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## **National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21\***

### **Finland**

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## **I. National drafting of the report**

1. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs is responsible for drafting and coordinating Finland's second National Report for the Universal Periodic Review. The Report was drafted jointly with the Prime Minister's Office and other Ministries.
2. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs prepared the report by formally requesting information on the national human rights situation from a total of 100 sources, including the supreme guardians of the law (the Chancellor of Justice and the Parliamentary Ombudsman) and other Ombudsmen, advisory boards, the Government of Åland, the Sámi Parliament, churches, religious congregations and numerous non-governmental organisations. The Office of the President of the Republic of Finland, the Parliament of Finland, the parliamentary groups of political parties and the highest law courts were also advised of the Universal Periodic Review and the process of drafting the national report.
3. Materials already collated for preparing the Government's first National Human Rights Action Plan were also used for drafting this Report, and a public hearing organised on 12 October 2011 to discuss the Action Plan also provided valuable information on the implementation of fundamental and human rights in Finland.
4. Civil society was also heard online and through the social media, with an opportunity provided over a three-week period from November to December 2011 to comment freely on strengths, challenges and trends in the Finnish human rights situation via the "Take a Stand" (*Ota kantaa*) online discussion forum. Attention was also called to this debate through the social media, including the Facebook page and Twitter account of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.
5. A meeting held on 17 February 2012 at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs with participants from various other Ministries also provided a forum for non-governmental organisations to submit their views on a draft version of this Report.
6. Ongoing work on the UPR Report and the National Human Rights Action Plan enabled a comprehensive evaluation of the Finnish human rights situation and an open discussion with civil society. The supreme guardians of the law, specialist ombudsmen, advisory boards and non-governmental organisations reviewed the shortcomings and challenges involved in fully realising fundamental and human rights,<sup>1</sup> and proposed Government measures to improve the situation. The National Human Rights Action Plan responds to these proposals with several projects.
7. A basic outline of the Universal Periodic Review and Finland's associated preparations is available in the Finnish language on the website of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs at [http://formin.finland.fi/human\\_rights/UPR](http://formin.finland.fi/human_rights/UPR).

## **II. Progress in promoting and protecting human rights**

8. The promotion and realisation of human rights is at a dynamic stage in Finland. In March 2012 the Government will discuss the first Finnish National Human Rights Action Plan. The situation of the individual will be protected through several new legislative projects. A Human Rights Centre, forming part of an autonomous and independent human rights institution, will begin working as an adjunct to the Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman this year. Work has also begun to develop indicators for assessing concrete realisation of fundamental and human rights.
9. Finland is a member of the European Union. The protection and promotion of human rights in Europe was further strengthened when the Charter of Fundamental Rights

of the European Union became a legally binding instrument for the EU and its Member States through the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009. The Charter recognises numerous individual and civil rights, as well as political, economic and social rights of EU citizens and persons residing within the EU, that are enshrined in EU law.

#### **A. Programme of Prime Minister Katainen's Government**

10. Pursuant to the June 2011 Government Programme of Prime Minister *Jyrki Katainen*, Finland will promote the principles of the rule of law, democracy and human rights in its bilateral relations and in international organisations in a constructive and result-oriented manner. Finnish international human rights policy will be realised through bilateral cooperation, the European Union, and multilateral and regional cooperation. Finland will also work actively in regional organisations, strengthening the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the Council of Europe. Finland also allocates considerable resources to promoting human rights through development cooperation and by supporting the work of national and international non-governmental organizations and defenders of human rights.

11. The Government seeks to ensure that everyone in Finland is equal, regardless of sex, age, origin, language, religion, conviction, opinion, health, disability or other grounds that concern his or her person. The Government works resolutely to combat racism and discrimination.

#### **B. Government Human Rights Policy Report**

12. Human rights policy is a key element in the foreign and security policy of the Government. Finland stresses the interconnectedness of human rights, development policy and security. The international human rights policy of Finland is based on international law and on the obligations enshrined in international human rights instruments.

13. In addition to the Government Programme, a key instrument guiding the implementation of human rights policy is the 2009 Government Report to Parliament on the Human Rights Policy of Finland. Finnish human rights policy is based on the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights. Anti-discrimination activities play a key role. The binding nature of economic, social and cultural rights is a pervasive theme. Finland strives to ensure that these rights enjoy adequate prominence in international cooperation to promote and protect human rights.

14. The Report finds that international human rights policy must focus especially on the rights of women, children, persons with disabilities, members of sexual and gender minorities, and indigenous peoples. Special attention will be attached to the status of Roma and other ethnic or religious minorities, and to recognising discrimination on multiple grounds. The rights of persons and groups in vulnerable situations, designated as the focus of Finland, will be promoted in a pervasive manner with respect to various human rights issues.

15. An effective human rights policy requires consistency and transparency in activities pursued, both nationally and internationally. The human rights policy report also comprehensively covers Finland's national human rights situation.

## **C. National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights**

16. The Government will debate Finland's first National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights in March 2012. This covers the priorities of Finnish national human rights policy during the term of the present Government, charts the role of various human rights stakeholders, and includes concrete measures for promoting the realisation of fundamental and human rights within various branches of administration.

17. The Action Plan is divided into two parts: the first analysing the general principles of the Action Plan and Finnish human rights policy, and the second describing concrete Government projects in 2012–2013 that will promote the realisation of fundamental and human rights. The Action Plan is linked at several points to the Government Programme and its priority of reducing poverty, inequality and exclusion.

18. Overall responsibility for monitoring will be vested in a Government Network of contact persons for fundamental and human rights to be appointed. Responsibility for implementing and monitoring individual projects will be shared between the Ministries. The Action Plan projects have imposed success evaluation criteria for each project. At the end of the electoral period the Government will submit a Human Rights Policy Report to Parliament evaluating implementation of the Action Plan.

19. Participation of civil society, trade unions, and regional and local administration in monitoring the Action Plan will be arranged through the panel of human rights stakeholders.

## **D. Government projects related to fundamental and human rights**

20. This chapter details Government projects related to fundamental and human rights, insofar as these are not discussed in chapter D on the implementation of UPR recommendations. The positive impact of human rights programmes, projects and other measures on the realization and effective enjoyment of human rights will be further strengthened.

