



Making Finland a Global Leader in Gender Equality

Government Action Plan for Gender Equality 2020–2023

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Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

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<p>Abstract</p> <p>The Government's Action Plan for Gender Equality 2020–2023 brings together the goals and measures of the Government of Prime Minister Sanna Marin for promoting gender equality. The objective of the Government is to make Finland a leading country in gender equality. This Action Plan for Gender Equality is based on the Government Programme. The Action Plan for Gender Equality summarises the measures for which the various ministries are responsible.</p> <p>The Action Plan for Gender Equality contains about 50 measures in the areas of working life, financial equality, family life, education, violence against women and intimate partner violence, improving the status of gender minorities, mainstreaming the gender perspective and promoting gender equality within the European Union and in international contexts. The Action Plan will be implemented by all ministries.</p> <p>Preparation of the Action Plan for Gender Equality is based on the Government Programme, international treaties and obligations, stakeholder hearings and inter-ministerial collaboration. The Government adopted the Action Plan for Gender Equality 2020–2023 in a Government Resolution on 25 June 2020. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is responsible for coordinating the Action Plan.</p>			
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Referat	<p>Regeringens jämställdhetsprogram 2020–2023 samlar statsminister Sanna Marins regerings mål och åtgärder för att främja jämställdhet. Regeringen har som mål att göra Finland till ett ledande land i fråga om jämställdhet. Jämställdhetsprogrammet är en del av genomförandet av regeringsprogrammet. I programmet har man sammanfört de åtgärder som respektive ministerium ansvarar för.</p> <p>Jämställdhetsprogrammet innehåller ungefär femtio olika åtgärder som gäller arbetsliv, ekonomisk jämställdhet, familjeliv, utbildning, våld mot kvinnor och våld i nära relationer, könsminoriteters ställning, jämställdhetsintegrering samt främjande av jämställdhet i Europeiska unionen och i internationell verksamhet. Programmet verkställs vid alla ministerier.</p> <p>Jämställdhetsprogrammet har beretts utifrån regeringsprogrammet, internationella avtal och förpliktelser, samråd med intressegrupper och ministeriernas samarbete. Regeringens jämställdhetsprogram 2020–2023 godkändes den 25 juni 2020 genom ett principbeslut av statsrådet. Social- och hälsovårdsministeriet samordnar arbetet i statsrådet.</p>		
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FOREWORD

The goal of the Government is to take ambitious action to improve gender equality in different sectors of society and to raise Finland into a leading country in gender equality. We are already close to the top in global rankings, but there is still a lot to be done. Gender equality must be achieved in all areas of society at all times. If we do not actively promote gender equality, there is a danger of the favourable trend reversing.

The Government's gender equality policy is rooted in human rights. People must be treated equally regardless of their gender. The year 2020 is important, marking the 25th anniversary of the UN Beijing Declaration and Plan for Action on the rights of women and girls. We must not take the rights achieved for granted; we must continue to strive to promote gender equality. Finland has committed to a number of international human rights treaties, such as the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and actively enforces this treaty in both national and international contexts. Gender equality has been one of the core values of the EU ever since it was established. On a national level, the Government Action Plan for Gender Equality implements the goals of the EU Gender Equality Strategy adopted in March 2020.

The Government Action Plan for Gender Equality 2020–2023 is based on the Government Programme adopted by the previous Government in June 2019, and adopted unchanged by the present Government in December 2019. The Government Programme incorporates a record number of measures to promote gender equality. These constituted the foundation for the preparation of this Action Plan. Promoting gender equality requires an intersectional approach: we must focus not only on gender but also, for instance, on socioeconomic status, age and ethnic background.

The worldwide coronavirus pandemic has caused extraordinary circumstances everywhere, and Finland is no exception. Prime Minister Marin's Government is determined that the promotion of gender equality must continue during and after the present crisis.

The entire Government is responsible for promoting gender equality. The Action Plan includes measures in various areas of society and is to be executed in all ministries. It was prepared at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, with input from other ministries. The preparation was steered by a team of State Secretaries chaired by Minister Blomqvist: Minna Kelhä, Eila Mäkipää, Tuomo Puumala and Johanna Sumuvuori. State Secretaries Pilvi Torsti and Ville Kopra and Special Adviser Silja Silvasti also contributed. NGOs and other interest groups were consulted during the preparation process. Cooperation with the civil society will continue at the monitoring and implementation phase of the Action Plan.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed to the preparation of the Action Plan for Gender Equality. Now it is time to put it into practice and to work together for a more equal and less discriminatory Finland.

