armed conflict is the most serious obstacle to development, in many poor countries. As Jan Eliasson, the Swedish former Deputy UN Secretary-General, often said: "there is **no peace without development**, and there is no development without peace, and none of the above without respect for human rights" (Eliasson, cited in Skoog 2017). Sweden strongly believes that **all aid must be made 'conflict-proof'** and that "aid and development cooperation are important components of these conflict prevention efforts" (Government Offices of Sweden, 2017a; Wallström, 2015). According to the **2017 statement of foreign policy**, peacebuilding and statebuilding are at the heart of Swedish aid (Wallström, 2017a).

Sweden's main policy frameworks relevant for peacebuilding

The **Ministry for Foreign Affairs** is the main ministry when it comes to peacebuilding, as will be explained in more detail in Section 4. It has developed a number of policy frameworks, which are relevant to understanding the evolution of Swedish peacebuilding policy. Annex 3 shows the evolution of Swedish policy

frameworks from 1991 to 2018, together with German, UK and EU frameworks (the other case studies undertaken as part of this project).

The **2003 Policy for Global Development**, which was formulated under a Social Democratic government, fostered a **whole-of-government and integrated approach to conflict, security and development** (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2003). It brought different policy areas together, such as defence, trade and foreign policy, to better deal with development and the underlying causes of conflicts (Hauck and Rocca, 2014). It also emphasised the **linkages between security and sustainable development**, as well as between human security and development. It stated, “The Government will continue to give priority to measures designed to prevent and manage conflicts [...]. A holistic view should be applied to military, humanitarian, peacebuilding and development-related measures, and coordination between various instruments must be improved” (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2003, p. 36).

In **2008**, when a centre-right government, led by the Moderate party, was in power, Sweden developed a **‘national strategy for Swedish participation in international peace-support and security-building operations’** (Government of Sweden, 2008). This strategy highlights the fact that “the Government links foreign, development, security and defence policy more closely together” and that “possible and practicable synergies with development cooperation must always be aimed for” (Government of Sweden, 2008, p. 3 and 6, respectively). An important feature of this strategy is that it fosters **integration between military and civil elements**, in the Swedish contribution to peace-support and security-building operations. Conflict-preventing measures, mediation efforts, dialogue, sanctions and reconstruction operations are listed as “instruments of direct relevance to creating peace and security” and “areas in which Sweden is active with a view to preventing and averting conflicts and creating the necessary basis for lasting peace” (Government of Sweden, 2008, p. 15). Moreover, the strategy insists on the fact that in fragile states and post-conflict countries, “security, development, democracy and human rights are dependent on and reinforce one another” (Government of Sweden, 2008, p.5).

In 2010, the government published a **‘Policy for Security and Development in Swedish Development Cooperation 2010-2014’** (Government Offices of Sweden, 2010), with the overarching objective to “contribute to a lasting peace that makes development possible”, in conflict and post-conflict situations. It highlighted the fact that human security is at the forefront. Moreover, the policy stressed the fact that “both peacebuilding and statebuilding are long-term, complex and nonlinear political and social processes that should take place in a continuous interaction between state and society, and may be relevant even a long time after a conflict has taken place” (Government Offices of Sweden, 2010, p.16). Peacebuilding is defined as a “process that endeavours to support the transition from armed conflict to sustainable peace, reconciliation and stability” that includes creating increased trust between the parties to a conflict, preparation for and implementation of peace agreements, strengthening the participation of women and their influence in the peace process, among others (Government Offices of Sweden, 2010, p.15). The fact that, in this case, the policy was developed under a centre-right government shows that Sweden's commitment to peacebuilding transcends party politics.

In its **2014 Aid Policy Framework** – also developed under the centre-right government – Sweden set itself the objective of creating preconditions for better living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression. It broke this objective into six contributory sub-objectives, of which **“safeguarding human security and freedom from violence”** was one. This sub-objective focuses on the safety of vulnerable people, especially women and children. It recognises the importance of an inclusive dialogue on conflict prevention, and the active participation of women, in all phases of the conflict cycle. “After a conflict, **peacebuilding and statebuilding**, including reconciliation, are central” (Government Offices of Sweden, 2014, p.37). The policy framework also emphasizes that “Swedish aid must therefore contribute to the efforts

and capacities of societies and people to prevent, reduce and handle conflict peacefully” (Government Offices of Sweden, 2014).

The **2016 Policy framework for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance** – formulated under the Red-Green coalition – introduced three thematic perspectives to be integrated in development cooperation: the gender perspective; the environmental and climate perspective; and the **conflict perspective** (i.e. taking conflict issues into account throughout development cooperation). The latter comes from the acknowledgement that “**peaceful and inclusive societies** based on the principles of the rule of law are a **prerequisite for sustainable development**” (Government of Sweden, 2017, p.15). In this new policy framework, **peacebuilding** is a more prominent and stand-alone concept. By contrast, in 2014, the concept of ‘human security’ overshadowed peacebuilding, which was mostly thought of in conjunction with statebuilding. Further issues that gained ground in this new policy framework are: addressing fragility, building resilience and the issue of migration. ‘**Peaceful and inclusive societies**’ is also one of the eight thematic directions of development cooperation identified by the policy framework. Under this thematic direction, the policy framework emphasises that “Sweden’s efforts for peacebuilding and statebuilding seek to **tackle the underlying causes of conflict and vulnerability**” (Government of Sweden, 2017, p.27). These efforts include, among others, transitional justice, support for inclusive dialogues and mediation processes, as well as civil crisis management to prevent, manage and resolve armed conflict. The policy framework considers that “work to prevent conflict and promote peace must revolve around the **causes of the conflict and the entire conflict cycle**, making the **link between security and development** clear” (Government of Sweden, 2017, p.28). Some stakeholders described this policy framework as a ‘Christmas tree’ with too many priorities and expressed discontent regarding the lack of broader consultations, during the drafting process of the policy framework. Nonetheless, it is considered as a good addition to the Swedish development cooperation framework, as it gives primacy to security, development, human rights, and the Sustainable Development Goals.¹⁰

Finally, the **2017 National Security Strategy** has a strong focus on security issues that have arisen in recent years and mentions **broader and more complex threats (both internal and external)**, which, together with a new security policy landscape, create new demands for a strategic approach (Government Offices of Sweden, 2017b). Furthermore, the strategy states “[w]e also face a situation in which our fundamental values and our way of life are being increasingly challenged” and that the **link between domestic and external security** is more direct than in the past (Government Offices of Sweden, 2017b, p. 5). It puts emphasis on “instability, armed conflict, a lack of democracy, terrorist elements and a lack of human security and respect for human rights, with huge humanitarian needs and large flows of refugees as a consequence”, near the EU’s southern borders, and a deterioration of the security situation in the neighbourhood as a result of Russia’s actions. Hence, **conflict prevention** (through diplomacy and development cooperation) features prominently in the strategy. In addition, international cooperation on security, **collective security** and the promotion of a **rules-based multilateral world order** are other important elements of this new strategy. It also states that “[d]emocracy, human rights and economic and social development provide the best foundation for both human security and international security” (Government Offices of Sweden, 2017b, p. 6). **Long-term measures to prevent violent extremism** are preferred. Finally, the strategy promotes a **strengthening of the UN’s initiatives** with regard to the prevention of armed conflicts, conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

¹⁰ Interviews with key experts, 30 May-2 June 2017.

Old commitments are reaffirmed

The ‘**Results Strategy for Global Action for Human Security 2014-2017**’, one of the results strategies for aid activities with a thematic focus¹¹, was replaced in August 2017 with the **strategy for sustainable peace for 2017-2022**. The former strategy aimed at creating the necessary conditions for people in conflict and post conflict situations to live in freedom, security and justice, and focused on two results areas: human security and freedom from violence, on the one hand, and, on the other, strengthened democracy, increased respect for human rights and freedom from oppression (Swedish Government, 2014).

The new strategy aims at contributing “to prevention of armed conflict, effective conflict resolution, sustainable peacebuilding and statebuilding, increased human security in fragile and conflict-affected states, and empowerment of women as well as of youth, children and other excluded groups in these situations” (Government Offices of Sweden, 2018, p. 2). It encompasses both **support at the global level, and national and local support** to nationally and locally owned and led peace processes. The strategy promotes “a **long-term approach in combination with speed, flexibility and calculated risk-taking**” and emphasises “rapid action is of great importance for efforts at national and local level” (Government Offices of Sweden, 2018, p.6).

While the 2017-2022 strategy demonstrates a renewed commitment to sustainable peace, the majority of priority areas¹² were already present in the 2014-2017 strategy, as was the support to international organisations and processes. The fact that Sweden **reiterates the importance of these concepts** is a positive sign. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that it **remains vague**, for instance, when it mentions “strengthened opportunities for peace dividends at national and local level [...]” or “a broad approach of prevention of armed conflict, peacebuilding and statebuilding, human security” (Government Offices of Sweden, 2018, p. 3-4). However, this strategy puts **more emphasis on integrated approaches at all levels and a “close interplay between humanitarian aid, long-term development cooperation, political dialogue and mediation”** (Government Offices of Sweden, 2018, p. 4).

A people-centred and inclusive peacebuilding policy

Overall, the conflict prevention and peacebuilding agenda in Sweden is clearly ‘**people-centred**’ and puts a strong emphasis on inclusiveness; “peacebuilding is a long-term process that should permeate and include the whole of society” (Government Offices of Sweden, 2017a). Furthermore, Sweden is a strong advocate of the **United Nations’ Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000)**, subsequent resolutions on **women, peace and security, resolution 1612 (2005)**, on **children and armed conflict**, as well as of resolution **2250, on youth, peace and security (2015)**. Since 2014, Sweden developed a **feminist foreign policy**¹³ through which it is supporting women’s meaningful participation in peace efforts before, during and after conflicts (Government Offices of Sweden, 2017a; Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2017a).

Sweden has been a consistent supporter of gender and peacebuilding issues since at least 2000, including by funding and advocating positions that advance this agenda internationally. Gender equality has been on

¹¹ Other thematic results strategies include the strategy for humanitarian aid for the period 2017-2020, the strategy for support via Swedish civil society organisations for the period 2016-2022, and the strategy for human rights, democracy and the rule of law 2018-2022. These strategies are drafted by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and implemented by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), and sometimes by Folke Bernadotte Academy as well.

¹² Promotion of human security, with an emphasis on women’s and children’s security, participation of women and of young people in dialogue and peace processes, reduction of uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons, rapid and flexible support in situations where bilateral strategies are lacking or where there is no possibility to act within existing bilateral or regional strategies.

¹³ The purpose of the Swedish feminist foreign policy is to “combat discrimination against women, improve conditions for women and contribute to peace and development”. It is “an integral part of activities throughout the Swedish Foreign Service, and aims to strengthen women’s rights, improve women’s access to resources and increase women’s representation” (Statement of Foreign Policy, 2015).

the domestic agenda for a long time in Sweden. The country also acknowledges the importance of women's participation in peace work to ensure lasting peace, in all its policy frameworks. In the context of Sweden's membership of the UN Security Council for 2017-2018, **women, peace and security** were higher on the agenda.

Sweden also put '**climate & security**' on its conflict prevention and peacebuilding agenda, and acknowledged that "acute shortage of water, food or energy can quickly create or exacerbate a conflict situation" (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2016a). Furthermore, Sweden is as a leader in combating climate change and an active donor partner, working towards sustainable peace in conflict situations around the world. Given its position, Sweden believes that, in order to ensure sustainable conflict prevention efforts, it is necessary to include climate-related risks when preparing interventions. Hence, it decided to strengthen the UN capacity on this issue during its membership of the UN Security Council (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2016b).

Swedish peace policy originally aligned with the definition of the **United Nations Secretary General's Agenda for Peace (1992)**, which introduced the term 'peacebuilding' into the international vocabulary (Smith, 2004). The Agenda for Peace defines peacebuilding as "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict" (United Nations, 1992). Yet Swedish stakeholders acknowledge that 'building' or 'solidifying' peace can be done in many ways and through various instruments, and that this requires building capacity at all levels, for conflict management. This is why Sweden provides support to peacebuilding at the local, national and regional levels (Government Offices of Sweden, 2017a).

While peacebuilding and statebuilding were usually addressed together in policy frameworks, the concept of statebuilding seems to have lost ground recently, both internationally and in Sweden. Today, while there is no fixed or universal definition, peacebuilding, or 'sustaining peace' (the term currently most frequently used in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as of 2017), from a Swedish perspective, is an intervention throughout the whole conflict cycle. In this way, Sweden is aligned with the **United Nations resolution 2282**, on a new peacebuilding architecture, which presents the term '**sustaining peace**' as a broad concept covering all parts of a conflict – before, during and after.¹⁴

Yet '**conflict prevention**' is sometimes seen as easier to communicate, which is why we observe an increasing use of this expression in the field of peacebuilding, especially in the context of Sweden's membership of the United Nations Security Council in 2017-2018 (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2016a). In its Peace and Conflict Thematic Overview, Sida highlighted that "peacebuilding and conflict prevention are overlapping concepts and processes" (Sida, 2017b, p. 2). This shows that the understanding of the concept of peacebuilding is getting broader. There may be some small variations in the definition or at least in the practical understanding of peacebuilding within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, according to the mandate of the departments.¹⁵ Nonetheless, the underlying idea remains to '**build peace**', which is also the Folke Bernadotte Academy's motto.¹⁶

Thus, while expressions such as 'conflict prevention' and 'sustaining peace' are increasingly used interchangeably, this is not true for terms like 'stabilisation', 'crisis management' or 'resilience', which have

¹⁴ "A goal and a process to build a common vision of a society, ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population are taken into account, which encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes [...] and should flow through all three pillars of the United Nations' engagement at all stages of conflict" (United Nations Security Council, 2016, p.1)

¹⁵ For instance, the department for Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs addresses conflict prevention from a broader perspective than the United Nations department. The UN department adopts a process-oriented and New-York based approach to peacebuilding, yet is also keen to ensure that UN agencies operationalise peacebuilding in their own actions.

¹⁶ Source: the Folke Bernadotte Academy's website: <https://fba.se/en/building-peace/>

not gained ground in Sweden contrary to our other case studies, Germany, the UK and the EU institutions. In conclusion, Sweden's commitment to peacebuilding is part of the political culture and consensual enough not to depend on the politics or government of the day. Over time, there have been changes in emphasis or new initiatives, but the overall commitment, engagement and language of Sweden in the area of peacebuilding remain similar and stable.

3.3. Despite security concerns, peacebuilding remains resilient

As early as 2008, the '**National strategy for Swedish participation in international peace-support and security-building operations**' stated that "the threats to Swedish security are constantly changing, however, and new risks and challenges are being added. Threats that are geographically remote may now be just as tangible as threats close to home" (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2008, p. 4). Similarly, the **2017 Statement of Foreign Policy** strongly acknowledged that the world has changed and that "migration issues have become increasingly important", emphasising the need to "sharpen the focus on the root causes of displacement and on conflict prevention" (Wallström, 2017a). Over the years, the language of the foreign policy statements has become increasingly stronger regarding the seriousness of the challenges the world is facing.

The impact of migration and terrorism on Sweden

The irregular **migration situation** had a huge impact on Sweden. In 2015, it received the highest per capita number of refugees in Europe. As a result, it spent the highest percentage of ODA on in-house refugee costs – 33.8% of total ODA compared to 8.7%, in 2010 (ECDPM and EBA, 2017). This is more than all other Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donor countries (Concord Aidwatch, 2016). The urgency of the situation led to amendments to the 2016 budget, which allowed for the reallocation of funds. As a result of these amendments, and in the context of the irregular migration and refugee situation, from 2015 to 2016, aid for the Middle East and North Africa increased by 42%, humanitarian aid by 6%, and aid to the rest of Africa declined slightly by 3% (ECDPM and EBA, 2017).¹⁷

Beyond this impact on ODA, the irregular migration situation has also influenced the policy level. The topic of migration has a whole section dedicated to it in the **2016 policy framework for development cooperation**, as 'migration and development' is one of its eight thematic directions. By contrast, it was only a subsection of one of the sub-objectives of the **aid policy framework in 2013**, entitled 'Greater capacity to tackle the opportunities and challenges brought about by migration and mobility' (Government of Sweden, 2017; Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2014, p. 3). This illustrates how the migration situation impacts on domestic policies, but also comes from the recognition that, in a global context of increased fragility, longer-term aid and humanitarian assistance have a role to play to address these situations (ECDPM and EBA, 2017). Thus, as the government policies guide the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), migration has been more fully integrated into Sida's work. Since 2015, Sweden's asylum laws have been considerably toughened, with restrictions on the right to family reunification, for instance (The Local, 2018). The **Budget Bill for 2018** proposed investments in the area of migration, in order to encourage returns. It also emphasised issues such as organised crime, terrorism and hate crime, and proposed increased investments in the police to enhance anti-terrorism efforts, as well as the establishment of a national centre to combat violent extremism, in January 2018. (Government Offices of Sweden, 2017c).