### **1. Children and young adults**

21. The Government aims to strengthen governmental coordination of issues concerning children, young adults and families, and to increase child impact assessments in all policymaking. It has engaged in long-term work to enhance implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, especially through improved implementation of recommendations made to Finland by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. A project is developing a mechanism for monitoring this implementation. The rights of the child are a cross-cutting theme in Finnish human rights policy and development policy.

### **2. Elderly persons**

22. The Government supports the health and independent functioning of elderly persons through services promoting welfare and health. Objectives include improving independent living and home services, and preparing an interdepartmental programme on improving housing for elderly persons. The right of elderly persons to quality and needs-based care is enshrined in law. Finland has also supported work to highlight the rights of elderly persons internationally, including work to analyse the present framework for protection with a view to strengthening this framework.

23. The Government is drafting a bill to Parliament on ensuring the availability of social welfare and health care services for the elderly. The key idea of the bill is to provide

services enabling the elderly to live a dignified life. These services must be based on knowledge of client needs, and they must be client-oriented, high quality and safe.

### 3. Equal pay

24. Women are paid approximately 18 % less on average than men for regular working hours in Finland. The Government and national labour market confederations have pledged to promote equal pay. A tripartite equal pay programme was initiated in 2006. The main objective of this programme is to reduce the gender-based pay gap to 15 % by 2015. It seeks to realise the principle of *equal pay for the same or equivalent work* through collective bargaining policy, by combating segregation at work and segregation between various occupations, by improving remuneration systems, and by supporting the careers of women.

### 4. Roma

25. The general objective of the first Finnish National Policy on Roma is to promote the participation and equality of Roma in various areas of life by mainstreaming the promotion of equality and non-discrimination in public policy. The starting point for the National Policy on Roma is that the current legislation and service system create a good basis for promoting Roma equality. Special measures are also required at all levels of public administration to realise the participation and *de facto* equality of the Roma. The Policy also seeks to strengthen the functioning and capacities of the Roma by exercising their own strengths.

26. The Government studies discrimination experienced by the Roma as part of the work of the Discrimination Monitoring Group and of monitoring fundamental and human rights. This project is reviewing the prospects for expanding existing knowledge of the Roma and developing monitoring indicators. The objective is to provide more public information exposing the prejudice and discrimination faced by the Roma. The Roma will also be furnished with more information and training on their rights, and on procedures for reporting suspected discrimination.

27. A study will focus on Roma housing and on associated problems and solutions from the standpoint of equality, including within the Roma community.

28. Measures to prevent discrimination against the Roma will pay special attention to combating and preventing discrimination against Roma women on multiple grounds. A study will focus on violence faced by Roma women in close relationships.

29. Last year the Ministry of the Interior coordinated a media campaign to eradicate negative stereotypes and prejudice against the Roma.

30. The Government will appoint a working group to analyse how the right of the Roma to maintain and develop their own language is realised in legislation and its implementation.

31. In 2011 Finland issued an impact strategy for international Roma policy "*The Objectives of Finland for Advancing the European Policy on Roma*"<sup>2</sup>. Through this strategy, Finland endeavours to actively influence European strategy on the Roma, offering national models and experiences of promoting the participation and equality of Roma while learning from the experience and good practices of other countries.

### 5. National languages strategy

32. A long-term language strategy will be formulated under the leadership of the Prime Minister for developing the two vital national languages: Finnish and Swedish.

## **6. Homeless persons**

33. There are approximately 7,600 homeless one-person households and approximately 420 homeless families in Finland. Homelessness has been reduced through consistent partnership between central and local government, private enterprise and organisations.

34. The objective of the Action Plan to combat long-term homelessness is to eradicate long-term homelessness by 2015 and to enhance measures for preventing it. The focus is on securing housing for young persons, persons in psychiatric or substance abuse rehabilitation, and prisoners who are homeless on release. The Action Plan is based on the “housing first” principle, where housing is secured by an individual rental agreement and other support is tailored individually according to the resident’s needs. The Action Plan will be implemented through broader international cooperation, mostly at EU level. A 2010 peer review report ([www.peer-review-social-inclusion.eu](http://www.peer-review-social-inclusion.eu)) found Finland to be one of the leading countries in adopting programmes to secure housing for the homeless.

35. Finland has also promoted the right to adequate housing internationally, through such measures as a resolution submitted jointly with Germany to the Human Rights Council.

## **7. Efforts to combat trafficking**

36. The second Revised National Plan of Action against Trafficking in Human Beings was adopted in June 2008. The Ministry of the Interior launched a project in February 2012 to coordinate the work of drafting a special Act on Human Trafficking.

37. The Ombudsman for Minorities has served as national trafficking rapporteur since 2009. The rapporteur monitors trafficking and related phenomena (including pandering, organising unlawful entry and discrimination at work), implementation of international obligations and the effectiveness of national trafficking legislation. The rapporteur issues proposals, recommendations, opinions, advice on anti-trafficking activities and realisation of the rights of victims, together with legal advice and assistance to (potential) victims of trafficking where necessary.

38. Legislation in Finland has been significantly amended to address the trafficking problem. The Criminal Code has been amended (650/2004) to include specific penal provisions on trafficking. The Aliens Act has also been amended to include provisions permitting a period of reflection and the issuing of residence permits for suspected victims of trafficking. The Act on Reception of Persons Seeking International Protection includes provisions on an assistance system for trafficking victims.

39. The system for assisting victims of trafficking has been improved by strengthening the victim-centred approach and lowering the threshold for referral and voluntary access to the system. State reception centres responsible for this system now view it more clearly as a tool in the identification process. Persons may also be admitted to the assistance system for the purpose of “investigating victimhood”.

40. Details of the national implementation procedure for the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings are provided in paragraph 49.

## **8. Immigrant integration and combating discrimination**

41. The Government regards immigrant integration and combating discrimination against immigrants as key activities of its present term of office, and its work now includes efforts to enhance integration policy and combat discrimination more effectively.

42. Government integration policy specifically focuses on ways of improving the employment rate of immigrants, promoting integration training and improving the status of immigrants in vulnerable situations (young persons, women, asylum-seekers).

