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Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies
Integrating Diversity in the European Union (InDivEU)

The Politics of Differentiated Integration: What do
Governments Want? Country Report - Sweden

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Integrating Diversity in the European Union (InDivEU) is a Horizon 2020 funded research project aimed at contributing concretely to the current debate on the 'Future of Europe' by assessing, developing and testing a range of models and scenarios for different levels of integration among EU member states. InDivEU begins from the assumption that managing heterogeneity and deep diversity is a continuous and growing challenge in the evolution of the EU and the dynamic of European integration.

The objective of InDivEU is to maximize the knowledge of Differentiated Integration (DI) on the basis of a theoretically robust conceptual foundations accompanied by an innovative and integrated analytical framework, and to provide Europe's policy makers with a knowledge hub on DI. InDivEU combines rigorous academic research with the capacity to translate research findings into policy design and advice.

InDivEU comprises a consortium of 14 partner institutions coordinated by the Robert Schuman Centre at the European University Institute, where the project is hosted by the European Governance and Politics Programme (EGPP). The scientific coordinators of InDivEU are Brigid Laffan (Robert Schuman Centre) and Frank Schimmelfennig (ETH Zürich).

For more information: <http://indiveu.eui.eu/>



**Integrating
Diversity in the
European Union**

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Abstract

Differentiated integration (DI) is of very low salience in Sweden, and the rare discussions on DI that took place focused on instances of DI rather than on models or mechanisms.

As regards the models of DI, Sweden had a negative view of multi-speed, which was seen as detrimental to cohesion within the Union. Multi-end Europe was instead perceived as a useful way to include different countries. Enhanced co-operation, in which some countries pursue a deeper cooperation, was therefore acceptable and Sweden had no problems when others engaged in enhanced co-operation on initiatives that Sweden was critical of. It was also pleased when initiatives that Sweden favoured and which could not find the acceptance of all, could be pursued as enhanced co-operation. It was, however, critical against using opt-outs in areas seen as crucial, like climate, the environment and migration.

Without explicitly mentioning the euro as a case of enhanced co-operation this was how Sweden dealt with it. Neither Sweden nor the EU have acted to bring about a formal opt-out. The two EU-critical parties, the Left Party and the Sweden Democrats, have, however, argued for this, most probably because of a wish to make non-membership of the euro permanent. While recognising the right of deeper co-operation among eurozone countries, Sweden saw it as crucial not to create wider political rifts in Europe.

With only a few exceptions, such as the euro, all political parties have agreed on the issues under discussion within the context of DI.

Keywords

Differentiated integration, Sweden, enhanced co-operation, multi-speed, out-out.

Summary of Results

I. Salience

Differentiated integration (DI) is of very low salience in Sweden. The four government programmes made no general references to DI and mentioned only a few key words associated with DI. Among the parliamentary debates connected to the government programmes, only one (January 2019) included a debate on deepening integration. The same lack of interest in DI emerged in the context of the Swedish presidency. Almost no DI key words could be found in the speeches and discussions. The Future of Europe initiative led to some, albeit limited, interest in DI – at least it meant that in the context of the Future of Europe discussions key words were mentioned in a broader context rather than a more specific one. On the whole, however, holistic grading of all these documents showed a low score for salience.

When the many other occasions of EU policy discussions found in the Swedish repository were added, this view was sustained. Furthermore, when putting the key words in context it became apparent that they did not always relate to differentiated integration. Enhanced co-operation might, for example, refer not to DI but to a deepening within a specific field that embraced all the European Union (EU) members. Similarly, core Europe references primarily related to a Swedish ambition to have a leading position in order to deepen policy for the whole EU in certain areas. It is also obvious that discussions were more focused on instances of DI than on models or mechanisms. At times, however, the discussions on particular instances were connected to the concept of enhanced co-operation, such as when discussing Rome III and the Unitary Patent.

II. Position

To the low interest in DI models is also added a largely negative view of two-speed and multi-speed Europe. References to an end point mainly concern ‘core Europe’ in the context of an aspiration that Sweden might become part of it.

As mentioned in the context of salience, most of the Swedish focus is on instances. When connected to enhanced co-operation, it resulted that Sweden mostly has a relaxed attitude to deeper co-operation including only some countries. For example, this was seen in the final discussion on the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, when enhanced co-operation was mentioned only once and then as a good way for Member States to choose their own paths. Sweden had no problem when others engaged in enhanced co-operation on initiatives that Sweden was critical of (and vetoed in the EU context). It was also pleased when initiatives that Sweden favoured, and which could not find the acceptance of all, could be pursued as enhanced co-operation. Regarding opt-outs, Sweden was generally critical when they concerned areas that Sweden favoured, like climate, the environment (such as fisheries) and migration.

Without explicitly labelling euro membership as a form of enhanced co-operation, that is how Swedish governments have dealt with the issue, often referring to the fact that not all countries participate in all forms of co-operation. In this context, the euro and Schengen were often mentioned together, the latter probably because it started out as enhanced co-operation. Speaking about euro membership in the context of opt-outs (informal in this case) would not be in Sweden’s interest since it would emphasise that it is not an ordinary thing. Neither Swedish governments nor the EU have acted in order to bring about a formal opt-out. The only political parties in Sweden that argued for a euro opt-out were the Left Party and the Sweden Democrats, both EU- and euro-critical. Most probably their wish was to ensure that non-membership of the eurozone would be permanent. Sweden recognised the right of eurozone countries to deepen their co-operation but had some concern about a widening rift between the eurozone countries and others as the co-operation among the former seemed to undergo a political deepening.

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1. Introduction

This report investigates the salience of differentiated integration (DI) in Swedish government discourse between 2004 and 2020. It also probes into the position of Swedish governments on the issue of DI in selected years (2008, 2012, 2017-2020).

1.1 Theory and methodology

The report distinguishes three levels of abstraction in government discourse on DI. **First**, two different models of DI are distinguished at the conceptual level. On the one hand, the ‘multi-speed EU’ model depicts DI as a temporary phenomenon and implies that all the Member States (MSs) will ultimately reach the same level of integration. On the other hand, the ‘multi-end EU’ model depicts DI as a potentially permanent feature of European integration. In this model, the MSs do not necessarily strive to reach similar levels of integration. Instead, each MS can ‘pick and choose’ to adjust its own level of integration to national preferences and capacities. **Second**, the analysis focuses on DI mechanisms. On the one hand, the enhanced co-operation mechanism allows a limited group of MSs – under certain conditions – to pursue deeper integration without having to involve all the MSs. On the other hand, the ‘opt-out’ mechanism allows MSs to refrain from participating in common policies. In short, enhanced co-operation allows a MS to integrate more than other MSs, while ‘opt-outs’ allow a Member State to integrate less than other MSs. **Finally**, the analysis looks at various instances of differentiated policies and policy fields. A total of twenty-one instances are included in the analysis. They are grouped in four different categories: (a) instances of enhanced co-operation, (b) instances of opt-out policy fields, (c) instances of inter se agreements and (d) instances of external agreements. Inter se agreements are agreements which EU Member States conclude outside the framework of the European Union. External agreements are agreements between the EU and non-EU states.

The results are based on an analysis of various government documents (Appendix 1). Six document categories were selected to cover a broad spectrum of venues and government actors. From the more abstract-programmatic to the more specific, the report looks at what government programmes say about DI, at what prime ministers say about DI and at parliamentary debates on DI. The focus when gathering material was on the Committee on European Union Affairs. All the ministers have to meet the Committee for consultation prior to each Council of Ministers and European Council meeting and again to report after the meeting. Additional telephone meetings may take place during negotiation processes. The government is not legally bound to respect the Committee’s advice, but not doing so may lead to a vote of no confidence. All the parties are represented in the Committee.

The salience of DI models, DI mechanisms and DI instances is assessed by counting key words in the above-mentioned documents (Appendix 2). The assumption is that the more a government talks about DI, the more relevant it is. While key word counts in government programmes and PM speeches show the salience of DI at specific moments in time, the analysis of parliamentary debates allows us to identify trends over time and situational peaks. To enhance the reliability of the findings, the key word counts were triangulated with a close reading of selected key documents. Regarding the governments’ positions, the results are based on a manual attitude analysis of parliamentary debates. To this end, references to DI key words in parliamentary debates were manually coded as negative, neutral or positive.

1.2 Swedish Governments and Political Parties 2004-2020

In 2004 Sweden was governed by a Social Democratic-Green Party coalition. The Prime Minister, Göran Persson, came from the leading party, the Social Democrats. In 2006 ‘the Alliance,’ four non-socialist parties (the Moderates, the Christian Democrats, the Liberals and the Centre Party) won the election and

formed a government with Fredrik Reinfeldt from the Moderate Party (the largest government party) as Prime Minister. The Alliance also remained in power after the 2010 election, but in 2014 it was replaced by a government formed by the Social Democrats and the Green Party, with the Social Democrat Stefan Löfven as Prime Minister. The September 2018 election had an inconclusive result and the negotiations to form a government, which were led by the parliament (Riksdag) speaker, were difficult. The new government was not formed until January 2019 and the solution was of a kind not seen before in Sweden: the Social Democrats and the Green Party stayed in government but only under the condition that they pursued a number of policies prescribed by the Liberals and the Centre Party. Stefan Löfven remained Prime Minister. The purpose behind this unusual procedure was to keep the Sweden Democrats (SD) from having any influence. The SD, which had entered the Riksdag after the elections in 2010 and had received 17 percent of the votes in 2018, are seen as xenophobic and populist by the other parties, which prefer not to cooperate with them.

The next section of the report details the results of the salience analysis. The third section details the results of the position analysis.

2. How salient is DI for Swedish Governments?

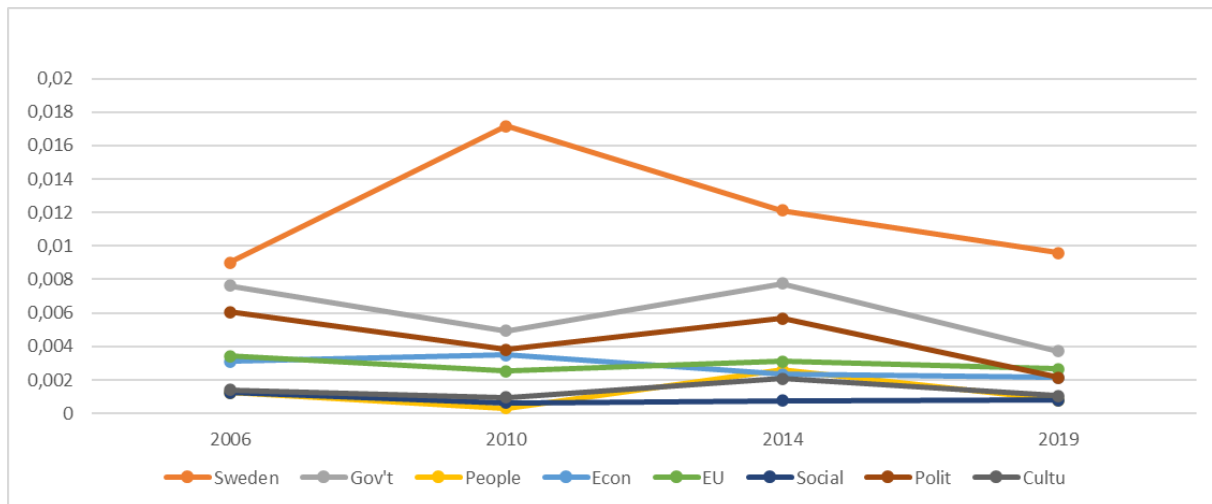
2.1 Government programmes

As a first step to assess the salience of differentiated integration in Sweden between 2004 and 2020, the government programmes in this period are analysed. During this period, four government programmes were presented: in 2006, 2010, 2014 and 2019, as described above.

The government programmes made no general references to DI and only a few references to some of the key words associated with DI. As for references to DI models, it was twice (in 2006 and 2010) mentioned that Sweden should be a member of the core in the EU. There were also two references connected to DI mechanisms ('enhanced co-operation') and one connected to 'instances' (the Eastern Partnership).

