

OPINION "Swedish highly specialised healthcare could become a new and successful export sector", writes Ella Bohlin, the Christian Democrats' top candidate in the EU elections.



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It has long been possible to get healthcare and even dental care in other EU member states.

Unfortunately, this freedom does not work completely. Citizens still wait far too long for healthcare and are hindered in receiving the treatment they have a right to by complex bureaucracy. EU politicians have not helped facilitate the mobility of patients within Europe. It is mainly Social Democrats over the whole of the EU that have delayed the process.

It is, however, pleasing to see that just two weeks ago the European Parliament took a crucial decision that will lead to better, and more accessible, healthcare for all EU citizens. The decision implies, in short, that advance decisions from the social insurance office, will no longer be necessary. Doctors' judgements and the patient's needs and medical situation will be the determining factors when it comes to receiving healthcare.

The Christian Democrats stand for patient power. To meet healthcare needs we feel that the EU needs open Europe-wide healthcare choice, building on common guidelines and with increased comfort and security for the patient. Free healthcare choice opens up new possibilities for the Swedish healthcare service to sell its services to all EU citizens. Swedish healthcare is of high medical quality, so why shouldn't we Swedes proudly and willingly export it? Increased patient mobility has, as we Christian Democrats see it, only positive effects. Simplified rules in the seeking of healthcare in other EU countries will also put pressure on the county council

“EU needs open Europe-wide healthcare choice”

Written by Ella Bohlin

Monday, 01 June 2009 06:07 - Last Updated Monday, 01 June 2009 06:32

themselves to shorten queues and better the service the patient receives within Sweden. Patient mobility is a factor ensuring that healthcare's quality and security is guaranteed in the whole of the EU and it additionally promotes working relationships between healthcare systems.

The Swedish healthcare service is, on the international stage, of high medical quality. This is reinforced by the high levels of competence of its practitioners. We Christian Democrats believe that highly specialised healthcare could become a new and successful export sector. It is noticeable that the Social Democrats and other left-wing parties seem to be steered by a fear that Europe's citizens would be able to compare other countries' healthcare systems. The question has become one of ideology.

To differentiate from the socialist block, we want to work for healthcare choice in Europe, export our healthcare to other EU countries and make it easier for those that work so that Sweden can become one of the most important players in the European welfare market. Healthcare can be used more efficiently in the future through specialisation and through the coordination of European healthcare systems.

A patient-centered system, such as the one we advocate, also means that we who live in Sweden have the right to healthcare in other countries, for example, Germany and France. That could be because of a gap in the regional county council's services, or due to long waiting lists. If you can't get healthcare here in Sweden on time you should, of course, be entitled to look for care in a hospital in another EU state.

The responsibility for healthcare should still rest with each and every EU member state even with Europe-wide healthcare choice.

The Christian Democrats do not want to create common healthcare policy with funding at the EU level. Most people, even with the option of open healthcare choice in Europe, will probably want to have treatment as near to home as possible, but those who want healthcare somewhere else in the EU should not be hindered from taking it.

Those who give the care, or where it is offered, have less importance than that you, as the patient, should receive the care you need, and on time. That is classified, as publicly financed care in Sweden should have the opportunity to receive reimbursement in the same way within

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the whole of the EU. Such an international exchange would benefit both the patient and the healthcare profession itself. I want to give the socialist parties a match: the Christian Democrats swap the waiting room with the treatment room, anxiety with security. This is why it makes a difference how you vote in the European elections on 7th. June. The vote in Europe can also be a healthcare vote!

Ella Bohlin

The Christian Democrats' top candidate in the EU elections.