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## **National report submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21\***

### **Finland**

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



## **I. Process for the preparation of the report**

1. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs drafted and coordinated Finland's fourth National Report for the Universal Periodic Review and finalised it jointly with other Ministries.
2. Drafting the report right after the publication of the third National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights<sup>1</sup> and the Government Report on Human Rights Policy<sup>2</sup> offered a fruitful continuation of the close dialogue with civil society on Finland's human rights situation. It also provided a prime opportunity to merge aspects covering developments both at a practical and policy level into one procedure—the National Action Plan having strengthened the monitoring of fundamental and human rights, and the Government Report having outlined the Government's policy on fundamental and human rights in international, European Union and national contexts.
3. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs presented an overview of the next UPR cycle to civil society organisations in an event organized by the Finnish League of Human Rights in September 2021, and sent an information note to authorities and civil society organisations an information note on Finland's next review along with a reminder of the call for stakeholders' input in December 2021.
4. A public hearing was organised online in May 2022 for civil society organisations to comment on the content of the national report as well as the level of implementation of the recommendations of the previous cycle.
5. Additionally in May 2022, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs circulated the draft report for comments to more than 140 recipients, including public authorities, the supreme overseers of legality and the special ombudspersons, the National Human Rights Institution, advisory boards, the Association of Finnish Municipalities, the Sámi Parliament, churches and religious congregations, and numerous civil society organisations. In addition, the draft was published online for a public consultation open to everyone. The draft was based on Finland's mid-term report submitted in 2019 and updated in autumn 2021.
6. Attention is called to the Universal Periodic Review and Finland's preparations for it through the social media and the website of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

## **II. Implementation of recommendations from the previous cycle**

### **Government's objectives to strengthen the fulfilment of human rights**

7. The Government has made the fulfilment and promotion of human rights one of the cornerstones of its programme. According to the Programme of Prime Minister Sanna Marin's Government (2019)<sup>3</sup>, to make sure that Finland can continue to be a safe and secure state governed by the rule of law, the Government must ensure that fundamental and human rights and legal protection are implemented equitably.
8. Most of the challenges identified in the previous national report (equal pay, prevention of exclusion, services for the elderly, migrants' situation, the indigenous Sámi people's status, and the status and rights of sexual and gender minorities) have a corresponding set of actions identified in the Government Programme. It also includes actions to further enhance the areas identified as achievements in Finnish society.

### **Third National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights**

9. The third National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights, covering the period 2020–2023, was adopted as a government resolution in June 2021. During the preparation of the Action Plan, there was broad cooperation with stakeholders, and special consideration was given to the Government Programme and the recommendations issued to Finland by the Treaty Bodies.

10. Building on the experiences gained from the previous action plans, the focus was on developing the monitoring of fundamental and human rights. In this regard, the measures include *inter alia* developing fundamental and human rights research and data collection, developing fundamental and human rights impact assessments, and enhancing the monitoring of recommendations from the Treaty Bodies. Furthermore, fundamental and human rights indicators have been developed as a key part of the Action Plan providing a new tool for monitoring fundamental and human rights in the short and long term. Resources have been allocated to create a website providing interactive and up-to-date information of the indicators.

11. The implementation of the Action Plan will be evaluated when the next electoral term begins.

### **Government Report on Human Rights Policy**

12. The Government Report on Human Rights Policy was adopted as a government resolution in December 2021. It is a result of two years' work and a wide public consultation.

13. The Report outlines the Government's long-term policy on fundamental and human rights in international, European Union and national contexts. According to the Report, Finland defends the universal and legally binding nature of human rights and promotes fundamental and human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

14. The Report describes and presents actions that the public authorities use to guarantee the fulfilment of fundamental and human rights in Finland and illustrates Finland's priorities in global forums. It stresses the importance of strengthening non-discrimination, equality and participatory rights, and emphasises the rights of women, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, sexual and gender minorities and, in European forums, the rights of the Roma. Two more recent themes are also presented – digitalisation and electronic communications, and environment and sustainability.

### **New human rights structures**

15. The Government is pleased that recently the Finnish institutional framework has been further expanded with an Ombudsperson for the Elderly,<sup>4</sup> a special rapporteur on violence against women, and with the Rule of Law Centre<sup>5</sup> operating within the University of Helsinki.

### **Sustainable development goals**

16. The Government acknowledges the interlinkages between human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals. The state of sustainable development in Finland is monitored annually. Åland's Statistic Office analyses the development on its part.

17. According to the 2020 State of Sustainable Development report,<sup>6</sup> summarising the progress made from 2016 to 2020, Finland has almost reached the goals related to social and economic sustainability. Key challenges are related to consumption and production patterns, climate action and the state of biodiversity. Furthermore, obesity is an increasing problem, and gender equality challenges remain. Finland bears global responsibility by contributing to international crisis management, but it has not reached the target level set for the official development assistance. Nevertheless, Finland's commitment has yielded tangible results, and it has been ranked at the top of international sustainable development comparisons.<sup>7</sup>

### **Implementation of recommendations from the previous cycle**

18. Of the 153 recommendations of the third UPR round, Finland accepted entirely or partly 120 and noted 33. Finland has also given due consideration to the areas raised by the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the time in his letter of 23 October 2017. In 2019, Finland assessed the implementation of the recommendations comprehensively and

submitted a voluntary interim implementation report to the Human Rights Council. A second assessment was made nationally in autumn 2021.

19. The implementation of the entirely or partly accepted recommendations has produced progress in many respects. With a wide array of actions to make progress, most recommendations have been implemented. However, the Government underlines that this does not mean there would not be room for improvement. Furthermore, reaching the set goals necessitates systematic implementation and monitoring work.

20. Nonetheless, the Government recognises that in many fields, such as ending domestic violence and discrimination, further work is needed. Furthermore, the question of what level of funding can be considered adequate resourcing is a perpetual dilemma. Securing such resources over government terms is also of key importance as many strategies and plans of actions last several years. Further attention is also needed in continuously monitoring the implementation of international recommendations and in ensuring that authorities' actions are preventive and not just reactive. Lastly, reducing the length of court proceedings is an important goal so that access to effective remedies can be guaranteed.

## **Acceptance of international norms, cooperation with Treaty Bodies, and follow-up to the UPR**

### **Full implementation of recommendations**

21. While Finland has already ratified nearly all core human rights treaties of the UN and the Council of Europe, the Government has considered its possibilities to take further actions.<sup>8</sup> The Government is pleased to note that Finnish citizens are quite well aware of the international protection of human rights and appreciate them. According to a study by the Ministry of Justice, 89% had heard of the European Convention on Human Rights and 63% of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and 95% thought that human rights are important when developing a fairer Finnish society.<sup>9</sup>

22. Finland has always given great weight to the work of Treaty Bodies as an integral part of the human rights system. When nominating national candidates to their elections, Finland emphasises independence and impartiality, recognized competence in the relevant field of human rights, availability to attend the sessions of the Committee in question and balanced gender representation. In the UN, Finland has not nominated national candidates for the Treaty Bodies' elections since 2012. However, national candidates for the Council of Europe's monitoring bodies are selected through a public call. The selection process is open and merit-based. A similar procedure would be used for the UN Bodies, too.<sup>10</sup>

23. The Government is committed to implementing the accepted recommendations of previous cycles. The Government notes that the purpose of implementing the recommendations is to further enhance Finland's human rights situation. The Government hopes that the indicator work of the third National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights in 2021 and the future interactive website tracking the progress made can develop into a future best practice.<sup>11</sup>

### **Partial implementation of recommendations**

24. According to the Programme of Prime Minister Sanna Marin's Government, the preconditions for the ratification of ILO Convention No 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries will be assessed. The Sámi Parliament will be engaged in this process, and other Sámi organisations contribute to the work.<sup>12</sup>

25. The Government is in the midst of ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. The government proposal was issued to Parliament in June 2022.<sup>13</sup>

26. Finland's work to promote the responsibility to protect is mostly preventive. In 2020, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs drafted a report<sup>14</sup> on the Responsibility to Protect policy adopted by Finland.<sup>15</sup>

## Pending recommendations

27. The Government has not found any new reasons to change its view regarding the reservation to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families or the ratification of the Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity. For example, since Finland is a State Party the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1 July 2002, the Government views that its article 29 covers *ratione materiae* the scope of application of the last Convention.<sup>16</sup>

## Constitutional and legislative framework

### Full implementation of recommendations

28. The Government has worked to ensure that the Finnish legislation is constantly up to date and promotes the enjoyment of human rights.

29. The work against discrimination has continued. The legislative framework is already rather comprehensive – discrimination based on sexual orientation as well as on several other grounds is prohibited in the Non-Discrimination Act (1325/2014). In accordance with the Government Programme, a partial reform of the Non-Discrimination Act is currently ongoing<sup>17</sup> – a public consultation on the draft proposal was held in spring 2022 and the Act is expected to be submitted to Parliament in 2022. Discrimination based on gender, gender identity or gender expression are prohibited in the Act on Equality between Men and Women (609/1986). Nevertheless, the Government is aware that more actions are needed – one possible focus area being intersectional approaches to vulnerability.

