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Macroeconomic Effects of a Decline

in Housing Prices in Sweden*

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Abstract

Real housing prices in Sweden have roughly doubled the last 15 years. The rise in housing prices has

coincided with a rise in household debt, sparking debate about both the presence of financial

imbalances in the Swedish economy and the macroeconomic effects that a correction of these

imbalances would have. In this paper, we conduct a quantitative assessment of the macroeconomic

effects of a considerable decline in housing prices using a Bayesian VAR model. Results show that a

20 per cent drop in housing prices would lead to a recession-like impact on household consumption

and unemployment. The impact would be even greater if falling housing prices coincided with a global

economic downturn. This information should be useful to policymakers. If a fall in housing prices

were to materialise, more expansionary stabilization policies would be motivated in order to dampen

the effects on the real economy.

JEL Classification: C32, F43

Keywords: Bayesian VAR, House prices, Private consumption, Unemployment, Small open economy

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Page 1 of 24

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