43. The scope of the new Act on the Promotion of Integration (1386/2010, hereinafter referred to as the *Integration Act*), which took effect in 2011, was extended to include all immigrants living in Finland. The new Act seeks a more controlled and interactive integration process. The amendments took effect on 1 January 2012 with a view to enhancing the integration of immigrants, particularly into the labour market.

### **III. Improvements in the normative and structural framework of human rights**

#### **A. Ratifications and signatures of international human rights instruments**

44. A Government bill to approve the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and for an Act implementing provisions falling within the scope of legislation (bill 141/2011) was submitted to Parliament in December 2011 and is currently under consideration.

45. Bills will be finalised during the term of the present Government on the following UN conventions: (1) the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, (2) the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which enables individual complaints, and (3) the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

46. An objective of the Government Programme is to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and its Optional Protocol enabling individual complaints. Ratification of the Convention in Finland still requires new provisions restricting the self-determination of individuals with permanently impaired cognitive abilities, who cannot understand the consequences of their acts and therefore risk jeopardizing their own health and safety or that of others by their behaviour. An interdepartmental working group is analysing the prospects for ratifying the Convention and the Protocol, with special attention to the need to create a functional and efficient national monitoring system, and will prepare a report and draft Government bill to Parliament.

47. Finland signed the new Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure on 28 February 2012.

48. The Government is also assessing the prospects for ratifying ILO Convention No. 189 concerning decent work for domestic workers.

49. A Government bill to approve the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, for an Act implementing provisions of the Convention that fall within the scope of legislation, and for an Act amending section 3 of the Act on business prohibition (bill 122/2011) was submitted to Parliament in November 2011 and is currently under consideration.

50. Finland signed the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence on 11 May 2011. The Convention is the first European Convention on women's rights seeking to establish a comprehensive legal framework protecting women from all forms of violence. A working group has been

appointed to analyse the measures required for ratifying the Convention, with a view to completing ratification during the term of the present Government.

51. Finland, Sweden and Norway initiated negotiations in March 2011 on a Nordic Sámi Convention that will seek to improve the status of the Sámi as an indigenous people and to strengthen and consolidate their rights.

## **B. Reform of non-discrimination legislation**

52. Work to draft a reform of the Non-discrimination Act and related legislation continues. The Non-discrimination Commission submitted its report to the Ministry of Justice in December 2009 (Ministry of Justice Reports 2009:4, in Finnish).

53. The reform will seek to strengthen non-discrimination protection by extending the legislation more clearly to all grounds for discrimination, making it more consistently applicable to all areas of life, and stipulating legal safeguards and sanctions that are optimally similar for all persons in various discrimination situations. To the extent required, the reform will also review the position, functions and competence of the authorities that currently address discrimination issues. Consideration will accordingly be given to the domestic supervision of fundamental and human rights as a whole, and to the international requirements for such supervision.

## **C. Human Rights Centre**

54. An independent Human Rights Centre and associated Human Rights Delegation attached to the Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman will begin working in 2012. These three bodies will jointly constitute the National Human Rights Institution.

55. The function of the Centre will be:

- to promote information, training, education and research related to fundamental and human rights
- to formulate studies on the realisation of fundamental and human rights
- to launch initiatives and issue opinions on the promotion and realisation of fundamental and human rights
- to participate in European and international cooperation for the promotion and protection of fundamental and human rights
- to discharge other corresponding functions related to the promotion and realisation of fundamental and human rights.

56. The Centre will not handle complaints or other individual cases. These will instead fall within the competence of the supreme guardians of the law.

57. The Human Rights Centre will include a Human Rights Delegation, serving as a national cooperation organ for stakeholders in the sector of fundamental and human rights. The Delegation will address matters of fundamental and human rights that are far-reaching and important in principle, and will approve the Centre's annual operating plan and annual report. The Delegation will comprise representatives of non-governmental organisations and various human rights stakeholders and advisory boards, together with researchers. The supreme guardians of the law, the specialist ombudsmen and a representative of the Sámi Parliament will serve as permanent members of the Delegation. The aim is to exercise alternation in selecting representatives from civil society.



## IV. Follow-up of recommendations adopted at the previous review

58. During the previous Review, Finland pledged to integrate UPR recommendations into the Government's Human Rights Policy Report submitted to Parliament in 2009. The Report referred to in paragraph 13 covers all thematic areas of the UPR recommendations and sets objectives for them. The recommendations have also been included thematically in the numerous action plans and projects of the Government.

59. The Government issued a voluntary intermediary report on implementation of the UPR recommendations at the 14<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council in June 2010.

### A. Recommendation No. 1:

#### 1. Measures to eliminate discrimination

60. Studies indicate that many discrimination cases remain unrecognised and unreported for several reasons. It is not always easy to identify and prove discrimination. The victim of discrimination may not know where to report it, or may not believe that reporting will have meaningful consequences. Intervention is important for eradicating discriminatory practices. One problem in monitoring discrimination is that pertinent information is fragmented.

61. The Non-Discrimination Act (21/2004) requires public authorities to actively promote equality and non-discrimination, and to formulate plans for promoting ethnic equality. As noted in paragraph 13, anti-discrimination work plays a key role in Finnish international human rights policy.

62. The Government has implemented several projects to eradicate discrimination since the last UPR. The most important of these is the Equality First project (YES, *Yhdenvertaisuus EtuSijalle*), which was co-financed under the anti-discrimination policy segment of the European Commission PROGRESS programme. This programme seeks to support national authorities in their work to promote equality and non-discrimination.

63. At the beginning of 2008 the Ministry of the Interior established a *Discrimination Monitoring* project to gather information on the realisation of non-discrimination in various population groups. The purpose of the system is to provide current, objective information on the prevalence, nature, basis and consequences of discrimination in Finland.

64. Discrimination will be monitored over the period from 2010 to 2013 through annual discrimination studies analysing various areas of life and covering all grounds for discrimination, and through a comprehensive quadrennial *Discrimination in Finland* review covering all areas of life.