30. There are several projects to support the implementation of these laws on multiple levels of the public sector. For example, the Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Association of Finnish Municipalities, Seta – LGBTI Rights Finland and the Lithuanian Gay League, carried out a project called Rainbow Rights<sup>18</sup>, which supported the implementation of the Non-Discrimination Act and promoted the equality of LGBTI people at different levels, and the Government of Åland has proposed an action plan on equal opportunities for LGBTQIA people in Ålandic society 2019–2025.<sup>19</sup> In addition, the Ministry of Justice along with other ministries assessed the realisation of the fundamental and human rights of sexual and gender minorities in Finland.<sup>20,21</sup>

31. More efforts have been made to ensure accessibility. For instance, the Government Decree on Accessibility of Buildings (241/2017) entered into force in January 2018. The decree is applicable to new construction and repair or alteration work requiring a building permit. The Ministry of the Environment has published guidelines<sup>22</sup> on accessible construction to supplement the new decree. Additionally, the Ministry of Transport and Communications published an Action Programme for 2017–2021 to ensure that common digital services are suitable for as many people as possible.<sup>23</sup> The Action Programme puts forward concrete priority measures that can be implemented and monitored in the short term to increase equal access to digital transport and communications services. The work was continued with a report and a set of recommendations on the definition and availability of accessibility information and on increasing awareness among providers of mobility services.<sup>24</sup> The Government of Åland has set up a Disability Council<sup>25</sup> (*Rådet för personer med funktionsnedsättning*), the term of which was renewed to 2023, and it has made an action plan on disability policy.<sup>26,27</sup>

32. The Government has continued its work to promote and protect the human rights for refugees, migrants and ethnic minorities. Accordingly, the Government's action programme to combat racism and to promote good relations<sup>28</sup> was adopted in October 2021 and it will be implemented in different administrative sectors during 2021–2023. The action programme includes concrete policy measures for different areas of life. Additionally, Finland's current legislation provides a good foundation for the promotion of the equality of the Roma. The National Roma Policy 2018–2022<sup>29</sup> has mainstreamed actions and measures that create further capacities for improvements in the human rights and socioeconomic status of Roma.

Regarding refugees and migrants, the national asylum process has recently been evaluated in co-operation with actors in the field of asylum. Its recommendations have been noted, and the Finnish Immigration Service has created a plan on how to improve its work. The Service has also allocated more resources to internal checks and quality control. In summer 2021, legislative amendments enhancing refugees' legal aid and access to justice entered into force (737/2021). The Government is aware that some of the actions taken in the field of immigration constituted revoking changes made in the previous government term and, according to an evaluation made, there remains room for improvement especially from a procedural point of view.<sup>30,31</sup>

### **Partial implementation of recommendations**

33. According to the Gender Equality Act, discrimination on the basis of pregnancy and family leaves is forbidden.<sup>32</sup> However, further work is needed to fully stop this kind of discrimination from happening.

34. According to the Government Programme, the Government will carry out a comprehensive reform of legislation governing sexual offences based on the principle of physical integrity and the right to sexual self-determination. The definition of rape in the Criminal Code will be amended so that it will be based on the absence of consent while simultaneously ensuring appropriate legal safeguards. The Government submitted its legislative proposal to the Parliament in February 2022 (HE 13/2022 vp), and Parliament approved the legislative amendments in June 2022.<sup>33</sup> In addition to legislative reforms, the Government notes the importance of authorities having the necessary skills to carry out the investigations both in an effective and sensitive manner.

35. Furthermore, the Government aims to give a proposal for an Act on the legal recognition of gender that respects people's right to self-determination to Parliament in 2022. The requirement of infertility will be removed from the act, and medical treatments will be separated from the legal recognition of gender. A public consultation of the proposal was held in spring 2022<sup>34</sup>. The Government acknowledges that dissenting views have been expressed regarding the situation of the underaged. Furthermore, the National Child Strategy<sup>35</sup> will establish a National Best Practice Guidelines for health professionals regarding families being told of their child's intersex.<sup>36</sup> The Government has noted that there have been wishes to have legislation in addition to guidance.

36. The Finnish Immigration Service has updated its instructions for the consideration of children's cases and the related decision-making in the Service, in particular regarding hearing of a child in light of the views adopted by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in the communication *A.B. v. Finland* (Communication No 51/2018). Moreover, the Government is planning to submit a proposal to Parliament in summer 2022 enhancing the situation of minors with a refugee status or a residence permit when applying for residence permits for the rest of the family abroad.<sup>37</sup> In this regard, the Government has noted that there have been calls for a broader reform of family reunification criteria. The Government has started assessing the need for a comprehensive reform of the Aliens Act.

37. The Government acknowledges the significance of business enterprises for the realisation of human rights, including the rights of indigenous peoples, children and workers. Finland is committed to complying with and actively promoting the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights as well as the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. There is a national action plan, and studies have been conducted on the current situation of Finnish enterprises.<sup>38</sup> In spring 2022, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment published a memorandum<sup>39</sup> mapping the options for the content of due diligence obligations in national legislation that would apply to Finnish companies.<sup>40</sup> However, the EU has also published its proposal for a Directive on the same issue. The Government has noted that there are different views on whether there still is a need for a national law. Regarding workers' rights, topics that have risen in the general discussion during the last period include the conditions of foreign workers and the rights of people working as freelancers for online platforms.

38. Finnish legislation provides a possibility to complete non-military service instead of conscription. The Act on the exemption of Jehovah's Witnesses from military service under

certain conditions was repealed in 2019 to treat all religious communities in Finland the same.<sup>41</sup> The Government has noted the observations by the Human Rights Committee<sup>42</sup> recommending widening the exemption instead. It has also noted the recommendations regarding the length and civilian nature of alternatives to military service.

## **Human rights policies, and national plans of action on human rights (or specific areas)**

### **Full implementation of recommendations**

39. Finland has continued its efforts to further improve not only its relevant legal and administrative frameworks described above, but also its policies in conformity with its international commitments.<sup>43</sup> In addition to several specific policy actions (described under the corresponding thematic sections), more general and overarching actions have been taken.

40. For example, the third National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights continues the resolved work set out in the previous plans. Only two out of 43 projects listed in the second National Action Plan were not implemented, and they were mainly linked to the health and social services reform that was unsuccessful in 2019. Monetary resources have been allocated to implement the Third Action Plan.<sup>44</sup>

41. Furthermore, the resources of the Finnish Council of Regulatory Impact Analysis have been strengthened, and a government-level system for an *ex post* regulatory impact analysis will be introduced. The Government has also drawn up a comprehensive action plan for better regulation. Studies have been conducted and reports drafted in many areas of human rights, *inter alia* the rights of child and education.<sup>45</sup>

42. The Government has noted that many stakeholders advocate for a more systematic fundamental and human rights impact assessment. Therefore, the Government is developing fundamental and human rights impact assessments in legislative drafting by providing guidance and training for law drafters and strengthening cooperation between authorities relating to impact assessments. A monitoring system covering all state administrative sectors will be created for monitoring gender equality. A gender impact assessment will be a compulsory part of public administrative functions in all government departments.

## **National human rights institution (NHRI)**

### **Partial implementation of recommendations**

43. The Human Rights Centre, its Human Rights Delegation and the Parliamentary Ombudsman together form the Finnish National Human Rights Institution (NHRI). The National Human Rights Institution is independent and autonomous. The budget allocated to the National Human Rights Institution has increased from 6,201,000 euros in 2017 to 7,145,000 euros in 2020, which included six new staff members (two for the Human Rights Centre and four for the Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman). In 2021, the budget was increased to 7,517,000 euros.<sup>46</sup>

## **Gender-based violence, violence against women, and domestic violence**

### **Full implementation of recommendations**

44. Domestic violence is one of the most persistent human rights problems in Finnish society. According to preliminary statistics, 31% of women and 18% of men have experienced violence or threats by their current or former partner.<sup>47</sup> More actions are needed to *e.g.* identify its forms, such as the so-called honour-related violence and female genital mutilation, and provide help and support to the victims. Indeed, it appears that during the last 12 months, only 50% of the women and 21% of the men having experienced violence had reported it either to family or authorities.<sup>48</sup>

45. The Government has continued its determined actions to end domestic violence as well as gender-based violence and violence against women. Accordingly, the Committee for

Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (NAPE)<sup>49</sup> has drawn up an Action Plan for the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention for 2018–2021<sup>50</sup> and for 2022–2025, and a committee is preparing one for Åland. The objectives of the Action Plan are largely based on the recommendations issued by GREVIO. The three main objectives of the new plan aim at strengthening 1) the gender perspective and intersectionality in the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, 2) reinforcing intersectoral and multiprofessional cooperation and 3) improving both the identification of violence against women and domestic violence and intervention in them. Similarly to the previous plan, the measures proposed in the Action Plan extend to all relevant governmental agencies and involve civil society organisations. In addition, an intersectoral working group, led by the Ministry of Justice, prepared a plan for combatting violence against women,<sup>51</sup> which was published in October 2020. The plan will be implemented by spring 2023. The plan's focus areas include so called honour-related violence and digital violence. In Åland, a strategy was made to combat domestic violence. In addition, the new Strategy on Preventive Police Work 2019–2023<sup>52</sup> and the Action Plan by the National Police Board focuses on ensuring the safety, security and the sense of security of different population groups. Women, young people and children are especially taken into consideration.<sup>53</sup> While many actions have been taken to prevent violence and to protect the victims, the Government has noted calls to invest more in the work with the perpetrators of acts of violence to address violent behavior.