Figure 1 gives an indication of the extent to which the EU as a whole was vital in the government programmes. As can be seen from the graph, 'Sweden' and 'government' were the two most frequent key words, which is not surprising considering that they were government programmes. 'EU' was the third most frequent term in 2019, and the fourth most frequent in 2006, but all the key words except for 'Sweden,' 'government' and 'political' were fairly equal in frequency. Interestingly, the line for the other key words is quite flat, which might indicate that the level of interest was unchanged regardless of activities and events connected to the EU, but this would be a premature conclusion. Only a qualitative analysis can give an answer to this. In addition, a government programme must cover a number of areas and therefore cannot change too much over the years.

Figure 1 - The salience of EU-related issues in government programmes



A striking feature of the graph is that the use of ‘Sweden’ shows a pronounced peak in 2010. A strong guess is that this is most likely to be a stylistic feature, especially as the government programmes in 2006 and 2010 emanate from the same government parties. The same reason may account for the fact that some of the lines are decreasing. The non-controversial key words ‘Sweden,’ ‘government’ and ‘political’ are the ones undergoing most changes, whereas the line for ‘social,’ which might be more politically loaded, is flat.

A qualitative analysis of the four government programmes gives some additional information. It was twice stated that Sweden should be part of the EU’s core, but this was both times followed by sentences saying that the EU should be a strong force for certain values such as open society, efficiency etc. This could therefore certainly be interpreted as a Swedish ambition to be in the lead, but not in the sense of a formal position such as is generally associated with ‘core Europe.’ Since the expression was only used by the two Alliance governments, it might be interpreted as meaning that this was more strongly felt by them.

‘Enhanced co-operation,’ which also appeared twice (in 2006 and 2010), when read in its context (the fight against terrorism and the full implementation of the internal market) again referred to a Swedish ambition not for a few but rather for all the EU members to deepen their co-operation in these two areas. The Eastern Partnership, finally, was a strong Swedish interest since Sweden and Poland together were the initiators of it. The only mention came in 2010, the year after it was accepted by the EU.

Another way to find out more about Swedish interest in DI is to see whether there are indirect ways in which the government programmes can be linked with or compared to the Commission’s *White Paper on the Future of Europe. Reflections and scenarios for the EU-27, COM (2017) 2025*. In this case, no such relations can be seen. First, being outside the eurozone already excluded some scenarios. Second, Swedish interests lay elsewhere. There were other areas emphasised in the government programmes for which there was a strong desire that all should join or alternatively that co-operation should be deepened. A common asylum system and a common climate policy are examples of this. Other prominent areas for Sweden were those of security, employment and social policy.

In conclusion, there seemed to be little attention to or interest in DI in Sweden, at least as is shown in the four government programmes. To the extent that it existed, the attention/interest seemed to be more prominent during the period of the Alliance government (2006-2014), but the evidence for this is far too scant for a conclusion to be based on it. In contrast to DI issues, the Swedish governments in power during the period 2004-2020 all showed strong ambitions to introduce or strengthen more

substantive areas of co-operation, as was described above. To a high degree, these areas were the same for the whole period and therefore were shared among most of the electorate.

2.2 Parliamentary debates connected to government programmes

The procedure in Sweden is that a debate takes place in the Riksdag shortly after the presentation of a government programme. The debate is called ‘Party leaders’ debate on the occasion of the presentation of the government programme’ and the first speaker is the leader of the largest opposition party. This means that the newly appointed prime minister gives no introductory speech in the Riksdag. The election on 9 September 2018 did not lead to the acceptance of a new government until January 2019 and the debate therefore took place on 30 January 2019.

The Riksdag debates mentioned above give a fuller picture of the different views of the political parties. As mentioned above, to a high degree the four governments shared their views regarding which EU policies to promote. The areas that gave their names to the first Swedish presidency (spring 2001), ‘enlargement, environment, employment,’ continued to be strongly supported, together with the others mentioned above.

Apart from the above-mentioned unanimity, there were, however, also some considerable discrepancies between some of the political parties. The Left Party and the Green Party were both against EU membership when the referendum on membership took place in 1994, but the Green Party changed its position in 2008 and the Left Party has done so very recently (and remains quite critical of the EU). The Sweden Democrats entered the Riksdag in 2010 and, like the Left Party, have recently decided to no longer work for Sweden leaving the EU, even though, like the Left Party, they remain quite negative. At the other end of the spectrum, the Liberal Party is the most positive towards the EU, and continued to argue for adopting the euro even after the lost referendum in 2003 and the subsequent sinking approval of the euro among the population.

All the discussions in the Riksdag after the elections to some degree dealt with the EU. In 2010 the European financial crisis was at the centre of discussion. The Sweden Democrats, the Left Party and the Green Party saw the euro itself as the problem, whereas others pointed to irresponsible politics in some EU countries. Since Sweden was not part of the eurozone, the crisis had less effect on the country, but, as was also pointed out, the Swedish economy in general benefitted from good economies in other countries.

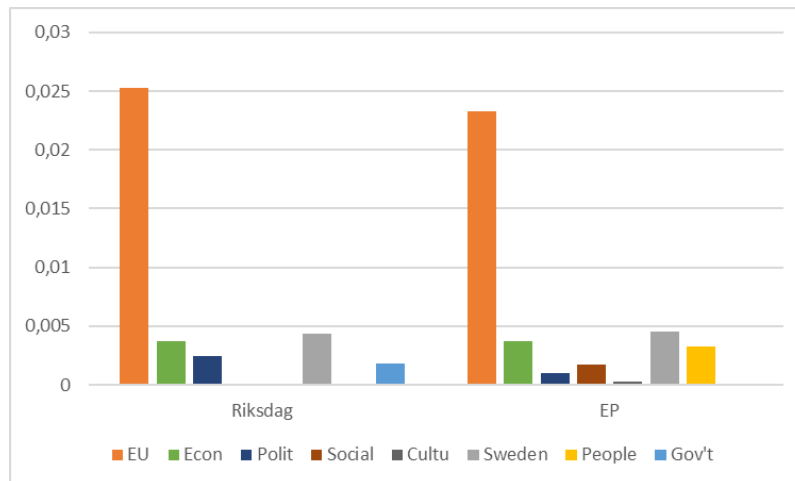
The debate in January 2019 brought up several issues related to deepened European co-operation. The Liberals claimed that deeper co-operation would help to solve many of the contemporary problems and the leader of the party reiterated his view that Sweden should join the euro. He also criticised the Prime Minister, Stefan Löfven, for not agreeing to a carbon tax, accusing him of refusing only because he did not want to give this authority to the EU. The Prime Minister agreed that in principle deepened co-operation was the way forward in order to solve common European problems, but also noted that he needed to go more deeply into the various proposals, such as that for a Banking Union, before deciding. In this context there was no reference to enhanced co-operation in the sense of not including all countries. Even though deeper co-operation was one of the themes, none of the DI key words were used in this discussion.

2.3 The Prime Minister and the Presidency

During the period 2004 to 2020, Sweden only once – in the autumn of 2009 – held the EU presidency. A comparison between the government programmes and the speeches made in connection with the presidency shows some differences between the use of the key words ‘EU,’ ‘Sweden,’ ‘people,’ ‘government,’ ‘econ,’ ‘polit,’ ‘social’ and ‘cultu.’ Unsurprisingly, while in the government programmes ‘Sweden’ and ‘government’ were the most frequent ones, in this case ‘EU’ was by far the most frequently used. The key word ‘economy’ appeared fairly frequently, which is not surprising considering

that the speech was made in 2009 in the midst of the financial crisis. For almost all the key words, as Figure 2 shows, the relative frequency is quite similar when comparing the presentation of the Swedish programme to the Riksdag and that to the European Parliament. An interesting exception which sticks out is that in the presentation to the Riksdag the key word ‘social’ is not used at all, whereas in that to the European Parliament it appears seven times. This must have its foundation in a political decision to pursue social issues during the presidency, even though such issues were generally favoured by the then opposition party, the Social Democrats.

Figure 2 - Prime Minister Council presidency speeches 2009



Another way to analyse the attitude to DI is to compare the use of the key words ‘two speed,’ ‘two tier,’ ‘core Europe,’ ‘enhanced co-operation,’ ‘multispeed’ and ‘multitier’ in four different speeches/debates: the Prime Minister’s speech and the following debate in the Riksdag, the equivalent speech in the EP and the following debate in the European Parliament. The result in this case was that all the key words related to DI are missing. This does not mean that there was a lack of ambition. Generally, DI is not a Swedish interest but in this case the timing would have made mentions even less likely. For Sweden, the main priority at the time was to help ensure that the remaining countries ratified the Lisbon Treaty. In both speeches, the continued management of the economic and financial crisis and the climate crisis were stated to be the two overriding goals for the Swedish presidency. The Prime Minister also declared that Sweden would seek to enlarge and deepen EU co-operation as a whole in a number of areas.

A holistic grading of a number of documents for the period between 2004 and 2020 was also undertaken. This entailed careful reading of the four government programmes and the ensuing debates, the Prime Minister’s presidency speeches in the Riksdag and the European Parliament and the ensuing debates and, finally, the Future of Europe speech in Sweden (citizen speech) and in the European Parliament. Of the total of 13 documents only three documents had any relation with DI and only one dealt with it at some length. The documents were given scores ranging between 0 (no reference to DI) and 2 (direct reference to DI). Similarly, the position of the government was evaluated as either 0 (negative), 1 (neutral) or 2 (positive). This grading gave a low score for salience (0.231). Furthermore, the analysis of the positions taken gave a rather negative result (0.667). However, the low number of documents and the subjectivity of the method make this result rather unreliable. DI key words were mentioned in the two government programmes in 2006 and 2010 by the Alliance parties, saying that Sweden should be part of the core of the EU. The third occasion was the Future of Europe citizen speech given by Social Democrat Prime Minister Göran Persson, in which he gave some conditional support for DI.

The lack of mention of DI in these documents is not related to a lack of interest in the EU in general. Sweden, as mentioned above, was very engaged in a range of areas, envisaging them to be endorsed by all. The Swedish situation of being outside the euro was mentioned above all by the Liberals, who were strong proponents of joining.

2.4 Parliamentary debates

The next step in the analysis was to bring in the three sets of key words, the first of them being the DI models, to plot the frequency of key words over time in parliamentary debates. As can be seen in Figure 3, DI had very low salience in Sweden during the entire period, with a total of 79 references. There were never more than 18 references in any one particular year and all the other years had many fewer. Due to the low number of references, it is difficult to find a pattern. In addition, as was mentioned above in the analysis of government programmes a comparatively large number of references were to the phrase ‘core Europe’ and most of these related to Sweden’s ambition to be part of a European core (see also part three on government positions below). Therefore, unlike the other terms they do not refer to the general concept of a core Europe. The aspiration to become part of the European core was only mentioned by Alliance politicians and the success of their ambitions was contested by the Social Democrats. In all, there were 46 references (out of 79) to ‘core Europe.’ In 2007 (see Appendix 3), the year with the highest number of occurrences, there were 12 (out of 18). After ‘core Europe,’ the most frequent key phrases in the whole period were ‘multi-speed Europe’ (14), followed by ‘two-speed Europe,’ ‘coalition of the willing’ (8), ‘two tier Europe’ (2) and ‘concentric circles’ (1). Other key words were not mentioned at all.

