

Of course we're going to mine our own uranium

LEADER. If one were to describe the Swedish energy policy of recent decades in one word, it would be self-harm. Time and time again, decisions are made that everyone knows are not good for us, but which, for ideological or ill-considered reasons, are pushed through anyway. Like the red-green invention from 2018 to ban uranium mines.

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Text



Sweden is home to a quarter of Europe's known uranium deposits. It is an asset that it must be legal to take advantage of. **Photo:** Samuel Steén/TT

The background to the decision was more or less this. The Social Democrats and the Green Party did not want Sweden to have any reactors and therefore did not believe that we needed any fuel for them. As a result, there was no longer any need for uranium mining. A political decision-making based on a childish imaginary world that had no basis in reality.

No matter how much you want to, you can't wish for nuclear power, and despite the fact that the previous government managed to shut down several reactors, there are still six of them. Last year, this nuclear power accounted for almost a third of Sweden's electricity supply. A supply that is impossible if the reactors do not get fuel.

The fact is that we could have been self-sufficient in this nuclear fuel. Sweden is home to a quarter of Europe's known uranium deposits. The Swedish resources of the metal correspond to 20,000 tonnes. This is ten times more than the annual consumption of the Swedish reactors. Instead, we are currently importing uranium from Canada, Australia, Namibia and Kazakhstan. This trade is not a problem in substance, other than that it may

be smart to have national access to a critical raw material, but it exposes the hypocrisy of the Swedish legislation.

"The uranium obtained from other extraction must be treated as garbage by law. So much for circularity."

The Red-Greens even went so far as to ban the extraction of uranium as a by-product, contrary to the original investigation. The uranium that is still produced from the extraction of other metals must therefore be treated as waste by law. So much for circularity.

Now, however, that is about to change. Recently, the government announced that they are appointing a fast-track inquiry into once again allowing uranium mining, a task that will be completed as early as this spring. It is not a day too soon, and a different approach would be impossible if we want to expand nuclear power at the same time.

The Swedish uranium deposits stretch from Skåne to the mountain range. Not all of them may be profitable to extract, new mines may not open everywhere, and perhaps it is only uranium as a by-product that will be recovered. But none of it should be forbidden.