¹⁷ However, such reductions do not necessarily mean that multi-year strategies governing Swedish Aid are negatively affected, as indicative multiannual financial envelopes allow for flexible annual allocations: a lower allocation in a given year can be followed by an increase in the following. In addition, the budget was amended again in autumn 2016, due to the fact that the forecast for the number of asylum seekers had decreased since the previous amendment (see ECDPM and EBA, 2017).

Nevertheless, without diminishing these developments – and the fact that they could still have an impact in the future – they have not (yet) altered the substance of Sweden’s development policy or its commitment to peacebuilding in foreign policy. **Many European countries have given more importance to ‘stabilisation’, countering violent extremism or managing migration priorities** in their peacebuilding-relevant policy frameworks and funding mechanisms, **as a result of the terrorist attacks and the 2015 irregular migration and refugee situation. Sweden, on the other hand, has, to date, resisted such trends.**

Sweden’s commitment to peace remains strong

The **2017 Statement of Foreign Policy** states: “in difficult times, Sweden’s foreign policy rests on a solid **value-based** foundation of human rights, democracy and multilateral cooperation” (Wallström, 2017a). Despite the irregular migration situation and the terrorist attacks it experienced,¹⁸ Sweden’s international conflict prevention and peacebuilding priorities have not changed significantly. It is worth noting that Sweden’s approach to violent extremism, for instance, still focuses on prevention, convinced this is the most effective approach, as this could impact its external peacebuilding policy and ability to resist the securitisation of its policy. Furthermore, while most budget lines were cut in 2016, as a result of the irregular migration and refugee situation, appropriations for ‘global efforts for human security’ increased by 11%, from 2015 to 2016 (ECDPM and EBA, 2017). There was no indication, in policy frameworks, that development cooperation is used in a more targeted way, in the countries of origin of the refugees coming to Europe (ECDPM and EBA, 2017).¹⁹

In the 2018 migration and asylum policy, the Ministry of Justice (2018, p. 1) explains that the Swedish government “took a series of temporary measures to significantly reduce the number of people seeking asylum in Sweden when the EU Member States were unable to share the responsibility that came with the large number of asylum seekers” (Ministry of Justice, 2018). The reason the migration situation had an important impact, domestically, was mainly due to a lack of administrative, political, and institutional capacity to face the ‘crisis’. Yet, Swedish policies continue to take account of the development impact of migration.

With regard to its peacebuilding priorities abroad, Sweden has not integrated migration concerns as a key driver.²⁰ In its most recent statement of foreign policy, **peacebuilding** still features strongly and it is much more prominent in its new policy framework for development cooperation, than it was four years ago. The underlying idea of ‘**building peace**’ in Swedish interventions is still there and, in its **2017 statement of foreign policy**, Sweden recalled that “[o]ur first line of defence consists of a foreign policy that we pursue through diplomacy, mediation, conflict prevention and confidence-building” (Wallström, 2017a). Thus, while Sweden acknowledges the world has changed, it seems significantly **less prone to integrate more narrow self-interests or to succumb to securitisation** than other European countries, whether in the field of development cooperation or in the field of peace and conflict. On the contrary, it seems to use recent global changes as a reason to **engage more internationally and increase cooperation**, especially in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Sweden is a country that **adapts very quickly to new international frameworks and norms** (e.g. 2030 Agenda, Paris Agreement, Addis Ababa Action Agenda, various United Nations resolutions related to peace and security) and integrates them easily at the national level. This is because, very often, these frameworks are very close to Swedish values and its national discourse. For instance, in the 2016 policy framework for

¹⁸ Sweden experienced bombings in December 2010 and a truck attack in April 2017.

¹⁹ Interviews with key experts, 30 May-2 June 2017.

²⁰ Although the government officials we interviewed admitted that the reason they did not feel a change in priorities might be the fact they work on a relatively niche issue, namely peacebuilding, and other people or departments in the MFA, Sida or Folke Bernadotte Academy might have different views. Interview with government officials, 30 May-1 June 2017.

Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, the thematic direction ‘peaceful and inclusive societies’ reflects the language of Sustainable Development Goal 16. In addition, Sweden is also keen on promoting these values and, for instance, is one of the most constant champions of the United Nations-World Bank study *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*, for which it provided some policy direction (United Nations; World Bank, 2018). Sweden sees this study as a way to provide data on the cost of conflict in order to renew the political consensus on conflict prevention.

As illustrated in this first section, which maps out the conceptual evolution and on-going discussion in Sweden, peacebuilding considerations and peace efforts have been part of the Swedish foreign policy DNA since even before the end of the Cold War and have benefited from long-standing civil and cross-party political support. The next section offers an overview of the main institutional actors involved in the implementation of the Swedish peacebuilding policy, as well as the instruments, human and financial resources available in the peacebuilding domain. It also looks at the role of civil society in influencing the peace debate.

Box 1: Key messages on the concept of peacebuilding: evolutions and trends

1. Sweden developed an action plan for conflict prevention as early as 1999. Thus, in Sweden, conflict prevention and peacebuilding have enjoyed policy support very early on. Despite acknowledging the changing world, Sweden remains committed to peacebuilding today and has even scaled up its engagement in the last few years. In some cases, this was through new foreign and development policy frameworks, which feature peacebuilding, or, as is the case with the results strategy 2017-2022, are specifically dedicated to ‘sustainable peace’.
2. Sweden still has a strong rights and value-based foreign and development policy. Contrary to other European countries, the language on peace and conflict has not yet been impacted by a narrow security self-interest. Nor have its geographic priorities changed fundamentally – despite the fact that Sweden was also strongly impacted by the irregular migration situation.
3. Since peacebuilding is part of the political culture and quite consensual, across political parties, a change in government only leads to changes in emphasis or initiatives related to peacebuilding.
4. The concept of ‘human security’ is prominent in Sweden’s peace policy, which is very people-centred and focuses on civilian means.
5. The current Swedish approach to peacebuilding, in the context of Sweden’s membership of the United Nations (UN) Security Council for 2017-2018, focuses on ‘conflict prevention’ and ‘sustaining peace’. The women, peace and security agenda also gained momentum in this context, yet Sweden has advocated for inclusiveness to build lasting peace and the participation of women in peace processes for a long time.

4. Institutional and financial support for peacebuilding

The different policy frameworks presented in section 3 all illustrate the multidimensionality of the Swedish approach to peacebuilding and the fact that lasting peace, security, development, democracy, and human rights are all dependent on each other, and thus need to be considered together. As a result of this multidimensionality, different actors are involved in the implementation of the peacebuilding policy. Yet the Ministry for Foreign Affairs leads peacebuilding policy, as it encompasses international development cooperation, conflict and humanitarian affairs, as well as foreign and security policy more generally. Importantly the MFA is also responsible for the government agencies working on these issues.

While the policy frameworks recognise that the different actors in the peacebuilding field need to work together, in practice, there is **more ‘collaboration’ between actors than ‘integration’**. Although it tested

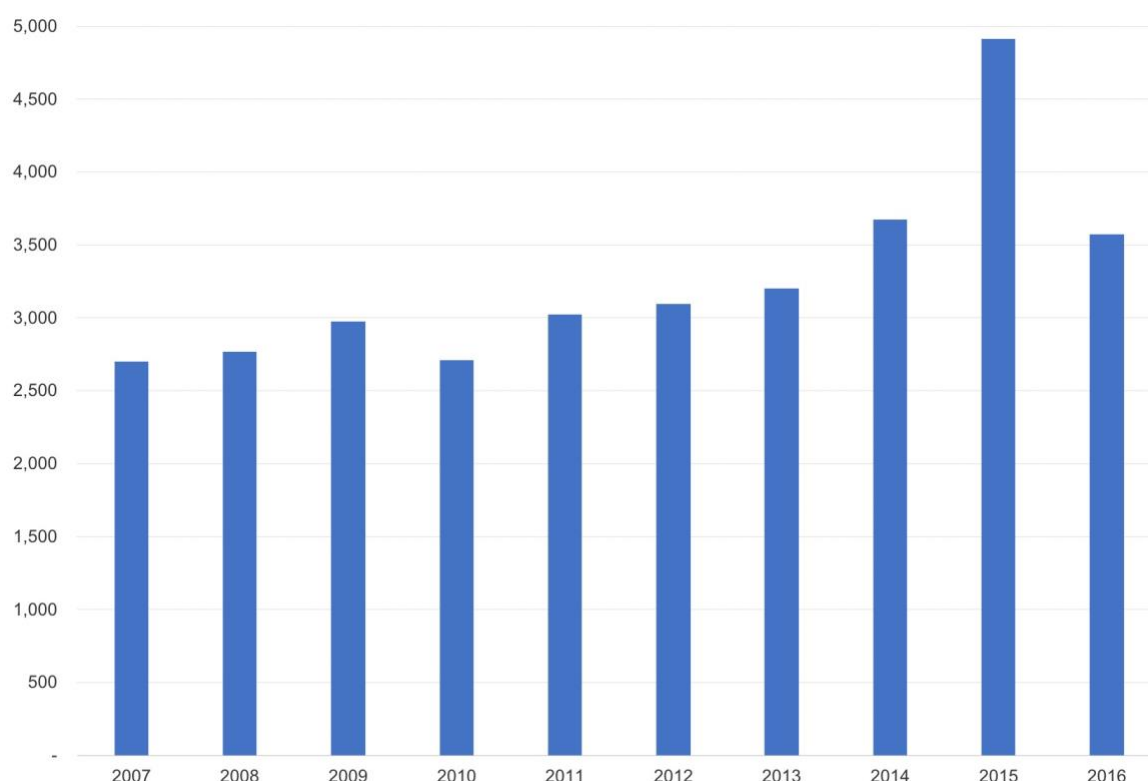
various forms of comprehensive approaches, Sweden has struggled to put in place such integrated working arrangements (Hauck and Rocca, 2014). This is also linked to the Swedish system of governance, in which **‘small’ ministries** work alongside **‘big’ implementing agencies**, namely Sida, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, and the smaller Folke Bernadotte Academy, the Swedish government agency for peace, security and development.

As these agencies enjoy significant autonomy, it may prove challenging to incentivise them to work together.²¹ Choosing to work collaboratively, instead of using a fully integrated model, has made it difficult to establish shared financing instruments or interdepartmental funds to address situations of fragility and conflict. Hence, Sweden has to rely on funding available for post-conflict or transition situations, in Sida’s development budget, and the direct funding which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs gives mainly to multilateral organisations (Hauck and Rocca, 2014).

Box 2: Trends in peace-related ODA in Sweden

An analysis of OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS) data²² shows that Swedish official development assistance (ODA) spending increased from USD 2.7 billion in 2007, peaked at USD 4.9 billion in 2015, and decreased to USD 3.6 billion in 2016.

Figure 2: Total Swedish ODA spending (in million USD, 2016 constant prices)



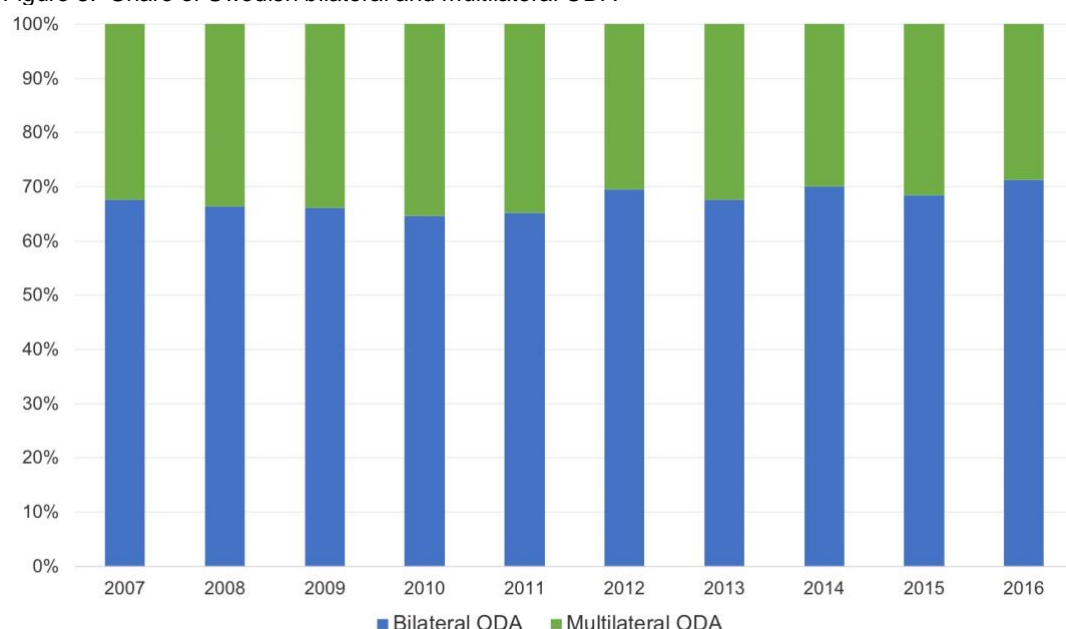
Source: ECDPM analysis based on CRS data

On average, bilateral ODA represents 68% of total Swedish ODA and this share has been constant over the years. The multilateral share increased slightly, from 2008 to 2011, but has dropped significantly since then. Roughly one third of all Swedish bilateral aid is directed to conflict and post-conflict settings (Öjendal, Leonardsson and Lundqvist, 2017).

²¹ Interview with government official, 1 June 2017.

²² See Annex 2 for a description of the methodology for the analysis of aid flows.

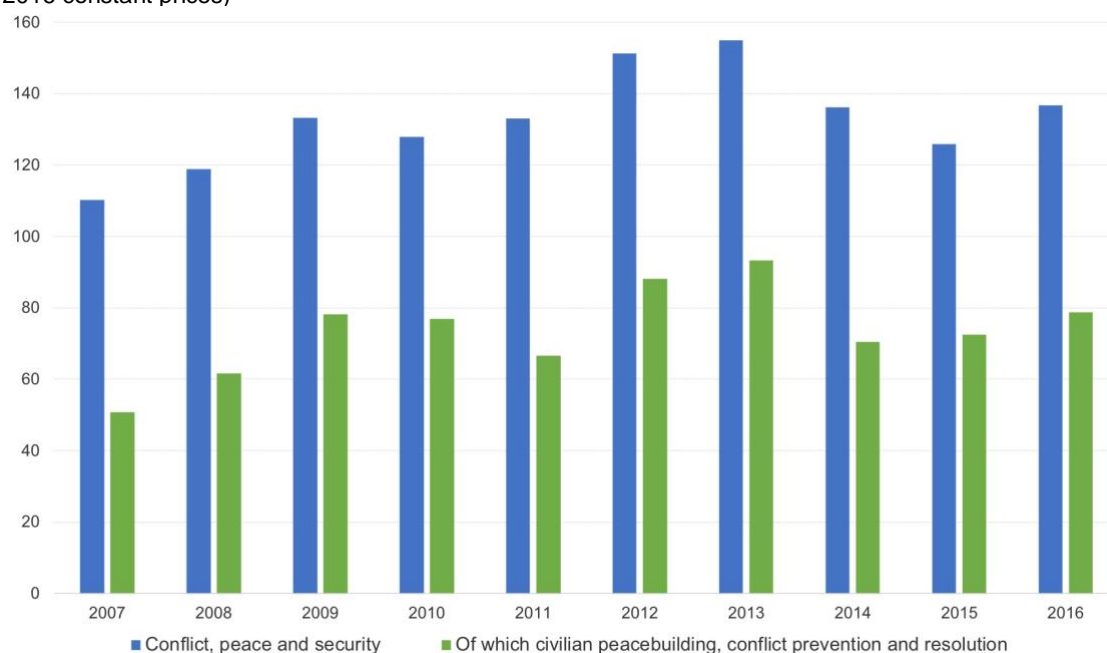
Figure 3: Share of Swedish bilateral and multilateral ODA



Source: ECDPM analysis based on OECD data

Between 2007 and 2013, in line with Swedish political priorities and global trends, **ODA spending for conflict, peace and security** has increased overall (from USD 110 million in 2007 to USD 155 million). However, the increase is modest in comparison with spending in other countries with a commitment to peace- and security-related support in their ODA. From 2013 to 2015, there was a significant decrease (to USD 126 million), followed by an increase in 2016 to USD 137 million (whereas Swedish ODA disbursements decreased overall). **Spending for civilian peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution** experienced ups and downs, from 2007 to 2016. Although it increased overall (from USD 51 million to 79 million), it did so at a very slow rate.