Figure 3 - The salience of conceptual key words in parliamentary debates over time

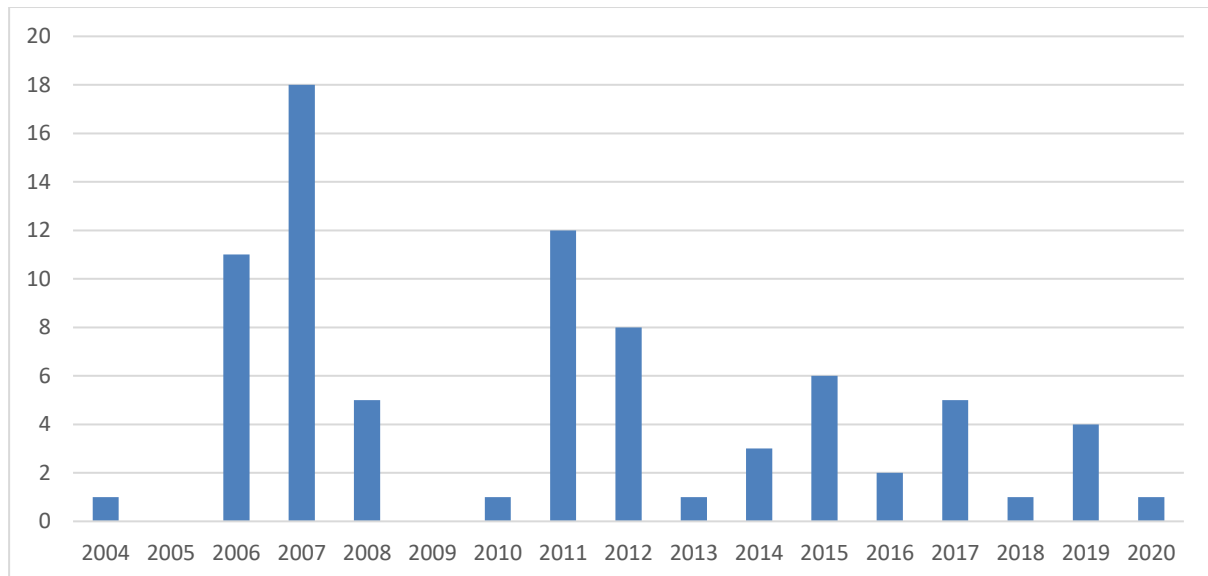
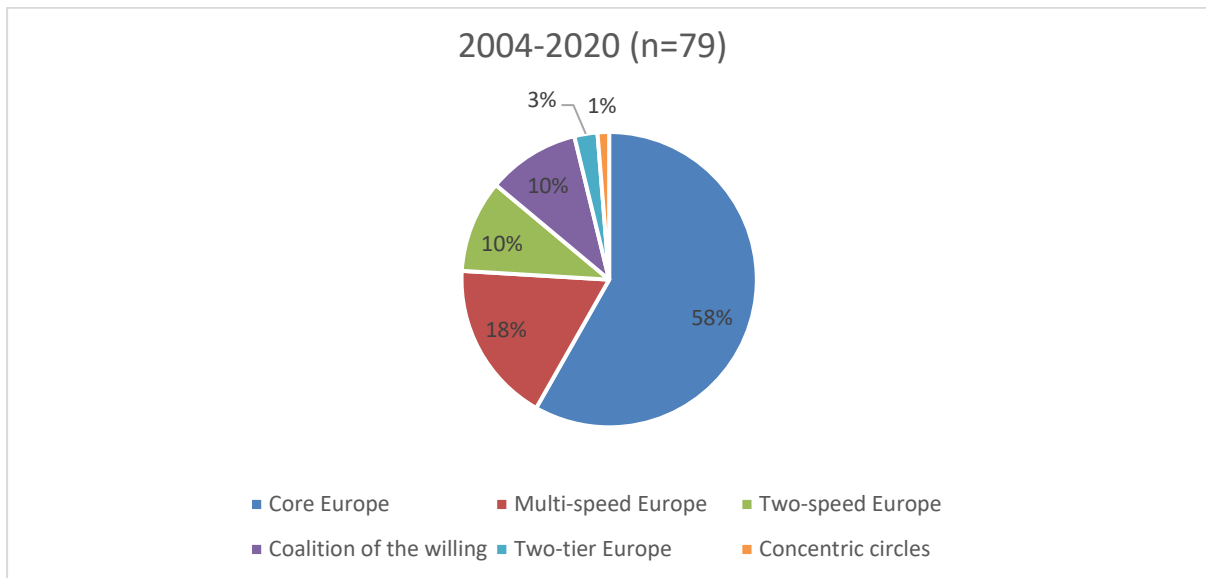
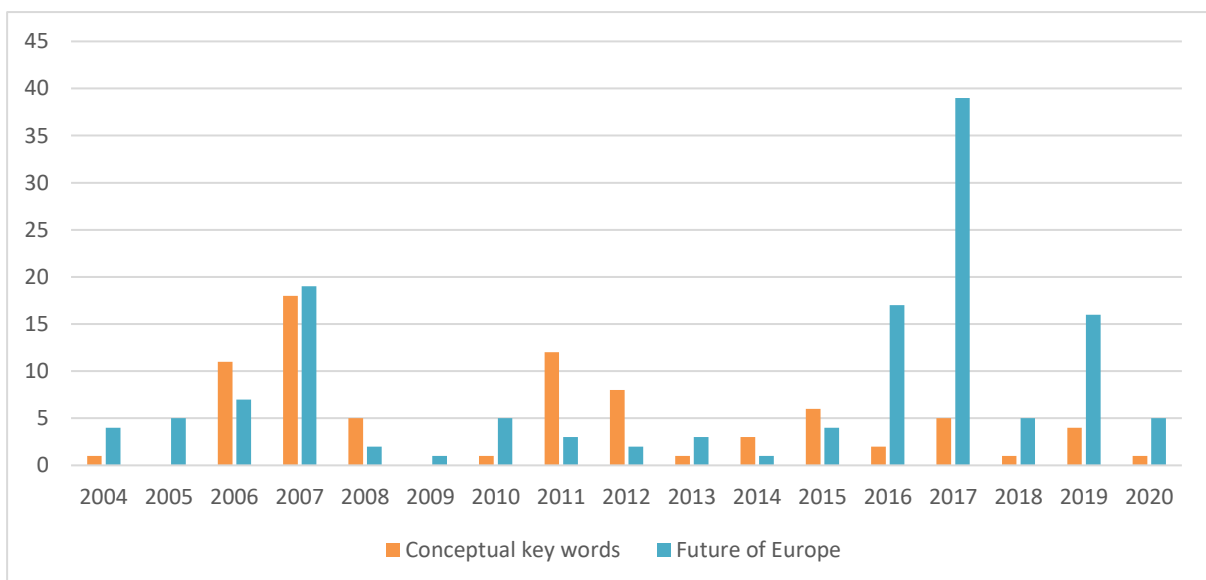


Figure 4 - Breakdown of conceptual key words in parliamentary debates



In Figure 5 the key phrase ‘future of Europe’ is added to see whether debates on DI occurred in the context of broader debates on the future of Europe. In all there were 138 references to the key phrase ‘future of Europe.’ It seems that the debates on the future of Europe were only partly related to the various integration models. In 2007, a year when the number of references to DI models was extraordinarily high, ‘future of Europe’ was sometimes, but far from always, mentioned in this context.

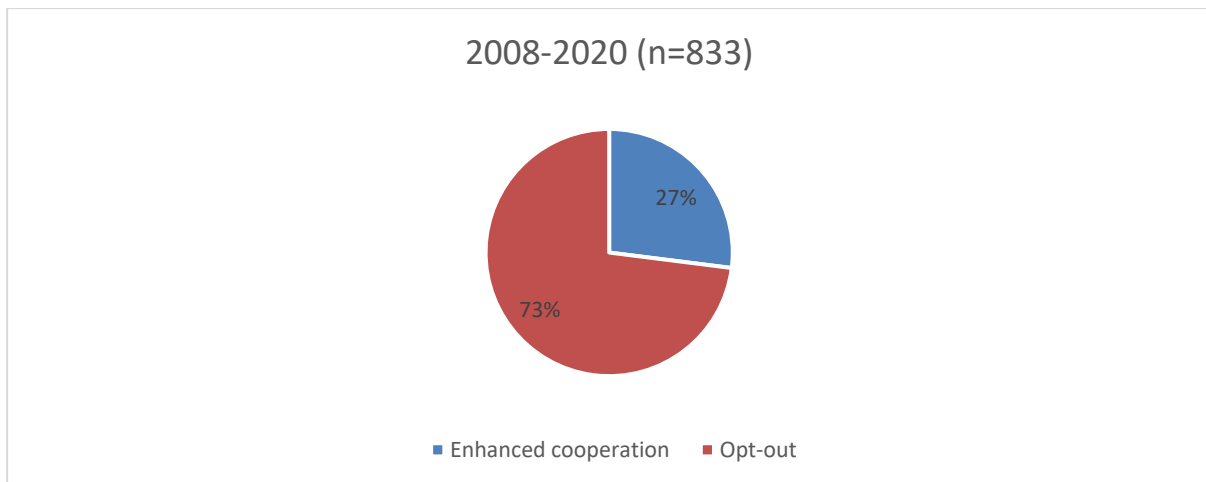
Figure 5 - The salience of conceptual key words in parliamentary debates relative to FoE debates



There seems to be no relation to any of the Treaty changes during the period 2004-2020, but some references relate to the initiatives named Future of Europe. In 2019, almost all the references relate to the European Council meeting in December when the Future of Europe (FoE) was on the agenda. The peak year was 2017, when several discussions were held in the Committee on European Union affairs following the ‘Future of Europe’ initiative.

As can be seen in Figure 6, references to ‘opt outs’ were far more frequent than ones to ‘enhanced co-operation.’ Since the Swedish equivalents rather than these expressions were used, there can be no total exactness. For enhanced co-operation, the two most frequent equivalent expressions, *fördjupat samarbete* (deepened co-operation) and *förstärkt samarbete* (strengthened co-operation), were used, and for opt outs the proper equivalent, *undantag*. In both cases the context was checked in order to avoid mistakes. (See also part three on positions for another way to deal with the Swedish equivalents to enhanced co-operation.)

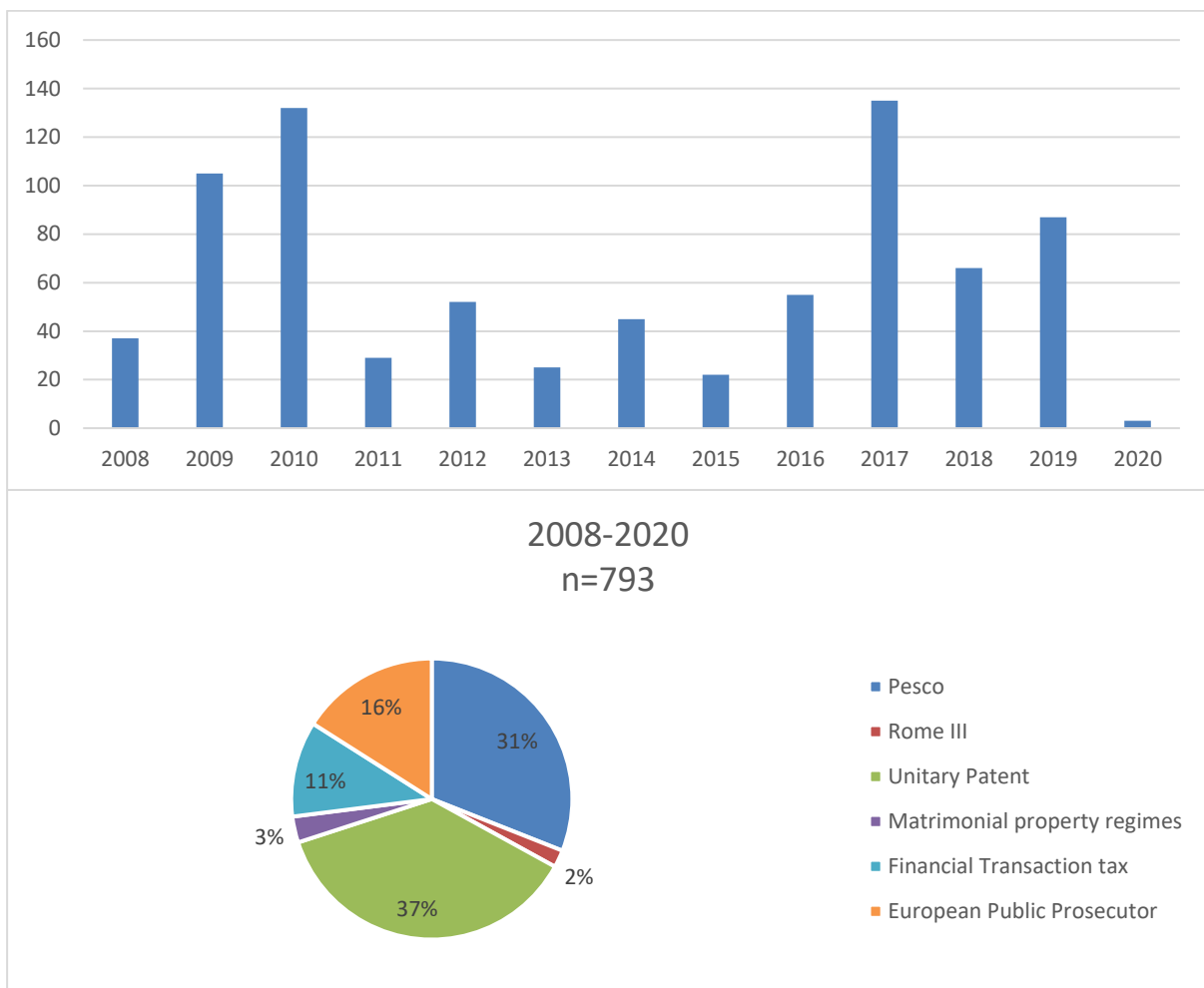
Figure 6 - The salience of DI mechanisms in parliamentary debates – breakdown by DI mechanism