65. On the autonomous Åland Islands an independent Ombudsman for Discrimination promotes equal treatment on the grounds of ethnic origin, religion and belief, disability, age and sexual orientation. An Equality Council assists the Ombudsman. The most recent study on discrimination on the Åland Islands (*Upplagd diskriminering i det åländska samhället år 2010*; ÅSUB report in Swedish) was published in 2010. The results showed that 28 per cent of those who replied to the survey had experienced discrimination. Gender was the ground on which people were most often discriminated against.

#### 2. Promoting the rights of minorities, including ethnic minorities

66. Information on the promotion of the rights of persons belonging to minorities is included in the chapter on the fundamental and human rights projects of the Government

and elsewhere in this Report. As explained in the Government Report on the Human Rights Policy of Finland and the Development Policy Action Plan, Finland also emphasizes the rights of linguistic, religious, and ethnic minorities in international work, lobbying for the rights of persons belonging to minorities in international organizations and regional cooperation, and through development cooperation.

67. The Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO) is a cooperation and expert forum for public authorities, labour market organisations, political parties, immigrants, ethnic minorities and religious communities. The Advisory Board seeks to promote extensive dialogue and to serve as an expert in developing an ethnically equitable and diverse society, and promoting good ethnic relations. While its decisions are not binding on society, the Advisory Board may influence societal developments through its expertise, activity and initiatives.

68. In 2011 the Government issued a new Decree on the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (298/2011). The new Decree further developed the work of the Advisory Board with respect to its functions, term of office and composition, and to the work of regional Advisory Boards for Ethnic Relations. The new Decree also prescribes a more extensive duty to promote ethnic equality and to improve the social participation opportunities of immigrants.

69. The number of regional Advisory Boards for Ethnic Relations was increased from four to seven, with a corresponding reduction in their territorial coverage. The function of regional Advisory Boards is to assist and support regional and local authorities in building a favourable attitude climate.

## **B. Recommendation No. 2:**

### **Preventing racism and xenophobia, especially on the Internet**

70. Surveys indicate that the attitudes of Finns towards immigrants have hardened in recent years. The Government is stepping up its work to combat racism, intolerance and xenophobia. Finland supports international cooperation to prevent racism and xenophobia.

71. The Additional Protocol of the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime, concerning the criminalisation of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems, took effect in Finland in 2011 (TSF 84/2011).

72. An amendment (511/2011) to the Criminal Code took effect in June 2011 providing additional powers to intervene in racist and other hate speech, and in other racist crimes. Public display or dissemination of opinions or other messages that threaten, slander or insult any group on grounds of race, skin colour, national or ethnic origin, religion or conviction, sexual orientation or disability, or on other corresponding grounds is punishable. The amended penal provision now also applies more clearly to hate speech disseminated using information technology (computer systems). The general grounds for increasing the severity of sanctions were also clarified to enable the foregoing grounds to be cited as aggravating circumstances.

73. The police have stepped up Internet monitoring, for example by increasing resources for monitoring and improving cooperation with various online service providers. Citizens are encouraged to report actively on observed online offences and hate speech. The police are also working in the social media, with virtual local police officers now serving under their own names online and thereby facilitating contact with the police.

## C. Recommendation No. 3:

### 1. Preventing violence against women

74. Finland consistently supports initiatives within the UN, the Council of Europe and the OSCE to combat violence against women, and stresses the importance of preventing such violence through the work of UN Women and elsewhere.

75. The rate of violence in Finland is only slightly higher than the average for Western industrialized countries. Finland is distinguished from other Western European or Nordic countries primarily by its high number of homicides. Violence in Finland is typically closely associated with the abuse of alcohol for intoxication purposes. Violence against women is partly characterized by special features and partly by features typical of Finnish violence in general. The high number of homicides is also linked to the probability of violent death for women.

76. Although good progress has been made in gender equality, the likelihood that a woman will fall victim to domestic violence in Finland is more than double the European Union average. The statistics do not include all offences, as contacting the authorities to report domestic violence is often considered difficult. Very few rapes are reported to the police.

77. An interdepartmental programme to reduce violence against women has been formulated for the period from 2010 to 2015. This programme was drafted according to European guidelines on the contents of national Action Plans, to international obligations binding Finland, and also in anticipation of the Council of Europe Convention referred to in paragraph 50.

78. The programme takes a comprehensive approach to violence against women, including measures to prevent violence against women, to protect and support the victim, and to bring perpetrators to justice. It also includes tangible measures for reducing violence against women, some of which have already been implemented. For example in a project initiated in 2010 in three local authority districts, an interdepartmental cooperation group (including the police, social welfare and health care sector and non-governmental organisations) evaluates the risk of re-victimization among victims of partner violence and takes the necessary protective measures. The aim is to extend the project and, after some experience, to make it nationwide.

79. The objective is to build a low-threshold service network to provide support and assistance to victims of partner violence and sexual violence. One special target group is victims in particularly vulnerable situations, such as members of immigrant groups, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and other persons belonging to minorities. Their special needs are considered in service provision.

80. A comprehensive approach is required to break the vicious cycle of violence. Most perpetrators of violence have also themselves been victims of such violence at some point. Violence is equally unacceptable regardless of the gender of victim or perpetrator, and both must be offered gender-sensitive assistance corresponding to their needs in order to prevent and stop violence.

81. Preparations for the Internal Security Programme have sought to ensure the availability of services for victims of crime, and referrals to such services. A working group has also been appointed to reform social welfare legislation. The terms of reference of this reform require the introduction of a duty to organise emergency services such as shelter services and specialised social welfare and health care services, together with long-term support for victims of partner and domestic violence.

82. Partly to prevent domestic violence, the Criminal Code (1082/2010) was amended with effect as of the beginning of 2011 to bring petty assault in close relationships within the scope of public prosecution. The number of assaults known to the police increased by almost 20 % between 2010 and 2011. It is estimated that this is partly due to the amendment, which has exposed covert criminality.

## 2. Collecting information on domestic violence against children

83. Measures to reduce domestic violence and violence in close relationships also have a direct impact on combating domestic violence against children. An expert group analysing violence against children and sexual abuse of children has compiled information on domestic violence against children. In its 2009 report the working group analysed how sexual abuse of children should be studied in a coordinated way in partnership with various authorities.

84. An expert working group appointed by the National Institute for Health and Welfare is analysing violence against children and sexual abuse of children. The mission of the working group is to formulate guidelines regarding the quality of studies related to violence against children and sexual abuse of children, and to monitor and improve these studies.