Figure 4: Swedish ODA trends for conflict, peace and security and for civilian peacebuilding (in million USD, 2016 constant prices)



Source: ECDPM analysis based on CRS data

It is worth noting that while spending on conflict, peace and security represents only 4% of the total Swedish ODA disbursements, on average, spending on civilian peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution, on average, represents 55% of this overall code (with peaks in 2010 and 2013 at 60%). This share increased since 2007 (although it decreased significantly in 2011 and 2014), which shows a prioritisation of peacebuilding and conflict prevention within peace and security related issues (see table 2). Indeed, since 2011, Sweden has **consistently ranked among the top five Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries for civilian peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution** (in the top six if we include multilaterals such as the EU in the ranking).

Table 2: Share of ODA allocated to conflict, peace and security and to peacebuilding

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Conflict, peace and security as a share of total ODA	4%	4%	4%	5%	4%	5%	5%	4%	3%	4%
Civilian peacebuilding as a share of conflict, peace and security ODA	46%	52%	59%	60%	50%	58%	60%	52%	58%	58%

Source: ECDPM analysis based on CRS data (codes 152 and 15220)

The top recipients of Swedish ODA for civilian peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution from 2007 to 2016 are the **West Bank and Gaza Strip, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somalia and Sudan**. They received support over the years, even following the Arab Spring (Syria, for instance, was among the top 10 recipients in 2013 and 2016 only). Myanmar and Rwanda also became part of the top five recipients, in 2015 and 2016.

4.1. *Utrikesdepartementet*, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) integrates diplomacy, foreign trade and international development cooperation.²³ Indeed, the Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate is part of the MFA. This means that the MFA has drafted all the policies mentioned in Section 3. Since the Red-Green government took power in 2014, the MFA has taken specific initiatives, involving more resources in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Given that the MFA has a central role in formulating priorities in foreign policy and guides the work of governmental agencies, these initiatives are meaningful.

Within the Ministry, the **Department for Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs** is an important institutional actor in the field of peacebuilding. Although it was created in 2016, the people working on these issues were there before but worked under another related organisation or unit. On the one hand, this department is responsible for the overarching Swedish policy with regard to conflict prevention and conflict resolution. On the other hand, it is responsible for the coordination and development of the Swedish humanitarian policy. In addition, the department is responsible for issues relating to the Folke Bernadotte Academy (Government Offices of Sweden, 2014).

²³ See an organisation chart of the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Annex 4.

The part of the department that deals with conflict directly comprised 10 to 12 people in 2017. In January 2017, a small support function was created in this conflict unit for '**dialogue and peace processes**'²⁴, which is part of the feminist foreign policy (Wallström, 2017b). Its aim is to merge local, regional, national, international processes into one peace effort and to involve all relevant (diplomatic and development) actors for inclusiveness, and to create sustainable peace processes.

As a result of the creation of this support function, additional resources were allocated to Swedish embassies. Three new positions were created in the Ministry and seven positions in the field (specially recruited diplomats) to contribute new knowledge to the embassies' on-going peace support efforts on the ground. The aim is to create a deeper understanding of complex conflicts, identify paths towards solutions, bring together parties, and promote dialogue as a tool (Government Offices of Sweden, 2017a). These extra resources required an exceptional budgetary process. Thus, the 'dialogue and peace processes' unit has become an important political priority and strategy, and demonstrates the underlying desire for Sweden to be more proactive in this field.

In August 2017, the MFA published a new **strategy for sustainable peace for 2017-2022** (in Swedish), which is being implemented by both Sida and the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), and replaces the results strategy for global action for human security 2014-2017. It was drafted by the Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department, although, due to Sweden's work on sustaining peace under the UN framework, the UN Department was also involved. Funding for this strategy has increased exponentially in the past three years, as Table 3 suggests. The government proposed a 48% increase, from SEK 280 to SEK 415 million, in the 2018 Budget Bill (Expenditure area 7 International Development Cooperation).

Table 3: Evolution of the resources dedicated to the strategy for global action for human security/strategy for sustainable peace

Years	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Amount (in thousands SEK)	197 082	184 665	224 190	280 000	415 000

Source: Budget propositions for 2018 for expenditure area 7 (Prop. 2017/18:1 Utgiftsområde 7).

The 2017 figure includes the 2017 spring and autumn budget changes but it is not the final allocation. The 2018 figure is the government's proposal for 2018.

The **UN Policy Department**, which works closely with the Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department on peace issues, is also a crucial actor in the field of peacebuilding. This is due to Sweden's membership of the UN Security Council (UNSC) for the period 2017–2018 and its work with the operational UN agencies. It is responsible for coordinating and developing Sweden's overall United Nations policy, including work in the UNSC, reforms of the UN system and coordination of candidacy issues in the UN system.²⁵ As a result of Sweden's seat at the UNSC, the UN Policy Department has benefited from increased capacity and staff, with a new section coordinating with the UNSC. Extra staff have also been recruited in Sweden's mission to the UN in New York.

The **International Development Cooperation Department** is responsible for overall governance and the evaluation of all Swedish development cooperation. It also has an important role in Swedish peacebuilding policy, as it is responsible for issues related to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

²⁴ The word 'dialogue' was deliberately chosen instead of 'mediation', to acknowledge that the modern mediation landscape has changed and is now multidimensional.

²⁵ Source: <http://www.government.se/government-of-sweden/ministry-for-foreign-affairs/organisation/>

In December 2015, the MFA launched a **women's mediation network**, which consists of nine appointed female mediators who are special representatives for inclusive peace processes that assist local women peacebuilders and support engagement in formal processes. For example, the women's mediation network has contributed to peace efforts in Syria, Burundi, Afghanistan and Somalia. In Afghanistan, it undertook dialogue and mediation training with local Afghan women peacebuilders. This Swedish network is a component of a wider Nordic mediation network (Wallström, 2017b). The Ministry also created thematic ambassador positions, such as the **Ambassador for gender equality** in 2015 who coordinates the feminist foreign policy and reinforces Sweden's profile in the Women, Peace and Security agenda (Government Offices of Sweden, 2017d). The **Ambassador for Children and Armed Conflict**, appointed in June 2017, is based at the MFA in Stockholm and responsible for coordinating Sweden's foreign and development policy issues related to children and armed conflict (Government Offices of Sweden, 2017e).²⁶

In terms of funding, the MFA is responsible for all or part of three expenditure areas in the central government budget – International cooperation, International development cooperation, and Industry and trade.

Table 4: Appropriations for International cooperation (in million SEK)

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Contributions to international organisations	1 429 1 104	1 329 1 398	1 329 1 512	1 329 1 509	1 329
Peace and security-building activities	158 155	138 133	140 126	151 138	192
Grant to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)	24 24	24 24	25 28	25 25	28
Total	2 018 1 662	1 899 1 934	1 905 2 070	1 913 2 084	2 009

Source: Swedish Government's budget bills submitted to the *Riksdag* (Parliament) from 2013 to 2017, Expenditure area 5 (see full table in Annex 3).

For each budget line, the top figure is the MFA's proposal and the bottom figure is the amount actually allocated ('utfall'). For 2017, the bottom figure is a forecast ('prognos') and the 2018 figure is a proposal ('förslag').²⁷

Table 4 reveals that, most of the time, the budget proposals are higher than the actual allocations, especially for peace and security-building activities. The budget line 'peace and security-building activities'²⁸ has decreased in 2015 and 2016, but started to increase again from then. In the **budget bill for 2018**, the

²⁶ "Raising Sweden's profile on these issues reflects the Government's high level of ambition regarding human rights, children's rights and international humanitarian law, and is also closely linked with the women, peace and security action plan." See Government Offices of Sweden (2017e).

²⁷ Comparing funding levels for budget lines from one year to the next only provides a snapshot of the situation, as projects tend to run over several years and thus funding in one year may be lower as a result of many projects having started in the previous year. Besides, the approved budget can be subject to changes during the year, which explains differences between the proposal, the adopted budget and the final allocations.

²⁸ This budget line includes expenditures for the promotion of peace and security, the prevention of conflicts, sanctions, humanitarian activities, the promotion of international human rights. This can be done through the support of projects, seminars, conferences, education, research efforts and other specific initiatives, as well as through state grants to intergovernmental or nongovernmental organisations and institutions. The budget line may also be used to provide Swedish staff to peace, security and conflict prevention-related activities in the framework of the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), NATO and others organizations.

Government proposed to increase appropriations for this budget line by SEK 40 million for investments in peace and security, conflict prevention, security and peace support measures, confidence-building, disarmament and arms control, women as peace actors and gender equality, security policy analysis and dialogue (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2017b). As such, the proposal for 2018 is significantly higher compared to previous years, yet it remains to be seen which amount will actually be allocated to peace and security in the 2018 budget.

Sweden is also one of the biggest contributors to the **UN Peacebuilding Fund**. Until 2017, it consistently ranked among the top three contributors to the Fund and has contributed USD 134 million since the Fund was established in 2006.²⁹ This is another illustration of Sweden's historic and strong support for UN peacebuilding. In 2018, the Director-General for International Development Cooperation in the MFA, Johannes Oljelund, was appointed to the Fifth UN Secretary General's Peacebuilding Funds Advisory Group (United Nations Secretary-General, 2018).

Table 5: Sweden's contribution to the UN Peacebuilding Fund

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Amount (million USD)	15,11	12,28	9,63	8,73	11,52	10,07	8,37	7,74	6,60	6,26	10,73
Position in donor ranking	2	3	2	1	2	3	2	3	2	3	4

Source: United Nations, Multi-partner Trust Fund Office Gateway <http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/PB000>

Table 6: Appropriations for International development cooperation (in million SEK)

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Development cooperation	30 678 29 856	28 852 31 009	31 121 30 723	33 706 35 437	41 606
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)	985 973	988 1 032	1 050 1 071	1 096 1 130	1 171
Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA)	98 97	100 101	105 103	107 109	124
Total	31 831 31 027	30 009 32 213	32 357 31 971	34 990 36 754	42 985

Source: Swedish Government's budget bills submitted to the Riksdag from 2013 to 2017, Expenditure area 7 (see full table in Annex 3)

Sweden meets its target of allocating 1% of its GNI to ODA and, in September 2017, the then government presented its largest aid budget ever, which included strengthened efforts for peacebuilding (Government Offices of Sweden, 2017f). Furthermore, Table 6 reveals that the MFA has allocated an increasing amount of funding to SIDA and the FBA. In the next subsections we will look at whether these increases have had an impact on the peacebuilding field.

It is worth noting that the Swedish aid budget is almost equivalent to its defence budget. Although this leads to difficult internal dynamics on these issues, the increase in the defence budget has never led to a questioning of the aid budget's size.³⁰

²⁹ Source: <http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/PB000>

³⁰ Interview with key expert, May 2018

4.2. *Försvarsdepartementet, the Ministry of Defence*

The **Swedish Ministry of Defence's** (MoD) strategic planning includes international operations and security-building activities.³¹ Based on the observation that “participation in international peace-building missions is an important aspect of security policy”, the **2003 policy for Global Development** stated, “international peace-building efforts should be further developed as one of the main tasks of the Swedish Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces” (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2003, p. 34-35).

Despite this, support for peacebuilding is mostly undertaken by the MFA. First of all, this is linked to the fact that in Sweden, unlike in some other European countries, there is no overarching policy framework or funding mechanism that enables the different ministries to work together on these issues. Secondly, the MoD is now more geared towards **‘territorial defence’** than multilateral overseas operations, which has been the main mission of the Swedish military since the end of the Cold War.

The Swedish Armed Forces have suggested some reallocations of the announced funding for the period of 2016-2020, which include moving SEK 1.3 billion from the funding for international missions to the funding for training and readiness (Ministry of Defence, 2015). This indicates a shift away from multilateral peacekeeping towards more interest-driven territorial concerns. Sweden's defence policy for 2016-2020 outlined the deteriorating security situation in Europe, particularly in light of the **Russian aggression against Ukraine**, and the fact that “a renewed regional focus will be a priority, with the emphasis on **national defence and planning for wartime scenarios**” (Ministry of Defence, 2015, p. 3).

In this context, an increased defence budget was deemed “fundamental”; “for the first time in more than two decades, the Swedish government has decided on a **substantial increase of the defence budget**” (Ministry of Defence, 2015, p. 3). While military spending fell to 1.1 percent of GDP in 2015, from 2.6 percent in 1991, it increased to 11 percent in 2016 (Selsøe Sørensen, 2017). In 2017, the ruling coalition of the Social Democrats and the Greens agreed with two centre-right opposition parties to increase the military budget by SEK 2.7 billion every year from 2017 to 2020 to boost defence capabilities, in the face of increased tension with Russia in the Baltics (Reuters, 2017).

Cyber defence capabilities are also considered a priority, especially in the run-up to the 2018 election. Thus, Sweden's defence and security policy ultimately aims at preserving **Swedish independence and autonomy** and defending it against political, military or any other kind of pressure (Ministry of Defence, 2015). This puts MoD and military support to the Swedish approach to peacebuilding abroad less high on the agenda, compared to other countries.

4.3. *Sida – a crucial operational agency*

Sida (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency), a government agency that works on behalf of the Swedish parliament and government, is a key actor in Sweden's international peacebuilding policy. It contributes to implementing Sweden's Policy for Global Development, as well as the policy framework for development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, which provides the framework for future thematic and geographic multi-year strategies (ECDPM and EBA, 2017). It works in a large number of countries in a conflict or post-conflict situation, where it creates strong links between peace, security and development cooperation (Sida, 2017a).³² In addition, Sida has the financial oversight of most of the aid budget (ECDPM and EBA, 2017).

³¹ Source: <http://www.government.se/government-of-sweden/ministry-of-defence/>

³² Sida's website indicates that Sweden has bilateral development cooperation with 35 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe, as well as regional development cooperation in these regions. The 2016 annual report explains that a growing share of these partner countries are characterised by violence, armed conflict, subnational and

As such, Sida is an authority under the jurisdiction of the Swedish MFA. It performs the assignments it receives to achieve Sweden's development assistance policy targets. The **government guidelines** describe how it should assist the government, which organisations it should cooperate with and how it should organise its work in partner countries. The current guidelines came into force in August 2010, although there have been some amendments. Furthermore, the **annual appropriation directions** from the government direct the operations of Sida during the year, set its goals and budget, and break down the budget between different activities. The directions for Sida for 2017 include six special tasks, among which are: 'integrated conflict, environmental and climate perspective' and 'using development cooperation to address the shrinking space for civil society' (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2016c).³³ It is worth noting however that peace and security issues do not appear in the assignments of the 2018 government's letter.

Sida has been one of the first governmental agencies (and, more generally, Sweden is one of the first OECD DAC members) to invest in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Already in the late 1990s, Sida's work was guided by the **Action Programme for Peacebuilding, Democracy and Human Rights** (1998) and the **Strategy for Conflict Management and Peacebuilding** (1999), which was replaced by a new policy '**Promoting peace and security through development cooperation**', in 2005. The latter focused on human security and outlined approaches to make development cooperation conflict-sensitive "that is, not having negative effects on the conflict dynamics", as, at the time, it was estimated that 75% of Sida's partner countries were affected by violent conflict (Sida, 2005, p. 4). It also emphasized that "[a] top priority for Sida is to contribute to the prevention of violent conflict by identifying and addressing its root causes more effectively at an early stage [...]" and that Sida can work for the promotion of peace and security "through the hidden potential of regular development cooperation", with activities such as conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities (Sida, 2005, p. 13 and 8, respectively).