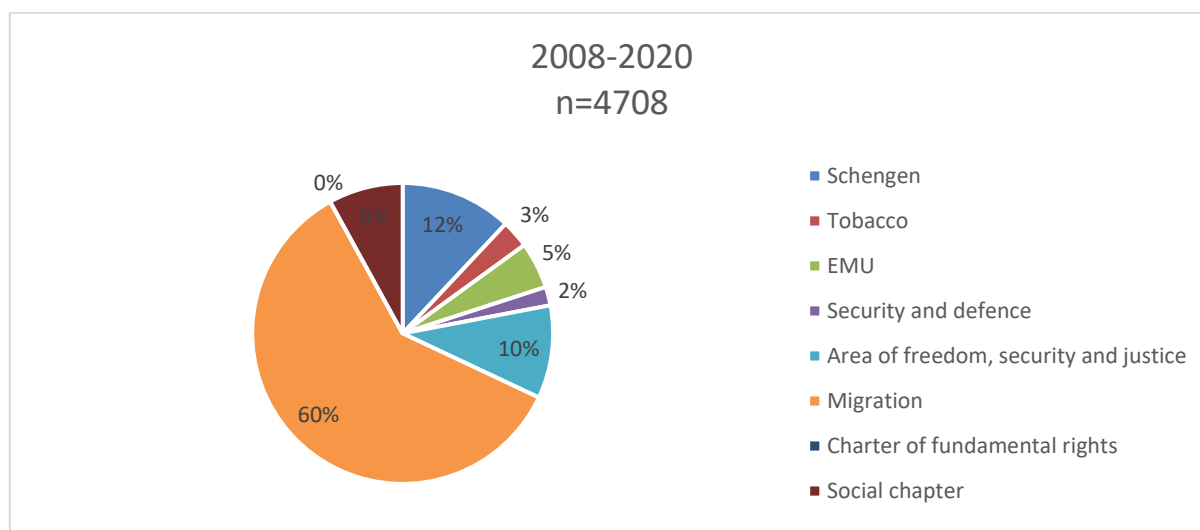
Two peak salience years stand out: 2013 and 2010 (Appendix 4). In the peak year for ‘opt-outs,’ 2013, the Swedish opt-out for wet snuff was much discussed after Sweden had brought up the issue for renegotiation. The Commission had banned oral tobacco snuff in 1992, but Sweden got an opt-out when it joined the EU, which meant that Sweden has the right to produce and use wet snuff but not to export it. The new agreement in 2014 did not lead to any change, however. Another big issue during 2013 concerned fisheries, an area in which Sweden had strong views about what it saw as over-generous opt-outs leading to overfishing. Sweden was the only country to disagree with a compromise proposed by the European Commission, arguing that it had too many loopholes. In 2010, a year in which enhanced co-operation had a relatively high frequency of references, the big discussion issue was the European Unitary Patent, which was supported by Sweden.

Figure 7 illustrates the dominance of two issues, the Unitary Patent and Pesco. In 2009 and 2010 the Unitary Patent was in the focus of discussions, and in 2017-2019 Pesco held that position, both being endorsed by Sweden. Sweden was and is very negative about Rome III, arguing that no Swedish person should be forced to undergo divorce proceedings under the laws of a country that is less liberal in these issues than Sweden. The issue of a European Public Prosecutor (EPPO) was also much discussed. The decision to join was finally taken in 2019, Sweden having previously been doubtful about the added value of EPPO. Matrimonial Property Regimes, which had been discussed for many years, were finally established as an enhanced co-operation in 2016. One of the problems for some countries was the inclusion of same-sex couples, which Sweden supported. The financial transaction tax (FTT) was primarily discussed around 2012, Sweden being negative about its introduction.

Figure 7 - The salience of instances of enhanced co-operation in parliamentary debates



Two areas of particular interest for Sweden are included in Figure 8. Migration is the area that had more references than any other. Considering the large numbers of migrants admitted to Sweden, in particular in 2015, a strong Swedish view was that there should be no opt-outs in this field – this is the reason why it is included here. The other was wet snuff, an issue dealt with under the heading of opt-outs. Schengen was discussed during the whole period, with a peak in 2011, in which the discussion concerned whether Bulgaria and Romania should be permitted to join (which Sweden supported), and another in 2016, in which discussions were on border control in the context of the ongoing migration crisis.

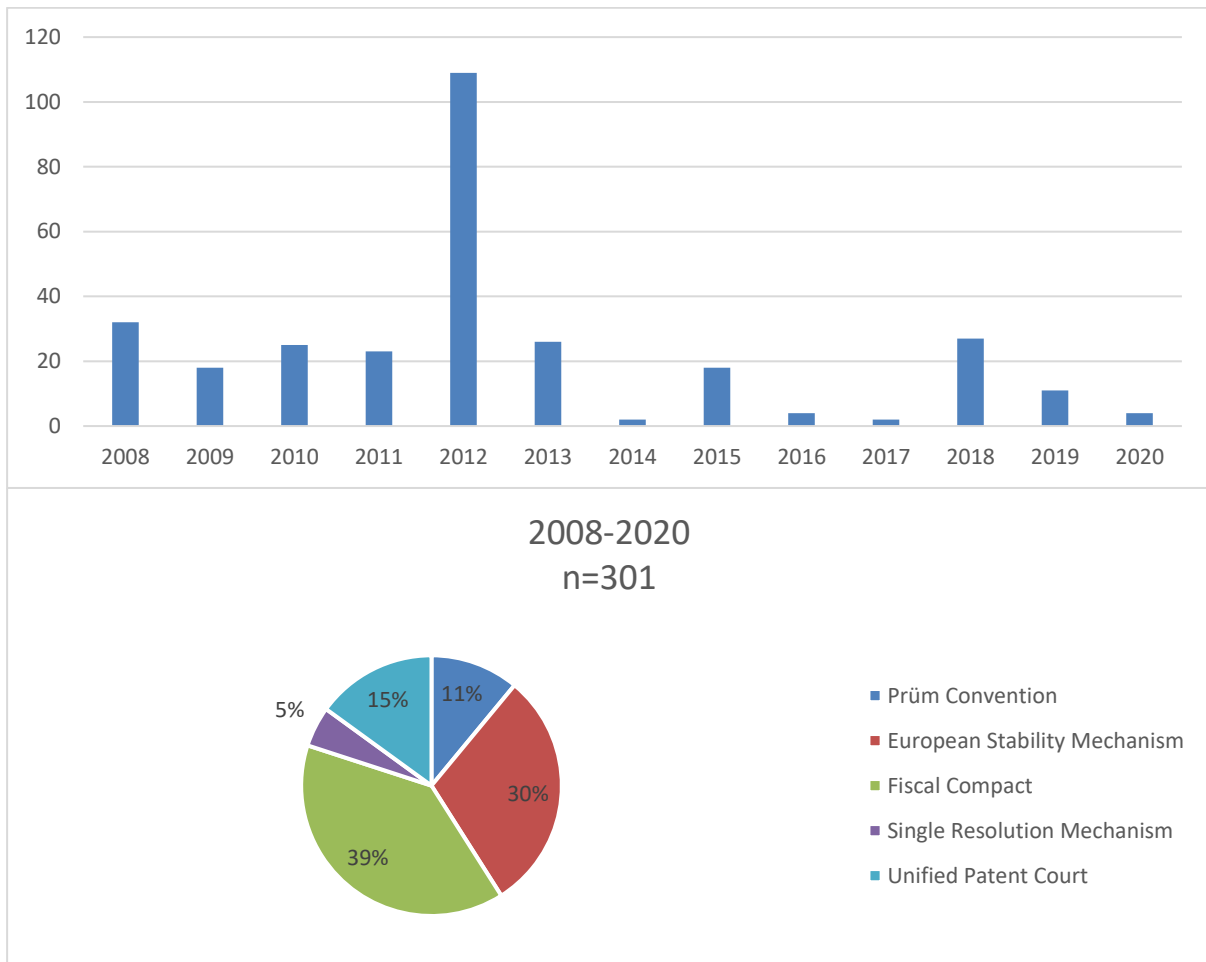
Figure 8 - The salience of opt-out policy fields in parliamentary debates

The EMU discussion can be divided in two parts. One was about the ongoing deepening of EMU and the other (sometimes connected to the deepening) was about Sweden being outside the eurozone. Some of the references to EMU concern this particular situation (see also part three on positions). The area of Freedom, Security and Justice had many references every year, reaching a peak in 2015 with issues related to migration and terrorism. The Social Chapter was of interest for Sweden, as was seen in the Gothenburg Summit in 2017. Security and defence had considerably fewer mentions, most probably because more precise words were used when discussing such issues, whereas the Charter of fundamental rights had only 18 references.

Regarding inter se agreements, the dominant issue, the Fiscal Compact, was much discussed in 2012, the year before Sweden joined, which can be seen from the long bar for 2012 in Figure 9. Sweden signed the Fiscal Compact, but as a non-euro country it is not bound by its rules. The European Stability Mechanism was mentioned almost every year, with a small peak in 2018, whereas the Prüm Convention was discussed almost only in 2008. Sweden joined the Prüm convention in 2013. The Unified Patent Court was supported by Sweden, as it was seen as a precondition for the Unitary Patent to function. For Sweden, this connection was considered important and it was therefore crucial that the Unitary Patent did not become valid until the Patent Court was in place.¹ The Single Resolution Mechanism (SRM) was less relevant for Sweden and therefore generated only a few references, most of them in 2015.

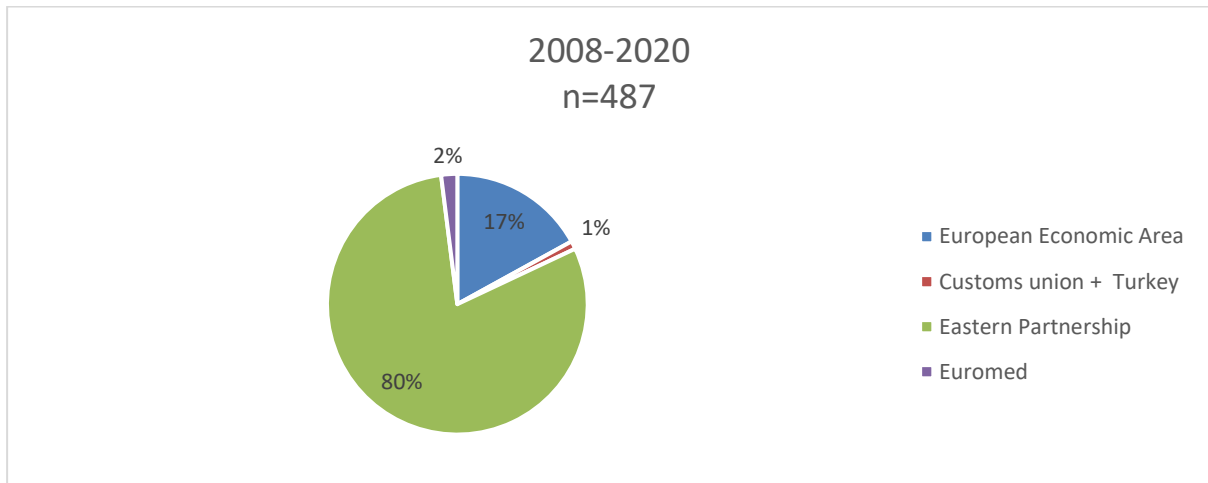
¹ Ewa Björling, Minister for Trade, Committee on European Union Affairs, 2010/11: 35, 27 May 2011.