85. In its national Internal Security Programme for 2008–2011 the Government sought to develop a “Children’s Affairs House” to provide comprehensive assistance to children and young adults falling victim to sexual and physical violence.

86. Corporal punishment of children was banned in Finland in 1984. A joint study, *Participation Rights of Children 2009 to 2010*, carried out in the Nordic countries by UNICEF Finland, asked children about human rights and their views on the use of disciplinary violence. The study found that 30 % of secondary school children in Finland approve of the use of disciplinary violence.

87. The National Action Plan against Disciplinary Violence covers the years 2010 to 2015 and seeks to halve the physical disciplinary violence experienced by children in all population groups by the year 2012. The Action Plan contains 16 proposals on measures emphasising support for parents.

88. The objective of the Action Plan is to strengthen the dignity of the child and to increase mutual respect of parents to prevent disciplinary violence. The Action Plan seeks to continue and accelerate the positive developments of the last two decades in Finland with a view to consistently reinforcing negative attitudes towards disciplinary violence among both children and adults, and steadily reducing the disciplinary violence suffered by children. A further objective is to reduce disparities between various regions and population groups with respect to both the prevalence of disciplinary violence and attitudes towards it. The Action Plan also seeks to regularize follow-up studies on disciplinary violence.

89. Data on domestic violence against children can be extracted from the police information system. The Police College has issued the following publications: “Violence against children and young adults that has come to the attention of the police” (2008) and “Sexual abuse of children in reported offences” (2009).

90. Finland has been involved in work to combat violence against children initiated by the UN (UN Violence Study), and has also been active in Council of Europe campaigns to combat disciplinary violence against children.

91. Finland supports in particular the work of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, with a view to criminalising and preventing all forms of violence against children globally.

## **D. Recommendation No. 4:**

### **Convention on the Protection of Migrant Workers**

92. The Government analysed the prospects for ratifying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families in 1992, 2004 and 2011.

93. Based on comments received, the Government concluded that ratification of the Convention is not expedient. Migrant workers and other immigrants are not differentiated in Finnish legislation, but enjoy the protection of the same constitutional rights and the same ratified international human rights instruments as other immigrants.

94. Directives of the Parliament and/or of the Council of the European Union concerning such matters as family reunification (2003/86/EC) and the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents (2003/109/EC) have been implemented nationally by amending the Aliens Act and other legislation. With some exceptions, the Convention is largely congruent with national social security legislation. The Convention contains some unclear and undefined concepts with regard to national labour law.

95. The status of alien workers is not only affected by national social security law, but also by social security agreements concluded by Finland and by the social security legislation of the European Union, which include a duty of equitable treatment.

## **E. Recommendation No. 5:**

### **ILO Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples**

96. Protecting and promoting the rights of indigenous peoples is a human rights priority of the Government of Finland. The only indigenous people within the territory of Finland are the Sámi, who enjoy cultural autonomy in the Sámi Homeland. The Sámi are united by a common history, common traditions, customs and communities. Subsection 3 of section 17 of the Finnish Constitution protects the right of the Sámi to maintain and develop their own language and culture.

97. Finland seeks to strengthen the status of indigenous peoples by continuing its support for the work of UN bodies on related issues. The rights of indigenous peoples are also a pervasive theme of Finland's development policy.

98. During this Government's term of office, the intention is to ratify the ILO Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries. The prospects for ratifying this instrument are being analysed.

99. The Sámi Parliament considers ratification of ILO Convention No. 169 to be very important for the rights of the Sámi.

100. Finland's first National Human Rights Action Plan includes projects that seek to improve the rights of the Sámi by clarifying legislation on their right to participate in policymaking and planning concerning the use of State-owned lands and waters in their homeland.

101. Regarding land rights, the new Mining Act and Water Act were adopted in March 2011. Both of these laws prohibit measures that impair the opportunities of the Sámi as an indigenous people to engage in their culture and related traditional livelihoods. They also include provisions on hearing the Sámi Parliament, and on the right of the Sámi Parliament to appeal against decisions made pursuant to these laws.

102. An ongoing programme to revitalise the Sámi language seeks to establish a permanent operating format for revitalising all three Sámi languages spoken in Finland. Implementation of the programme will be monitored using indicators that are specified in the programme.

## **F. Recommendation No. 6:**

### **Review of procedures related to asylum-seekers**

103. Finland is committed to full implementation of the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (hereinafter referred to as the *Refugee Convention*). Issues of international protection will be analysed as part of a forthcoming comprehensive strategy “*The Future of Immigration 2020*” that is now under preparation.

104. A project to review provisions governing the detention of foreigners was launched at the end of 2011. Its objectives include a ban on the detention of unaccompanied minor asylum-seekers. The project will also analyse alternatives to detention and improvements in detention statistics.

105. The Ombudsman for Minorities has identified the detention of asylum-seekers as particularly problematic in cases involving single-mother families or other families with children, and has stressed the need for precise regulations in this field.

106. Non-governmental organisations have also called attention to the situation of unaccompanied minor asylum-seekers in cases of family reunification. Under current legislation, the age of the child is defined according to the time when the decision is issued. A residence permit may not be denied for this reason, however, if processing of the application has been significantly delayed for reasons that are not due to the applicant or sponsor, and this person has assisted in determining the facts of the case. Non-governmental organisations have also called for the best interests of a young asylum-seeker to enjoy paramount consideration, even if the applicant has attained the age of 18 years.

107. Attention has also focused on provisions of the Aliens Act governing family reunification and their application, and on corresponding provisions of the EU Directive on family reunification. The aim is to study the impact of the amended provisions on family reunification and of any need for further amendments.

108. The legal services provided to persons seeking international protection were analysed in spring 2011, and inclusion of individual legal aid in the legal aid system was recommended. General legal counselling would also continue to be provided through and financed by reception centres.

109. The Act on the Reception of Persons Seeking International Protection (746/2011) took effect in 2011. The purpose of the Act is to secure the immediate means of support and care of persons seeking international protection, persons receiving temporary protection, and victims of trafficking. The Act clarifies the legislation on reception and promotes uniformity of reception services.