Thus, in the late 1990s and early 2000s Sida increasingly looked at how programmes and strategies impact conflict and are influenced by it (which it called applying a '**conflict-prevention lens**' (Wiking, 2001). It also developed tools in order to strengthen conflict sensitivity and analysis in its development cooperation work. For instance, in 2003, a Sida discussion paper entitled *Reflections on Development Cooperation and Violent Conflict* stated that Sida was in the process of shaping its own **Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment** (PCIA) methodology, one for the strategic and one for the project level (Holmberg, Buxton and Kvist, 2003). In 2004, Sida developed a guiding document entitled '**Conflict-Sensitive Development Cooperation: How to Conduct a Conflict Analysis**' and in 2005, '**Guidelines on Peace and Security**'.

In 2001, Sida had already gained rich experience, "having worked with conflict management and conflict prevention for some years", and was gathering lessons learned (Wiking, 2001). An **evaluation of Sida's support to conflict management and peacebuilding**, conducted in 2000, found that Sida was placing increasing emphasis on the importance of peacebuilding and conflict prevention and giving support to an increasing number of peacebuilding initiatives (SIPU International AB et al., 2000). However, one expert noted that establishing an operational definition of 'peacebuilding', within Sida, was not an easy task and that 'human security' was more operationalised than 'peacebuilding'.³⁴

In the past few years, Sida has gone through a lot of **organisational changes**, especially under the centre-right government, led by the Moderate party, which was in power from 2006 to 2014. In 2008-2010, Sida had an operational department, the Department for Conflict and Post-conflict Cooperation, and a policy

regional conflicts, economic instability, political violence and turmoil, and an increasingly significant lack of human security. Among the seven countries receiving most development cooperation from Sida in 2016, five are severely affected by conflict and fragility: Afghanistan, Somalia, Palestine, Syria and the Democratic Republic of Congo (see Sida, 2017a).

³³ The other special tasks include 'Agenda 2030 and the Global Goals', 'Measures for capacity development', 'Government jobs' and 'UN ocean conference'.

³⁴ Interview with key expert, 12 March 2018.

department, the Department for Human Security. The latter disappeared in the reorganisation in 2011 and merged with the Department for Conflict and Post-conflict Cooperation.

Since the re-organisation in January 2014, there is a **support unit for Conflict and Post-conflict Cooperation** at the Department for Asia, MENA and humanitarian aid (HUMASIA/CONFLICT), which housed the global policy specialists on Peace and Security until December 2016. In January 2017, a position for a '**lead policy specialist on peace and security**' was created. This specialist is based in the Department for International Organisations and Thematic Support, and is part of a team of other lead policy specialists (health, environment, gender equality, human rights). Apart from this position, there is one senior policy specialist for peace and security, one temporary policy specialist for peace and security (until February 2018), and one advisor, placed in the Asia department. There are also two advisors for Africa and two for Europe/Latin America. Finally, there is a focal point in the Unit for Support to Civil Society (CIVSAM) as well as a policy specialist for women, peace and security in the HUMASIA department.

Years of '**results-based management**', imposed by the previous government, and **drastic cuts in budget support**,³⁵ in the context of the financial and economic crisis, led to the departure of the Director General and significant staff cuts³⁶, as well as the loss of part of its network and conflict-sensitivity lens. Nevertheless, in the last few years, the agency has been trying to reinforce its work in this field again.

In the last two years, Sida has increased its – already significant – investments in the field of peace and security. Given that fragility, conflict and violence, as well as increased levels of social tension mark a growing number of Sida's partner countries, the government's revised instructions for Sida prescribed an integrated **conflict perspective** in all development cooperation activities in 2015 (Sida, 2017c).³⁷ However, one interviewee considered that the government never clearly defined this and that it therefore had to be defined internally.³⁸ As a result, in 2017, Sida developed a '**Peace and Conflict Toolbox**', which provides knowledge, tools and inspiration on how to operationalise **conflict sensitivity**, as well as peace and security in Swedish development cooperation. On its website, Sida (2018) explains: "a solid knowledge and method base is more important than ever due to an increased focus on conflict prevention and peacebuilding in Swedish and global policy and practice".

The Peace and Conflict Toolbox provides thematic method support and guidance in relation to Sida's key processes. It targets Sida managers and staff as well as implementing partners and other external stakeholders. It includes three different kinds of materials: tools, issue briefs and thematic overviews. This toolbox enabled Sida to develop an approach with an **integrated conflict perspective**, which it defines as "having a good knowledge about the context where a development program is implemented, taking into account how contextual factors affect the implementation of a development program, and how the development program can intentionally or unintentionally affect on-going and submerged conflicts/tensions". The aim is essentially "to minimise the negative effect and maximise the positive contribution to conflict prevention, peacebuilding, reconciliation and conflict management". **Conflict analysis** and **conflict sensitivity** are again recognised as key tools in applying a conflict perspective (Sida, 2017c). However, there has not been an increase in staff in the last few years, despite the increased support to conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

³⁵ In 2007, the conservative government completed a review of Sweden's bilateral aid portfolio with the intention of focusing assistance on fewer countries as a foundation of a new development cooperation policy. "We cannot expect Sida's administrative resources to grow at the same pace as the aid" (Howell and Lind, 2009, p.98).

³⁶ Between 2009 and 2012, Sida reduced its staff from 796 to 633 because of budgetary challenges.

³⁷ The other perspectives that Sida must integrate in its activities are the rights perspective, the poor people's perspective on development, the environmental and climate perspective and the gender perspective.

³⁸ Interview with key expert, 1 June 2017.

In the last few years, it is mainly policies and policy frameworks that have guided the support for peacebuilding within Sida. Given that it is a government agency that receives **guidance from the MFA**, it had to adapt to the shifts that took place at the policy level. These shifts include the increasing integration of the human security dimension and the change of terminology, with the rising importance of ‘sustaining peace’. In the field of peace, Sida mainly works with the MFA’s Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department but, recently, it has also been in contact with the UN Department, regarding peacebuilding issues (for example, to strengthen the dialogue with the UN on conflict sensitivity). It is also increasingly working with research institutes such as SIPRI.

While the MFA gives policy guidance to Sida, Sida has an **overarching responsibility for the implementation of the policy**, which means that it has a certain degree of independence. As Table 7 reveals, there has been a almost 25% increase in resources for SIDA, over the last six years.

Table 7: Evolution of Sida’s financial resources (in thousands SEK)

Years	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Amount	984 061	1 068 787	1 083 240	1 150 093	1 181 848	1 225 302

Source: *Sidas årsredovisning (2012-2017)*

Sweden’s total **development aid budget for 2018** is SEK 49 billion, which is 1% of GNI. Deductions from the aid budget are made for, among other things, refugee costs in Sweden, EU assistance and contributions to the regular budget of some UN agencies. Excluding those costs leaves SEK 43 billion for development cooperation, of which **Sida manages SEK 41.2 billion**. Of this amount, approximately SEK 15.2 billion are funds that the Government Offices decide upon and follow up, but where Sida handles payments and certain financial monitoring (Sida, 2017d).

Most of the funding goes to bilateral support, although Sida also provides global support to the UN agencies for peace and security, through programme and project funding (while the MFA mainly provides core funding to the UN system), and to civil society, through its unit for support to civil society CIVSAM.³⁹ Another share of the funding goes to strategies that govern Sida’s work in development cooperation. These strategies apply to a country, a region or a particular thematic area. Of particular importance in the field of peace is the **‘Results Strategy for Global Action for Human Security 2014-2017’**, which was entirely managed by Sida and gave specific funding for peacebuilding and statebuilding to non-governmental organisations, such as Saferworld, and International Alert (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2014).

In August 2017, this strategy was replaced by the **strategy for sustainable peace 2017-2022**, which Sida has been commissioned to implement together with the Folke Bernadotte Academy. Alongside this strategy, funding also goes to programs and projects in the area of peacebuilding and conflict prevention through bilateral strategies.

³⁹ In 2016, a fifth of the country’s bilateral ODA was channelled through civil society organisations (27%), which is above the average of 16% among members of the OECD-DAC. (Donor Tracker, 2018)

Table 8: Evolution of Sida's disbursements for the main sectors and conflict, peace and security (in million USD)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Governance, democracy, human rights and gender equality	528	642	676	771	777	599	610
Humanitarian aid	372	469	418	438	567	364	462
Conflict prevention, peace and security	82	100	103	111	106	86	87

Source: Openaid.se (see full table in Annex 3).⁴⁰

Table 8, above, outlines the evolution of Sida's overall disbursements for the sector 'Conflict prevention, peace and security', since 2010. Although it has decreased since 2014, this is to a lesser extent than other sectors and it remained relatively stable over the period 2010-2016. 'Conflict prevention, peace and security' is a relatively small sector compared to the other ones. In 2016, **Sida's targeted support for conflict, peace and security represented around 4% of Sida's total budget, of which 62% was dedicated to civilian peacebuilding, conflict prevention and conflict resolution**. Nevertheless, the agency estimates 58% of all its support had peace and security as a principal or significant objective (Sida, 2017a).

It is worth appreciating that, although a significant number of Sida's activities (related to health, education, governance etc.) are linked to peacebuilding, they are not necessarily labelled as such. Similarly, support given to the UN system or to global NGOs, such as International Alert (managed by the conflict support unit), contributes to peacebuilding worldwide, but it is difficult to track the exact amount of funding that goes to this field. Some of the support to these organisations is catalytic and ensures that the UN system for instance has enough capacity in this specific thematic area.

Overall, Sida manages a large portfolio of funds, with a breadth of both geographic and thematic focus. Its potential impact on peacebuilding is significant but some of this potential is underused, according to stakeholders consulted. Sida, like most large development agencies, still operates mostly in a traditional development or humanitarian logic, even after 25 years of commitments to peacebuilding. Experts point to the fact that in an environment where ODA to fragile states is declining, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find non-humanitarian funding for these states⁴¹ (this is demonstrated by the significant difference between humanitarian aid and conflict prevention, peace and security, in table 8 above). Furthermore, integrating all five perspectives in Sida's development cooperation priorities can be challenging in some countries.⁴²

4.4. Folke Bernadotte Academy – an actor of growing importance

Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), established in 2002, is a good example of the way Sweden has tried to match its commitments with greater resources and instruments. This government agency for peace, security and development contributes both to the implementation of Sweden's development policy and to the promotion of international peace and security.

⁴⁰ It is worth noting that since the data was extracted, the sectors have changed on Openaid.se and 'conflict prevention, peace and security' is not one of the sectors anymore.

⁴¹ Interview with key expert, 12 March 2018.

⁴² Interview with key expert, 1 June 2017.

Like Sida, FBA is under the authority of the MFA (with which it has a close relationship) and receives **instructions** from the government, which determine the agency's basic tasks and management conditions. The latest revision of these instructions took place in 2013. The document instructed FBA to support international peace efforts through capacity-building and training; research, policy analysis and method development in order to strengthen peacebuilding and statebuilding in conflict and post-conflict countries; secondments of civilian staff to peace operations and election observation missions led by the EU, UN and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Secondments⁴³ are the biggest area of spending for FBA. The instructions also listed FBA's activities: international conflict prevention, peacebuilding, peacekeeping and security promotion efforts; statebuilding within the framework of international peace efforts; SSR and DDR; support for rule of law and respect for human rights; implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and security; multifunctional civil-military collaboration (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2013). While FBA has evolved since 2013, as a result of a growing number of assignments (due to the increasing engagement of Sweden on peace and security issues), the core of the instructions remained the same. However, priorities and the way the government uses FBA have changed. A **letter of appropriation** also sets targets, assignments and funds every year. For 2017, the letter of appropriation instructed FBA to support the government's commitment to dialogue and peace processes and to support the further development of the Swedish and Nordic women mediation networks; to contribute to the implementation of the National Action Plan for the implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security and on youth, peace and security (among other assignments) (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2016d).

The recent terminological evolutions in Sweden's approach to peacebuilding have influenced FBA's work as the concepts of 'conflict prevention', 'sustaining peace' all relate to FBA's core goal, which is to **'build peace'** and, more widely, to Sweden, as an actor supporting international peace and security.⁴⁴ It has taken FBA a few years to reach maturity as a seconding agency. Beyond providing training and supporting international organisations with capacity, FBA is now a niche actor, with a specific mandate and focus on peace and security issues. For instance, it works together with the MFA on capacity building in embassies. FBA also works more in the field and has a role to play in strategies, as instructions are now given to both Sida and FBA, and not only to Sida anymore. For instance, since 2014, FBA and Sida operate together within **bilateral development cooperation strategies**, in a select group of countries (for five years). Such strategies, funded by the MFA, have already been put in place in countries where peace is fragile and there is a need for peacebuilding efforts, such as the DRC, Liberia, Colombia, Mali, Iraq, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Somalia and Sub-Saharan Africa as a regional strategy.⁴⁵

FBA and Sida generally operate towards the same overarching goals, but the government often provides some specific focus for each agency. Thus, directions match their areas of expertise and the tools at their disposal, and in the case of FBA, they are often linked to conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Similarly, the new **strategy for sustainable peace**, adopted in August 2017, is to be implemented by both Sida and FBA for the period 2017-2022. It matches most (if not all) of FBA's areas of expertise. **The decision to include FBA in this strategy implies both a desire to bring together government actors** in development cooperation, under the same priority areas, and with resulting coordinating mechanisms, and an increased ambition and resource allocation for FBA to conduct its activities. As a result, FBA "can do more, can explore complementarity, and can think more long-term in partnering up with other actors and designing support interventions to achieve effect and sustainability".⁴⁶

⁴³ The temporary transfer of Swedish staff to another position, mostly in international operations.

⁴⁴ Interview with government official, 2 June 2017.

⁴⁵ Interview with government official, 2 June 2017.

⁴⁶ Follow-up to an interview with a government official, August 2017.

These recent evolutions show that FBA now has such a scope that the government increasingly uses it as an instrument. For instance, before the MFA established the 'dialogue and peace processes' support function, within the Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department, it asked FBA to undertake a specific government assignment, which was to analyse how Sweden could increase its support and be a more visible actor on mediation, dialogue and peace processes (comparing it with its Nordic neighbours).⁴⁷ The government took this assignment into account when establishing the new support function, which shows that FBA's technical expertise is increasingly recognised and used more strategically by the government in its renewed push for peacebuilding.⁴⁸

An important distinction however is that Sida is a funding or transferring agency, while **FBA is an implementing agency**.⁴⁹ FBA also works more with technical support than Sida. Besides, it is not assignment funded, which gives the agency some flexibility and autonomy to engage where it is most needed, where conflict is prevalent.⁵⁰ According to key experts, the inclusion of FBA in the strategies in recent years might be linked to a perspective from the government that Sida focuses more on long-term development and administratively has less need to adapt its priorities. There would therefore be a need for more flexible, politically savvy and quicker ways of translating policy into practice that FBA can offer.⁵¹

FBA has benefited from an increase in financial resources in the past few years, as demonstrated by table 9 below. Despite the increased demands there is no feeling of being under-resourced within the agency, yet FBA remains very small compared to the larger and differently mandated Sida (although it is growing). In terms of human resources, FBA has grown significantly in the past 15 years as it started with only five individuals in 2002 and has around 150 staff members and 70 secondees as of 2017.⁵²

Table 9: Evolution of FBA's financial resources (in thousands SEK)

Years	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Amount	191 587	210 007	215 924	214 851	226 172	255 176

Source: FBA's annual reports (2012-2017)

FBA considers that its work is catalytic and that it takes time to develop foundations in these fragile countries to make progress. For instance, its work in the DRC has been very fruitful as it stimulated a closer dialogue between the MFA, Sida, FBA and the embassies to coordinate and find complementarities. In these countries, it aims at drawing on the embassies' local presence. However, as we will see in the next subsection, this coordination very often proves challenging.

⁴⁷ Delivered in May 2016, the analysis recommended an increase in human and financial resources dedicated to mediation and dialogue, as well as further development of skills and experience; further development of FBA's mission, the establishment of a support function for mediation and dialogue and the development of the women's mediation network.

