



OECD High-Level Parliamentary Seminar

17-18 June 2013

The Swedish Parliament

Stockholm, Sweden

From Economic Turbulence to Inclusive Growth: Lessons from the Nordic Model?

Draft programme

Monday, 17 June 2013

- Chairs: **Anthony Gooch**, Director, Public Affairs and Communications Directorate, OECD
Anna Kinberg Batra, Chair, Committee on Finance, Swedish Parliament
Fredrik Olovsson, Vice Chair, Committee on Finance, Swedish Parliament
- 12:00 – 13:15 **Welcome Lunch**, Sammanbindningsbanan, The Riksdag building, Right Wing
- 13:15 – 13:30 **Welcome**, Förstakammarsalen
Anthony Gooch, Director, Public Affairs and Communications Directorate, OECD
Anna Kinberg Batra, Chair, Committee on Finance, Swedish Parliament
- 13:30 – 15:00 **Promoting Inclusive Growth**
Andreas Bergh, Associate Professor, Lund University and Research Institute of Industrial Economics
Yves Leterme, Deputy Secretary-General, OECD
Åsa Löfström, Associate Professor, Umeå School of Business and Economics, Umeå University
More than 200 million people are out of work worldwide and poverty continues to affect millions more; in many countries, the gap between rich and poor is widening, youth unemployment is soaring, and access to basic services remains a challenge for many. The global community is calling for change, for solutions that foster economic growth in a more inclusive manner, with a more equally shared "growth dividend" and less pronounced gaps between the rich and the poor – not only in terms of income, but also in terms of other dimensions that matter for people. Finding alternative growth models that are more inclusive and sustainable has become a concern in public policy circles. The hesitant recovery and the persistent social crisis demand decisive policy action. The OECD is developing a new vision for inclusive growth that combines strong economic growth with improvements in living standards and outcomes that matter for people's quality of life (e.g. good health, jobs and skills, clean environment, community support). Part of this exercise is to seek a common understanding of the main elements which comprise inclusive growth and the conditions under which growth can be inclusive. This will allow for the relevant policies and institutions to be put in place to pave a way forward that is both pro-growth and pro-people.
- 15:00 – 15:30 **Coffee break**
- 15:30 – 17:00 **Workshop: How Parliaments work with OECD and other experts**
Members of Parliament are in constant need of independent and unbiased data, analysis and policy advice to inform their work. International organisations, think tanks, universities, and other bodies, such as independent fiscal councils, can provide this expertise. The OECD can inform parliamentary debates by sharing data, comparative information and

experience, including in identifying best practices and assessing regulatory impact. But how do MPs and their staff actually work with these experts? How can they ensure they stay informed and make best use of the wealth of information available? This workshop will be an opportunity for MPs and staffers to share experiences and best practices of how MPs can work with the OECD and other experts. One example from the Swedish Parliament is the creation of an “OECD group” to follow the work of the organisation where all committees are represented. In Chile, the OECD worked with the Chamber of Representatives to establish a Department for Law Evaluation, taking advantage of OECD expertise to support legislative bodies in a practical way.

17:00 – 18:00

How’s Life? Evidence from the Better Life Index

Anthony Gooch, Director, Public Affairs and Communications Directorate, OECD

In 2011, the OECD created the Better Life Index – an interactive tool that allows individuals to compare well-being across countries, based on 11 topics identified as essential to the quality of life. The digital platform allows individuals to put different weights on each topic, and thus decide for themselves how to measure well-being. The resulting visualisation provides a unique view of how countries perform according to the priorities individuals themselves set. The aim of this index is to involve citizens in the debate on societal progress; the feedback they provide offers a fresh perspective from which to evaluate public policy and its implementation. It empowers the public by improving their understanding of policy-making and can generate support for needed policy measures. But, what do the results of the past two years tell us? What are the preferences of citizens in the Nordic countries and how does this differ from the rest of the world?

18:00 – 19:00

Guided tour of the Old Town, followed by boat to Djurgården island

20:00

Dinner

Gustavianska Våningen, Skansen, Djurgården island

Tuesday, 18 June 2013

08:30 – 09:00

Arrival of participants and morning coffee

09:00 – 10:30

Lessons from the Nordic Model

Lennart Erixon, Professor, Stockholm University

Peter Norman, Minister for Financial Markets, Sweden

Paul van den Noord, Economic Counsellor to the Chief Economist, Economics Department, OECD

The Nordic countries (generally referring to Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) are often regarded as a benchmark, having succeeded better than other countries in combining economic efficiency and growth with a peaceful labour market, a fair distribution of income and social cohesion. Although critics have questioned the sustainability of this success, not least due to the challenges of globalisation, the models of development adopted by the Nordics have proven to be relatively resilient in the face of the global economic and financial crisis. The model is pointed to as a source of inspiration for other people in their search for a better social and economic system. On the other hand, many observers around the world are amazed that “the bumble-bee can fly” – that the Nordic economies can prosper and grow in spite of the presumably weak economic incentives associated with high tax wedges, a generous social security system and an egalitarian distribution of income.

10:30 – 11:00

Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:30

Case study: Working with Independent Fiscal Institutions

Lars Calmfors, Professor of International Economics, Institute for International Economic Studies, Stockholm University and former Chair of the Swedish Fiscal Policy Council

Teodora Cardoso, Chair, Portuguese Public Finance Council

Jean-Philippe Cotis, Chief Counsellor, Cour des Comptes (Court of Auditors), France (TBC)

Mario Marcel, Deputy Director, Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, OECD

Although relatively few and novel worldwide, examples of independent fiscal institutions (fiscal councils and parliamentary budget offices) have existed for several decades in countries like the Netherlands, Belgium, and the United States. Today, a clear trend towards establishing fiscal councils is evident in OECD member countries, with governments, academics and regional and international bodies looking to them (often in concert with new or strengthened fiscal rules) to reinforce fiscal governance and to combat deficits and unsustainable debt. Moreover, these actors recognise the potential of such bodies

to reduce information asymmetries, promote transparency and accountability, and to raise the quality of public debate on fiscal policy. The OECD's Network of Parliamentary Budget Officials and Independent Fiscal Institutions has identified a set of common values among these highly diverse institutions – independence, non-partisanship, transparency, and accountability, while demonstrating technical competence and producing work of the highest quality that stands up to public scrutiny – that have formed the basis for the network to develop a set of first OECD Principles for Independent Fiscal Institutions. Among the themes covered in the Principles is fiscal councils' relationship with the legislature. Of particular importance is the fiscal council's contribution, through their work and appearance before relevant legislative committees, to legislative debate on the budget and fiscal policy. This session explores how parliaments can best work with and learn from fiscal councils.

12:30 – 13:00

Conclusions

13:00 – 14:00

Closing Lunch, Sammanbindningsbanan, The Riksdag building, Right Wing