Figure 9 - The salience of instances of inter se agreements in parliamentary debates



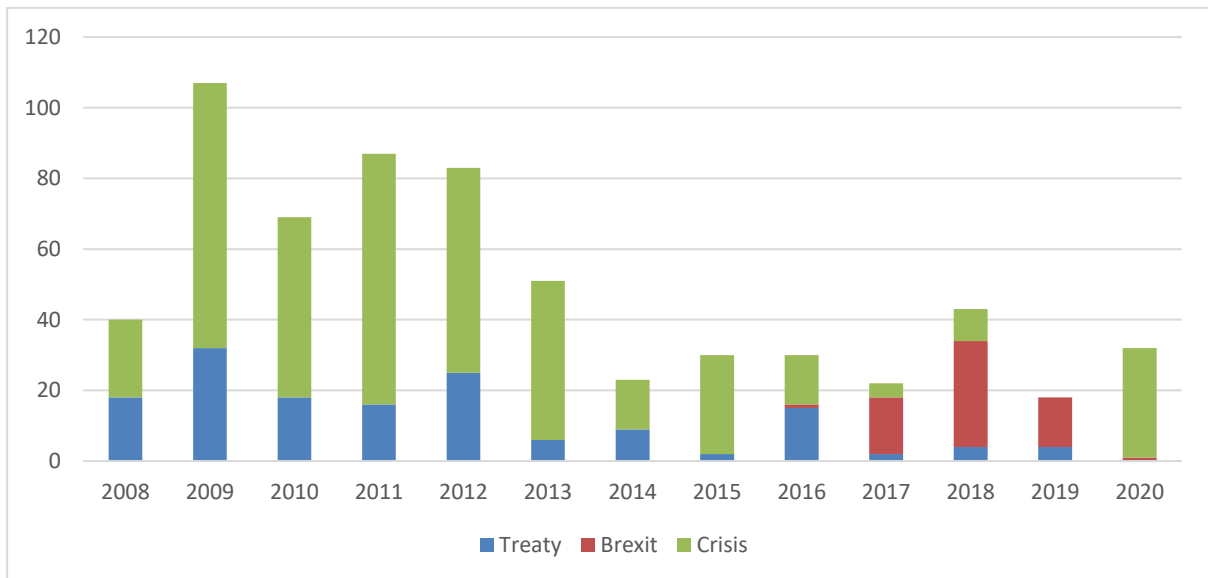
As can be seen in Figure 10, external relations were dominated by the Eastern Partnership. This is only to be expected since this was a Polish-Swedish initiative based on a joint interest in the fate of these countries. Interest in this region was consistent throughout the whole period, not as might have been expected peaking only in 2009, the year it was accepted by the EU. Many of the references to the EEA concerned Norway. For Sweden (and Norway) it was very important for EU rules to continue to permit close connections between the two countries. Euromed was not mentioned much but references to relations with North Africa were very frequent in the context of migration (for both Euromed and the Eastern Partnership, see part three on positions). Customs Union + Turkey had few references.

Figure 10 - The salience of instances of external association agreements in parliamentary debates



European Council statements In Figure 11 some political phases are illustrated by the number of mentions at meetings between prime ministers and the Committee on European Union Affairs in the context of European Council meetings. As mentioned above, the Swedish prime minister meets parliamentarians before and after each meeting of the European Council, sometimes also discussing with them during a meeting. This means that some years there were up to 19 meetings, which would have been overwhelming for this graph. For this reason, the bars show the total number of references each year. The references to ‘treaty,’ as can be expected, focus around the years in which the Lisbon Treaty was in its final negotiation and ratified. In addition, also predictably, the financial and the corona crises and Brexit are reflected in this figure.

Figure 11 - Three topics, three phases



The next step in the analysis is to find the extent to which key words referring to DI models, mechanisms, and instances were used in prime minister statements. With regard to DI models (conceptual key words), this happened extremely rarely, although the key phrase ‘Future of Europe’ was considerably more

frequent (Appendix 5). Key words related to DI mechanisms were also very rare in Council statements, with a peak in 2016, which primarily reflects issues discussed between the EU and the UK (Appendix 6). With regard to DI instances, Pesco (n=3 in 2017) and the Financial Transaction Tax (n= 1 in 2010) were the only two instances of enhanced co-operation which were mentioned in European Council statements. Sweden participates in the former but not in the latter. Finally, with regard to instances of inter se agreements, the Stability Mechanism appeared very rarely in Swedish documents, which is not surprising since it is connected to eurozone co-operation. The Fiscal Compact, in which Sweden has participated since 2013, was mentioned somewhat more often, especially in 2012 (Appendix 7).

3. What positions do Swedish governments have on DI?

As was already demonstrated in the section on salience, Swedish governments and politicians have not shown great interest in differentiated integration and there are therefore not many key words related to DI models and mechanisms. In this section, which deals with the positions of Swedish governments in the years, 2012, 2008 and 2017-2020, only the documents for these years that include references to conceptual key phrases (coalition of the willing, two-speed Europe, multi-speed Europe, variable geometry, core Europe, two-tier Europe, concentric circles and à la carte) have been selected. This means that the number of documents will be limited – in all to 25 hits – which results in 20 documents being included.

3.1 Quantitative overview of government positions

Multi-speed Europe

In order to make a meaningful distinction between government and opposition parties, a separation has been made in Figure 12 between, on the one hand, the period 2017-2020, during which the Social Democrats and the Green party were in government and, on the other, 2008 and 2012, when Sweden was led by the Alliance (Moderates, Christian Democrats, Liberals and the Centre party).

Figure 12 – Position on multi-speed Europe (two-speed + multi-speed) n = 9

	Negative Full period	Neutral Full period	2008 and 2012	2017-2020
Government	3	3	2	4
Opposition	2			2
Neutral (chair)	1		1	
2008				
2012	3			
2017-2020	3	3		

A reservation must be made concerning the small number of references. Obviously, more comments were made but framed in words that are not connected to any of the key words ‘two-speed,’ ‘multi-speed’ and ‘*hastighet*’ (Swedish for speed) that are used here. Nevertheless, some conclusions can be drawn from the table above.

It is interesting that there are no positive references to two-speed or multi-speed Europe. The three statements, which are here labelled as neutral, referred to the EU in a general sense, stating that it was important for EU members to keep together, but other forms of co-operation involving only some countries, like Schengen and the EMU, were nothing new. This variety of affiliations must, however,

not lead to a situation in which cohesion among the EU Member States would suffer. Most importantly, however, as both government and opposition parties stated, the EU needed to address concrete issues. For Sweden, among the most prominent of these were creating a common asylum and migration system and a social dimension. Many of the other (negative) comments were related to the fact that deepening integration was taking place within the eurozone. The comments warned that the rift between the eurozone countries and the others might become too wide.

There were no clear differences in views between the opposition and governments, as can be seen from the table. On the whole, the views among the political parties on this issue were more or less the same.

Summarising the Swedish position, politicians had no problems with a situation in which different countries were part of different EU initiatives, which is not surprising considering that Sweden itself had chosen not to join the euro. This was, however, different from multi-speed development, in which some countries deepened their co-operation in a way that affected others negatively. Swedish politicians were therefore watching eurozone developments attentively. Since they described these developments as problematic for Sweden their comments were labelled as negative.

In Figure 13, ‘core Europe’ is the only end point used, since there were no references to any of the other end points in these particular years. In fact, ‘two-tier’ was only mentioned twice and ‘à la carte’ not even once in the whole period 2004-2020.

Figure 13 – Position on multi-end Europe (core Europe) n= 10

	Negative Full period	Neutral Full period	Positive Full period	2006 and 2008	2017-20
Government	3	2		3	
Opposition	2	2	1	4	3
2008	3				
2012		4			
2017-2020	2		1		

As mentioned previously, ‘core Europe’ was often used in the context of the Swedish ambition to be in the core of Europe rather than the general concept of a core Europe. As for core Europe including a distance from others, most of the comments were negative. The only rather positive one predictably came from a Liberal, who spoke about the need for a strong EU which took care of the many problems and her wish that in this EU Sweden should be in the core.² Here too, however, the core concept was linked to substantive issues rather than to that of leadership.

The negative comments indicate some perceived bad effects of core Europe, such as the observation that countries which perceive themselves to be in the core use it to gain advantages.³ Another person argued for Sweden to seek a position in the core, otherwise it would not have any influence in Europe.⁴ In one remark in the context of discussions on the future of Europe, a parliamentarian pleaded with the others to be scrupulous when considering proposals that sought to make a difference in speed in the

² Tina Acketoft, Committee on European Union Affairs, 2017/18:11, 15 November 2017.

³ Fredrik Reinfeldt, Committee on European Affairs 2008/09:14, 10 December 2008.

⁴ Eskil Erlandsson, Committee on European Union Affairs, 2017/18:32, 9 May 2018.

integration process between the core and the periphery.⁵ The comments labelled as neutral mainly concerned the possibilities for Sweden to be a core member.

Figure 14 on enhanced co-operation has been subdivided into three tables, one covering the full period and the other two covering the periods in which the Alliance (Moderates, Christian Democrats, Liberals and the Centre Party) and the Social Democrats together with the Green Party respectively formed the government.

Figure 14 - Position on enhanced co-operation

(n=52)	Negative Full period	Neutral Full period	Positive Full period
Government	11	23	13
Opposition	3	1	1
2008	3	2	2
2012	10	16	7
2017-2020	1	6	5
	14	24	14

2008 and 2012 Alliance government

(n=40)	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Government	11	18	8
Opposition	2		1
Total	13	18	9

2017-2020 Social Democratic and Green Party government

(n=12)	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Government		5	5
Opposition	1	1	
Total	1	6	5

As mentioned previously, the term ‘enhanced co-operation’ has no single equivalent in Swedish. Previously two Swedish terms were used, but in order to cover the discussion more fully in this section some other key words related to deepening have been added, with all having been checked for relevance. Still, unavoidably not all the comments related to deepening co-operation could be traced due to the many ways in which it can be expressed. All the references to equivalents of enhanced co-operation are included, which means that a number of them are not related to initiatives in which only some countries participated.

Government representatives (including a few persons belonging to the parties in government) dominate in all the periods when counting the number of references. A primary reason for this is that representatives of the government always initiate discussions by making lengthy statements. They report on a meeting or inform about the government’s position on the issues to be discussed or decided on in a coming meeting, asking for the Committee on European Affairs’s advice. In addition, ministers (or state secretaries) in their following statements speak longer than the others. They need to be clear and

⁵ Pål Jonson, Committee on European Affairs, 2019/20:16, 6 December 2019.

convincing, since the Committee gives the government a mandate. Moreover, there is a time limit of five minutes for the others to speak. The large number of neutral references often emanate from government representative information points.

Looking at the various issues discussed, it is striking that there were very few instances in which there were sharp differences between the opposition and the government. This is the case regardless of which government was in power. One example of this is in 2017, when a member of the Moderate opposition declared his disagreement with the Social Democratic Prime Minister, who argued for a strengthened social dimension, which, according to this person, would reduce Sweden’s influence on its own social policy.