⁴⁸ Interviews with government officials, 1-2 June 2017.

⁴⁹ Yet FBA can provide support to civil society organisations, although this role has been limited so far. Before 2018, FBA administered two funds in support of civil society organisations: the Peace Million and The 1325 Grants. Only Swedish organisations were eligible to apply for funding from The Peace Million, but international organisations could apply for funding from The 1325 Grants. In 2018, the Swedish government decided that FBA hereafter will have one fund to administer, and that only Swedish civil society organisations and foundations, registered in Sweden, will be eligible to apply for FBA grants in the future. See FBA, Support to civil society: <https://fba.se/en/support/>

⁵⁰ Interview with government official, 2 June 2017.

⁵¹ Interview with NGOs experts, 30 May 2017.

⁵² Source: FBA's website

4.5. Despite long-standing commitments, efforts towards a more coordinated approach remain challenging

In 2008, the **National strategy for Swedish participation in international peace-support and security-building operations** noted that “Sweden’s combined operations [with both military and civil elements] in a conflict area or post-conflict area, i.e. areas in which a conflict is in progress or has recently ended, should be covered by an overarching national objective” and that “[t]his will be based on strategic planning and improved coordination between short-term and long-term aims, as well as between different players” (Government of Sweden, 2008, p. 8 and 16, respectively). The importance of interaction between Swedish actors was also emphasized by the **Policy for Security and Development in Swedish Development Cooperation 2010-2014** (Government Offices of Sweden, 2011).

Nevertheless, while Sweden has been dedicated to international peace and security for decades, the difficulties that it still faces in implementing **coherent and whole-of-government approaches** (already fostered in the **2003 Policy for Global Development**) are striking. Stakeholders in the field are, overall, satisfied with the peacebuilding-related policies of successive governments, however they highlight the fact that this very high ambition level is not matched by institutional leadership and capacity. While commitments and ambitions have been increasingly strengthened in the past ten years, the implementation side has not significantly changed.⁵³

This is first of all linked to the fact, as explained in the previous subsections, that the **independent governmental agencies** Sida and FBA have different organisational cultures and ways of working, do not often work together and ministers cannot directly interfere in their work. While this means that these agencies act upon their mandate and not short-term politics, this can also lead to different interpretations of policy guidelines on the ground. There is a recognition within the MFA of the **need to make development cooperation more ‘political’**, to merge it with political dialogue and the work of FBA or the NGOs. However, while Sweden has a strong and well-regarded engagement with defended principles, in some contexts there is a resistance to the politicisation of development cooperation for more self-interested foreign policy concerns. Also, practical joint action through joint analysis, strategies, planning or implementation over the last 20 years appeared rare. Indeed, examples of **joint conflict analysis** between Sida and FBA also involving the Ministry are rare. Despite these challenges, there are attempts to increasingly use it as a tool. Some workshops have been organized where people working in embassies in conflict countries, in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and in Sida were gathered to analyse how they could work better together in these countries and identify opportunities for better cooperation. Such opportunities, while considered as very useful by most actors and while becoming more common, were unusual over the last 20 years despite Sweden championing peacebuilding globally.⁵⁴

The **strategy for sustainable peace 2017-2022** highlights the fact that “today’s interconnected and complex crises increase the need for an **integrated approach and cross-system efforts** to build peace, and prevent, handle and resolve conflicts at a national, regional and global level” but also the “need for a **close interplay between humanitarian aid, long-term development cooperation, political dialogue and mediation** as well as coordinated and supplementary measures at national, regional and global level” (with a “focus on joint analysis, planning and goal formulation”). The strategy also states that “the political character of the activities and the limited possibilities for development cooperation to by itself address the causes of conflict require close dialogue between relevant actors”. This was not emphasised as much in the previous strategy. It remains to be seen however whether it will lead to greater integration of efforts in coming years (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2018).

⁵³ Interviews with key experts, 30 May-2 June 2017.

⁵⁴ Interview with government officials and experts, 30 May - 2 June 2017.

Box 3: Sweden's engagement in Afghanistan

A very good example of these operational challenges met by Sweden is Afghanistan. An **evaluation of Sweden's engagement** (political-diplomatic efforts, military operations and development cooperation) **in Afghanistan** (one of the largest recipients of Swedish aid) over the period 2002-2014 found that Swedish engagement was less cohesive and concerted than reported. While civil-military cooperation was strongly emphasised in government bills and policy documents related to the engagement in Afghanistan, "no more concrete analysis was ever made of what was meant by 'cooperation'", which "generated frictions and tensions between and within government agencies, and between decision-makers" (Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence, 2017, p. 9). The evaluation also observed that "different ministries were responsible for different parts of the engagement in line with regular routines" and that "the different parts of the engagement were governed in separate processes, or in so-called 'silos'" (Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence, 2017, p. 10). According to the evaluation, "achieving a concerted Swedish engagement requires an overall analysis established by the Government, and a guiding strategy for all agencies involved", including a division of tasks (Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence, 2017, p. 14). The **national strategy for Swedish participation in international peace-support and security-building operations**, formulated in 2008, which fostered integrated military and civil actions, was tested in Afghanistan and produced considerable disillusionment across government ministries and agencies, as well as resistance from Swedish NGOs (Hauck and Rocca, 2014). The evaluation, however, recommended that military operations and civilian efforts have separate tasks and are not mixed up. On the contrary, in Somalia, the different actors involved in peacebuilding worked very closely together and it had a positive impact. The New Deal was particularly useful in that case, as it fostered joint decisions. However, Somalia is reportedly one of the only cases where such an approach worked.⁵⁵

In 2001 already, David Wiking (at that time Adviser, Conflict Management, in Sida's Division for Humanitarian Assistance) highlighted that "the challenge is not only finding new methodologies and means of analysing conflicts, but also **changing the attitudes of actors involved in development issues**. As attitudes change, improved coordination and cooperation, not least between donors, will hopefully follow" (Wiking, 2001, p. 41). Yet it seems that seventeen years later, the challenge remains in Sweden as it does in other countries and multilateral organisations trying to develop more joined up approaches to peacebuilding or to import a peacebuilding logic to agencies with other primary missions in the foreign or development policy spheres. While the UK has often been considered as a 'model' by Sweden in the field of responding to violent conflict (especially when it comes to its expertise), there is a degree of risk aversion (linked to the failure of programmes, investments but also a fear of reputational risks on the ground) in Sweden that prevents the country from reaching the same degree of 'whole-of-government' approach as in the UK.⁵⁶

4.6. Civil society – a key actor in feeding the peacebuilding debate

Civil society and expertise outside of government are other key actors in keeping peace high on the agenda in Sweden and were consulted and influential in past policy developments, including originally at the EU level. Indeed, both for the development of the original 1999 action plan and in the context of Sweden's sponsorship of the EU's Gothenburg Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts in 2001, non-governmental expertise was heavily consulted. In 1997, a conference was held on 'Government-NGO Relations in Preventing Violence, Transforming Conflict and Building Peace', which fed into the development of the 1999 action plan, and in May 2001, the European Centre for Conflict Prevention and the Swedish Peace Team Forum organised a conference on 'Promoting the Prevention of Violent Conflict and Building Peace' in Gripsholm, which fed into the EU's 2001 policy (Government Offices of Sweden, 2002). This shows that the expertise of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and research institutes is recognised by the

⁵⁵ Interview with government official, 1 June 2017.

⁵⁶ Interview with key expert, 12 March 2018.

government. For instance, the government increasingly wants **SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute)**⁵⁷ to undertake activities such as mediation and capacity building.⁵⁸ In 2016, its grant was considerably increased, as a response to “the increasingly complex situation in the world and the related foreign and security policy challenges” that “place greater demands on independent research and policy analysis in foreign policy operations” (see table 4 above) (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2015, p. 1). Beyond Swedish organisations, Sweden has been a consistent and valued supporter of international NGOs working on peacebuilding. Exchange of ideas, perspectives and concepts from these organisations (e.g. International Alert, Saferworld, Conciliation Resources, and Interpeace) and Swedish actors has occurred for well over a decade.

Civil society organisations can also be very influential in policy formulation and implementation. For instance, when, in 2015, the government considered using as much as 50% of aid for refugee costs in Sweden, Swedish CSOs protested against this plan and after a few months of debate, campaigning and internal power struggles within the government, the government agreed to a 30% upper limit (Concord Aidwatch, 2016). Regarding the launch of the feminist foreign policy in 2014, the **Foundation Kvinna till Kvinna** (‘Woman to Woman’), which supports women in times of war and conflict, considers that it has been instrumental in the run-up to this policy, as it had many contacts with the Minister beforehand. The dialogue with and provision of evidence base to Sida and MFA representatives has opened space for influence and priority setting, in particular in relation to bilateral and regional results strategies.⁵⁹ In addition, the development of results strategies offers space for civil society consultation in the process (and has, for instance, been used to highlight the effects of the shrinking space for civil society and the need to address it). In general, stakeholders consider that the environment remains favourable in Sweden for NGOs, which is positive in a global environment marked by a shrinking space for civil society.

Sweden has, through Sida, supported civil society programmes on peacebuilding over many years (mainly the big peacebuilding organisations). **Sida’s unit for support to civil society (CIVSAM)** is still very strong. Kvinna till Kvinna, for instance, is one of 16 organisations which benefit from a framework agreement with this unit, and it chose peacebuilding as one of the thematic areas to work on with this funding (which shows that these organisations have a certain degree of autonomy when it comes to the use of their funding). EU funding for civil society organisations is also becoming more and more important.⁶⁰

The **peace movement** is also important in Sweden, represented for instance by the **Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society**, which is the world’s oldest and Sweden’s largest peace organisation.⁶¹ The Swedish peace movement has been actively involved in advocacy in the field of arms exports for example.⁶²

Overall, civil society organisations in Sweden we engaged with are broadly satisfied with the path of the recent governments in relation to peacebuilding, while at the same time being concerned with what the future may hold. Furthermore, the political consensus around the importance of civil society remains strong and stakeholders consider the dialogue with Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs on the shrinking space for civil society as good. Government officials are aware of problems with the channelling of money to partners and there are good policy documents and initiatives around this.⁶³ All this does not mean that civil society is

⁵⁷ In 1966, Sweden’s long-standing commitment to conflict prevention resulted in the establishment of Sipri and support for its research on the structural causes of armed conflicts.

⁵⁸ Interview with key expert, 2 June 2017.

⁵⁹ Although civil society representatives note that it depended much on the individual contact person. Follow-up interview with a civil society representative, 22 March 2018.

⁶⁰ Interview with civil society representatives, 30 May 2017.

⁶¹ Source: <http://www.svenskafreds.se/the-swedish-peace-and-arbitration-society-spas>

⁶² Source: <http://www.svenskafreds.se/transparency-and-reporting-in-sweden>

⁶³ Interview with civil society representatives, 30 May 2017.

not often critical of special government policies, actions or funding modalities and choices, or that it does not push the government for outcomes at the EU and UN levels where it feels Sweden could do more.

4.7. Conclusion: The renewed impetus for peacebuilding needs to be met by operational changes

While political support has been there for a long time, in the last few years there has been a renewed push, with a new rhetoric in terms of Sweden's engagement in peacebuilding. New units, tools and policy frameworks have emerged and resources have been increased for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Yet, while it is constantly acknowledged that efforts need to be integrated to bring lasting peace, changes at the operational level and new incentives for joint action have been lacking and, as a result, the silo mentality has not been sufficiently challenged.

There is a gap between commitments, capacity, and spending which seems to prevent Sweden from being a more coherent and credible actor internationally. Sweden benefits from a strong political leadership in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs who advocates for a more integrated way of working within the United Nations. While more could be done with the European Union, it is also a positive force there. Yet, Sweden still does not fully apply this approach at home. Initiatives have been taken recently to improve coordination (such as joint strategic meetings between the MFA, Sida and FBA to implement the new strategy for sustainable peace) and a conflict perspective has permeated the work of governmental actors, but much more will be needed in the next few years to maintain the stamina, especially in a period where such principles and commitments are significantly under threat. In addition, stakeholders observe that the consensus that Sweden enjoyed in the 2000s has faded and today the different parts of the political spectrum have more diverging views.⁶⁴ The next section will thus provide insights on the main driving forces and influencing factors behind such dynamics, as well as on obstacles for change towards a more coherent peacebuilding policy.

Box 4: Key messages on institutional and financial support for peacebuilding

1. As there is no separate development ministry in Sweden and the Ministry of Defence focuses more on territorial defence, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs leads peacebuilding efforts and policies. Furthermore, there is no overarching policy framework or funding mechanism enabling different ministries to work together on conflict issues (as is the case in the United Kingdom for instance).
2. Within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, different initiatives emerged, as a result of a growing engagement in the field of peacebuilding from different governments, most recently a new support function for 'dialogue and peace processes' and a new strategy for sustainable peace in 2017.
3. Alongside the ministries, governmental agencies have an important role in implementing Sweden's peace policy. Firstly, Sida has developed the conflict perspective in its work for over two decades and improved its tools in the last two years (with a Peace and Conflict Toolbox notably). Secondly, Folke Bernadotte Academy is now working alongside Sida, its expertise in peace and security is increasingly recognised and used by the government and its role and budget are increasing.
4. Financial resources for peace have increased in the last three years, through different avenues: increased funding for the strategy for sustainable peace, increased resources for existing agencies (namely FBA) or for the set-up of new units, but also for research institutes such as SIPRI.

⁶⁴ Interview with key expert, 2 June 2017.

5. Civil society is a key actor in keeping peace high on the agenda in Sweden and the use of the expertise of INGOs and research institutes by the government in the field of peace and security remains strong.
6. While Sweden has increased its commitments for peacebuilding and its engagement, in terms of both human and financial resources, the implementation of whole-of-government approaches and efficient communication between Swedish actors in conflict countries are still lacking.

5. Analysis of the main determinants of support for peacebuilding

5.1. Sweden's position in a changing international order

As highlighted by the **2017 Statement of Foreign Policy**, “Sweden and the world are experiencing a paradoxical time of **rapid and significant change**” and the multilateral world order created in 1945 is being challenged, as global ‘centres of gravity’ shift (Wallström, 2017a). Similarly, the **2017 National Security Strategy** mentions an increasing rivalry between major powers, a global redistribution of power, as well as an **increasingly complex international system** (Government Offices of Sweden, 2017b). Sweden is experiencing a number of **challenges** “at a time when our world is characterised by aggression and division” (Wallström, 2016, p. 1): migration issues and the huge increase in displaced people, the war in Syria, a resurgent Russia and the crisis in Ukraine, the growing insecurity in the neighbourhood, the growth of China, the Brexit, the presidency of Donald Trump and the uncertainties it brings, and the fact that the European project is currently put to a test as a result of uneven economic recovery and xenophobic and populist forces. Sweden is also faced with a number of **threats**, in an increasingly complex and interconnected world, namely military threats, armed conflicts, cyber threats, ‘brutal terrorist attacks’, violent extremism and organised crime, the presence of weapons of mass destruction, pandemics, antibiotic resistance and natural disasters, climate change, water issues and resource scarcity.

In this context, unlike many other countries, Sweden has chosen to engage even more internationally and to advocate strongly for multilateral cooperation, with its neighbours, with the EU, the UN, and the OSCE. First of all, this is linked to the fact that Sweden favours a **value-based engagement** and considers that “simply putting one’s own country first would be selfish and unwise. What is good for the world is good for Sweden” (Wallström, 2017a, p. 1).

On the other hand, there is recognition that “in a time of global threats, **global cooperation** is needed” (Wallström, 2016, p. 5). A stronger and more effective EU and UN are crucial in order to overcome the challenges and threats faced. This is why Sweden puts a strong emphasis on **responsibility sharing**. According to the Swedes, this is something that was crucially lacking during the irregular migration ‘crisis’ in the EU for instance. From a realistic point of view, Sweden is also concerned it is a **small actor** that needs international systems to protect it. This explains why, in recent years, Sweden has been cooperating increasingly with NATO, albeit not as a member. Sweden also believes rapid global change can lay the foundation for crucial progress, not only threats.⁶⁵

International norms and commitments have a significant impact on the country; the language in domestic policies is often borrowed from **international frameworks**. The fact that the Minister for International Development Cooperation, Isabella Lövin, co-chaired the **International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and**

⁶⁵ This is consistently repeated in foreign policy statements.

