

France could learn from Sweden reforms

By Anne Jensen

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From Ms Anne Jensen.

Sir, Wolfgang Munchau is absolutely right when arguing that Sweden's economic success is mostly due to how the country has adopted policies, and not just to the policies themselves ("Swedes show a dour Europe the way to reform", April 3).

In spite of having a strong social democratic culture, most Swedes recognise the virtues of market- oriented reform. In the 1990s the country's conservative government implemented a range of reforms that made Sweden what it is today, namely a country that combines a generous welfare state with growth rates that out-perform most of its fellow European Union members.

What these countries, and especially the French political elite, could learn from the Swedes ahead of their future attempts at reforming their sluggish economy, is how to sell a policy and how to get their people excited about reform.

After all, the new labour reform was meant to help young people find work, not to exclude them from the labour market. That they are now rioting in the streets rather than welcoming these changes is the fault of the misleaders, not the misled.

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