Sanna Marin
Prime Minister

Thomas Blomqvist
Minister for Nordic Cooperation and Equality

1 Introduction

Prime Minister Marin's Government Programme states as one of its goals to make Finland a forerunner in gender equality. The Government proposes an ambitious range of measures to improve gender equality in various areas of society. Special focus is given to equality in working life and in families. The headline goal of the Government is to increase the employment rate to 75% and to increase the number of people employed by at least 60,000. As part of its sustainability roadmap, the Government intends to set a new employment growth goal at the next government budget session, higher than the current 60,000. We must pay more attention than ever to fostering employment and to creating high-quality jobs. The Government also seeks to promote pay equality, for instance through research & development projects and through increasing pay transparency through legislative measures.

The Government Programme includes the goals of families dividing family leave and care responsibilities equally among parents, equality and non-discrimination being reinforced in working life, and the gender pay gap being reduced. Choices and flexibility available to families for planning their family leave will be increased. The family leave reform will be designed to treat diverse families equally and to allow for various kinds of entrepreneurship. This reform must be executed so that, in a family with two parents, both parents will have an equal quota of months of leave.

Violence against women remains a serious human rights issue in Finland. It is also a key theme under the gender equality policy. The Government aims to reduce violence against women and intimate partner violence, and also to improve the status of victims of human trafficking. There are many measures in the Government Programme designed for this purpose, distributed across programmes and projects to be implemented in the various administrative branches.

Action Plan for Gender Equality is based on the Government Programme and the Government Action Plan. The purpose of this Action Plan for Gender Equality is effectiveness; it incorporates concrete measures for improving gender equality and for curbing discrimination. Because the gender equality policy is cross-administrative by nature and occupies the administrative branches of all ministries, it has points of contact with many other programmes of the Government. Efforts have been made in this Action Plan for Gender Equality to avoid overlaps with other programmes. Comments received from experts and stakeholders at a hearing held in February 2020 were taken on board in the preparation.

International treaties such as the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the UN Beijing Declaration and Plan for Action, and the EU Gender Equality Strategy adopted in March 2020, have guided the preparation of this Action Plan for Gender Equality. The UN Sustainable Development Goals are incorporated as a cross-cutting principle. The EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025 outlines several important measures for promoting gender equality. The key objectives include ending gender-based violence; challenging gender stereotypes; ensuring equal opportunities in the working life, including closing pay gap; and achieving gender balance in decision-making and politics. Measures for reconciling work and private life will also be enhanced so that women and men can have real potential for equal development both personally and professionally.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals are incorporated in the Action Plan for Gender Equality as a cross-cutting principle. The UN 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals have many points of contact with gender equality. All measures in this Action Plan for Gender Equality support the attainment of Goal 5, Gender Equality. This Action Plan for Gender Equality enshrines the Sustainable Development Goals for instance in measures addressing improving the rights of women and girls, education, working life, the economy, eliminating inequalities, curbing violence and mainstreaming the gender perspective.

This Action Plan for Gender Equality relies on intersectionality, an approach where an individual's status in society is considered to be influenced simultaneously by multiple factors – not just gender but also socioeconomic background, place of residence, origin, family background, educational attainment, age, degree of disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

Intersectionality is a means for examining overlapping and cross-cutting mechanisms of discrimination in society at large. Many of the measures in this Action Plan for Gender Equality are based on population-level research findings and register data analysed by legal gender. Statistics and studies concerning the status of women and men do point out major challenges in gender equality but do not provide a broad picture. This Action Plan for Gender Equality accepts both the gender diversity and the diversity of families; yet research findings on families usually describe the family model consisting of two heterosexual parents with children. The measures in this Action Plan for Gender Equality seek, within the limitations of statistics and research data, to address both the diversity of family types and the gender diversity.

This Action Plan for Gender Equality does not set goals or define indicators. These will be provided in the Gender Equality Report to be submitted by the deadline imposed by Parliament, the end of 2021. The Gender Equality Report will present national gender equality goals extending beyond the current electoral term. A cross-administrative monitoring system will be set up to oversee these gender equality goals; there is an entry in the Government Programme to this effect.

This Action Plan for Gender Equality is organised into three sections in each chapter: current situation, Government goals and concrete measures. The purpose of the **current situation** sections is, as the title states, to present an overview of phenomena as they stand now in the light of statistics and research data. The **goals** are taken directly from the Government Programme in each respective area. The **measures** describe in concrete terms what is going to be done under this Action Plan for Gender Equality.

The Government is adopting this Action Plan for Gender Equality in exceptional circumstances. The coronavirus pandemic brings its own particular gender equality challenges for our health, wellbeing, care, work and safety. So far, no comprehensive analysis of the gender impacts of the pandemic has been performed in Finland. What is evident by now is that the mortality rate is higher among men than among women, while women, particularly young women, were more likely to be laid off from their jobs in the early stages of the pandemic than men. In the female-dominated care sector and service occupations, telecommuting is in most cases impossible, meaning that these employees are at risk of exposure at work and when commuting. Those who can telecommute may experience stress

in reconciling work and family life, particularly in families with small children. According to a survey conducted by Eurofound, this is more of a stress factor for women than for men. The protective and restrictive measures imposed on the elderly affect women more than men. For instance, 70% of the aged in 24h care are women. Emergency calls to the police regarding domestic violence have increased during the coronavirus crisis. In the majority of cases concerning intimate partner violence, the victim is a woman, or a young person belonging to a gender minority.