46. Shelter services are funded by the State and they provide immediate help in a crisis situation, 24/7 living and psychosocial support, and counselling and guidance for every person in need regardless of residence and are free of charge. The Act on State Compensation to Producers of Shelter Services (1354/2014) entered into force in January 2015. For the year 2021, a total of 25.55 million euros have been allocated to 29 shelters that accommodate altogether 211 family places. The shelters are open for anyone – women, men, and children of all ages – who have experienced or have been threatened by domestic violence. Children usually stay in the shelter with a parent. The law in question also enabled adults with no children to enter a shelter while previously shelters accepted only women accompanied with children. The shelters cover geographically different parts of Finland and also include places for the Swedish-speaking minority, as well as migrant women and children. Many of the shelters are also accessible for persons with disabilities – however, there have been wishes that accessibility information would be better available. In May 2017, a rape crisis centre (SERI support centre), as stipulated by the Istanbul Convention, opened in Helsinki University hospital. In May 2022, 16 support centres have been established, 5 main support centres operating at the university hospitals and others at regional hospitals or health centres. More SERI support centres are underway in various areas of the country, and they are to be established in close affiliation with the main support centres. Under the Act of Åland on shelters (2015:117), the county must ensure victims of domestic violence access to shelters.<sup>54</sup>

47. The corporal punishment of children is prohibited in the Finnish Criminal Code. According to follow-up data, the use of disciplinary violence has decreased considerably over the past 20 years. Unfortunately, there are indications that attitudes towards corporal punishment have become more understanding in recent years.<sup>55</sup> A child victim study will be carried out under the National Child Strategy. The Strategy also implements a guide and education set on determining situations of separation and post-separation violence in cooperation with the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare. Furthermore, an action plan for the prevention of violence against children was made for 2020–2025.<sup>56</sup> The action plan deals with the rights of the child, inclusion, factors that protect against violence as well as risk factors and their consequences. In addition, a national action plan for 2022–2025 on the Lanzarote Convention<sup>57</sup> has been made and a national Barnhaus project<sup>58</sup> has been started.<sup>59</sup>

### **Partial implementation of recommendations**

48. While substantive actions have been taken to end all kinds of violence, especially domestic violence, along with funding, the Government acknowledges that it is dealing with a problem that requires further work, follow-up and continuous assessment. Unfortunately, domestic violence still exists leading at worst to death. Furthermore, intersectional viewpoints need further attention as well as cooperation between different authorities. Therefore, the above mentioned programmes are multiannual to ensure constant action.<sup>60</sup>



## Discrimination against women

### Full implementation of recommendations

49. The Government notes that determined actions are needed to address gender discrimination and for that reason robust institutions must be in place. In Finland, there are *inter alia* the Ombudsperson for Equality, the National Non-Discrimination and the Equality Tribunal, the Gender Equality Unit within the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, and the Council for Gender Equality (TANE). In Åland, an agenda for equality<sup>61</sup> was drawn up.<sup>62</sup>

50. Legislative changes have been made regarding family leave. The aim is an equal division of family leave and care responsibilities between the parents in the family, taking into account different types of families, stronger non-discrimination and equality in the world of work, and reduced pay disparities between the sexes. Families will have more opportunities for choice and flexibility in taking family leave. The Government acknowledges the need to follow the results of the reform and the importance of measures supporting equality in practice, including the role and equal status of fathers. Indeed, the Government has noted that the Ombudsperson for Equality receives the most contacts regarding discrimination due to pregnancy and family leave.<sup>63</sup> In 2018, the Government of Åland reserved budget funds for the next five years for preventive work to counteract stereotype gender norms and to combat words and acts of sexual violence among children and young people in Åland.<sup>64</sup>

### Partial implementation of recommendations

51. While the efforts to end all kinds of discrimination have continued, there remains work to do. Therefore, in accordance with the current Government Programme, a partial reform of the Non-Discrimination Act is currently on the way as mentioned above. The issues to be assessed include, among others, the competence and tasks of the authorities supervising the Non-Discrimination Act, the definition of harassment, and the obligation to address harassment. In addition, the Government of Åland has initiated a revision of the Non-Discrimination Act of Åland.<sup>65</sup> Unfortunately, several problems persist. For example, sexual harassment is a problem present in different sectors and even young girls are targeted. In addition, the Ombudsperson for Equality has, among other things, brought up questions relating to discrimination in recruitment and to gender diversity.<sup>66</sup>

52. The Government's Action Plan for Gender Equality was drawn up in 2020 to coordinate measures for achieving a gender equal society in various sectors. Furthermore, pay equality will be promoted by continuing the Equal Pay Programme. Legislative changes to promote transparency of remuneration have been considered.<sup>67</sup> The Government has allocated resources for a new permanent position for the Ombudsperson of Equality's Office as of 2022. The Action Plan for Gender Equality and Equal Pay Programme will have a 0.5 million euro yearly funding. Pay equality is monitored as part of the Sustainable Development Goals.<sup>68</sup> The pay gap between women and men has continued to narrow consistently but slowly in the 2000s. In the early 2000s, women's monthly earnings were on average 80% of men's earnings, and 84% in 2020.<sup>69</sup> The Government notes that the segregation of professions by gender remains an issue. In May 2022, a project started mapping the differences in careers and career paths and their effect on pay differences.

## Racial discrimination

### Full implementation of recommendations

53. The Government Programme states that the Government will combat racism and discrimination in all sectors of society. The Government's Action Programme to combat racism and to promote good relations was adopted in October 2021 and will be implemented during 2021–2023.<sup>70</sup>

54. Various other actions have been taken as well to continue and enhance the efforts against racial discrimination. The Ministry of Justice coordinates the national discrimination monitoring system. The Ministry of Justice implements together with different partners a

range of projects to promote non-discrimination.<sup>71</sup> For example, there was a wide media campaign against racism in the All in for Equality project.<sup>72</sup> In addition, there are projects focusing on coordinating the national work against hate crimes, the development of hate crime reporting and data collection, improving the capacity of the police, prosecutors and judges to act against hate crimes and hate speech. In the projects, training has been offered and material has been produced to support work against hate crimes and hate speech. Consequently, fighting hate crimes is set as one priority in the Police Strategy and there has been a wide array of training.<sup>73</sup> Police officers are also actively present in various social media platforms to reduce the threshold for contacting the police and their presence has been seen as a good means to prevent illegal hate speech online. The National Child Strategy will implement a website against bullying, sexual harassment, violence, hate speech, and discrimination in cooperation with the Finnish National Agency for Education.<sup>74</sup> Nonetheless, the Government acknowledges that combatting racism, especially structural racism, in a systemic fashion is a topic needing continuous attention, as is combatting multiple and intersecting discrimination.

55. Efforts have been taken to curb hate crimes against minorities. For example, the new Strategy on Preventive Police Work 2019–2023 and the Action Plan by the National Police Board have focused on ensuring the safety, security and the sense of security of different population groups. Accordingly, the police will further increase their interaction with minority groups and develop expertise in issues specific to these groups. The number of suspected hate crimes has decreased from the peak years (1,250 in 2015 and 852 in 2020), although the Government understands that only a part of crimes are reported to the police.<sup>75,76</sup>

#### **Partial implementation of recommendations**

56. The Government has further assisted the efforts carried out by the Non-Discrimination Ombudsperson. In 2021, the Office of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsperson was contacted 1,584 times on discrimination, and the number has been growing in the last years (984 times in 2018).<sup>77</sup> The Office has received funding for one additional staff member in its work against discrimination.<sup>78</sup>

## **Migrants**

#### **Full implementation of recommendations**

57. The Government has strengthened the policies related to receiving and the integration of migrants and refugees. The Integration Act (1386/2010) sets the basis for measures promoting the integration of migrants. A proposal for a reformed Act was sent for public consultation in early summer 2022. The law is complemented by the Government report on the need to reform integration promotion services.<sup>79</sup> The report establishes guidelines for the development of integration promotion in a way that ensures the inclusion of the growing immigrant population in society and that utilises the skills of immigrants in response to major changes in society, including the decline in the working-age population. For its part, the Government of Åland has made a programme to enhance integration.<sup>80</sup> Statistics Finland (the statistics office of Finland) gathers statistical information about immigration and integration.<sup>81</sup> In addition, measures have been proposed<sup>82</sup> to help state, municipal and third sector organisations promote equality, cultural diversity and integration through art and culture.<sup>83</sup> Despite all the actions taken, there remains work to do. For instance, shortcomings have been found regarding the employees' rights concerning foreign workers.<sup>84</sup>

58. The Government has striven to enhance the better political participation of minorities. As part of the National Democracy Programme 2025, the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations, which operates within the Ministry of Justice, has set up a working group on multilingual and immigrant Finns as societal actors. In June 2022, the working group published a report with recommendations.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, one aim of the Government's action programme to combat racism and to promote good relations is to develop more accessible structures and methods for consultations to ensure participation opportunities for groups at risk of discrimination.<sup>86</sup>

### **Partial implementation of recommendations**

59. The above mentioned Strategy on Preventive Police Work 2019–2023 and the Action Plan by the National Police Board focus on ensuring the safety and security and the sense of security of different population groups. A special focus will be given to preventing people from becoming victims of violence and perpetrators of violent acts.<sup>87</sup>

60. In addition to the above mentioned legislative reforms, there are several ongoing projects in the Finnish Immigration Service which aim to improve the legal assistance provided to asylum seekers and to improve their overall situation while undergoing the asylum process.<sup>88</sup> More social workers with specific skills (family social work and crisis support) have been hired for reception centres.<sup>89</sup>

61. The Government has provided the Non-Discrimination Ombudsperson with new resources. One reason is the need to monitor the increased number of deportations. New resources have enabled the establishment of three new permanent positions in the office of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsperson.<sup>90</sup>