110. A judgment of the Supreme Administrative Court issued in January 2012 (KHO:2012:1) found that a decision to remove an asylum-seeker from the country must include a detailed analysis of whether the person concerned has reason to fear persecution on the grounds of sexual orientation. The decision clarifies certain concerns, including that of how an asylum-seeker’s risk of persecution in the country of origin is assessed.

## **G. Recommendation No. 7:**

### **1. Providing the same protection for sexual orientation as for other discrimination grounds and observance of the Yogyakarta Principles**

111. Improving the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender and intersex persons is a key area in Finnish international human rights policy. Finland seeks to ensure that the UN adopts the Yogyakarta Principles as international recommendations for guiding action to equitably protect the human rights of gender and sexual minorities. Finland supports work to tackle discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity within the framework of the United Nations.

112. In February 2012 the Ministry for Foreign Affairs organised a seminar for public authorities and parliamentarians on LGBTI, addressing the obligations of the authorities to promote the human rights of persons belonging to these groups. The seminar also highlighted international recommendations promoting realisation of the rights of members of these groups, such as those of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and the Yogyakarta Principles.

113. The recommendations of the Council of Europe include classifying sexual orientation and gender identity as prohibited grounds for discrimination in gender equality legislation, removing infertility and unmarried status as conditions for gender recognition, granting same-sex couples equal adoption rights compared to other couples, and giving LGBTI persons equal access to fertility services. A national interdepartmental working group that also includes representatives from civil society is responsible for implementing these recommendations

114. Gender equality legislation will be revised in the course of reforming non-discrimination legislation by including provisions protecting gender minorities (transgender and intersex persons and other persons belonging to gender minorities) and provisions on multiple discrimination in the Act on Equality between Women and Men, and by introducing the minimum amendments to the statutes and provisions governing monitoring of this Act that the reform of non-discrimination legislation requires.

### **2. Providing the same protection for disability as for other discrimination grounds**

115. The Disability Policy Programme for the years 2010 to 2015 outlines concrete disability policy measures. The measures in the Programme form a package that develops all policy sectors from the viewpoint of the rights, freedoms and equal opportunities of the disabled. The Programme is divided into 14 thematic areas that are relevant for disability policy, and contains a total of 122 concrete measures.

116. In accordance with the Disability Policy Programme, the Government will pay special attention to design for all (universal design) and its associated principles when preparing legislation on land use and construction. Adherence to the principles of design for all will also be promoted in renovation work. The aim is to promote unification of accessibility interpretations and provide guidance on ways of allowing for accessibility in policy on zoning and other planning of neighbourhoods.

117. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is compiling a nationwide plan to arrange housing for the developmentally disabled, with a view to ensuring that by the year 2020 no developmentally disabled person will live in an institution.

118. A working group was appointed at the beginning of 2012 to study social welfare services that support integration into the working life and supported employment. The objective is to develop legislation and services so that persons with disabilities enjoy equal

status in relation to other client groups that are difficult to employ, and that services more effectively support their rehabilitation for work and integration into the labour market.

119. Another way in which Finland promotes the rights of persons with disabilities is by supporting the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on Disability. Finland is particularly supportive of political participation by persons with disabilities through development cooperation. The provision of support to disability organisations and other non-governmental organisations is a significant instrument in this regard.

## **H. Recommendation No. 8:**

### **Full integration of the gender perspective into the UPR follow-up process**

120. The Government's Equality Programme for 2008–2011 set out the principal measures for advancing gender equality. The objectives of the programme included mainstreaming the gender perspective, reducing the gender-based wage gap, promoting women's career advancement, increasing awareness of gender equality in schools, reducing gender segregation in occupations, improving reconciliation of family and work, and reducing violence against women.

121. A self-assessment by each responsible Ministry and the monitoring group indicates that the Programme was implemented satisfactorily and that progress has occurred, particularly with respect to mainstreaming the gender perspective. The Ministries are now jointly drafting a new Equality Programme.

122. In October 2010 the Government submitted its first Finnish Equality Report to Parliament, outlining the future equality policy of Finland to the year 2020. This Report seeks to reinforce purposeful and systematic promotion of gender perspective mainstreaming.

## **I. Length of non-military service**

123. At the time of adoption of the Report of the UPR Working Group on Finland during the 8<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council in June 2008, the *Quakers (Friends World Committee for Consultation)* and *Amnesty International* expressed the wish that Finland would respond to the Working Group's comment in paragraph 36 of its Report concerning the duration of non-military service in lieu of military service.

124. Under the Conscription Act (1438/2007), every male Finnish citizen aged between 18 and 60 years is liable for military service. The duty of national defence may be performed in armed or unarmed military service. Non-military service is an alternative to military service.

125. About 80 % of the age group concerned performs military service. The most common duration of this service is 12 months, as performed by 45 % of conscripts. The calculated average duration of the service is 275 days.

126. The Non-Military Service Act (1466/2007), which took effect at the beginning of 2008, reduced the duration of non-military service to 362 days. The Non-Military Service Act also acknowledges the right to conscientious objection during times of crisis.

127. The Monitoring Sentences Act (330/2011) that took effect in 2011 also enables electronically supervised home arrest instead of a prison terms for total objectors declining both military and non-military service.



128. Aside from their respective durations, any comparisons of military service and non-military service must also consider the associated overall strain of each form of service, their differences in principle, and their manner of implementation. Military service is performed in a closed garrison from which leave of absence must always be obtained, even during leisure time. Non-military service is performed under entirely civilian conditions that entitle the individual to enjoy leisure time in accordance with normal working hours (not exceeding 40 hours weekly). Freedom of movement is not restricted in any way.

129. The prospects for reducing the duration of non-military service were last examined in 2011. While the working group found no way to reduce the duration, it proposed an analysis to determine whether such service could be graded according to its intensity and strenuousness.

130. The duration of non-military service is clearly linked to the maximum duration of military service. There are plans to shorten military service by 15 days and alternative service correspondingly.

## **V. Achievements and good practice, and challenges and limitations**

### **A. Finnish school education earns top marks**

131. Numerous international comparisons, such as the PISA (*Programme for International Student Assessment*) study, have shown that Finnish school education is of the highest standard globally. High-quality education that is equal and free of charge has brought affluence, reinforced democracy and reduced disparities between regions and social groups.