Statebuilding from 2015 to 2018 also had an impact on Swedish support for peacebuilding, and since Sweden was a **member of the Security Council in 2017-2018**, “whatever is in vogue in New York is adopted in Stockholm”.⁶⁶ There is definitely a **UN policy momentum in conflict prevention**, which Sweden has fostered both at home and at the global level.

Firstly, the 2015 review of the UN peacebuilding architecture and the UNSC resolution 2282, which presents the concept of ‘**sustaining peace**’, were both **integrated in the Swedish approach to peacebuilding** (United Nations Security Council, 2016). Secondly, the candidacy for a seat at the UNSC for 2017-2018 was an opportunity for Sweden to **push its own agenda**, namely a stronger link between development and peace, an increased focus on conflict prevention and peacebuilding, dialogue and mediation as a tool, and a stronger role for women in peace processes at the UN. In doing so, it has had some successes: the UNSC Resolution 2348 on the DRC (31 March 2017) stresses the importance of giving a voice to women, and of strengthening the UN’s efforts to tackle the root causes of conflict (Wallström, 2017c).

As early as in 2000, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs argued “Sweden can and should argue forcefully and constructively for the gradual integration of conflict prevention into the policies of international organisations and into intergovernmental cooperation” (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2001, p. 10). The MFA developed policy papers on these issues before the UNSC membership and the Swedish agenda coincided very well with the **Secretary General’s focus on conflict prevention**, when he took office at the beginning of 2017. The candidacy for UNSC membership was “a concrete expression of the Government’s **desire to influence the course of global politics**” in these “unsettled times” (Wallström, 2015, p. 2 and 5, respectively), although the country is conscious of the fact that it needs the UN system more than it can actually impact it. Another reason why Sweden supported the Secretary General in his agenda for reform was the concern, within the ‘peacebuilding community’, that **the UN is in dire need of reform** and that it is paralysed, in the face of some of the worst conflicts ever seen. Indeed, Sweden considers the UN as the world’s most important platform for international peace and security (Wallström, 2016).

Despite the volatile environment and the importance it gives to international developments, Sweden continues to **maintain its own values**. For instance, the 2015 Statement of Foreign Policy emphasised the distinction between foreign and domestic policies was becoming blurred and that the concept of security has become broader (Wallström, 2015). Nevertheless, while Sweden is a strong advocate for a security-development nexus in its policy frameworks, the **evaluation of Sweden’s engagement in Afghanistan** found that “a clear dividing line needs to be drawn between military operations and development cooperation in complicated countries with complex conflicts” (Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence, 2017, p. 9). Furthermore, in 2016, the European Commission proposed to amend the regulation establishing an instrument contributing to stability and peace (IcSP) to be able to finance capacity building of security and military actors of partner countries through the general budget of the Union. In response to this, Sweden issued a declaration saying that by “blurring the boundaries of development cooperation and security related activities [...] we risk undermining the development agenda as well as the effectiveness of CBSD (Capacity Building for Security and Development)” (Council of the European Union, 2017, p. 13).

Similarly, stakeholders in the field of peacebuilding found that, in the last few years, Sweden **did not (yet) shift its geographic priorities**, as a response to new security challenges. Conversely, civil society organisations also claim that some regions relevant for peacebuilding, like the Balkans, have been virtually forgotten in terms of peacebuilding. Despite this, interviewees found that Sweden still strongly engages where conflict is prevalent, where it can ‘**build peace**’, even if those countries are not directly related to Swedish interests (such as Colombia and Burundi).⁶⁷ Indeed, instead of turning to countries which are much more linked to Sweden’s direct interests, but where geopolitics play a role such as Syria, Sweden continues

⁶⁶ Interview with government official, 1 June 2017.

⁶⁷ Interviews with key experts, 30 May-2 June 2017.

to focus on countries where it has a long-standing engagement, or where it can actually have an **influence in the course of the conflict**.⁶⁸ Another interviewee believed Sweden's geographic priorities were driven by demands from embassies.⁶⁹ Moreover, despite the fear of certain government officials and civil society representatives that 'countering/preventing violent extremism' would take over the conflict prevention agenda, as it was 'à la mode' at the UN, this has not materialised.⁷⁰

In conclusion, Sweden is very much conscious of the current international challenges and takes them into account in its policy frameworks. It adopts any changes in the international peacebuilding-related frameworks it considers constructive and positive. However, despite the terrorist attacks it experienced and the significant number of refugees it welcomed in 2015, **Sweden is much less influenced by the securitisation of peacebuilding than other countries** (of course, this could change in the future) and **maintains a values-based and stable engagement, even in these uncertain and volatile times**. Its **support for peacebuilding is heavily driven by a belief in international systems**, which it has had even during the Cold War. Overall support is also interest-driven, as it enables this small country to influence other actors and spread its model internationally.⁷¹ Support to specific peacebuilding initiatives at the international or European level can also be boosted by direct sponsorship and leadership of prominent Swedish political personalities.

5.2. National political dynamics influence the support for peacebuilding

Typically, peacebuilding, along with development and the promotion of multilateralism, are consensual topics in Sweden. The right-wing **Sweden democrats**, known for their nationalist views and strong stance against immigration, are the only political party questioning this strong support. Seven out of eight parties support the target of spending 1% of GNI on ODA and the Sweden Democrats would like to reduce the aid budget and come back to the 0.7% target⁷² – which other European countries struggle to achieve (Sverige Demokraterna, 2018; Development Today, 2018).⁷³ Despite this broad consensus, national politics does still affect support for peacebuilding, as it causes it to be more or less high on the agenda, influenced by which parties are in power and which personalities hold key offices.

The former **centre-right government (2006-2014)** governed in a time of financial and economic turmoil, during which conservative governments across Europe undermined the aid effectiveness agenda, applied **results-based approaches** and stopped budget support in some countries. The application of these approaches was strongly driven by accountability concerns – where does Swedish taxpayers' money go – and affected the flexibility of and administrative requirements for civil society actors. The focus then shifted to learning and adaptability, with an emphasis on improving the quality of work. From an implementation perspective, the above-mentioned approaches affect how one can do peacebuilding work, foster ownership locally and implement long-term approaches.⁷⁴

⁶⁸ Interview with government officials, 1 June 2017.

⁶⁹ Interview with government official, 1 June 2017.

⁷⁰ Interviews with government officials and civil society representatives, 30 May-2 June 2017.

⁷¹ Interviews with key experts, 30 May-2 June 2017.

⁷² According to their manifesto, the Sweden Democrats want aid to focus on efficiency and results and to promote generous humanitarian aid. One of their main priorities in development policy is to invest in international refugee aid in the immediate area, support reconstruction in war-hit areas and contribute to the voluntary return of refugees. Regarding their stance on peace issues, they "want Sweden to be a strong and independent voice for peace and good relations between the world's people".

⁷³ The political consensus surrounding aid and the 1% level led the Director General of Sida, Carin Jämtin, to say "If Moderaterna come to power, there would of course be some changes, but not like in Norway and Finland" (Development Today, 2018).

⁷⁴ Interview with key experts, 2 June 2017 and 23 March 2018.

The Red-Green government (2014-2018) was more committed to developing the global outreach of Sweden's traditional peacebuilding engagement. This is the result of the personal ambitions and commitments of the ministers and state secretaries in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, all of which had a significant knowledge of and experience in development and international issues.⁷⁵

Furthermore, in that coalition government, **the Green party** had been instrumental in a number of initiatives, such as the creation of the dialogue and peace processes unit, within the Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. In a national political climate that favoured deepening Sweden's partnership with NATO, the sale of a power plant to Germany, as well as closed off borders, at the peak of the irregular migration crisis, this support unit was a 'political gift' to the Green party during the budget negotiations, as it wanted to work more coherently with peace issues. The Green party was also instrumental in putting the issue of 'climate and security' on the agenda when Sweden became a member of the UN Security Council.⁷⁶ However, some of these initiatives may take a toll after the September 2018 elections, as they are too closely associated with the current government. The personalities, interests and backgrounds of the people that will be appointed to senior positions in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will be determining factors.

Within the centre-right coalition, the Alliance, the liberal-**conservative Moderate party** is ideologically moving closer to the far-right Sweden Democrats, especially on immigration issues, albeit important differences remain. In January 2017, Anna Kinberg Batra, the leader of the party, broke a taboo by opening the door for cooperation with the Sweden Democrats (she then had to resign in September 2017). While the party now rejects any negotiation with the Sweden Democrats, it is prepared to govern with the greatest majority possible and has invited the Sweden Democrats to take part in a national debate on the future of the country's immigration policy.

As Niklas Bolin (cited in Deloy 2018b), a political scientist from the university of Central Sweden, puts it "politics in Sweden over the last two legislatures have been very much focused on relations that each might entertain with the Democrats of Sweden". This party has also managed to impose its electoral agenda in the September 2018 election and to make law, order and immigration the main issues at stake, whereas the economy and public services used to dominate the public debate (Deloy 2018b).⁷⁷ But the Sweden Democrats, as other right-leaning parties across Europe, have also managed to impose their vision, pushing the other parties to toughen their stance, especially on migration. In the documents for the Social Democrats' congress in April 2017 (entitled 'safety in a new era'), for instance, development cooperation was addressed under heading 6, 'cooperation for common security' (together with defence policy, EU policy, migration policy) (Socialdemokraterna, 2017).

The Sweden Democrats received around 17.5% of the votes in the September 2018 election (thus becoming the country's third biggest party⁷⁸). Furthermore, the right and left blocs both received around 40% of the votes in the elections (the left bloc has only one more seat than the Conservative bloc). Hence, at the time of writing, it is very difficult to build a coalition government without some type of backing from the Sweden Democrats. This leaves the country facing uncertain times, with the risk that cooperation with the Sweden Democrats will impact the consensus on Sweden's approach to international issues.

⁷⁵ Interview with key expert, 2 June 2017.

⁷⁶ Interview with government official, 1 June 2017.

⁷⁷ According to Henrik Oscarsson (cited in Deloy 2018b), a political scientist from the university of Göteborg, "for the first time immigration has become a daily issue in the Swedish electoral campaign".

⁷⁸ Although the party achieved a lower score than forecast by the polls (the expected 20 to 30%), their score has grown from 5.7%, in 2010, when they first entered parliament, notably by attracting votes from both sides of the political spectrum (Deloy, 2018a).

The Social Democrats dominated the political landscape for decades, winning 45% of the vote on average (Deloy, 2018b). Yet, despite remaining the largest party in the country, in the September 2018 elections, they received a historically low 28% of the votes. These results demonstrate that the **domestic political culture in Sweden is slowly changing**. Society is becoming more conservative and polarised, with more negative mobilisation around immigration. Thus, **Swedish national politics could become more similar to politics in other European countries, where populist parties have become more ‘acceptable’ and likely to influence the policies of more mainstream parties even if they do not enter government formally**. While it is unlikely that Swedish support for peacebuilding will change radically in the next government, the coalition that will come out of the election may have important implications for the degree and the focus of this support.

The government's **focus on the United Nations (UN) or the European Union (EU)** is also an important determinant. Each year, statements of foreign policy consistently repeat that the EU is Sweden's ‘most important foreign policy arena’. On the other hand, the UN's importance in Swedish foreign policy has been significantly restored in recent years. The centre-right government up until 2014 was very much focused on the EU, thus following the trend of improving “crisis management” rather than a heavy focus on “conflict prevention”. Despite this, it was still concerned with improving the EU's mediation capacities and the sponsorship of new initiatives such as the European Institute of Peace. The Red-Green government (2014-2018) strongly supported the UN and advocated for **Sweden's membership of the Security Council**. Sweden's increased focus on conflict prevention, peacebuilding and women, peace and security went hand in hand with its candidacy, which shows that the focus of its foreign policy has an important role to play in the global support for peacebuilding. It is likely that, when this membership will end after 2018, Sweden will refocus some of its attention on the EU (which has certainly missed one of its most consistent supporters of peacebuilding being somewhat more focused on the UN level). It is worth noting that the Sweden Democrats want to organise a referendum on Sweden's membership of the EU for “ideological” reasons, yet, reportedly, only 17% of Swedes support their country's exit of the EU, while 57% are against leaving (Deloy, 2018b).

5.3. Geopolitical shifts could impact Sweden's peace policy

The **resurgence of Russia** is currently the top concern for the highest level of government, as it is considered as the “greatest challenge to the European security order since the end of the Cold War” (Wallström, 2016, p. 2). In March 2017, the government decided to reactivate **conscription** (which was suspended in 2010) in specific expert areas, from January 2018. The government website explains that “[t]he **security environment in Europe and in Sweden's vicinity** has deteriorated and the all-volunteer recruitment hasn't provided the Armed Forces with enough trained personnel. The re-activating of the conscription is needed for **military readiness**” (Government Offices of Sweden, 2017g).

Thus, recruitment to the Armed Forces will be partly voluntary and partly conscription-based and the Armed Forces are planning for 4,000 recruits annually, in basic military training, in 2018 and 2019 (Government Offices of Sweden, 2017g). According to the Press Secretary to the Minister for Defence, Nyh Radebo, “[t]he Russian illegal annexation of Crimea [in 2014], the conflict in Ukraine and the increased military activity in our neighbourhood are some of the reasons” for this new policy (Radebo, cited in BBC News 2017). Moreover, a letter from the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency instructed municipalities around the country to “increase their ability to resist an armed attack against Sweden from a qualified opponent” (Selsøe Sørensen, 2017). Finally, in May 2018, a leaflet was sent to 4.8 million households, warning them, for the first time since 1961, about what they should do in the event of a war, cyber and terror attacks and climate

change (Henley, 2018). Another security concern was related to a **potential attempt by Russia to influence the election** in September 2018.⁷⁹

Nevertheless, the fact that military defence is much higher on the agenda has not yet had a significant impact on the MFA's development and international peacebuilding priorities. Yet, it is a priority for the Ministry of Defence. In fact, it can be argued that it triggered an 'upgraded partnership' with NATO and, in this way, military defence does have an important impact on Sweden's peace policy.⁸⁰ Some government officials suspect the MFA departments working on international peace and conflict are too far-removed from sensitive, top-level state security political issues to deal with such a priority. Some experts believe that these geopolitical developments help build the argument for development cooperation in addressing violent conflict. According to others, a Russian move to offensively destabilise EU members by deploying hybrid warfare would certainly impact Sweden more than another terrorist attack, as it would mean that "the world has changed" geopolitically.⁸¹

The US **presidency of Donald Trump** is also an important concern, as it creates a lot of uncertainty regarding the transatlantic link. Sweden has always strongly supported this link. A decrease in support from the US for peace and security issues and multilateralism, more broadly, will inevitably affect the UN. This has been interpreted as requiring Sweden to be even more vocal on peace issues internationally.⁸² Potentially, a greater Swedish role at the EU level pushing for peacebuilding and conflict prevention could also be response to shifting geopolitics.

5.4. Implementation and the lack of cooperation as obstacles to a more coherent peacebuilding policy

In its **resolution 2282**, the **United Nations Security Council** (2016, p. 2) defined peacebuilding as "an inherently political process" that "encompasses a wide range of political, developmental and human rights programmes and mechanisms". It also recommended "an integrated and coherent approach among relevant political, security and developmental actors" (United Nations Security Council, 2016, p. 2). However, while Sweden strongly supports this resolution and adopts very similar language in its **strategy for sustainable peace 2017-2022**, it still struggles to implement such an **integrated and coherent approach**. Beyond the absence of pooled funding for conflict prevention and peacebuilding, there is a lack of platforms in the Swedish governance system, which could bring together the relevant actors in decision-making (the MFA, the Ministry of Defence, Sida, FBA). This leads to **silo thinking** and a **lack of communication and coordination** between actors, either in Stockholm or on the ground. Working together would require a significant **change of mind-set in institutions and incentive structures**.