## **Minorities, and indigenous Sámi people**

### **Full implementation of recommendations**

62. The Government has continued with its efforts to prevent discrimination against the Roma and other minorities. Finland's National Roma Policy's (2018–2022) primary objective is to support the progress in the societal integration of Roma and positive development of Roma linguistic, cultural and social rights. The next policy document for 2023–2030 is under preparation. Within the National Child Strategy, a report will be made on the implementation of the welfare and rights of Roma and Sámi children in Finland in cooperation with the Ombudsperson for Children in Finland. Discrimination has been taken into account in the Policy as a crosscutting theme with specific measures among all policy guidelines. Additionally, the Government's Action programme to combat racism and to promote good relations 2021–2023, and the National youth work and youth policy programme 2020–2023<sup>91</sup> include concrete measures that address discrimination against Roma. The national Language Policy Programme<sup>92</sup> covers Sámi languages, Romani language and Karelian language.<sup>93</sup>

### **Partial implementation of recommendations**

63. The Government has increased its efforts to protect the economic, social and cultural rights of the indigenous Sámi people. For example, in the natural resource planning for the Sámi homeland, the objectives of forest use and management are set both for the homeland in its entirety and for each reindeer herding cooperative separately. The Akwé: Kon Group for natural resource planning takes stock of the needs of those using the area from the perspective of traditional livelihoods, conveys them to the planning process, and assesses the impacts on Sámi culture. Moreover, the coordination of forestry operations is based on the agreement concluded in 2014 by the Sámi Parliament, the Skolt Village Assembly, the reindeer herding cooperatives in the Sámi homeland and Metsähallitus concerning the practices to be followed in the homeland and the conclusion of more detailed local agreements. The implementation of the agreement is monitored annually in negotiations between the parties. The Mining Act is being updated.<sup>94</sup> Furthermore, items from museum collections have been returned, and the immaterial property rights of the Sámi have been brought into discussion.<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, in October 2021, the Government appointed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission concerning the Sámi People.<sup>96</sup> Negotiations are ongoing regarding amendments to the law on the Sámi Parliament.<sup>97</sup>

64. The Government has continued the efforts to guarantee the representation of all people in political and public life. The objective of the Government's current cross-administrative National Democracy Programme 2025<sup>98</sup> is to promote participation and new forms of interaction between the public administration and civil society. The Working Group of the National Democracy Programme is currently preparing a draft for a Government Resolution on Finnish democracy policy in the 2020s, which emphasises the importance of fundamental and human rights and the rule of law alongside democracy. In 2019, the Parliament of Åland

passed a new elections act for Åland, with accessibility and increased equality as key factors. “An elections school” will be arranged in Åland especially for immigrants, incomers, refugees and others voting for the first time, such as young people and persons with disabilities, in order to help them understand both the political system itself and the electoral system and the voting procedure.<sup>99</sup>

65. The Government has worked to ensure that services are provided to all without any kind of discrimination. According to the Non-Discrimination Act, authorities, education providers and employers have an obligation to promote equality, which can include the provision of culturally sensitive services. Key actors are provided with training, practical tools and capacity building in the framework of different policy initiatives such as the Government’s Action Programme to combat racism and to promote good relations. The Finnish Immigration Service developed its competences in the OSAKA project<sup>100</sup> in supporting and improving the studying and working possibilities of asylum seekers. Furthermore, Sámi art and culture is supported with an appropriation in the state budget each year. The appropriation strengthens the realization of Sámi cultural self-government. In addition, the Finnish Roma Policy Programme (ROMPO) 2018–2022 supports the preservation and development of the Roma language, art and culture.<sup>101</sup>

## **Persons with disabilities, and right to just and favourable conditions of work**

### **Full implementation of recommendations**

66. The Government has continued its efforts on the promotion of opportunities of productive and paid employment for persons with disabilities. Many actions are taken or being planned. For example, the Government has proposed a law creating Työkanava Oy, a public company with the aim of providing work to persons with partial disabilities (HE 198/2021 vp). Moreover, the Government of Åland intends to study the need for legislative measures concerning, for example, the social service system supporting inclusion in the labour market.<sup>102</sup> However, further work is needed—according to a study, 28% of persons with disabilities had faced discrimination in work or in search for work due to their disability.<sup>103</sup> Furthermore, the Government has noted that Finland has received recommendations regarding its arrangements for unpaid work for persons with disabilities.<sup>104</sup>

### **Partial implementation of recommendations**

67. Since the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities entered into force in Finland in June 2016, the National Disability Policy Programme (VAMPO) was replaced by a national action plan, which defines the national objectives for the implementation of the Convention, the concrete measures promoting the implementation, and the follow-up measures. The action plan is drawn up for each term of office of the Advisory Board for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (VANE). The second national action plan for years 2020–2023<sup>105</sup> was published in February 2021. The implementation of the measures will be monitored during the action plan period and assessed at the end of the period. Additionally, the legislation on disability services is being reformed.<sup>106</sup> The Government acknowledges that further work is required – for example, there have been requests for a more systematic approach to assessing the impacts of measures on persons with disabilities. Furthermore, there has been dissatisfaction with the fact that a leave to appeal is needed to the Supreme Administrative Court concerning disability services matters – as is also the case with most types of appeal in Finland.

## **Children – general principles and protection, and juvenile justice**

### **Full implementation of recommendations**

68. The Government has worked to reinforce the measures to protect the rights of the child. The National Child Strategy creates a strong basis for the implementation, monitoring and assessment of the obligations included in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and it implements the European Child Guarantee. The Strategy aims at strengthening a child-

rights-based approach in administration and decision-making. Its objective is to ensure that the rights of the child are realised in all policy areas and levels of administration. The Executive Plan of the National Child Strategy includes measures promoting the rights and welfare of the child. Moreover, especially to enhance the rights of children in vulnerable situations, education providers' duty to promote equality will be extended to apply to early childhood education from 2023.<sup>107</sup> Nevertheless, the Government has noted the opinions indicating that areas that would benefit from further attention include hearing children and children impact assessments even though on the latter a handbook for law drafters<sup>108</sup> was published.

69. Training has been provided on the rights of the child. For example, the National Courts Administration regularly provides training on the rights of the child for judges, and a multiannual training programme is being prepared. The Ministry of Justice provides annual training on the rights of the child for public legal aid attorneys and to public guardians. Furthermore, in 2021–2023, the Ministry of Justice is running a project called the Voice of Children and Young People in Europe,<sup>109</sup> which is a part of a joint European project (CP4Europe), coordinated by the Council of Europe and co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe. In addition, the Police University College is annually arranging a year-long training programme dealing with crimes committed against children. Relevant professionals were also provided with training on the amendments to the new Social Welfare Act and Child Welfare Act, and the Handbook for Child Welfare<sup>110</sup> was updated.<sup>111</sup>

70. The Government notes that the provisions on child welfare are laid down in the Child Welfare Act. All decisions concerning children must be based on the primacy of the child's best interests. Despite efforts to support families, sometimes children must unfortunately be taken into care to protect them (in 2020, 11,210 children were in care<sup>112</sup>). However, all decisions are subject to appeal. The appeals are considered by a regional administrative court or the Supreme Administrative Court.<sup>113</sup>

71. The role and nomination of the legal guardian or representative for asylum seeking unaccompanied minors is defined in the Reception Act (746/2011). A legal guardian or representative must be appointed for an unaccompanied minor without any delay. The reception centre where the child is registered finds a suitable legal guardian or representative for the child and makes an application to the district court. The child must be heard before the application is made. The final decision is made by the district court.<sup>114</sup>

### **Pending recommendations**

72. No general prohibition has been made to prohibit the detention of minors. However, according to the Criminal Code (Chapter 6, Section 9), a sentence of unconditional imprisonment shall not be imposed for an offence committed by a person under 18 years of age, unless there are serious reasons for this. When assessing the significance of a serious reason, the placement of the perpetrator in a child welfare institution referred to in section 57 of the Child Welfare Act (417/2007) shall be taken into account. As of 1 January 2019, the law provides for new alternatives to remand prison both pre-trial and post-trial that are also applicable to minors.<sup>115</sup>

## **Trafficking, and prohibition of slavery**

### **Full implementation of recommendations**

73. The Government has stressed the importance of protecting victims of human trafficking. The 2016–2017 National Action Plan against Human Trafficking has yielded many follow-up measures. For example, the National Police Board has issued guidelines to the police on identification, protection, referral and investigation of the trafficking in human beings. The guidelines were updated in 2020. In addition, occupational safety and health inspectors have a duty to recognise potential victims and direct them to the assistance system, given that they consent to it. However, despite the actions taken, a need for further work has been identified.

74. Accordingly, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has appointed a working group until the end of 2022 to prepare regulation on assisting the victims of human trafficking.<sup>116</sup> The aim is to clarify and simplify the current legislation so that services are better available to all victims. The Ministry of the Interior is preparing amendments to the Reception Act and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is preparing an amendment in the Social Welfare Act.<sup>117</sup>

75. The Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings<sup>118</sup> was approved in May 2021. Other actions taken include research projects, developing training materials, increased training for different actors, and preparing legislative amendments to enhance the position of victims in criminal proceedings. A new national anti-trafficking investigative team of the police was established by the National Police Board in February 2021. The team is based in the Helsinki Police Department and in the National Bureau of Investigation. Moreover, the National Bureau of Investigation provides a monthly outlook regarding trafficking. Nevertheless, there remain difficulties in identifying and inspecting offences related to human trafficking and forced labour,<sup>119</sup> and further actions are being taken and planned. For example, the National Police Board of Finland and Police University College are planning training on the matter.<sup>120</sup>

76. The Finnish National Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking is a central authority in victim assistance.<sup>121</sup> Reporting the offence to the police or an ongoing investigation related to human trafficking is not needed for access to the assistance system. In the asylum process, children who have faced or face possible exploitation are given special attention, and their needs are considered in relation to housing, for example. A victim of human trafficking has the right to safe housing. Housing can be organised in reception centres, (supported) rental apartments or safe houses. The individual circumstances are taken into consideration when making the arrangements. In addition, social and health care professionals have been trained in different parts of the country.<sup>122</sup> While many actions have been taken, the Government remains concerned about human trafficking and the fact that the victims often are women and people already in a vulnerable situation.

