

The 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Human Rights 75 Pledges

Pledge by the Government of Finland

28 November 2023

The Government of Finland, in its unwavering commitment to advancing human rights, presents this pledge to the United Nations, in honour of the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, outlining the following measures at national level to intensify its human rights efforts. This pledge reflects Finland's dedication to upholding the highest standards of human rights and the significance of every individual's dignity and the right to be free from discrimination.

Firstly, Finland is committed to intensifying the monitoring of the implementation of human rights. A society built on trust and good relations between population groups arises from the fact that everyone in Finland can trust that their rights and the principles of gender equality, equality before the law and non-discrimination will be respected and that they will be able to improve their own lives. As outlined in the Government statement to Parliament on promoting equality, gender equality and non-discrimination in Finnish society, issued on 31 August 2023, the Government of Finland pledges to annually review the decisions, conclusions and recommendations issued to Finland by international bodies monitoring human rights and decide on measures to be taken.

Secondly, central to this pledge is to create a new tool for systematic monitoring of the implementation of human rights by establishing a database of recommendations issued by the treaty monitoring bodies of the United Nations and the Council of Europe on the implementation of Finland's human rights obligations and also by other human rights mechanisms, including the Universal Periodic Review. By doing so, Finland seeks to ensure that these recommendations are not only well-documented but also readily accessible to policymakers, civil society, and the public at large. The database of recommendations supports the development of policies and law drafting and, in particular, the assessment of human rights impacts. In addition, the database creates a knowledge base for the ex post evaluation of legislation. The database of recommendations, to be maintained by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs on its website, is an accessible public online service that is open to everyone. Recommendations can be searched with search functions itemising by Conventions, treaty bodies and mechanisms and by keywords both thematically and by population and minority groups.



Thirdly, the pledge includes that during this Government term, the Government of Finland will take into use fundamental and human rights indicators. The development of these indicators has been inspired by the work done by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Constitutional Law Committee of Parliament of Finland has stressed the importance of developing human rights indicators in order to obtain reliable information on the trends concerning the realisation of fundamental and human rights. The indicators will provide a new instrument for monitoring fundamental and human rights in the short and the long term. They will serve as essential tools for measuring progress and identifying areas needing improvement in the realisation of rights in people's everyday lives. They will provide a clear, evidence-based framework to guide the Government's actions and policies in the realm of human rights, ensuring that efforts are knowledge-based, effective and targeted.

Fourthly, the Government of Finland will prepare Finland's fourth National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights during the ongoing Government term. The Constitutional Law Committee of Parliament of Finland has found that it is necessary for the systematic promotion of the realisation of fundamental and human rights to formulate a National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights for each Government term. The objective of the National Action Plan is to translate into concrete terms the obligation of public authorities to guarantee the observance of fundamental rights and human rights, as laid down in section 22 of the Constitution of Finland. The Government of Finland finds the adoption of the fourth National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights important for continuity. Its preparation will take into account the observations of the three previous Action Plans.

Fifthly and most importantly, the Government of Finland recognizes the vital role of civil society in the promotion and protection of human rights. As part of this pledge, there is a firm commitment to not just consult but also actively involve civil society in the development and implementation of human rights policies. This collaborative approach is aimed at creating a more inclusive and participatory process, one where diverse voices are heard and considered. In this regard, the Government

- has appointed for the term 2024-2027 the Advisory Board for International Human Rights consisting of representatives of all parliamentary groups, a representative of the Sámi Parliament as well as representatives of different civil society organisations engaged in human rights work. The task of the Advisory Board is to follow international human rights questions. It can issue statements on related matters that are of fundamental importance.



- will continue to organize civil society hearings on Finland's membership in the UN Human Rights Council 2022-2024, and to foster dialogue on the realization of Finland's human rights obligations and commitments by inviting civil society to provide input;
- prepares a strategy on civil society organisations and an implementation plan for it during the Government term. One of the aims of the strategy is to improve the interaction between the public authorities and the civil society.
- increases the openness and transparency of law drafting by making the monitoring of the full process more open. The Guidelines for Consultation in Law Drafting will be renewed in 2024.