Among the three types of comments, neutral ones were the most common, which, as mentioned above, often constitute information (“at the meeting we discussed x etc.”) or a report on procedure. They sometimes also constitute statements in which the person’s comment includes both the positive and negative aspects of an issue in a balanced way.

When comparing negative and positive comments, the table furthermore shows that in the full period they were equal in number, but when comparing the two periods they differed, with more negative ones in 2008 and 2012 and more positive ones in 2017-2020. Specifying the various issues will shed more light on this.

In 2008 there were several references to Rome III. The minister of Justice declared that Sweden (being the only country against it) would not give up its resistance to this proposal, which might impair the possibility for a person to get a divorce.⁶

By far the most frequent comments, however, concerned the proposed deepening of the eurozone. The right of the eurozone countries to deepen their co-operation was recognised, but it was also pointed out that its effects often concerned other countries. Therefore, these countries had to be involved to some degree. The comments varied between neutral and negative, often as general statements that the deepening was not uncomplicated for Sweden.

Positive references to ‘enhanced co-operation’ concerned several fields. There was some mention of a need for enhanced co-operation within the internal market, in which some areas were not yet included. These areas concerned the service sector and cross-border internet trade. Other positive references referred to enhanced co-operation in the context of co-operation with areas outside the EU, such as the Eastern Partnership and North Africa. The references to the latter were connected to the Swedish interest, as mentioned elsewhere, in a common asylum and migration policy.

Figure 15 focuses on opt-outs. Unlike the case of the term ‘enhanced co-operation,’ ‘opt-out’ has a specific Swedish equivalent (*undantag*, which is also the common word for exception). This means that opt-outs were easy to find but needed to be separated from other uses of *undantag*. However, as in the case of enhanced co-operation, scrutiny of the texts revealed that some of the parliamentarians spoke about opt-outs without mentioning the word *undantag*, so a number of references were unavoidably missed.

Figure 15 - Position on "opt-outs"

(n=25)	Negative Full period	Neutral Full period	Positive Full period
Government	5	10	5
Opposition	2	1	2
2008	5	10	2
2012	1	1	1
2017-2020	1	-	4

⁶ Minister of Justice, Beatrice Ask, Committee on European Affairs, 2008/09:34, 30 May 2008.

2008 and 2012 Alliance government

(n=20)	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Government	4	10	2
Opposition	2	1	1

2017 – 2020 Social Democratic and Green Party government

(n=5)	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Government	1	-	3
Opposition	-	-	1

A comparison between the two tables shows that for both enhanced co-operation and opt-outs the numbers of references were considerably higher at the beginning of the period – with the peak year for enhanced co-operation being 2012 and for opt-outs 2008. The latter is not surprising, since the references were all part of debates related to the Lisbon Treaty. As in the case of enhanced co-operation, government representatives dominated when it comes to the number of references and for the same reasons too. Moreover, as in the previous case, regardless of which government was in power there was not much controversy between the government and the opposition. Finally, there were many neutral references to opt-outs, most of them being points of information.

All the relevant references to ‘opt-out’ were included and were labelled according to the position on the opt-out mentioned, but only looking at the specific text will reveal the view of the speaker in question on the relevant issue. A certain policy may, for example, be highly endorsed but at the same time the speaker will admit that a few opt-outs may be necessary. There are several cases of this in the table.

Most of the policy issues mentioned were ones which Sweden endorsed. One of them was in the field of energy, in which Sweden supported increasing market orientation and argued for a limitation of opt-outs to as few as possible. Another issue concerned opt-outs on value added tax (VAT), for which Sweden wanted as few exceptions as possible, but was positive about the inclusion of audiobooks. The Swedish view of the need for enhanced co-operation within the internal market (the service sector and cross-border internet trade) was brought up here too, in statements arguing that opt-outs should be very rare and primarily used for security reasons. Finally, among the policy issues that Sweden favoured, climate was one of the important ones and opt-outs that were sought in this area were seen in a very negative way.

A few references to opt-outs also concerned areas less liked by Sweden and in which Sweden itself favoured the possibility of opting out. One of them, as mentioned before, was Rome III, while another concerned a smaller opt-out from the new law against terrorism. The EMU was mentioned too, as a member of the Swedish Democrats argued for Sweden to apply for an opt-out.

3.2 Qualitative assessment of government positions

Swedish views on differentiated integration were a mix of both positive and negative ones. DI was rarely discussed in Sweden as an issue in itself. Instead, Sweden usually took a view on each issue separately. In general, however, Sweden preferred initiatives to include all the EU members in order to preserve cohesion within the Union.

The issue that was mentioned most often in DI discussions was the **euro**. The relationship with the eurozone was a constant concern as the eurozone members proceeded with their deepening, the effects of which on Sweden might be harmful. The euro referendum in September 2003 was preceded by years of discussion on the issue. It resulted in 55.9 per cent against the euro, 42 per cent for and 2 per cent blank votes. As many as 86 percent of the electorate voted. Today, the adherents of the euro are fewer

and there is no discussion. The Liberal Party is the only party which is united in its wish to join. As a non-member of the euro, formally Sweden should negotiate an opt-out, but there is no interest in this on either the Swedish or the EU side. In the Riksdag, members of the Left party and the Sweden Democrats often brought up this issue in economic discussions. Since these parties were strongly against Sweden joining the euro, the reason was most probably to make it more difficult for Sweden to join if public opinion should change in the direction of joining. In 2017, news spread that the European Commission would put pressure on the non-euro countries with the goal of making all of them join before 2025, but this was not true according to Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis. The Swedish view was expressed by State Secretary Hans Dahlgren, stating that it was important for Sweden that euro co-operation worked well, but also to protect cohesion among all the Member States. Furthermore, Swedish influence in matters concerning all the countries must not diminish when euro co-operation was deepened. Everyone, he stated, of course knew that no one could demand that Sweden introduced the euro as long as the Swedish people said no to it.⁷

Regarding a number of other DI instances, Sweden took its time to join, such as the Prüm Convention, which Sweden only joined in 2013. There was little discussion about this, and most of it was during the early years. The decision to support the initiative on a European Public Prosecutor was also taken late, for the reason that for several years Sweden saw it as bringing little added value. The decision was finally taken in late 2019 and the issue is now being finalised. The same goes for the Banking Union, which Sweden is now considering. Sweden was also somewhat late in announcing its wish to support Pesco, but it eventually joined together with most of the other EU countries in December 2017. Like Germany, Sweden was hesitant because it preferred Pesco to be part of the EU.

The period 2004 to 2020 can be divided in three periods. Each one is dominated by certain internal or external major events, and during each of them some DI-related issues were discussed.

3.2.1 2004-2009: Lisbon Treaty

The Lisbon Treaty was accepted by the Swedish Riksdag on 20 November 2008. The decision was taken by a large majority, with 243 members voting for the treaty and 39 members against. Sweden generally has a strict view on when referenda should be used, and this was a case when it was not seen as necessary. In the autumn of 2009, as president of the EU, Sweden took an active role in solving some late ratification hurdles for the Treaty.

Most political parties saw the Lisbon Treaty as an improvement compared to the Nice Treaty as it gave the EU the possibility of acting more efficiently on cross-border issues. It was further seen as making the EU more democratic, more social and more open. In the discussion on 20 November 2008, which ended with the positive vote on the Lisbon Treaty, enhanced co-operation was hardly mentioned. The only statement which specifically pointed to it was “Deepened co-operation, which must include at least nine participating member countries, will create flexibility for the future to develop at different speeds. This will give individual countries a choice as regards their own development.”⁸

During the process leading to the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, no major concerns were raised in Sweden. Some minor changes were made to the Swedish constitution due to added EU responsibilities in the areas of criminal law and police co-operation. The Swedish non-alignment was not an issue since the formulation in Article 42.7 of the Treaty on the European Union, after stating the obligation to aid

⁷ “Det är viktigt också för vårt land att eurosamarbetet fungerar väl, men det är också viktigt att värna om sammanhållningen bland alla EU:s medlemsstater och att vårt inflytande över beslut som påverkar alla länder inte minskar för att eurosamarbetet fördjupas. Alla vet förstås att ingen kan begära att Sverige ska införa euron så länge som det svenska folket säger nej till detta.” Committee for European Union Affairs, 2017/18:2, 28 September 2017.

⁸ “Det fördjupade samarbetet, som ska omfatta minst nio deltagande medlemsländer, kommer att skapa en framtidsflexibilitet för olika utvecklingshastigheter. Detta ger enskilda länder ett val beträffande sin egen utveckling.” Holger Gustafsson, Christian Democrats, Protokoll 2008/09:32, Sveriges riksdag, 20 November 2008

and assist a Member State that was the victim of armed aggression on its territory, also added another sentence: “This should not prejudice the special character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States.” Sweden and other non-aligned countries (and countries with an opt-out clause) therefore did not have to come to the aid of other EU countries. In order to show that Sweden still felt solidarity to do so, the Riksdag in 2009 decided on a Swedish unilateral solidarity declaration: “Sweden will not remain passive if another EU Member State or Nordic country suffers a disaster or an attack. We expect these countries to act in the same way if Sweden is affected. Our country must therefore be in a position to both give and receive support, civilian as well as military.”

The four parties in the Alliance constituting the ruling government were all positive towards the new Treaty and so was the main opposition party, the Social Democrats. The Left Party and the Green Party were, however, critical. The Left Party demanded that Sweden should ask for an opt-out in order to be able to sustain the Swedish model of collective agreements in the labour market. The Green Party similarly agreed that the Swedish model would have to be protected, and demanded a referendum. These demands were rejected by the Riksdag.

In 2008 and the following years, two examples of enhanced co-operation were much discussed with Sweden taking different positions. As mentioned earlier, Sweden was much against the idea that the EU would accept **Rome III**. It did, however, not object to Rome III being established as enhanced co-operation. As the State Secretary presenting the issue stated, since Sweden would not join this group it would consequently not have any views on the others’ co-operation. However, as the chairman of the meeting pointed out, “even if the possibility of deepened co-operation exists, the list of jurisdictions that we found so important to include in the Lisbon Treaty still exists. You cannot deepen co-operation on just anything and then label it EU.”⁹ The other issue concerned the **Unitary Patent**, which Sweden endorsed: “[...] in principle all Member States except Spain and Italy can accept the proposal by the Commission and the Presidency. Several countries, among them Sweden, pointed out that we were prepared to look at the preconditions for deepened co-operation if it turned out to be impossible to reach an agreement within a reasonable time period.”¹⁰

3.2.2 2008-2015: The Financial Crisis and the Eastern Partnership

The financial crisis affected Sweden like all the other countries in Europe. Compared to many, the effects on Sweden were more limited, however, since the country was outside the eurozone and had a floating exchange rate. Another fortunate aspect for Sweden was that its two main export destinations, Norway and Germany, were economically strong. This meant that the level of unemployment stayed relatively low and that the budget and state debt remained under control. In Swedish relations and discussion with the EU, the financial crisis was, however, an important issue. Many of the measures discussed (instances) were less relevant for Sweden, not being a member of the eurozone, but due to the interdependence between Sweden and this group they were of course of high interest.

Discussion on the **Fiscal Compact** in January 2012 was a step on the way for Sweden to join the compact, which was also open to non-euro states. There were reasons for joining. Minister of Finance Anders Borg sympathised with views of the compact such as the advantages of having strict rules for handling public finances. Furthermore, as Minister Borg saw it, it would not be advantageous for Sweden if all the other countries except Sweden discussed these issues on a regular basis. Since Sweden

⁹ [...] även om möjligheten till fördjupat samarbete finns gäller fortfarande den befogenhetskatalog som vi tyckte var viktigt att få med i Lissabonfördraget. Man får inte fördjupa samarbetet om precis vad som helst och kalla det EU sedan. Chairman, Committee on EU Affairs, 2009/10:40 28 May 2010.