## **Right to health, and right to social security**

### **Full implementation of recommendations**

77. The Government has continued with structural reforms in the social welfare and health care to ensure high-quality services in every part of the country. A major advancement was the legislation on establishing wellbeing services counties and reforming the organisation of healthcare, social welfare and rescue services that was adopted by Parliament in June 2021 after years of preparation.<sup>123</sup> The wellbeing services counties are now entrusted with the health, social and rescue services duties that were the responsibility of municipalities and joint municipal authorities.<sup>124</sup> Nevertheless, the Government acknowledges that securing adequate human and financial resources is a constant debate. Furthermore, the Government notes the importance of guaranteeing equal access to services *e.g.* in rural areas and to Swedish-speaking minority and Sami-speaking indigenous people. Other topics that have been present in general discussion include adequately resourcing childcare and care of the elderly.

78. The Finnish universal social security system provides necessary support in particular situations in life such as sickness, unemployment and parenthood. Everyone who is resident and/or employed in Finland is covered by the social security system. One of the key strengths of the Finnish social security system is the wide basic social security coverage provided by the universal residence based social security system. This strength has enabled the social security system to react adaptively to the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of the Sustainable Development goals, the number of people receiving long-term social assistance per age group is monitored.<sup>125</sup> The coronavirus pandemic impaired many people's financial situation, and especially in young age groups. The number of recipients was at its highest in June 2020, when 251,827 people received assistance in 169,431 households. Concerns have also been raised about poverty amongst families with children and pensioners.

79. However, a need for a clearer and more efficient social security system for individuals has been identified. Consequently, the Government has launched a comprehensive reform of the social security system. One of the main objectives of this reform is to improve the integration of employment and social security in changing life situations. The fundamental and human rights aspects will be thoroughly examined in this reform.

#### **Partial implementation of recommendations**

80. In parallel to the considerable organisational reform, other development work has continued within the social and health sector. The Government will boost the economy of wellbeing by investing in measures that foster people's health and wellbeing and reduce their need for services. Various actions are being taken or planned: assessing the health and wellbeing impacts of decisions comprehensively; more effective prevention and treatment of chronic diseases; updating the substance abuse strategy; reducing smoking and the overall consumption of alcoholic beverages; preparing a mental health strategy; developing an action plan to support children and young persons with substance symptoms; and creating a National Programme on Ageing.<sup>126</sup> The Government has given a proposition to Parliament to enhance access to healthcare services (HE 74/2022 vp). The Government of Åland commissioned a programme to prevent suicides.<sup>127</sup> Further work is nevertheless needed *e.g.* in mental healthcare services and young people especially have advocated for faster access to services.

### **Human rights education**

#### **Full implementation of recommendations**

81. Multiple actions have been taken to advance human rights education. For example, in June 2020, a Steering Group for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights Education (2020–2023)<sup>128</sup> was set up. To support the work of the Steering Group, a database on existing democracy and human rights education projects and good practices was created in 2021.<sup>129</sup>

#### **Partial implementation of recommendations**

82. Knowledge and skills relating to education for democratic citizenship and human rights education are seen as one of the important components of a teacher's expertise in Finland. While many actions have been taken<sup>130</sup>, providing sufficient resources to continue with systematic human rights education and training of teachers at all levels of national education is an open-ended target. Nevertheless, the Finnish National Agency for Education has an annual budget (around 10 million euros) for the in-service training of 23,000 teachers, and human rights education and training is one of the training themes. These themes are taught also in teachers' pre-service training that is provided by universities and teacher training units.<sup>131</sup>

## **III. Status of implementation of voluntary pledges**

### **Strengthening the respect for universal human rights for all**

83. Finland underscores the importance of the rules-based international system, its obligations, and the universal and binding nature of human rights. Finland underlines the importance and interdependence of the three pillars of the UN: peace and security, development, and human rights as mutually reinforcing elements. Finland takes a proactive and constructive approach to strengthening multilateral cooperation.

84. Finland regards the Human Rights Council as a fundamental cornerstone of the multilateral system and is honoured to serve as its member 2022–2024 with the objective of strengthening the respect for universal human rights for all. In this spirit, prior to its election Finland presented voluntary pledges and commitments<sup>132</sup> in support of its membership. Finland is committed to these pledges and commitments in its day-to-day work as a member in the Human Rights Council.

## **International peace, security and human rights**

85. Finland is a well-known and trusted actor in international development policy, peacekeeping and mediation operations. Finland strives to continue on this course.

86. For example, the Centre for Mediation established in 2020 under the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will strengthen Finland's expertise and capacity in mediation matters as well as coordinate activities within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and with other actors. In addition, Finland is strongly committed to the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and the subsequent resolutions<sup>133</sup> both at the national and international level.<sup>134</sup>

87. Moreover, in 2021, first in the world, Finland adopted its first National Action Plan on the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security in collaboration with active youth and representatives of youth organisations, central Government, research institutes and civil society. The implementation of the Action Plan will be followed by a monitoring group, which will submit a mid-term report and a final report to Parliament.<sup>135</sup>

## **Commitment to enhance the monitoring of fundamental and human rights**

88. The Government has published its third Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights with indicators to track the development. The Government is committed to the implementation of this framework and to the creation of a database of recommendations received from the Treaty Bodies. Moreover, the Government undertakes to improve the competence of law drafters in fundamental and human rights issues and to assess systematically the relevant fundamental and human rights impacts of legislative proposals.

## **Commitment to achieve the development aid goal**

89. Finland reiterates its aim to increase the development budget as the national economy recovers, in the long term to 0.7% of the gross national income in line with the UN goals. In 2021, it was budgeted around 1,257 million euros (estimated to be around 0.5%) for development cooperation.<sup>136</sup>

## **Commitment to submit a voluntary interim UPR report**

90. Finland commits itself to submitting to the Human Rights Council, in autumn 2024, a voluntary interim report on implementing the recommendations of the fourth UPR round. The Government makes this commitment especially acknowledging the fact that various reforms and programs mentioned above are still ongoing.

# **IV. New and emerging issues – advances and challenges**

## **Climate crisis, environmental degradation and the loss of biodiversity**

91. Climate change, biodiversity and environmental degradation are linked with many human rights, including the rights of indigenous peoples and children, enshrined in human rights conventions and treaties and with the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution of Finland. Finland is taking action towards climate change mitigation and adaptation and to safeguard biodiversity so that fundamental and human rights can be fully realised. Finland emphasises this interconnectivity for example in its UN activities.<sup>137</sup> Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals will also contribute to the realisation of fundamental and human rights in Finland and internationally.<sup>138</sup>



92. The New Climate Change Act will enter into force in July 2022. The aim of the Act is to strengthen the steering effect of regulation and to ensure that Finland will achieve carbon neutrality by 2035. Representatives of interest groups and, due to the nature of climate issues, citizens were consulted particularly widely during the preparation process both through events and online channels. Children, young people and the indigenous Sámi were selected as particular target groups for consultations and participation, and the proposal included a human rights impact assessment. The Government acknowledges that the transition to a carbon neutral economy must take place in a socially just manner, with ecological boundary conditions also taken into account. A Government proposal on remedies concerning climate measures will be given in autumn 2022. In addition, the Government submitted to Parliament in May a new national Nature Conservation Act (HE 76/2022 vp), and the Ministry of the Environment has started to assess a potential biodiversity law.

### **Sámi people's status and rights**

93. The Constitution of Finland protects the linguistic and cultural rights of the indigenous Sámi people. According to the Government Programme, the Government will respect and promote the realisation of the linguistic and cultural rights of all Sámi people and Sámi groups, taking into account international treaties. As part of this work, the possibility of ratifying ILO Convention No 169 will be examined. The Government will continue its work to reform the Act on the Sámi Parliament and the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In sectoral work, for example, the new Climate Change Act includes provisions on the rights of the Sámi.

94. The Government has worked in accordance with its programme. However, the discussion has been animated and sometimes difficult. Therefore, legislative amendments are still under preparation. The aim still is to reform the Act on the Sámi Parliament and assess the requirements for ratifying ILO Convention No 169.

95. The Government recognizes the importance of completing its work on the rights of the indigenous Sámi people. The Government acknowledges that there remains room for improvement *e.g.* in putting the FPIC-principle systematically into practice. Furthermore, the Government has noted that Treaty Bodies found in 2019 and in 2022 that Finland had violated the right of the indigenous Sámi people to self-determination in regard to their status and membership of their Community and recommended that the Act on the Sámi Parliament be reassessed.

96. Preparatory work for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission concerning the Sámi people<sup>139</sup> began in 2017 at the initiative of the Sámi Parliament. The Commission's work began when it was named in October 2021, but the start of the work has had its challenges. The Commission is an impartial and independent body.

97. The purpose of the truth and reconciliation process is to identify and assess historical and current discrimination, including the assimilation policy of the state and violations of rights, to find out how they affect the Sámi and their communities in the current situation, and to propose ways to promote links between the Sámi and the state of Finland and among the Sámi people. The truth and reconciliation process aims to raise awareness about the Sámi as the indigenous people of Finland. A further aim is to ensure that, as a result of the truth and reconciliation process, the state of Finland will bear responsibility for its actions and, together with the Sámi Parliament, the Skolt Village Assembly and other Sámi operators, will work to strengthen the realisation of the rights of the Sámi people in Finland. The Commission is to draft a report of its work including proposals for actions.