The Government is determined to promote gender equality notwithstanding the exceptional circumstances caused by the pandemic. It is important to evaluate the gender impact of measures undertaken during the pandemic and exit measures in the short and long term. The goal for evaluating health-related, financial and social impacts is that the Government's effort to improve gender equality will continue to advance both during and after the pandemic. The coronavirus crisis must not halt reforms that are crucial for gender equality; on the contrary, reinforcing gender equality and human rights is now more important than ever.

Key programmes and reforms undertaken by the Government with relevance for gender equality

The Government is pursuing several reforms and projects with relevance for gender equality: These include the action plan for combating violence against women, sharing family leave and care responsibilities equally between parents in families, and measures to promote equal pay. The social welfare and health care reform, social security reform, employment improvement projects and revising general conscription also have significant gender equality implications. The Government is also preparing a national action plan on fundamental and human rights, and a programme against racism and discrimination. What is important for the matter at hand is that these significant and far-reaching reforms and projects must contribute to gender equality. This goal is also entered in the Government Programme. The aforementioned reforms and projects are each being prepared in their respective processes and are thus not discussed in this Action Plan for Gender Equality.

2 Improving equality in working life and financial decision-making

Current situation

Compared with many other countries, the gender equality situation on the Finnish labour market is rather good. Over a period of several decades, both women and men have been provided with opportunities to both hold jobs and care for small children, also during infancy. Employment rates are very close to each other, 71.8% for women and 73.3% for men (persons aged 15–64, 2019). The average gender gap in employment in the EU Member States is about 12 percentage points. In Finland, the unemployment rate is 6.2% among women and 7.2% among men (persons aged 15–74, 2019). The unemployment rate for both decreased on the previous year, more so for women than for men. The risk of unemployment is high for persons who have only completed basic education (the majority of whom are men) and for persons in fixed-term employment. The employment rate among single parents and disabled women is significantly lower than for the entire population, as is the employment rate among immigrants.

The employment rate for persons with foreign background born abroad is 48% among women and 57% among men (2017). Women born abroad are much more likely than women born in Finland to be completely excluded from the labour force, their labour force participation rates being 65% and 81%, respectively. For immigrants, their country of origin and how long they have been resident in Finland are highly significant for their employment potential¹. The labour market

¹ It is important to use the term immigrant accurately. This term is defined in different ways in various sources and statistics. In the present context, it is used to describe persons with foreign background who were born abroad.

position of women with foreign background is particularly weak, even with good education and language skills, as even after 15 years of living in Finland they do not attain the employment rate of women with native background. People with partial work ability, such as persons with physical disabilities, find it harder than average to gain employment. Their situation has improved in recent years, however. Partially disabled persons principally find employment in various sectors on the open labour market. Unemployment among single parents increased with the recession of the 1990s but did not subsequently decrease at the same rate as that of other households. According to the employment statistics of Statistics Finland, the unemployment rate among single parents in 2018 was 13% for women and 12% for men (persons aged 18–64). Unemployment among single parents was thus clearly higher than the national average.

Platform work, agency work and similar forms of employment are marginal at the moment but growing steadily. Up until 2015, agency work involved women and men in roughly equal numbers, but since then agency work has become much more common among men. In 2018, there were about 40,000 agency workers in all, and 59% of them were men. There are about 106,000 people employed on zero-hour contracts; two out of three are under 35 years of age. There are roughly as many women as men on zero-hour contracts.

A clear gender gap may be found in types of employment relationships: 19% of women and 13% of men are in fixed-term employment. The gender gap is even more pronounced among part-time employees, with 22% of women and 10% of men being in part-time work (persons aged 15–74, 2019). The most common reason for part-time employment is the lack of a full-time job (women) or studying (men). The lack of a full-time job is the most common reason for part-time employment among women aged 25–34; even in this age group, child care is a substantially less common reason. Part-time employment can be a feasible solution for reconciling work and family life, depending on one's life situation, but part-time employment also involves conflicts. Persons in part-time employment earn less in wages and in pension contributions, and the working hours may be difficult to reconcile with the everyday life of a family with children, as many part-time employees work in the evenings and at weekends. More than half of the employees in the sectors where part-time employment is most common have found it difficult to get by on their wages. The negative characteristics of part-time employment manifest themselves most commonly among people who are working part-time because of the lack of a full-time job.