Sometimes, this is also due to rivalries between the actors, namely the MFA and Sida (since the latter receives funding from the former and has a lot of autonomy, it gets more credit in the interventions). Experts note that, as a result of silo thinking, **a common narrative** on peacebuilding is sometimes lacking and different conceptual perspectives of peacebuilding coexist in the same country of engagement. In order to have a coherent and effective peacebuilding policy, Sweden would benefit from finding out where it could add value and what its doctrine in the conflict-affected country is. Furthermore, it is crucial the political context

⁷⁹ Interviews with government officials, 30 May-2 June 2017. This is why pre-emptive actions have been undertaken, such as the training of local election workers to spot and resist foreign influence or the country's biggest media outlets teaming up to combat false news (Birnbau, 2018).

⁸⁰ Debate intensifies in Sweden about whether the country should join NATO as the four main centre-right opposition parties are for the first time in agreement that the country should seek NATO membership and public opinion is shifting, although this is still a controversial issue (Milne, 2018; Duxbury, 2018).

⁸¹ Interviews with key experts, 1-2 June 2017.

⁸² Interview with government official, 2 June 2017.

be linked to peacebuilding, as the technical (peacebuilding activities) and political (the embassies' work) levels are often still dealt with separately.

Although initiatives are being taken to get the different actors together more often, integration is happening more in the form than in the content. Furthermore, according to one interviewee, there sometimes tends to be a mismatch between the political attention Sweden gets in this field internationally and at the EU level and its own operational dimension, actual implementation of the commitments (when it comes to the implementation of the SDGs and, for instance, goal 16 more particularly).⁸³ Finally, institutional learning still does not drive support for peacebuilding; the extent to which Swedish institutions develop their own ways of working and approaches, based on international concepts they take on board, remains limited, which might also be an obstacle to more effective action.⁸⁴

As illustrated in the previous sections, political and financial support for peacebuilding remains high in Sweden, despite the changing environment. However, although the country is likely to maintain its tradition of a peaceful actor, section 5 showed that **the drivers for peacebuilding support are very contextual**. The last section aims to provide a forward-looking perspective on Swedish support for peacebuilding.

Box 5: Key messages on the main determinants of support for peacebuilding

1. In the context of significant changes in the multilateral world order, Sweden made the choice to be even more engaged internationally and to advocate for global cooperation, both because it strongly believes in the EU and the UN as forces for peacebuilding, and because these international fora are opportunities for Sweden to be a more influential actor. Sweden is very receptive to international peace-related frameworks when they match its values and domestic discourse.
2. Sweden has certainly used the momentum for peace and conflict within the UN to advocate for its own agenda in the context of its membership of the UNSC, while harnessing it domestically by integrating UN language in its own approach to peacebuilding.
3. National politics is an important driver for peacebuilding in Sweden, as different political parties put peacebuilding more or less high on the agenda and advocate, or not, for new initiatives. Political support for peacebuilding has been high in the Red-Green government. Furthermore, the government's focus on the EU or the UN has implications on Sweden's approach to peacebuilding. Swedish domestic political culture has been evolving in recent years – albeit slowly – with the rise of the far-right Sweden Democrats imposing their electoral agenda and their views on issue such as migration. Following the September 2018 elections, the extent to which national politics could influence support for peacebuilding remains to be seen, no matter how consensual the issue is across political parties.
4. The changing security environment in Sweden's neighbourhood, namely the resurgence of Russia, is a concern at the highest level of government and might have an impact on support for peacebuilding in the future. The US presidency of Donald Trump is another concern, due to its potential impact on multilateralism, generally, and on peace and security, at the UN level, more particularly. Overall, Sweden is very conscious of the shifting geopolitical order. To counterbalance the current uncertain times, it is advocating for a rules-based international order. Nevertheless, heightened instability in its neighbouring region may force it to review its defence policy, thus moving away from its traditionally pacifist stance.
5. Institutional learning does not seem to be a driver for Sweden's support for peacebuilding. The silo mentality, the lack of common platforms to bring the different actors working in conflict-affected countries (MFA, Sida, FBA...) together and, as a result, the lack of an integrated approach seem to be obstacles to a more coherent peacebuilding policy.

⁸³ Interview with key expert, 12 March 2018.

⁸⁴ Interviews with key experts, 2 June 2017.

6. Prospects for transforming peacebuilding support

There is a growing consensus, among experts and practitioners, that, given the fast changing global, European and national dynamics, the future of support for peacebuilding is at a crossroads, despite many positive international commitments. While peacebuilding in Sweden is not yet subject to broader trends in foreign and development policy priorities in the same way as other European countries, it is still very much a sub-sector of development or foreign policies. Power politics is now becoming the dominant driving force for the emerging multipolar global order and is pushing international norms and value-based agendas such as peacebuilding to the background. In addition, with domestic security interests becoming more prevalent in the foreign policy of many countries, those working on promoting peacebuilding need to find new ways to engage in this changing context.

Sweden's renewed commitments and recent initiatives in the area of conflict prevention and peacebuilding are positive developments in a European environment where it is becoming harder to make the case for peacebuilding. Compared to other countries that support peacebuilding, Sweden is an outlier, with the possibility to regain its leadership role at the EU level in this area. Yet our hypothesis is that in the present environment **the current way of doing business will not manage to make these initiatives catalytic and transform support for peacebuilding**. We identified a number of entry points and driving factors that the peacebuilding community can try to influence in order to avoid losing ground.

While trends in Sweden remain comparatively positive, a similar engagement from the peacebuilding community in Sweden will lead to the same results and show the limits of the Swedish commitments in this field. **Obstacles to a more transformative support for peacebuilding** include the **system of governance**, which is not conducive to a coherent whole-of-government approach to conflict, as well as risk aversion when it comes to implementing innovative approaches. Thus, over the years, we see a discrepancy between high-level political commitments and their implementation. Without changing its form of engagement, it is likely that Sweden's potential in the field of peacebuilding and conflict prevention (thanks to its good reputation, good relationships, its lack of colonial history, its non-alignment, its strong development cooperation) will not be fully realised. Especially if the negative trends in other European countries spill over into Sweden.

Swedish stakeholders have noticed that the **Swedish political culture is gradually changing**: the political landscape is increasingly fragmented and affected by migration or security concerns. These concerns provided a fertile ground for the right-wing populist Sweden Democrats, starting in 2010, when they entered Parliament and accelerating in the 2014 and 2018 elections. As the third biggest party in the country since the September 2018 elections, the Sweden Democrats may have significant influence on the political debate in the near future, including through its positions against migration, ODA and the EU, more generally. While attitudes towards migration have traditionally been very positive in Sweden, Swedish stakeholders have noticed an increase in negative attitudes, as well as a fear of migration and its political impact. In addition, some stakeholders fear that the **traditional consensus around peacebuilding and development is too closely linked to older generations**. The fact that these changes in Swedish political culture might impact the support for peacebuilding and values in foreign policy cannot be ruled out.

Our analysis shows that there are **specific entry points and opportunities** that the sector can seize in order to bring support for peacebuilding to the next level. A solid foundation exists for peacebuilding support, which benefits from both a cross-party and public consensus. This is unlikely to change soon. Yet a more 'transformative' support would require influencing the bureaucratic and political incentives that drive it.

First of all, a change in engagement at the **national level** is required. The **strategy for sustainable peace 2017-2022**, through its emphasis on "integrated and cross-system efforts", represents a great opportunity to

bring humanitarian aid, development cooperation and political dialogue together, around the shared objective of long-term peace. Actors implementing this strategy in FBA and Sida should push for more integration, more communication and joint conflict analysis to break with the silo mentality of the past. Similarly, the creation in 2017 of a 'dialogue and peace processes' support unit (to which FBA has contributed) points to a momentum that civil society should build upon.

These recent initiatives should not disappear with a change of government, but rather be complemented with other new initiatives linked to the new political leadership. The impact of self-interested foreign policy concerns, that are not strongly international and normative, is more limited in Sweden. This is linked to its **'sense of place in the world'** and the fact that Sweden is a small actor that does not have significant geostrategic interests, but values engagement with its international partners. Furthermore, the dialogue between Sida or the MFA and civil society remains very good. The peacebuilding sector could work to **ensure that these Swedish specificities are preserved as the country navigates uncertain waters**. A key uncertainty concerns the follow-up to the September 2018 elections and which parties will manage to build a coalition, with or without some kind of support of the Sweden Democrats. On the other hand, the peacebuilding community should **build upon these specificities to push the government to take more risks and develop innovative institutional frameworks in its response to conflict** (for instance, a platform bringing together actors working in fragile and conflict-affected states).

Sweden's **large aid budget** represents a key opportunity for innovation and for fostering new approaches. Yet Sweden needs to find its niche and have a clear strategic vision shared by all Swedish peacebuilding actors. Civil society is a key actor for maximising the potential of these domestic entry points and keeping the current momentum going, through positive communication about peacebuilding and its successes, and constructive engagement with the government. To achieve this, the sector would benefit from being more articulated and vocal and reaching out to other communities (including the humanitarian and development sector).

At the **international level, Sweden's membership of the UNSC for 2017-2018** represented a key opportunity for Sweden, which it used to advocate for conflict prevention, lead by example, and find partners to influence the sustaining peace agenda. Sweden is a credible norm entrepreneur on conflict prevention and, in the future, it should use this to shape the international agenda and change the ways of working. The fact that the UNSG Antonio Guterres' agenda is aligned with Sweden's agenda is another key opportunity to push for more investment in conflict prevention and peacebuilding at the global level. While Swedish government officials push for joint approaches at the UN level, the peacebuilding community should ensure that this is taken on board at home and integrated in its way of working, either in Stockholm or in the field. As one of our interviewees put it, Sweden needs to "adjust its machinery to political priorities" and be consistent regarding the messages it conveys at the UN and what it does internally. Civil society has a role to play in exercising pressure on the government to better implement its commitments.

Moreover, the **geopolitical environment** brings risks and opportunities. On the one hand, **Trump's US presidency** and its rejection of multilateralism might be an important driver in Sweden's support for peacebuilding. Indeed, it could narrow the gap in the political spectrum, as the different political parties acknowledge the imperative to increase its multilateral engagement to counterbalance developments in the US. On the other hand, the **deterioration of the security environment in Sweden's neighbouring region** creates an uncertain future. An increasingly assertive Russia will have an impact on defence spending and political prioritisation in Sweden. It will be essential for the peacebuilding sector to ensure that a strong threat to national security and territorial integrity does not shift the focus away from civilian tools and soft power, towards more hard power.

Our analysis also shows that further drivers of support for peacebuilding are the **governments' allies**. Sweden is increasingly isolated on the international scene. Given that it is likely that violent conflict will continue to occur in the European neighbourhood, thus triggering forced and irregular migration to Europe, Sweden will continue to oppose itself to a more interest-based engagement, more 'stabilisation', or more 'countering violent extremism' in the approach to peacebuilding from its European counterparts and the EU institutions themselves. The country already felt isolated during the refugee crisis in 2015 when, according to experts, "what was damaging was what the other governments were not doing"⁸⁵ and it is likely that it will have less and less allies, even among its former like-minded partners (Finland, the UK, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Germany). As a result, issues such as border control, migration management and counterterrorism are likely to take over the conflict prevention and peacebuilding agenda, which requires an even stronger engagement from Sweden.

Furthermore, with **Brexit**, Sweden loses a key European partner but also a 'model' within the European Union in the field of responding to violent conflict, if not peacebuilding specifically. Brexit is a concern because of its impact on financial support for peacebuilding (a large number of peacebuilding organisations are based in the UK and Sweden invested significantly in them), but also because Brexit is seen as a symptom of a bigger societal shift. More importantly, the UK is a powerful EU member with a concern for peace and security. In the future, **Sweden will have to find new partners among the EU Member States and creative coalitions beyond governments (as it has done in the past)**, so that its voice is strong enough to counter the current developments that threaten a value-based engagement on conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and to push peacebuilding at the European level.

The ongoing EU budget negotiations for 2021-2027, the change of political leadership in the European Union in 2019, a possible reform of the European institutions and the 20-year anniversary of the EU Gothenburg Programme of Action for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts in 2021 offer some windows of opportunity. Rather than working on improving downstream implementation modalities for conflict prevention and peacebuilding of the EU, Sweden is uniquely placed to push for renewed EU political leadership in this area. If Sweden does not do this at the EU level, it currently seems unlikely that other member states will. Sweden has a rich history to draw upon in this regard.

In conclusion, **there are opportunities for the Swedish peacebuilding community to rethink and increase its engagement, at the domestic, European and global levels.** Transformative support for peacebuilding will not be achieved with the current ways of working, especially if we consider Sweden's changing political culture and the international environment. The community needs to reflect internally on its relations with other sectors, on how to communicate more effectively about peacebuilding, and on how to make the case for peacebuilding if the government were to be less supportive. When developing their message, peacebuilding advocates need to consider what kind of communication is needed to make the case for peacebuilding more compelling, or whether evidence is necessary at all. Furthermore, they should discuss how social media, which is naturally prone to more alarmist messaging, could be used more effectively to communicate on the complex and often context-specific ideas surrounding peacebuilding.

However, **the main challenge for the peacebuilding community will be to move this dialogue beyond the expert level**, with which it shares a common commitment, towards a multi-stakeholder and multidimensional dialogue. This would require adapting the existing Swedish governance system to the peacebuilding logic, as well as seeking access to the higher echelons of government. The successful promotion of peacebuilding may require linking it better with the broader foreign policy debate, in an era of changing geopolitics where multilateralism is under threat. Past experience has shown that individual members of government can have the leverage to lift the peacebuilding agenda higher up on the agenda.

⁸⁵ Interview with key experts, 2 June 2017.

New networks and alliances, including with political leaders, opinion makers and greater engagement with civil society could prove instrumental. On the other hand, this raises the question to what extent peacebuilding advocates should engage with public sentiment, for instance by engaging with the narratives on policy responses to domestic events.

Nevertheless, a wide coalition would have the potential of broadening the constituency and channelling the 'silent' public support into active advocacy for peacebuilding. In short, **while peacebuilding support may seem under threat from various directions, there are also opportunities for peacebuilding supporters to reassert and even boost their case, especially in the Swedish context.** This would, however, require asking some tough questions. These include reassessing existing relations with other communities and question how it can broadcast its messages more forcefully at the political level, as well as to the public at home. Crucially, the Swedish peacebuilding community should examine how its agenda can better resonate with today's world.

Annex 1: List of interviewees

Åsa Theander, Head of Section, UN Policy Department, Security Policy Section, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Mia Hallen, Deputy Director, UN Policy Department, Security Policy Section, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Urban Sjöström, Deputy Director, Department for Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Carl Mörner, Desk Officer, Department for Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Karolina Hedström, Deputy Director, Department for Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Lena Ag, Secretary General, Kvinna till Kvinna

Charlotte Booth, Advisor Women in Peacebuilding, Kvinna till Kvinna

Peter Sörbom, Head of Policy and Advocacy, CONCORD Sweden

Åsa Thomasson, Policy and advocacy coordinator, CONCORD Sweden

Åsa Walton, Lead Policy Specialist, Peace and Security, Unit for Policy Support, Department for International Organisations and Policy Support, Sida

Markus Derblom, Director, Prevention, Peacebuilding and Governance, Folke Bernadotte Academy

Henrik Hammargren, Executive Director, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation

Sigrid Gruener, Programme Manager for 'Building Peace', Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation

Timo Smit, Researcher, Peace Operations and Conflict Management, Sipri

Aurelien Tobie, Senior Researcher and Activity Coordinator, Mali Civil Society and Peacebuilding Project, Sipri

Dan Smith, Director, Sipri

Lennart Wohlgemuth Visiting Research Fellow/Visiting Lecturer, University of Gothenborg

Annex 2: Methodology for the analysis of aid flows

Funding related to conflict, peace and security has one specific purpose code in the OECD DAC financial reporting system, the Creditor Reporting System (CRS): **code 152 “Conflict, Peace & Security”**. It includes security system management and reform; civilian peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution; participation in international peacekeeping operations; reintegration and small arms and light weapons (SALW) control; removal of landmines and explosive remnants of war; and prevention and demobilisation of child soldiers.

Within this code and of interest to peacebuilding is the **code 15220 “civilian peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution”**, which includes funding for two purposes: (i) support for civilian activities related to peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution, including capacity building, monitoring, dialogue and information exchange; and (ii) bilateral participation in international civilian peace missions and contributions to civilian peace funds or commissions.⁸⁶

We made the methodological choice to analyse how Swedish disbursements for both code 152 and code 15220 have evolved, over the last years (2007-2016), and to identify the top recipients of code 15220 only. We chose this approach to provide the most accurate picture possible of Swedish financial support to peacebuilding. Yet, it is not without inherent flaws.