132. Finland's success is largely explained by the school system (uniform comprehensive school for the entire age group), the professionalism of teachers and the autonomy of schools. Nearly three quarters of persons aged between 25 and 64 years have earned at least a secondary level diploma, i.e. by completing the Finnish Matriculation Examination or a vocational diploma, and one third have been in higher education. Only the core curricula are nationally prepared. The decentralised education system is based on locally formulated and implemented curricula that can respond to the individual needs of school students. High quality special needs education and a principle of early intervention ensure that no student is ever "abandoned".

133. Education is also a special priority in Finnish development policy under the Development Policy Programme.

### **B. A forerunner in gender equality**

134. Finland has been a forerunner in gender equality in many ways. For a long time women have participated actively in the working life and in policymaking. The share of women has grown in recent decades, especially in elected policymaking bodies and in the composition of the Government. The Act on Equality between Women and Men has been in force for 25 years (609/1986). Gender equality is a key political objective, and must be respected in all policymaking and activities.

135. Gender equality is promoted through a twin track strategy. This involves both specific measures for removing obstacles to equality and mainstreaming of the gender

perspective in all policymaking and policy formulation. Social issues related to the status of men have also been raised more vigorously in recent years.

136. Gender equality is manifest in Finland, for example, through almost equal participation of both sexes in the labour market. Significant socio-political decisions have been made to improve the employment situation of both women and men, such as separate taxation of spouses, family leaves and day care, which support participation in the working life by both sexes.

137. Under the Act on Equality between Women and Men, gender-based discrimination also includes disparities of treatment for reasons of pregnancy or childbirth, or on the basis of parenthood or family responsibilities. Pregnancy and family leave nevertheless continue in many cases to affect the prospect of securing permanent employment or extended temporary employment, or place employees in an unequal position in terms of pay or other conditions of employment.

### **Challenges for realising fundamental and human rights**

138. Realising fundamental and human rights requires continual and consistent work. Work to prepare the National Human Rights Action Plan involved analysing the *de facto* state of fundamental and human rights in Finland and pinpointing the principal and topical problems and defects in their realisation. At the same time, issues highlighted by the national supervisory mechanisms were compared with the decisions and conclusions submitted to Finland by international monitoring mechanisms.

### **Reducing poverty, inequality and exclusion**

139. The Government works resolutely to develop and strengthen the basic structure of Finland's affluent society, reducing poverty, inequality and gender disparities. The welfare of families and the political participation of all will be increased.

140. Approximately 700,000 people in Finland are estimated to live at risk of poverty.<sup>3</sup> Some 400,000 people receive income support, and about 13 % of the population are on low incomes. This increase in the poverty rate reflects such factors as the increased income of high-income individuals while social benefits fall short of growth trends in remuneration.

141. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has appointed a steering group for the years 2012 to 2015 to implement an interdepartmental Action Plan for reducing problems of exclusion, poverty and health. The Ministry has also appointed a working group to draft objectives and measures for reducing poverty, exclusion and low-income situations for a national programme in response to the Europe 2020 strategy.

142. In December 2011 the Government adopted a Child and Youth Policy Programme for 2012–2015. This will help to realise the objectives imposed in the Government Programme for reducing poverty, inequality and exclusion. Every four years the Government adopts a Young Adult Policy Programme under the Youth Act (72/2006) with a view to improving the growth and living conditions of persons under 29 years of age. Policy on children and young adults will focus in coming years on strengthening participation, equality and everyday life management among children and young adults. Ensuring that children and young adults are heard is a top priority. Child and young adult impact assessment must be more comprehensively integrated into policymaking.

143. In addition to national measures, Finland also works to address child poverty internationally by such means as including the rights of the child and the principle of the best interests of the child in poverty-reduction strategies, budget support and other

development policy and development cooperation programmes, both nationally and at European Union level. A 2011 study on child poverty as a challenge for foreign policy gives the Government new tools for addressing child poverty.

### **Legal safeguards and good governance**

144. Everyone in Finland has the right to have his or her case dealt with appropriately and without undue delay by a legally competent court of law or other authority, as well as to have a decision pertaining to his or her rights or obligations reviewed by a court of law or other independent organ for the administration of justice (section 21 of the Constitution of Finland). Provisions concerning the publicity of proceedings, the right to be heard, the right to receive a reasoned decision and the right of appeal, as well as the other guarantees of a fair trial and good governance are prescribed by Act of Parliament.

145. Effectively realising legal safeguards and the requirements of good governance has been an important topic of attention in the national supervision of fundamental and human rights in Finland. Decisions of the supreme guardians of the law (the Parliamentary Ombudsman and the Chancellor of Justice) most often address these very issues. It is quite unusual, by international standards, for procedural safeguards to enjoy the status of a fundamental right in the manner stipulated in section 21 of the Constitution of Finland. The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union also includes a provision on good governance. Assessing the realisation of procedural safeguards is important in Finland, as judgements of the European Court of Human Rights establishing infringements by Finland of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms have mostly concerned this issue.

146. The supreme guardians of the law receive complaints regarding the excessive duration of proceedings before the courts and other public authorities. Although proceedings may have been conducted correctly in other respects, their excessive duration may in practice have caused non-realisation of rights within a reasonable time.

147. A private party in civil cases, petitions and criminal cases is entitled to reasonable compensation if the excessive duration of judicial proceedings is considered to violate the said party's right to a trial within a reasonable time.

148. In 2012 the Government will draft a bill to Parliament for legislation on the speed of administrative proceedings, and on legal remedies in cases of passivity on the part of authorities. The Government will also prepare a client service strategy for public administration, which should clarify and set standards for client service in public administration.

### **Rights and treatment of persons subject to restraining measures and of persons deprived of their freedom**

149. The Parliamentary Ombudsman has repeatedly raised the issue of the rights and treatment of persons deprived of their freedom, and of persons who are subject to restraining measures. Legislation on the requirements for deprivation of liberty or on the use of force or restraint in this connection is either inadequate or there are no legal norms on the issue at all in certain situations. There is no legislative basis for the use of coercive measures in caring for the elderly. The use of force in caring for persons with disabilities is based on a single provision that does not provide for judicial control of restraining measures. It has been observed that the instructions of psychiatric hospital wards do not always respect a principle known as the ban on institutional authority. This ban forbids any

restriction of the rights of patients based on internal ward norms, and restrictions must instead be based in law and applied on the basis of individual discretion.

