Dear all,

No one can have escaped the fact that two new research facilities, MAX IV and ESS, are currently under construction in Lund, but everyone is perhaps not aware of how enormous these investments are for a country like Sweden. Even an organic chemist like me is deeply impressed by the investments and the new possibilities that these facilities will offer to basic research. MAX IV and ESS will involve some real changes to Lund University, and as I have written before, we must utilise the opportunities they provide.

The area between MAX IV and ESS is a 17-hectare square, known as Science Village Scandinavia or SVS, and in this location there are plans for constructing the infrastructure required by the two facilities. It can be anything from laboratories to guestrooms for visiting researchers, from restaurants to instrument parks, and this is where major universities in Sweden plan on establishing themselves in order to make it easier for their researchers to use MAX IV and ESS. There are also plans to build premises for those industries that wish to establish themselves in the vicinity of the facilities, innovative activities and showrooms that can attract visitors. SVS is a joint-stock company, jointly owned by Lund Municipality, Region Skåne and Lund University, which all three have an interest in making sure that the investments in this city district called Brunnshög will provide the best possible results for the region, the city and basic research.

When thoroughly reviewing which research infrastructure is really needed to make optimal use of the opportunities offered by the facilities, you realise that it would cost too much and be difficult to establish it at SVS. However, much of what is needed is already in place at LU, and can be used jointly by LU, MAX IV and ESS, if there is will to do so. This is what needs to happen, and it automatically means that LU will become integrated with the two research facilities and that the three parties will become mutually dependent. For me this is a natural and healthy development, and I will do my best to promote it.

LU’s physical presence in the area can of course be discussed, but, in a sense, we already have operations there because MAX IV is part of LU. However, I believe that it is crucial to the success of the entire concept that any parts of LU and the facilities which need the other in close proximity relocate to this area. This I believe because the combination of MAX IV/SVS/ESS in the coming decades will affect Lund, Lund Municipality, Region Skåne and even Sweden in a major way. I’m sure that if we don’t jump on the bandwagon now, when we are in a position of choosing the location as well as the function of the premises that have not yet been built, we will deeply regret it in 10 years from now. Moving our operations would obviously be costly, and we all know how strained our finances are. However, we have a large agency capital that could be used. In all my years as dean I have argued how important it is to have a substantial agency capital, to be able to make major investments the day unique opportunities present themselves. I think it’s time for us to dare to take a big and exciting step.

Olov Sterner, Dean