¹⁰ [...] i princip alla medlemsstater kan acceptera kommissionens och ordförandeskapets förslag utom Spanien och Italien. Flera länder, bland annat Sverige, påpekade då att vi var beredda att se över förutsättningarna för ett fördjupat samarbete om det skulle visa sig omöjligt att nå en överenskommelse inom rimlig tid. Ewa Björling, Minister for Trade, Committee for EU Affairs, 2009/10:7, 5 November 2010.

was not a member of the eurozone it could not be forced to obey the legal rules of the Fiscal Compact, and neither should membership of the Fiscal Compact be seen by others as a first step towards joining the euro. Such a step would need to be determined in a Swedish referendum.¹¹

The view on the **European Stability Mechanism (ESM)** expressed by Finance Minister Anders Borg in 2011 was that since Sweden was not to become a member of the ESM it would not be proper for it to have too many views on it.¹² It was, however, possible for Sweden to join and it might even do so on a case-by-case basis when participating in a financing action, as it had previously concerning

The **FTT** met much criticism in Sweden. Finance Minister, Anders Borg stated that it was a bad proposal since it would increase capital costs, which would lead to lower salaries and a lower gross domestic product (GDP). In addition, if done at all, it should be done on a global scale (G20). Furthermore, no analysis of the consequences had been carried out. He was also concerned that there would be disadvantages for non-participants.¹³ In 2013, Sweden agreed to others participating in the FTT but chose not to participate itself. Further co-operation with the 11 states interested in joining was to focus on minimising the negative effects for Sweden. When the FTT was mentioned in 2019, the Social Democratic Minister of Finance, Magdalena Andersson, referred to a majority in the Committee on EU Affairs and the Riksdag, finding that the FTT was harmful for both employment and economic growth, which, she stated, was the reason for the Swedish negative viewpoint.

There were, however, also opponents of the Swedish position. The Left Party argued that the FTT was beneficial for welfare and for progressive policy on the whole. A tax on international speculation was therefore necessary.¹⁴

In accordance with the often-stated Swedish thinking that one of the important tasks for the European Union was to engage in concrete issues, often connected to neighbouring areas, several initiatives were taken. Anna Lindh, Foreign Minister between 1998 and 2003, was much engaged in **Euromed**, and *The Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue of Cultures* was named in her honour. The **Eastern Partnership**, which was established in 2009, was initiated by Poland and Sweden in order to speed up the pace of political and economic integration with the eastern European neighbourhood. The idea was to focus on certain areas of importance like the creation of deep and comprehensive free trade areas and visa liberalisation. The Eastern Partnership, which includes Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, has since then made some progress, in particular as far as Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine are concerned. These three countries have now all signed association agreements with the EU including the above-mentioned goals.

'**Core Europe**' was an expression fairly frequently used. The Alliance government declared in several contexts, such as in the 2009, 2010 and 2011 government programmes, that the Swedish ambition was to become part of the core. This was, however, not the case in the 2012 government programme, and when the Prime Minister, Fredrik Reinfeldt, was asked about this he referred to developments in the previous few years. The reason was, he declared, initially that the Swedish people had decided that Sweden should not use the euro as its currency:

"We now have a financial crisis, and a deepening is taking place among the countries of the eurozone. The decision that we should have a different currency limits the possibilities of entering the core in various areas within the EU when co-operation is deepening. The government has agreed that it is better to be honest towards the Swedish parliament. We can't automatically say that we are part of each area that is undergoing a deepening when this deepening is partly built on the eurozone shaping its own foundation in order to function. The 17 heads of states and governments have their own summits. They have agreed to have their own Fiscal Compact. They have their own crisis

¹¹ Anders Borg, Committee on EU Affairs, 2011/12:19, 20 January 2012.

¹² Anders Borg, Committee on EU Affairs, 2010/11: 22, 11 February 2011.

¹³ Anders Borg, Committee on EU Affairs, 2012/12:13, 30 November 2012.

¹⁴ Magdalena Andersson and Jens Holm, Committee on European Union Affairs, 2018/1):37, 14 June 2019.

management fund, called the ESM. Sweden is outside all this and I have not asked to be part of it. For this reason, my conclusion was that the correct procedure was to make this adjustment of the description of our goals before the entire government. This follows from the referendum of 2003.”¹⁵

3.2.3 2015-2020: Migration, Brexit and the new Europe

A new period of challenges for Europe and for Sweden started with the **migration** crisis in 2015. Sweden has traditionally been generous in accepting refugees and in 2015, the peak of the migration crisis, it accepted 163,000 migrants, which was more per capita than any other European country. By the end of the year, it was obvious that Sweden had depleted its resources to handle such a vast influx and the rules had to be changed. The Swedish thinking was that other countries now had to take their turn. Since then, Sweden has been very engaged in the way the EU deals with asylum and migration issues, arguing that a solution must be found in which there are no opt outs from reception. The proposal by the Commission of 13 July 2016 to reform the Common European Asylum System was much weaker than Sweden had preferred, but Sweden still supported it since it prescribed that all countries must respect the right to seek asylum. Throughout this period, one party, the Sweden Democrats (SD), has been sharply at odds with the Swedish policy. Their view is that each country should have the right to decide on its own.

Brexit was seen as very negative for Sweden. The United Kingdom (UK) had for many years been a close partner of Sweden in the EU. The two countries had shared views on several issues, such as the necessity of free trade and the damaging effects of protectionist tendencies in the EU. They both saw a need for a firm attitude to Russia’s new aggressive policy and they both preferred the EU’s defence policy to remain intergovernmental. Hans Dahlgren, State Secretary, declared in early 2016 that Sweden had a strong interest in continued British membership, but this had to be under the condition of full respect for the basic values of the Union, such as free movement. All the other parties except for the Sweden Democrats were of the same view. After the referendum, which was deplored by the other parties, a member of the SD declared that he welcomed the outcome and hoped that the British example would be followed by others.¹⁶

Brexit contributed greatly to the new Global Strategy, the fast development of the security and defence policy of the EU, starting in 2016. None of this was problematic for Sweden, which together with all the other EU Member States voted for it. **Pesco** was one of the initiatives in the Global Strategy. Since Pesco was intergovernmental in nature it was compatible with Swedish non-alignment. Sweden was, however, initially critical about Pesco being set up outside the EU framework but appreciated the fact that it was based on the German preference for inviting all EU members rather than the French preference to only include a few. As Sweden and most other EU states joined Pesco in December 2017, all the parties except the Sweden Democrats and the Left Party agreed. The argument of the two parties was that this was a step towards further militarisation of the EU, which in addition would bring Sweden closer to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

Sweden is not a member of the **Banking Union**, but an enquiry was made in 2019 regarding the advantages, disadvantages and risks associated with participating in it or remaining outside. The crucial

¹⁵ *Vi har nu en finanskris, och en fördjupning sker mellan eurozonens länder. Beslutet att vi ska ha en annan valuta innebär en begränsning av möjligheterna att gå in i kärnan av olika delar när samarbetet fördjupas. Regeringen tyckte att det är bättre att vara ärlig gentemot Sveriges riksdag. Vi kan inte automatiskt säga att vi i varje del är med i en fördjupning som delvis bygger på att eurozonen skapar sig en egen grund för att kunna verka. Eurozonens 17 stats- och regeringschefer har numera egna toppmöten. De har enats om att de ska ha egen fiskal kapacitet. De har en gemensam krishanteringsfond som kallas ESM. I alla delar står Sverige utanför, och jag har inte heller framfört något önskemål om att delta. Därför tyckte jag att det var korrekt att samlat för regeringen göra en justering i beskrivningen av målformuleringen. Detta följer av folkomröstningsresultatet 2003.*

¹⁶ Hans Dahlgren, Committee on European Union Affairs, 2015/16:26, 12 February 2016 and Pavel Gamov (SD), Committee on European Union Affairs 2015/16:53, 8 July 2016.

issue was whether Sweden could participate in the Banking Union on terms that were equivalent to those of the eurozone states.¹⁷

The Social Chapter. President Juncker called for a European pillar of social rights in his State of the Union Address in September 2017. The Swedish Social Democratic Prime Minister, Stefan Löfven, was much in favour of this, which led to the two of them hosting the European Summit in Gothenburg in November 2017. On this occasion, President Juncker proclaimed the European pillar of social rights. Whereas the Social Democrats supported the social pillar, members of the Alliance parties were largely negative, fearing that Sweden would partly lose control of its social policy. In addition, also representatives of the Left Party and the Sweden Democrats declared that they were against it.¹⁸

Future of Europe. Issues related to the future of Europe became more topical in the context of Brexit and the meeting in Bratislava in 2016. The Juncker initiative of 2017 led to much discussion in the Swedish Committee on European Union Affairs and its five scenarios were called a good starting point. It was, however, obvious from the discussion that the Swedish interest lay in the policies rather than the structure of the EU. As Prime Minister Löfven stated, this was not the time to establish new structural forms but to deliver and to stick together. One of the ways in which the EU could preserve cohesion was to allow flexibility for countries to choose which forms of co-operation they wanted to be part of.¹⁹

4. Conclusion

As has been shown in this report, the Swedish governments in power between 2004 and 2020 had very similar views on DI-related issues. This was also very much the case of the eight political parties with the exception of the Left Party and the Sweden Democrats (neither of which were part of a government coalition). Their issues of disagreement were the euro (seeking an opt-out), defence (being negative about increased co-operation within the EU), the Social chapter and the FTT (with the Left Party being positive). As for the other parties, the social pillar did not meet full endorsement. The euro was not a main subject for political discussion, probably since the parties (except for the Liberals) were divided on this issue.

Differentiated co-operation was not dealt with as a single issue. While on the whole it met little interest in Sweden, the various cases of it were met with different reactions. A multi-speed Europe (see Table 3), was in the best case seen as neutral. Most comments were, however, negative, fearing that it would lead to diminished cohesion within the EU. Enhanced co-operation and opt-outs were instead sometimes seen as useful ways for some countries to deepen their co-operation while others that were not interested could abstain from participating. The positive effect could, however, only be obtained under the condition that those not participating were not affected negatively. For Sweden, seeing the euro as part of enhanced co-operation, this was the case if further deepened co-operation became politicised. Examples of opt-outs that were seen by Sweden as negative concern areas were climate change, fisheries, asylum and migration policy etc.

A quotation from Prime Minister Löfven's Future of Europe (citizen) speech in 2017 can be seen as representative of the Swedish conditional support for differentiated integration:

“[...] having different forms of co-operation on some issues is not so strange. Schengen and the euro are two examples of how this is already the case today. And will be so in the future as well. But there is an apprehension that we are in the process of creating different types of membership: an ‘A team’ and a ‘B team,’ if you will. This apprehension creates a fear of divisions in the EU. It is a concern that we must take seriously. Those of us who choose to remain outside areas of our co-

¹⁷ *Sverige och bankunionen*. English summary of SOU 2019:52. Betänkande av Utredningen om ett eventuellt svenskt deltagande i Europeiska bankunionen. Swedish government Inquiries, Stockholm 2019.

¹⁸ Committee on European Union Affairs 2017/18:15, 8 December 2017.

¹⁹ Stefan Löfven, Committee on European Union Affairs, 2017/18:6, 18 October 2017.

operation must demonstrate that we are nonetheless constructive and engaged. Those participating in the areas of co-operation, such as the euro area, must show consideration for us all.”²⁰

Appendices

Appendix 1 Overview of documents

Category of document	Time period	Details
1. Government programmes	2004-2020	2006, 2010, 2014, 2019
2. First speeches (and parliamentary debates)	2004-2020	The first speech held in parliament after each election and the following debate: 11 October 2006, 4 November 2010, 8 October 2014 and 30 January 2019
3. European Council presidency speeches a. in the national parliament b. in the European Parliament	2004-2020	23 June 2009 Swedish parliamentary protocol 15 July 2009, European Parliament
4. Future of Europe speeches (and parliamentary debates) a. in the European Parliament b. for citizen consultation	2017-2020	PM speech in the European Parliament, 3 April 2019 PM Speech on citizen consultation, 26 October 2017
5. Prime Minister European Council Statements	2004-2020	All pre- and post-Council statements 2004-2020: 180 documents
6. Parliamentary (committee) debates	2008-2020	All discussion protocols of the Committee on EU Affairs, and various other important parliamentary and other documents.