### **Electronic communication and digital technologies**

98. Society and the world are digitalising at an ever faster pace and are becoming increasingly reliant on data and information transmitted online and on knowledge and services created from them. This has increasing impacts – positive and negative alike – on many fundamental and human rights (*e.g.* freedom of expression, participatory rights, privacy and personal data protection, the right to education, children's rights and protection from

abuse, and equality and non-discrimination). Furthermore, the accessibility of digital services and availability of other service channels need to be kept in mind.

99. Finland's starting point and aim is for fundamental and human rights to be respected and the rule of law to be upheld and for these to be supported by efficient oversight of legality when developing and adopting new technology. For example, on the initiative of the Ministry of Justice, a study was carried out on how to avoid biases and how to prevent discrimination when using artificial intelligence.

100. Disinformation – false and harmful information that is created deliberately and spread publicly – has been disseminated extensively via Internet and social media services across national borders and in contexts such as ahead of elections. Disinformation may erode trust in democratic institutions and the information provided by them. It may create rifts and discord between population groups and intensify labelling and discrimination of persons belonging to minorities. Nonetheless, all measures taken must be in compliance with international human rights obligations and must not violate fundamental and human rights.

### **The COVID-19 pandemic**

101. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a test for the realisation of civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights throughout the world. It has both affected existing issues and created new challenges. It has posed a particular threat to the right to life and the right to adequate healthcare services. The global pandemic has tested the Finnish fundamental rights system and the capacity of the rule of law. Managing the COVID-19 pandemic and curbing the spread of infection has required restrictive measures that have interfered with people's fundamental rights in Finland, too. Restrictions have managed to curb the pandemic and, consequently, protected people's right to health and the right to life. Most of the restrictions imposed have been based on ordinary legislation, and compared to many other countries, no general curfew has been imposed. Both emergency powers and powers based on ordinary legislation are subject to appeal and the Finnish courts have delivered cases based on the restrictions imposed under ordinary legislation during the pandemic.

102. However, the measures to combat the pandemic have themselves had human rights implications. Distance learning has weakened the learning conditions of many children and young people. Educational inequality has been estimated to increase, and the pandemic and the restrictions have negatively affected the mental health of many young people. Restrictions on personal contacts have had negative impacts on the living conditions, human contacts and access to services of those who are in institutional care, as well as on older people or persons with disabilities. Cases have piled up in courts, and access to non-acute healthcare has been delayed. Restrictions have also extensively affected the freedom to conduct a business and access to income particularly in the culture and arts as well as service and tourism sectors and to some extent the situation has affected the practice of religion. Furthermore, it seems that women and female-dominated industries were affected especially by the pandemic. The Government is also worried about the effects of the pandemic on exclusion, a question already affecting men in particular.

103. The COVID-19 pandemic is not over, and the Government will use the lessons learnt in its actions to curb the pandemic and its effects. The assessment of actions taken, including scientific analyses and policy discussions, is important so that the global community is more prepared in the future and so that the long-lasting negative human rights effects can be addressed.

## **V. Challenges and support from the international community**

104. Nothing to report.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Publications of the Finnish Government 2021:59: National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights 2020–2023: Developing the monitoring of fundamental and human rights (in Finnish) (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-383-630-3>). All webpages consulted on 21.6.2022.
- <sup>2</sup> Publications of the Finnish Government 2022:10: Government Report on Human Rights Policy (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-383-637-2>).
- <sup>3</sup> Publications of the Finnish Government 2019:33: Programme of Prime Minister Sanna Marin's Government 10 December 2019. Inclusive and competent Finland – a socially, economically and ecologically sustainable society (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-287-811-3>).
- <sup>4</sup> The task of the new independent Ombudsperson for the Elderly is to promote the status and rights of the elderly, for example by monitoring and assessing legislative reforms. See website: <https://vanhusasia.fi/en/front-page>.
- <sup>5</sup> Rule of Law Centre / Duties: <https://www.helsinki.fi/en/networks/rule-law-centre/duties>.
- <sup>6</sup> State of sustainable development report: <https://kestavakehitys.fi/en/state-of-sustainable-development-report>.
- <sup>7</sup> Finland tops European comparison of sustainable development: <https://kestavakehitys.fi/en/-/finland-tops-european-comparison-of-sustainable-development>; Finland ranks in international sustainable development comparison: <https://kestavakehitys.fi/en/-/10616/finland-ranks-first-in-international-sustainable-development-comparison>.
- <sup>8</sup> Recommendations 100.4–6 (noted). All references to recommendations are to Finland's previous UPR cycle.
- <sup>9</sup> Publications of the Ministry of Justice, Reports and guidelines 2021:17: Fundamental right barometer (in Finnish) (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-259-821-9>).
- <sup>10</sup> Recommendation 100.17.
- <sup>11</sup> Recommendation 100.18.
- <sup>12</sup> Recommendations 100.14 (noted), 100.15 and 100.16 (noted).
- <sup>13</sup> Recommendations 100.7–100.11 and 100.12 (partly accepted).
- <sup>14</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs (2020): Finland and the Responsibility to protect. Fifteen years since the adoption of the responsibility to protect principle ([https://um.fi/documents/35732/0/UM\\_Suomi+ja+suojeluvastuu\\_English\\_NET.pdf/3cf564d4-3314-e495-88f7-6aed7d7903fd?t=1611730614830](https://um.fi/documents/35732/0/UM_Suomi+ja+suojeluvastuu_English_NET.pdf/3cf564d4-3314-e495-88f7-6aed7d7903fd?t=1611730614830)).
- <sup>15</sup> Recommendation 100.75.
- <sup>16</sup> Recommendations 100.1–3 (noted) and 100.13.
- <sup>17</sup> Yhdenvertaisuuslain osittaisuudistus: <https://oikeusministerio.fi/en/project?tunnus=OM013:00/2021> (in Finnish).
- <sup>18</sup> Project Rainbow Rights Promoting LGBTI Equality in Europe: <https://oikeusministerio.fi/en/rainbow-rights-project>.
- <sup>19</sup> Ålands landskapsregering (2019): Handlingsplan för hbtqia-personers lika villkor i det åländska samhället 2019–2025 (in Swedish) (<https://www.regeringen.ax/sites/www.regeringen.ax/files/attachments/page/hbtqia-handlingsplan-for-lika-villkor.pdf>).
- <sup>20</sup> Publications of the Ministry of Justice, Reports and guidelines 2021:26: Towards a more inclusive Finland for LGBTIQ people. Situational assessment of the fundamental and human rights of sexual and gender minorities in Finland 2021 (in Finnish) (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-259-939-1>).
- <sup>21</sup> Recommendations 100.44–45.
- <sup>22</sup> Ministry of the Environment (2018): Esteettömyys. Ympäristöministeriön ohje rakennuksen esteettömyydestä (in Finnish) ([https://ym.fi/documents/1410903/38439968/Ohje\\_esteettomyys\\_2018-A2B183D6\\_3C10\\_40A3\\_AE1F\\_DB0898AAC3D8-137003.pdf/86e77f87-c19d-4139-f744-531b500b9a86/Ohje\\_esteettomyys\\_2018-A2B183D6\\_3C10\\_40A3\\_AE1F\\_DB0898AAC3D8-137003.pdf?t=1603260121408](https://ym.fi/documents/1410903/38439968/Ohje_esteettomyys_2018-A2B183D6_3C10_40A3_AE1F_DB0898AAC3D8-137003.pdf/86e77f87-c19d-4139-f744-531b500b9a86/Ohje_esteettomyys_2018-A2B183D6_3C10_40A3_AE1F_DB0898AAC3D8-137003.pdf?t=1603260121408)).
- <sup>23</sup> Publications of the Ministry of Transport and Communications 15/2017: Making digital transport and communication services accessible (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-243-535-4>).
- <sup>24</sup> Publications of the Ministry of Transport and Communications 2021:18: Report on the definition and availability of accessibility information and increasing awareness among providers of mobility services (in Finnish) (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-243-600-9>).
- <sup>25</sup> Rådet för personer med funktionsnedsättning: <https://www.regeringen.ax/halsa-omsorg/funktionsnedsattning/radet-personer-funktionsnedsattning> (in Swedish).
- <sup>26</sup> Ålands landskapsregering (2022): Ett tillgängligt Åland. Ålands landskapsregering - funktionshinderspolitiska åtgärdsprogrammet år 2022–2025 (in Swedish)

