

Bild 1 – Försättsbild www.SE2009.eu

Bild 2 – Name and title or presentation

Colleagues and distinguished guests. It is a pleasure to be here today.

I am here to talk about the Swedish presidency and the development of a European knowledge society.

But firstly I would like to briefly touch upon the Swedish innovation strategy, and the work that all of you are doing here.

Bild 3 – Innovation strategy

Last year the Swedish Riksdag passed a bill on an Innovation Strategy for the years 2009-2012.

The strategy includes an increase in funding of research on ICT and mobile communications with 125 Million Swedish Krona, about 11.5 million Euro.

You can see that our priorities all relate to electronic communications.

It is important that research communities in Sweden and Europe, pursue many strands of research.

The research perspective you are promoting here, with user involvement and living labs, is in touch with the times and promotes user involvement and a user centered perspective.

The knowledge society relies to a great extent on IT, and the Internet.
But the main message is that it is not the technologies that will make a difference to society, it is the users that will make a difference.

Many of us think of these technologies as key to face the challenges of today:

- Reduction of CO₂-emissions, and
- Economic recovery and the creation of jobs

What you have done here today is to shoulder a responsibility and respond to these challenges. You deserve credit for it.

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Bild 4 The overall objectives for the Swedish Presidency

I would like to show you how these challenges are addressed by the Swedish presidency.

The climate issue is the most important challenge of our time, and the EU has a leading role in the fight against climate change.

That is why we want to reach a global agreement on climate change in December in Copenhagen.

At the same time, in the economic downturn, there is a need to strengthen the European economy. We need to reap the benefits of globalization and restore functioning financial markets.

Europe needs a revitalised strategy for sustainable growth and prosperity that corresponds to the challenges ahead.

Bild 5 Creating an Eco efficient economy

Developing an eco efficient economy is the overall theme for the presidency.

There is a need to strengthen competitiveness and at the same time address the environmental perspective.

There is no conflict between economic growth and being careful about the environment.

In this area, ICT has much to offer. One obvious aspect is how to have energy efficient computers and gadgets.

But more importantly, ICT can empower us to reduce our energy consumption on a wider scale, by transporting goods more efficient or by improving logistics and by substituting videoconferencing for travel.

Different policy areas must cooperate better to achieve smart solutions. Sweden has managed to cut the CO₂ emissions by 9 percent since 1990. This has been done while maintaining a good economic growth rate. Our ambition is to cut the CO₂ emissions by 40 percent by the year 2020.

ICT and the climate challenge are clearly linked. That is why the meeting in Copenhagen is of utmost importance - also for us in the ICT sphere.

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Bild 6 Economic recovery through ICT

Analysis have shown that on a macro-level, as much as 40 per cent of the economic growth between 1995-2005 was due to ICT. It is necessary and important to recognize what ICT can offer in terms of economic recovery.

The mobile industry expect to invest 800 billion dollars globally during the next five years. Of these, as much as 550 billion dollars could be spent on mobile broadband.

But there are areas such as health and other government services where the use of ICT could be greatly improved.

The fact that we know that there is still much to be done is a good thing. It bears the promise of future increases in efficiency, productivity and economic growth.

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I have mentioned how information technology, centering around the Internet, bears promises for growth and for greening.

More and more aspects of work and everyday life are migrating to the Internet. Citizens communicate with each other every day and take part in the public debate. We need access to government services, to shopping and financial services. Citizens choose the Internet for their media and entertainment consumption. This trend will continue.

What can we as policy-makers and law-makers do to promote the transformation? This is a topic close to my heart.

I have mentioned some examples to put ICT in a broader perspective for the priorities during the Swedish presidency.

We have two main priorities:

Firstly, we need a common future oriented European ICT-policy. The policy-initiative i2010 is coming to an end and must be renewed.

Bild 7 Visby Agenda

Our aim is to arrive at a common program for the future ICT-policy in the EU.

We will host a high-level conference on future ICT policy in November in Visby. The Conference is called *Visby Agenda -Creating Impact for an eUnion 2015*.

In preparation of the conference, we have commissioned a report which will form the basis of the discussions.

The report will be made public in September. It is our hope that the findings of the report will be broadly and publicly discussed.

I invite you to participate in this debate in September.

Bild 8 Baltic Sea Strategy

A second important issue on the Swedish presidency agenda will be managing the radio spectrum that can be available for new uses as a result of the switch-over from analogue to digital TV; known as the Digital Dividend.

In Sweden we decided in December 2007 to use the band (790-862 MHz) for electronic communication services.

By working in a constructive way with all stakeholders, we could find a solution where all were better off. With new services becoming available more music, movies and TV-shows will be consumed by customers.

Efficient use and easier access to spectrum is essential to give people the opportunity to take an active part in the information society.

I would like to stress the added With a harmonized approach, we can achieve great results and create a common environment for growth and innovation.

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Bild 9 Thank you

In summary;

The importance of communications and the Internet is already significant and the potential is huge. The examples I have mentioned shows the potential to develop an eco- efficient economy. From a democratic point of view it is also vital that all citizens have access and can use the new services.

We should remind ourselves that we are still only about fifteen years into the life of the Internet as a widely used technology.

We are still at the very beginning of an era that will stretch over the coming decades.

We have many challenges a head of us but also a unique chance to grasp the future.

Thank you for your attention!