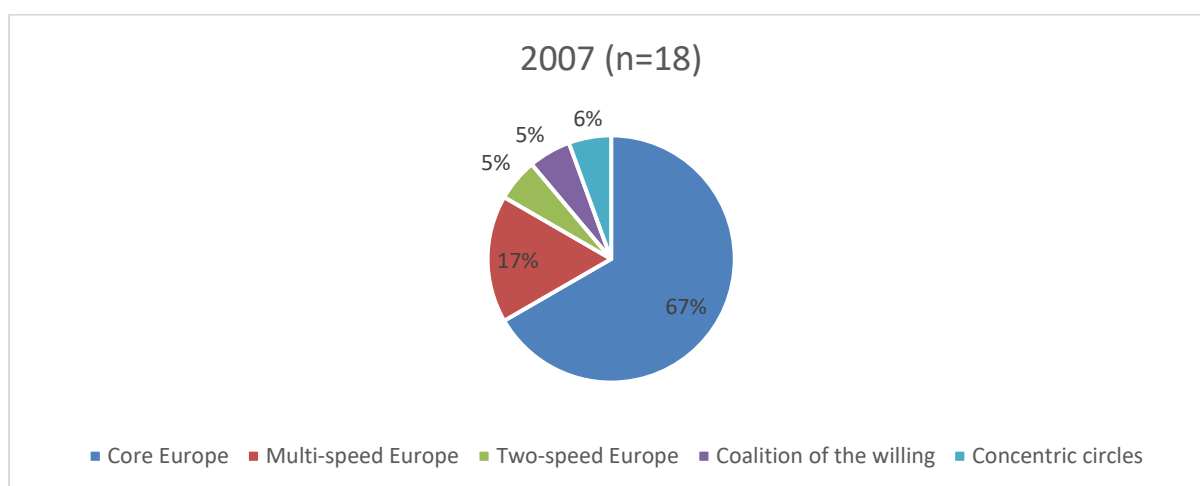
²⁰ “Our Europe – Our Shared Responsibility,” Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at Uppsala University, 26 October 2017.

Appendix 2 Key words in English and Swedish

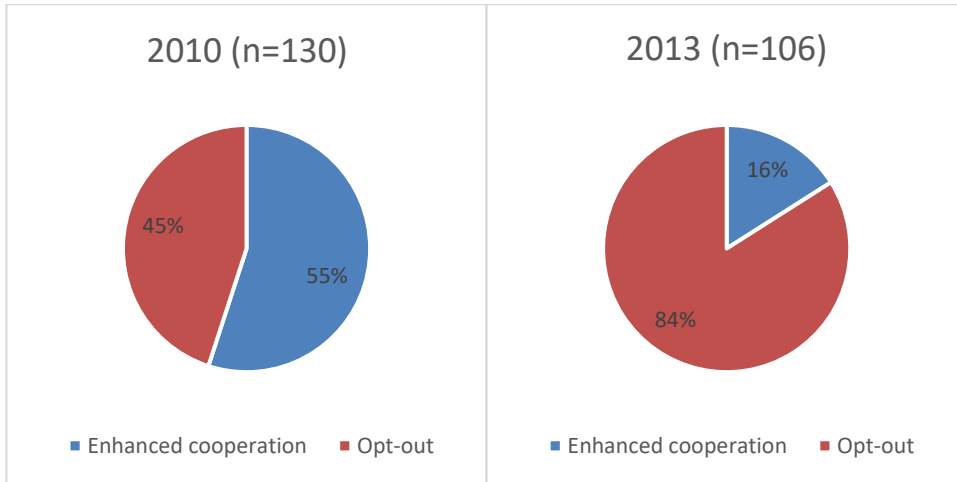
Key word	Swedish equivalent	Comment
DI models (conceptual key words)		
Differentiated integration	Differentierad integration	
Coalition of the willing	Koalition av villiga	
Two-speed Europe	Europa i två hastigheter	
Multi-speed Europa	Europa i flera hastigheter	
Variable geometry	Variabel geometri	
Core Europe	Kärn-Europa	Usually only core is used
Two-tier Europe	Två nivåer av samarbete	Difficult expression, seldom used
Concentric circles	Koncentriska cirklar	
À la carte	À la carte	
(Future of Europe)	Europas framtid, EU's framtid	
DI mechanisms		
Enhanced co-operation	Fördjupat samarbete (deepened) or förstärkt (strengthened) samarbete	Other expressions are also used, usually some form of deepening
Opt out	Undantag	This is also the common word for exception
DI instances – enhanced co-operation		
Pesco	Pesco or Det permanenta strukturerade samarbetet	
Rome III	Rome III/Internationella pars skilsmässoregler	
Unitary patent	Enhetligt patent	
Matrimonial property Regimes	Makars och sambors förmögensförhållanden	
Financial transaction tax	Skatt på finansiella transaktioner/FTT	
European Public Prosecutor	Europeisk åklagare/EPPO	
DI instances – opt-out policy fields		
Schengen	Schengen	
Economic and Monetary Union	Ekonomiska och monetära unionen (EMU)	

Security and defence Policy	Säkerhets- och försvarspolitik	
Area of Freedom Security and Justice	Området med frihet, säkerhet och rättvisa	
Charter of Fundamental Rights	Stadgan om de grundläggande rättigheterna	
Social Charter	Sociala stadgan	
DI instances – inter se agreements		
Prüm Convention	Prümkonventionen	
European Stability Mechanism	Europeiska stabilitetsmekanismen/ESM	
Fiscal Compact	Finanspakten/Fiscal Compact	
Single Resolution Mechanism	Resolutionsmekanismen	
Unified Patent Court	Enhetliga patentdomstolen	
DI instances – external agreements		
European Economic Area	Europeiska Ekonomiska Samarbetsområdet/EES	
Customs Union + Turkey	Tullunion + Turkiet	
Eastern Partnership	Östliga partnerskapet	
Euromed	Euromed	

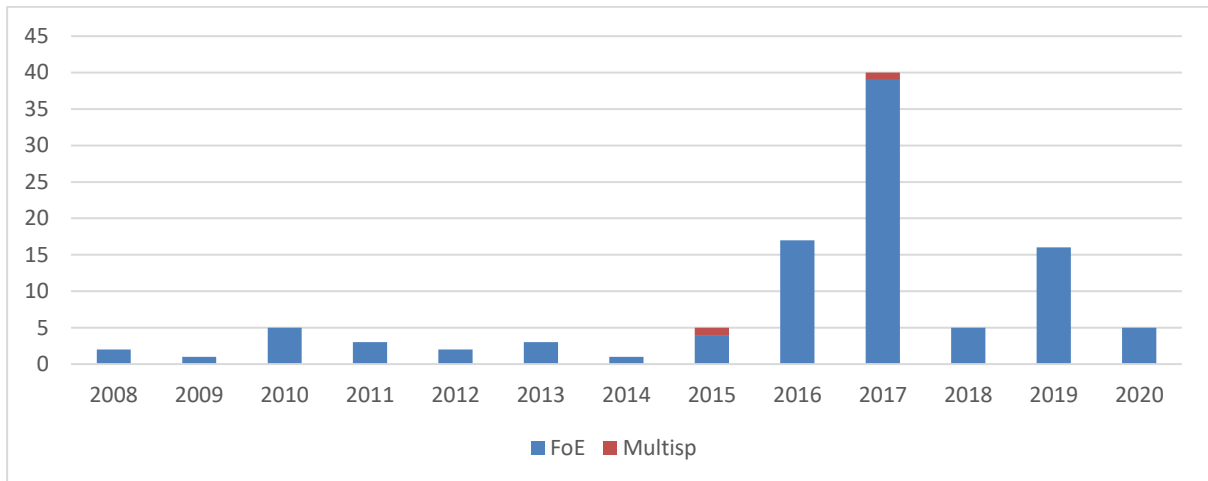
Appendix 3 Breakdown of conceptual key words in 2007



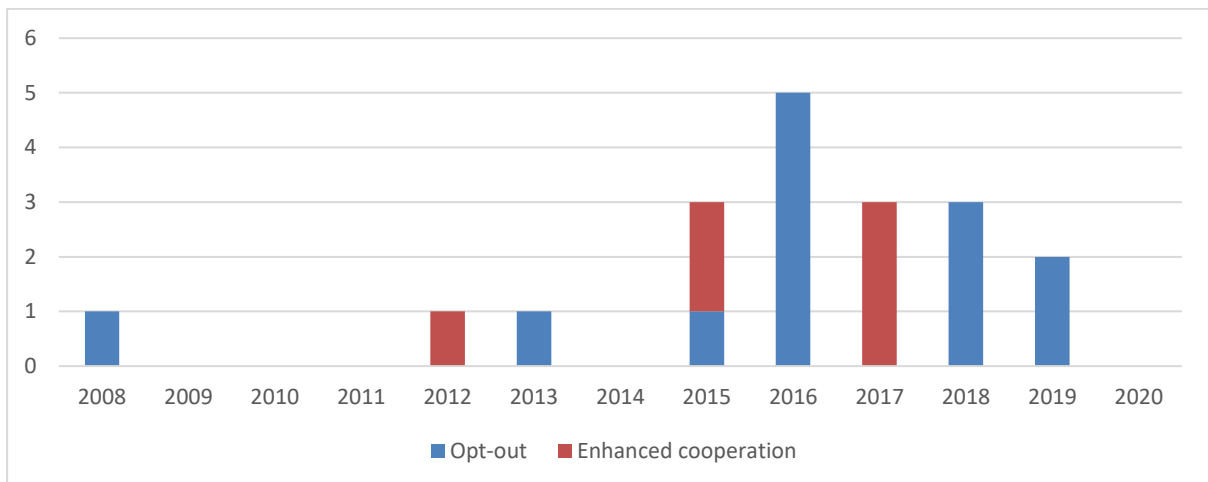
Appendix 4 The salience of DI mechanisms in parliamentary debates in 2010 and 2013



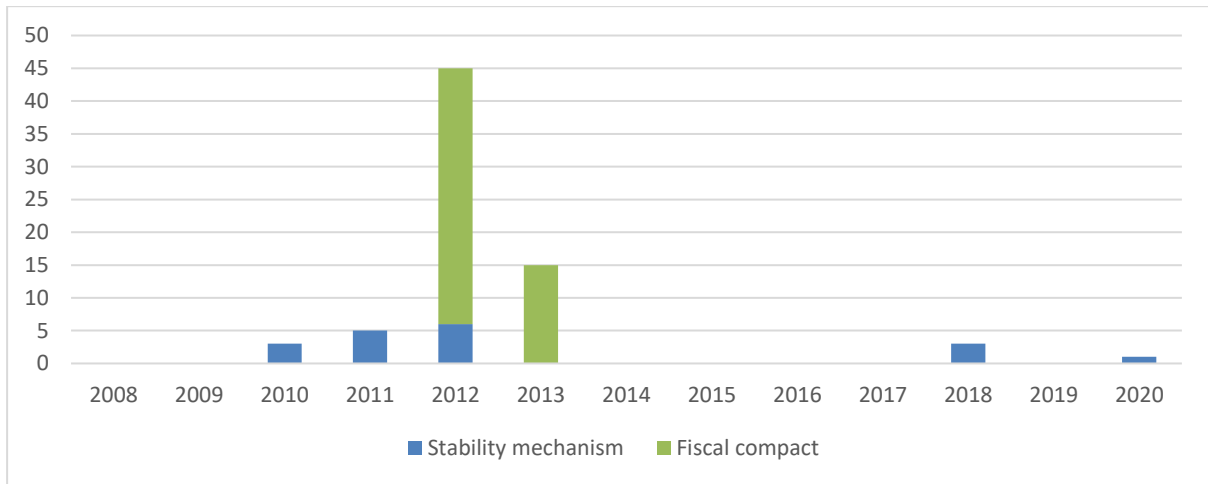
Appendix 5 The salience of MI models + future of Europe in European Council statements



Appendix 6 The salience of DI mechanisms in European Council statements



Appendix 7 The salience of instances of inter se agreements in European Council statements



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