- (<https://www.regeringen.ax/sites/www.regeringen.ax/files/attachments/protocol/nr11-2022-enskil-s2.pdf>).
- 27 Recommendations 100.136 and 100.138.
- 28 Publications of the Ministry of Justice, Memorandums and statements 2021:34: An Equal Finland Government Action Plan for Combating Racism and Promoting Good Relations between Population Groups (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-259-813-4>).
- 29 Publications of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 3/2018: Finland's National Roma Policy (ROMPO) 2018-2022 (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-00-4119-9>).
- 30 Publications of the Government's analysis, assessment and research activities 2021:10: The combined effects of the amendments to the Aliens Act and the practice of applying the Act with regard to the status of those requesting and receiving international protection (in Finnish) (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-383-009-7>).
- 31 Recommendations 100.147 and 100.152–153.
- 32 Recommendation 100.92.
- 33 Recommendations 100.20–24 and 100.110–111 (noted).
- 34 Translaki: <https://stm.fi/en/project?tunnus=STM009:00/2021> (in Finnish).
- 35 Publications of the Finnish Government 2022:38: Implementation plan for the National Child Strategy. Government resolution (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-383-823-9>).
- 36 Recommendations 100.46–49 (noted), 100.50 (partly accepted) and 100.51–53 (noted).
- 37 Recommendations 100.126 and 100.129.
- 38 Business and human rights: <https://tem.fi/en/enterprises-and-human-rights>.
- 39 Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (2022): Memorandum on the due diligence obligation – Review of the national corporate social responsibility act (<https://tem.fi/documents/1410877/0/Memorandum+on+the+due+diligence+obligation.pdf/768b3219-db5b-7643-4a98-889d5f351515/Memorandum+on+the+due+diligence+obligation.pdf?t=1649930584536>).
- 40 Recommendation 100.74 (noted).
- 41 Recommendation 100.84 (noted).
- 42 Human Rights Committee. Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Finland (CCPR/C/FIN/CO/7), paragraphs 36 and 37.
- 43 Recommendation 100.19.
- 44 Recommendations 100.31–32 and 100.72.
- 45 For example, the Ministry of Education and culture has published several reports and policies concerning accessible higher education, marginal groups in Higher education as well as gender equality and non-discrimination in higher education. In addition, the Ministry of Education and Culture has published a report on the Sami languages and Sami language education.
- 46 Recommendations 100.27–28.
- 47 Statistics of Finland: Gender-Based Violence (2021–2022).
- 48 Statistics of Finland: Gender-Based Violence (2021–2022).
- 49 NAPE: <https://stm.fi/en/project?tunnus=STM183:00/2020> (in Finnish).
- 50 Publications of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2017:16: Combating violence against women and domestic violence (in Finnish) (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-00-3970-7>).
- 51 Publications of the Ministry of Justice, Memorandums and statements 2020:15: Action Plan for Combating Violence against Women for 2020–2023 (in Finnish) (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-259-835-6>).
- 52 Publications of the Ministry of the Interior 2019:11: Finland's Strategy on Preventive Police Work 2019–2023 (<https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/161343>).
- 53 Recommendations 100.100–106, 100.108, 100.109 (partly accepted), 100.115–117, 100.118 (partly accepted), 100.120 and 100.122.
- 54 Recommendations 100.76, 100.112, 100.114 (partly accepted) and 100.119.
- 55 Lastensuojelun Keskusliiton verkkojulkaisu 7/2021: Kovemmin käsin. Suomalaisien kasvatusasenteet ja kuritusväkivallan käyttö 2021 (in Finnish) (<https://www.lskl.fi/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Kovemmin-kasin-Suomalaisien-kasvatusasenteet-ja-kuritusvakivallan-kaytto-2021.pdf>).
- 56 Publications of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2020:34: Non-Violent Childhoods – Action Plan for the Prevention of Violence against Children 2020–2025 (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-00-8351-9>).
- 57 Publications of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2022:8: Lanzarote Convention: National Action Plan for 2022–2025 (in Finnish) (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-00-8675-6>).
- 58 Barnhaus project: <https://thl.fi/en/web/thlfi-en/research-and-development/research-and-projects/barnhaus-project>.

- <sup>59</sup> Recommendations 100.107 and 100.131.
- <sup>60</sup> Recommendations 100.113, 100.121 and 100.123.
- <sup>61</sup> Ålands landskapsregering (2019): Agenda för jämställdhet 2019-2030 (in Swedish) (<https://www.regeringen.ax/sites/www.regeringen.ax/files/attachments/guidedocument/2019-agenda-for-jamstallldhet-med-ordlista.pdf>).
- <sup>62</sup> Recommendation 100.26. In Finland, the Ombudsperson for Equality and the National Non-discrimination and Equality Tribunal supervise compliance with the Act on Equality between Women and Men in private activities and in public administration. The Gender Equality Unit within the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, which it prepares and develops the governmental gender equality policies and gender equality legislation, promotes gender mainstreaming in state administration and is in charge of tasks related to the EU gender equality legislation and policies. Lastly, the Council for Gender Equality (TANE) works to promote gender equality in society. TANE drafts proposals and provides statements to develop legislation and other measures that affect gender equality. The Ministry of Justice coordinates the national discrimination monitoring system, which produces information on discrimination, increases awareness of the need to collect data on discrimination and coordinates cooperation between different actors in the field. The national discrimination monitoring system, which produces information on discrimination, increases awareness of the need to collect data on discrimination and coordinates cooperation between different actors in the field.
- <sup>63</sup> Ombudsperson for Equality (2022): Tasa-arvoaltuutetun kertomus eduskunnalle 2022 (in Finnish) ([https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/vaski/Kertomus/Documents/K\\_1+2022.pdf](https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/vaski/Kertomus/Documents/K_1+2022.pdf)).
- <sup>64</sup> Recommendations 100.86 (noted), 100.91, 100.95–96 and 100.98–99.
- <sup>65</sup> Recommendations 100.35, 100.43 and 100.61.
- <sup>66</sup> Ombudsperson for Equality (2022): Tasa-arvoaltuutetun kertomus eduskunnalle 2022 (in Finnish) ([https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/vaski/Kertomus/Documents/K\\_1+2022.pdf](https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/vaski/Kertomus/Documents/K_1+2022.pdf)).
- <sup>67</sup> Reports and Memorandums of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2021:67: Increasing pay transparency in the Act on Equality between Women and Men. Final report of the working group (in Finnish) (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-00-7189-9>).
- <sup>68</sup> The quality of working life remained stable despite the coronavirus pandemic; employment rate dropped and working hours decreased: [https://kestavakehitys.fi/-/tyoelaman-laatu-ja-muutos-2021-tyoelaman-laatu-sailyi-vakaana-koronapandemiasta-huolimatta-tyollisyys-notkahti-ja-tyotunnit-vahenivat?languageId=en\\_US](https://kestavakehitys.fi/-/tyoelaman-laatu-ja-muutos-2021-tyoelaman-laatu-sailyi-vakaana-koronapandemiasta-huolimatta-tyollisyys-notkahti-ja-tyotunnit-vahenivat?languageId=en_US).
- <sup>69</sup> Recommendations 100.25, 100.88, 100.89 (noted), 100.90 and 100.93 (noted).
- <sup>70</sup> Recommendation 100.42.
- <sup>71</sup> For example, the All in for Equality project, the European Commission's Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) programme, equality and hate crimes monitoring as part of the fundamental and human rights indicator framework of the third National Action Plan 2020–2023.
- <sup>72</sup> All in for Equality -project: <https://oikeusministerio.fi/en/project?tunnus=OM072:00/2020>.
- <sup>73</sup> For instance, over 1,000 police officers have been trained to identify hate crimes through the OSCE/ODIHR TAHCLE-programme, an annual Hate Crimes Detection and Investigation Course is being arranged by the Police University College, the police launched a compulsory online training for all personnel on non-discrimination and recognizing punishable hate crimes at the beginning of 2021.
- <sup>74</sup> Recommendations 100.36–41, 100.54–58, 100.59 (noted), 100.60, 100.62–64, 100.65 (partly accepted), 100.66–72, 100.73 (noted) and 100.148–149.
- <sup>75</sup> Poliisiammattikorkeakoulun katsauksia 19/2021: Poliisin tietoon tullut viharikollisuus Suomessa 2020 (in Finnish) ([https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/506683/POLAMK\\_Katsauksia19.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/506683/POLAMK_Katsauksia19.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)).
- <sup>76</sup> Recommendation 100.63.
- <sup>77</sup> Non-Discrimination Ombudsperson (2022): Yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutetun kertomus eduskunnalle 2022 (in Finnish) ([https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/vaski/Kertomus/Documents/K\\_7+2022.pdf](https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/vaski/Kertomus/Documents/K_7+2022.pdf)).
- <sup>78</sup> Recommendation 100.30.
- <sup>79</sup> Publications of the Finnish Government 2021:62: Report of the Finnish Government on the need for a reform in integration promotion (in Finnish) (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-383-856-7>).
- <sup>80</sup> Ålands landskapsregering (2020): Landskapsregeringens program för integrationsfrämjande 2020–2023 (in Swedish) (<https://www.regeringen.ax/sites/www.regeringen.ax/files/attachments/guidedocument/lr-program-integration-2020-2023.pdf>).
- <sup>81</sup> Immigrants and integration: [https://www.stat.fi/tup/maahanmuutto/index\\_en.html](https://www.stat.fi/tup/maahanmuutto/index_en.html).
- <sup>82</sup> Publications of the Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland 2021:5. Art, Culture and Diverse Finland  
Final Report of the Working Group for Cultural Policy, Immigrants and Promotion of Cultural