150. Legislation on social welfare and health care will be reformed by optimally consolidating into one Act of Parliament provisions that limit the self-determination of patients or clients of social welfare services. An implementation steering programme will be prepared to support this legislation.

151. For several years both the Parliamentary Ombudsman and the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) have called attention to the excessive use of remand detention in police establishments. The conditions of remand prisoners and the associated legislation are current areas of reform. An ongoing project is seeking to reduce the number of remand prisoners detained in police establishments, to study the prospects for electronic monitoring of mobility restrictions, to increase opportunities for remand prisoners to participate in activities outside of their cells, and to upgrade police detention facilities to meet the standards required in the Rescue Act.

152. Detainees under the Aliens Act may only be lawfully detained in police establishments in exceptional circumstances. While the police exercise discretion in using detention only as a last resort, they have had to hold detainees in police establishments when accommodation was no longer available in the detention unit for aliens prescribed in the Act on the Treatment of Aliens Placed in Detention and Detention Units.

### **Fundamental and human rights education and training in Finland**

153. Human rights education covers all sectors of society, i.e. both pre-school and school education, and the need to ensure the human rights skills of various professional groups including not only education and training staff, but also police, border guards, the judiciary, and officials in central and local government. The general situation is reasonable with respect to fundamental and human rights education for staff in the public sector, but room for improvement remains in the standard of knowledge of human rights and fundamental rights.

154. Human rights constitute a key element of the value basis for education in the core curricula that provide a national framework for formulating local curricula.

155. The demand for fundamental and human rights education provided through voluntary work exceeds the resources of the organisations that provide such education. The primary wish expressed by the non-governmental organisations is for the Government to assume greater responsibility for human rights education in future.

## **VI. National initiatives and commitments**

### **International peace and security**

156. Finland is cognisant of its responsibility for international peace and seeks to have an effective impact in maintaining and increasing this. Finland participates in defining the debate on broad security and views security, development and human rights as closely interlinked; each cannot be realised without the others. Human rights policy is a key element of the foreign and security policy of the Finnish Government. The Government regards human rights policy as a means of achieving a more just, secure and humane world. If Finland is elected to the UN Security Council for the period 2013 to 2014, then promoting human rights will be one of the key principles for action on the Council.

157. Finland is a well-known and trusted stakeholder in international development policy, peacekeeping and mediation. It has contributed strongly to implementing the UN Security Council Resolution on women, peace and security, and is currently preparing its second National Action Plan. Finland continues to strengthen its mediation capacity on the basis of a National Action Plan adopted in December 2012, and the country is investing in crisis prevention. The work of the Group of Friends for Mediation, initiated by Finland and Turkey at the UN, will be continued and developed. The Group of Friends is a key, internationally visible support group for mediation enabling a greater exchange of information between countries that are active in the field of mediation. On the initiative of Finland and Turkey, the Group of Friends negotiated the first General Assembly Resolution on mediation, which was adopted by consensus in June 2011. The resolution strengthened the principles of UN support for mediation and the key role of the UN in mediation.

### **Commitment to the development assistance objective**

158. Finland's new Development Policy Programme emphasises respect for and implementation of human rights, democracy and responsibility. The starting point is a human rights-based approach to development. Particular emphasis is given to the rights of women, children, ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities and indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS, and sexual and gender minorities.

159. The pervading objectives of Finland's development policy are gender equality, reducing inequality, and climatic sustainability. These aims are promoted in all of Finland's development policy and development cooperation. Effective realisation of gender equality also promotes the achievement of other development goals. Development will be advanced globally by reducing economic and social inequality and exclusion. Finland requires its development partner countries to comply with universal human rights. The recommendations of the UN Human Rights Council are a factor to be considered when implementing development cooperation.

160. The objective of Finland is to secure steady growth in appropriations that will enable achievement of the 0.7 % share of the Gross National Income (GNI) and of the country's international commitments. Towards the end of the current electoral period the proceeds from auctioning emission allowances will also be allocated to development cooperation and climate financing. The Government will correspondingly seek to increase the GNI percentage of development cooperation appropriations during its term of office.

### **Commitment to more effective monitoring of human rights implementation**

161. The Government undertakes to promote realisation of fundamental and human rights and to monitor its implementation more systematically and effectively. Protecting effective realisation of fundamental and human rights requires good coordination of associated issues within the Government. As part of this commitment, a Network for fundamental and human rights composed of contact persons representing the Ministries will be appointed.

162. The mission of the Network will be to monitor implementation of the National Human Rights Action Plan and prepare the Government Report on Human Rights Policy. The Network will analyse the situation of fundamental and human rights in Finland, implementation of the human rights obligations and commitments of Finland, and the associated periodic reporting. It will also monitor the development, adoption and national implementation of new international human rights instruments and their protocols. The Network will also review UPR recommendations.

163. The internal Network of State Administration will clarify the processing of issues related to fundamental and human rights and expedite information flows. The Network will increase knowledge of such rights within various administrative branches.

164. Finland has several good practices in the sphere of cooperating with civil society and other stakeholders on fundamental and human rights. The Network will provide an opportunity for further development of these partnership models. It is important to maintain dialogue on the realisation of fundamental and human rights with representatives of regional and local administration and also with the private sector.

*Notes*

<sup>1</sup> The expression “fundamental rights” refers in Finland to constitutional rights enjoyed equally by all individuals. The constitutional character of the rights and freedoms of the individual makes them particularly permanent.

<sup>2</sup> <http://formin.finland.fi/public/download.aspx?ID=89745&GUID={D8A77DAA-390E-40FA-B60F-975A3AF071D3}> <http://formin.finland.fi/public/download.aspx?ID=89746&GUID={9A577E7C-5DC2-475F-834B-46F3872D30FE}>

<sup>3</sup> In applying the statistical concept of relative poverty, i.e. the percentage of those whose income is below 60 per cent of the median income, the poverty line is EUR 1,185 per month.

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