First, OECD-DAC CRS codes 152 and 15220 are not perfect indicators. The former encompasses activities, which some may view as going beyond the realm of peacebuilding, such as SALW control and removal of landmines. The latter may be perceived as too narrow. Second, our focus on ODA limits the scope of our analysis to those amounts that donors actually reported to the OECD-DAC. As a consequence, the figures may give an incomplete picture. For example, the costs involved in politically engaging in peace processes may be left out. Furthermore, administrative considerations may lead actors not to report certain expenses.

In addition, to avoid double counting, projects are allocated to a single purpose code on the basis of the activities that comprise the largest share of the project. Some ODA spending relevant to peacebuilding may therefore be missed by looking only at codes 152 and 15220.

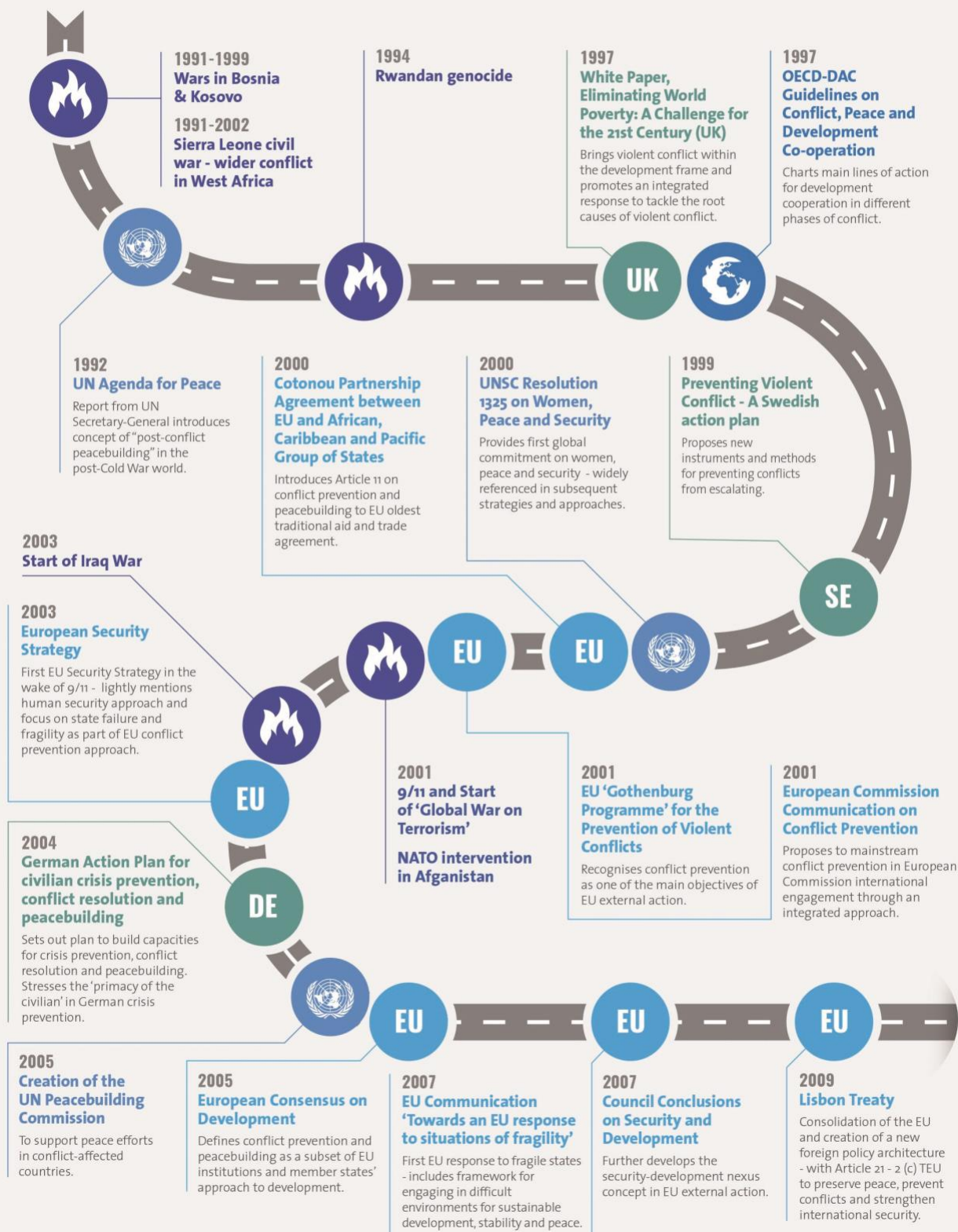
Despite its flaws, we chose this approach for three reasons: (i) availability and accessibility of data, (ii) the working definition of peacebuilding adopted in this paper and (iii) comparability of figures both over time (corrected for inflation) and between donors. In the future, the authors are open to carrying out further and more detailed research on ODA –should there be a strong demand for such analysis.

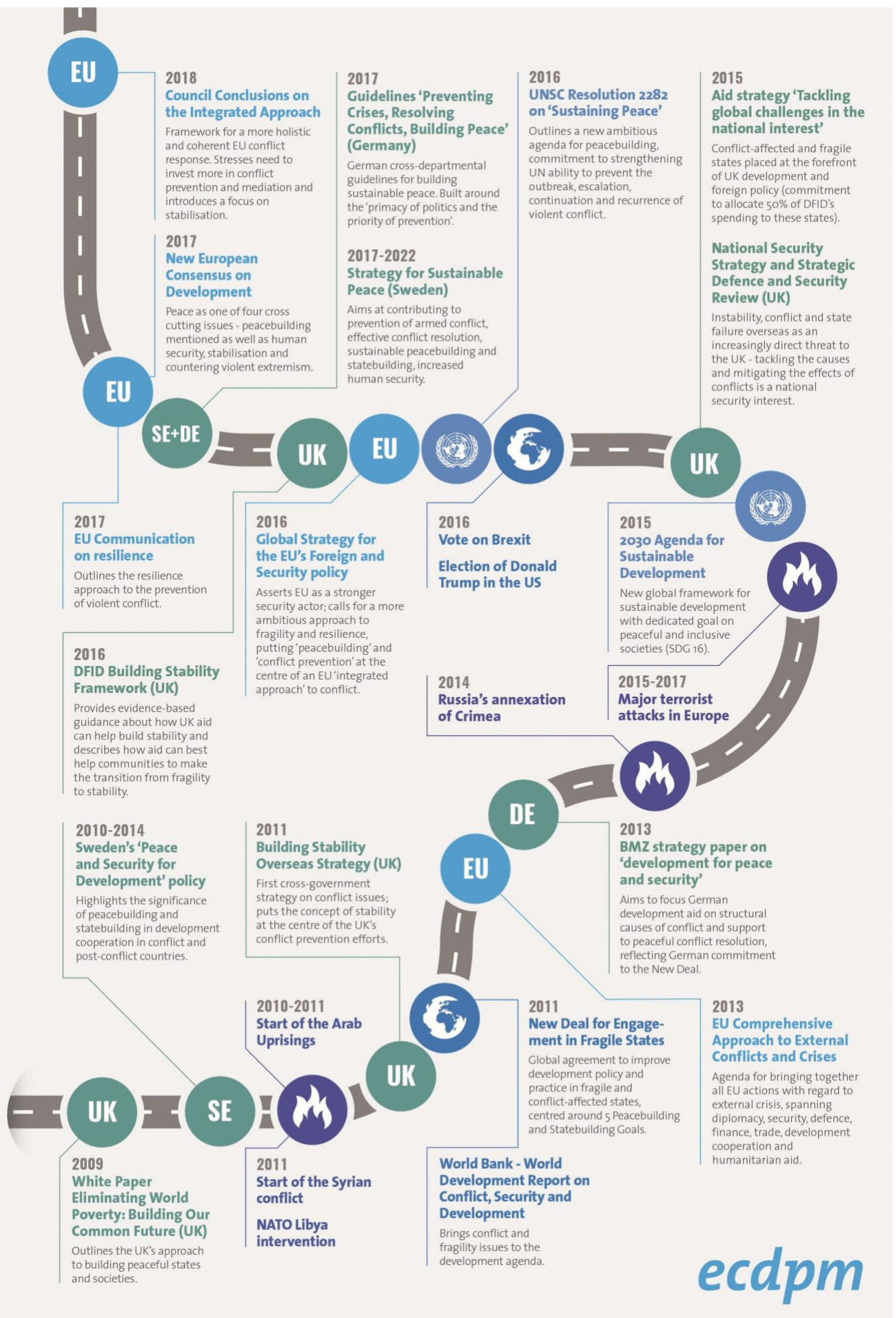
⁸⁶ Financing of military equipment and services as well as anti-terrorism activities are excluded from ODA reporting (OECD-DAC, 2016). Thus, code 15220 excludes engagement in military strategy and defence cooperation.

Annex 3: Policy frameworks relevant to peacebuilding (including Sweden) and their evolution, 1991-2018

POLICY FRAMEWORKS RELEVANT TO PEACEBUILDING AND THEIR EVOLUTION 1991-2018

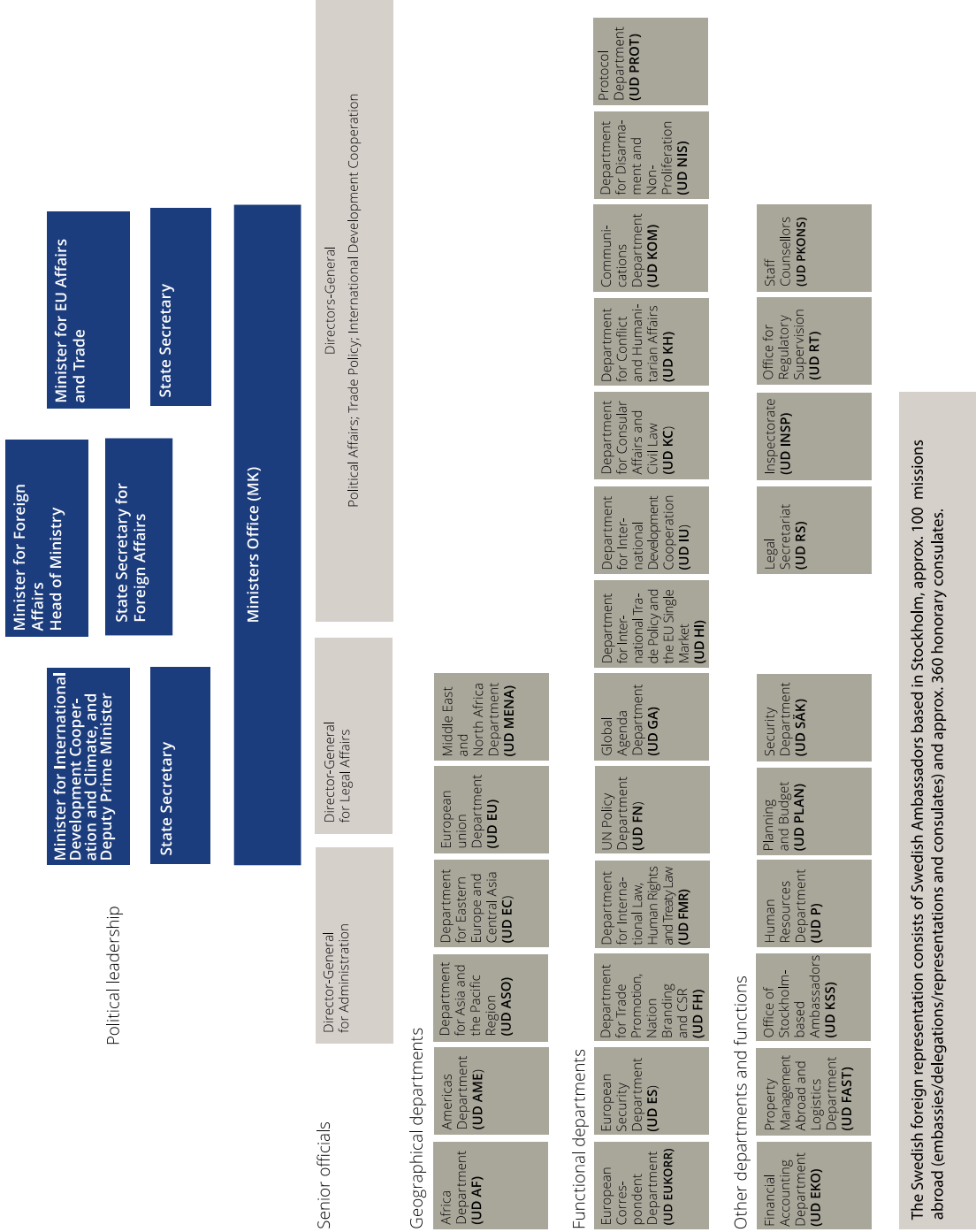
IN GERMANY, SWEDEN, THE UK AND THE EU





Annex 4: Organisation of the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Organisation of the Swedish Foreign Service
Ministry for Foreign Affairs



Source: <https://www.government.se/government-of-sweden/ministry-for-foreign-affairs/organisation/>

Annex 5: Financial resources relevant for peacebuilding

Table 10: Appropriations for International cooperation (in million SEK)

For each budget line, the top figure is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' proposal and the bottom figure is the amount actually allocated ('utfall'). For 2017, the bottom figure is a forecast ('prognos') and the figure for 2018 is a proposal ('förslag').

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Contributions to international organisations	1 429 1 104	1 329 1 398	1 329 1 512	1 329 1 509	1 329
Peace and security-building activities	158 155	138 133	140 126	151 138	192
Nordic cooperation	14 12	14 13	14 12	14 13	16
Financial support to individuals abroad and various costs for the judicial system	4 2	4 2	4 2	4 3	14
Swedish Inspectorate of Strategic Products	30 31	30 30	29 30	29 33	43
Research, inquiries and other action relating to security policy, disarmament and non-proliferation	45 45	45 42	46 44	45 45	54
Grant to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)	24 24	24 24	25 28	25 25	28
Grant to the Swedish Institute of International Affairs (UI)	16 16	16 16	17 17	17 17	19
Swedish Institute	96 92	96 90	98 102	120 118	124
Information about Sweden abroad	14 14	14 14	15 15	15 15	15
Cooperation in the Baltic Sea region	189 167	189 171	189 182	164 167	174
Total	2 018 1 662	1 899 1 934	1 905 2 070	1 913 2 084	2 009

Source: Swedish Government's budget bills submitted to the Riksdag (Parliament) from 2013 to 2017, Expenditure area 5.

Table 11: Appropriations for International development cooperation (in million SEK)

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Development cooperation	30 678 29 856	28 852 31 009	31 121 30 723	33 706 35 437	41 606
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)	985 973	988 1 032	1 050 1 071	1 096 1 130	1 171
Nordic Africa Institute	14 14	14 15	14 14	15 15	16
Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA)	98 97	100 101	105 103	107 109	124
Swedish National Audit Office: International Development Cooperation	40 40	40 42	50 46	50 49	50
Evaluation of international development cooperation	15 10	15 15	16 14	16 15	18
Total	31 831 31 027	30 009 32 213	32 357 31 971	34 990 36 754	42 985

Source: Swedish Government's budget bills submitted to the Riksdag from 2013 to 2017, Expenditure area 7

Table 12: Evolution of Sida's spending for its main sectors (in million USD)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Governance, democracy, human rights, and gender equality	528	642	676	771	777	599	610
Humanitarian aid	372	469	418	438	567	364	462
Multisector	147	168	149	162	190	133	169
Administrative costs of donors	135	147	138	152	146	129	146
Population policies/programmes and reproductive health	76	75	149	117	110	92.5	116
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	88	102	127	117	116	81.3	103
Water and sanitation	45	64	122	134	106	90	83
Health	118	105	117	137	107	80	97
General environmental protection	110	109	99	116	108	79	93
Conflict prevention, peace and security	82	100	103	111	106	86	87

Source: Openaid.se⁸⁷

⁸⁷ It is worth noting that since the data was extracted, the sectors have changed on Openaid.se and 'conflict prevention, peace and security' is not one of the sectors anymore.

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