- Diversity (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-263-884-7>).
- <sup>83</sup> Recommendations 100.144–146.
- <sup>84</sup> Publications of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration in Finland 3:2022: Ulkomaisen työvoiman käytön valvonta vuonna 2021 (in Finnish) ([https://www.tyosuojelu.fi/documents/14660/2642702/TSH\\_raportti\\_Ulkomaisen\\_tyovoiman\\_kayton\\_valvonta\\_vuonna\\_2021/](https://www.tyosuojelu.fi/documents/14660/2642702/TSH_raportti_Ulkomaisen_tyovoiman_kayton_valvonta_vuonna_2021/)).
- <sup>85</sup> Publications of the Ministry of Justice, Memorandums and statements 2022:27: Addressing the Democratic Deficit among Immigrants and Multilingual Finns Working Group Report and Recommendations (in Finnish) (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-400-466-4>).
- <sup>86</sup> Recommendation 100.140.
- <sup>87</sup> Recommendation 100.150.
- <sup>88</sup> For example, in the ONE project, guidance material for refugees on the administrative process and processing of applications was created. The material is translated into 13 languages, and takes into account children arriving without a guardian.
- <sup>89</sup> Recommendation 100.151.
- <sup>90</sup> Recommendation 100.29.
- <sup>91</sup> Publications of the Ministry of Education and Culture 2020:4: The National Youth Work and Youth Policy Programme 2020-2023. Aiming to ensure a meaningful life and participation in society for all young people (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-263-887-8>).
- <sup>92</sup> Publications of the Finnish Government 2022:51: Language Policy Programme. Government Resolution (in Finnish) (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-383-645-7>).
- <sup>93</sup> Recommendations 100.141–142.
- <sup>94</sup> Hallituksen esitys eduskunnalle laiksi kaivoslain muuttamiseksi (in Finnish): <https://tem.fi/hanke?tunnus=TEM090:00/2019>.
- <sup>95</sup> By decision of the Government, the national Museum of Finland submitted its collection of more than 2.200 Sámi objects to the Sámi Museum Siida in 2021. The Vapriikki Museum Centre of Tampere also donated its Sámi collection to the Sámi Museum in 2015 and the Hämeenlinna Museum 2016, repatriating the collections to the Sámi communities. The protection of traditional knowledge and immaterial property of indigenous peoples in the Nordic countries was brought up at the conference of the Nordic Council of Ministers in November 2021 during Finland's Presidency. The conference focused on protecting the Sámi's own perspective and the cultural expressions of their own work, such as handicrafts and yoiks. The ministers responsible for intellectual property (IP) rights and Nordic cooperation, the Nordic Council of Ministers and representatives of the Sámi Parliament in Finland, Sweden and Norway encouraged them to continue their cooperation in the coming years. Increasing knowledge on the one hand on the rights of indigenous peoples and on the other on the system of intellectual property rights was considered central.
- <sup>96</sup> Establishing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Concerning the Sámi People: <https://vnk.fi/en/truth-and-reconciliation-commission-concerning-the-sami-people>.
- <sup>97</sup> Recommendation 100.143.
- <sup>98</sup> National Democracy Programme 2025: <https://oikeusministerio.fi/en/national-democracy-programme-2025>.
- <sup>99</sup> Recommendation 100.85.
- <sup>100</sup> Highlighting the skills of asylum seekers and increasing activity at reception centres: <https://migri.fi/en/-/turvapaikanhakijoiden-osaaminen-esille-ja-lisaa-aktivoivaa-tekemista-vastaanottokeskuksiin>.
- <sup>101</sup> Recommendation 100.139.
- <sup>102</sup> Recommendation 100.137.
- <sup>103</sup> Publications of the Ministry of Justice, Reports and guidelines 2021:17: Fundamental right barometer (in Finnish) (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-259-821-9>).
- <sup>104</sup> Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Finland (E/C.12/FIN/CO/7), paragraphs 29 and 30.
- <sup>105</sup> Publications of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2021:2: Right to social inclusion and equality. National Action Plan on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2020–2023) (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-00-5422-9>).
- <sup>106</sup> Recommendation 100.135.
- <sup>107</sup> Recommendations 100.124 and 100.130 (noted).
- <sup>108</sup> Publications of the Prime Minister's Office 2021:5: Handbook on child impact assessment for law drafters (in Finnish) (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-383-370-8>).
- <sup>109</sup> Voice of Children and Young People in Europe: <https://oikeusministerio.fi/en/project?tunnus=OM016:00/2021>.

- <sup>110</sup> Lastensuojelun käsikirja: <https://thl.fi/fi/web/lastensuojelun-kasikirja> (in Finnish).
- <sup>111</sup> Recommendation 100.125.
- <sup>112</sup> Lastensuojelu: <https://thl.fi/fi/web/lastensuojelun-kasikirja/toimijat-tyon-tuki-hallinto/lastensuojelija-thl/lastensuojelun-tilastoa> (in Finnish).
- <sup>113</sup> Recommendation 100.128.
- <sup>114</sup> Recommendation 100.127.
- <sup>115</sup> Recommendations 100.132 and 100.133–34 (noted).
- <sup>116</sup> Ihmiskaupan uhrien auttamista koskevan lainsäädännön uudistamista valmisteleva työryhmä: <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/hanke?tunnus=STM054:00/2020> (in Finnish).
- <sup>117</sup> Recommendations 100.80–81.
- <sup>118</sup> Publications of the Ministry of Justice, Memorandums and statements 2021:15: Finland fights human trafficking. Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-259-824-0>).
- <sup>119</sup> Publications of the Government's analysis, assessment and research activities 2022:18: Trafficking in human beings and associated crimes. Application of the criminal provisions (in Finnish) (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-383-330-2>).
- <sup>120</sup> Recommendation 100.77.
- <sup>121</sup> The assistance system maintains a website that provides different kinds of tools on how to identify a victim of human trafficking and how to help them to find guidance and services. Materials are provided in several different languages, and the assistance system has a 24/7 phone service for information. The assistance system provides to victims with a possibility to rest and evaluate their situation with the help of professionals.
- <sup>122</sup> Recommendations 100.78–79 and 100.82–83.
- <sup>123</sup> Government proposal for health and social services reform and related legislation adopted by Parliament: <https://soteuudistus.fi/en/-/1271139/government-proposal-for-health-and-social-services-reform-and-related-legislation-adopted-by-parliament>.
- <sup>124</sup> Recommendation 100.87.
- <sup>125</sup> The coronavirus pandemic increased the number of young adults receiving long-term social assistance: [https://kestavakehitys.fi/-/yhteiskunnallinen-eriarvoisuus-2021-koronapandemia-kasvatti-pitkaaikaisesti-toimeentulotukea-saavien-nuorten-aikuisten-maaraa?languageId=en\\_US](https://kestavakehitys.fi/-/yhteiskunnallinen-eriarvoisuus-2021-koronapandemia-kasvatti-pitkaaikaisesti-toimeentulotukea-saavien-nuorten-aikuisten-maaraa?languageId=en_US).
- <sup>126</sup> Publications of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2020:31: National Programme on Ageing 2030. For an age-competent Finland (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-00-8431-8>).
- <sup>127</sup> Recommendation 100.97.
- <sup>128</sup> Demokratia- ja ihmisoikeuskasvatuksen kehittämisen ohjausryhmä: <https://okm.fi/en/project?tunnus=OKM035:00/2020> (in Finnish).
- <sup>129</sup> Recommendation 100.33.
- <sup>130</sup> *E.g.* the University of Helsinki, in cooperation with and co-funded by the Ministry of Justice, the Human Rights Centre and the Ministry of Education and Culture, carried out a project in 2018–2019 to develop democracy and human rights education in teacher education; in 2020–2021, learning materials on various themes, such as fundamental and human rights in general, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, inclusion, and indigenous Sámi people, were produced; teacher education curricula and study contents have been developed further.
- <sup>131</sup> Recommendations 100.34 and 100.94.
- <sup>132</sup> Note verbale dated 22 June 2021 from the Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/76/93).
- <sup>133</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs (2018): Women, Peace and Security. Finland's National Action Plan 2018–2021 (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-281-327-5>).
- <sup>134</sup> At the national level, the 1325 agenda has been incorporated in the Government Programme. At an international level (in international organisations) and at a local level (in regions affected by crises and conflicts), the objectives are pursued through crisis management, development cooperation, humanitarian aid, expert assistance, training and diplomacy. The Government is currently drafting its fourth National Action Plan on the implementation of the 1325 agenda.
- <sup>135</sup> Publications of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2021:5: Youth, Peace and Security: Finland's National Action Plan 2021–2024. Finland's National Action Plan for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution on Youth, Peace and Security 2021–2024 (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-281-368-8>).
- <sup>136</sup> Development cooperation appropriations: <https://um.fi/development-cooperation-appropriations>.
- <sup>137</sup> In October 2021, Finland co-sponsored the Human Rights Council's Resolution (48/13) on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.
- <sup>138</sup> As part of monitoring the sustainable development goals, the following indicators were selected: carbon footprint of private consumption, consumption of different foods, carbon dioxide emissions from passenger transport by modes of transport, total municipal waste, municipal waste in per

treatment type, carbon footprint of public procurement, amount of decaying wood on forest lands and fields of high natural value, nutrient loading from rivers to the Baltic Sea, atmospheric sulphur, nitrogen and fine particulate emissions, and subsidies that are harmful to the environment. See statistics: [https://kestavakehitys.fi/-/yksityinen-kulutus-2021-suomalaisten-kulutuksen-hiilijalanjalki-on-pysynyt-liian-suurena?languageId=en\\_US](https://kestavakehitys.fi/-/yksityinen-kulutus-2021-suomalaisten-kulutuksen-hiilijalanjalki-on-pysynyt-liian-suurena?languageId=en_US) and [https://kestavakehitys.fi/-/luonnon-ja-ympariston-tila-2021-elonkirjo-hupenee-edelleen-ymparistonsuojelussa-myos-monia-onnistumisia?languageId=en\\_US](https://kestavakehitys.fi/-/luonnon-ja-ympariston-tila-2021-elonkirjo-hupenee-edelleen-ymparistonsuojelussa-myos-monia-onnistumisia?languageId=en_US).

<sup>139</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission Concerning the Sámi People: <https://sdtsk.fi/en/home/>.