Problems with debilitating stress and coping have been increasing since 2013, particularly among women. Women are more likely than men to feel that digitisation has increased their workload and the pace of work, while men are more likely than women to feel that going digital has made their work more efficient and allows the use of creativity at work. Experiences of the introduction of digital solutions have been more negative among wage earners in local government than among others. Nearly half of the women employed in local government (48%) feel that digitisation has increased their workload. It is noteworthy that in the European Working Conditions Surveys (EWCS) Finland stands out as a country where even back in 2015 women experienced more stress than the EU28 average, while the stress experienced by men was close to that average.

The gender pay gap is a chronic gender equality issue on the labour market. It is a crucial goal for the promotion of gender equality to have equal pay for work of equal value, regardless of gender. This goal applies to the entire labour market, not just to wages at an individual workplace. Examining the labour market as a whole, we find that the pay gap has decreased only by about 3 percentage points in 15 years, being 16% in 2019 (as per advance statistics on average monthly pay for employment with regular working hours). The average monthly pay for full-time employment was EUR 3,835 for men and EUR 3,226 for women. The average pay is the lowest in the local government sector, which is female-dominated. Although female-dominated sectors and occupations have long been highlighted in public debate as being underappreciated, no significant improvement has been forthcoming. The average educational attainment of women has risen, but this has not been reflected in rising wages. A whole raft of measures, such as tripartite equal pay programmes, has passed by without making much of a dent in pay gaps in female-dominated and male-dominated sectors. Structural changes in working life have likewise failed to eliminate this problem.

Gender equality researchers have criticised the claim that the pay gap is mainly due to segregation in the labour market and to the educational and occupational choices made by individuals. Labour market segregation is certainly a factor in all this, but hardly the only one. Also, the aforementioned claim has the effect of shifting the blame for the pay gap to individuals who make ‘the wrong choices’. Emphasising individual choices deflects attention from structural discrimination in working life, pay discrimination at individual workplaces and the role of the labour market organisations in generating and upholding pay differentials.

Wages affect future pensions. The pension gap between the genders is greater than the pay gap: women's pensions are on average one fifth smaller than men's pensions. Women outnumber men among low-income pensioners (e.g. guarantee pension recipients). Not much attention has been paid in public debate to the pension gap between women and men. A project launched by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, with part funding from the EU, seeks to highlight the gender pension gap issue.

Gender-based discrimination continues to be perpetrated in working life. Women are much more likely to encounter discrimination than men. Discrimination scenarios often involve age and religion too. Origin and language, or disability and age, are typically occurring pairs of grounds for discrimination. Pregnancy discrimination and family leave discrimination are major gender equality issues, and these may be found in all sectors. The majority of the complaints made to the Equality Ombudsman have to do with fixed-term employment relationships not being renewed once the employee was found to be pregnant. In 2019, Statistics Finland investigated the incidence of pregnancy discrimination. They found that the fixed-term employment relationships of 11,000 women had not been renewed because of discriminatory reasons, while 17,000 women had changed employers or job duties because their duties had changed or been eliminated during their parental leave, or another person had been hired in their place. It is illegal to refuse to renew a fixed-term employment contract on the basis of pregnancy or family leave or to specify a fixed-term employment relationship as ending at the beginning of maternity leave, paternity leave or parental leave, but this ban is only provided for in the Act on Equality between Women and Men. The Equality Ombudsman has estimated that adding provisions to this effect to the Employment Contracts Act and other legislation governing employment would more effectively protect against this kind of discrimination. Discrimination against family leave can also manifest itself in attitudes in the workplace, complicating the potential for fathers to take extended family leave.

In the group of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) or undergoing military service, the gender balance is fairly equal, even though public attention generally focuses on young men and boys. In 2019, the percentages of young people (aged 15–24) in this group were 8% of all boys/men and 10% of all girls/women. We should note that this is a very heterogeneous group and includes e.g. young people preparing for entrance examinations of institute of higher education or they might be on family leave.

The EU Gender Equality Strategy adopted in March 2020 identifies the connection between gender stereotypes and inequality. It is estimated in the Strategy that segregation limits the educational and occupational choices available to individuals, upholds pay differentials and complicates the meeting of supply and demand on the labour market. On the Finnish labour market, gender segregation is more sharply defined than in many other countries. In other words, women and men tend to favour sectors and occupations that are 'typical' for them. The general rise in educational attainment in the population has not significantly contributed to reducing segregation across the labour market as a whole, even if the gender distribution has shifted in certain individual occupations. The percentage out of the whole labour force employed in what are known as 'equal occupations' (where gender percentages are between 40% and 59%) has been decreasing throughout the 2000s and is now less than 10%. Analysed by sector, the most female-dominant sector is social welfare and health care, while the most male-dominated sector is construction. Gender segregation can be measured in several ways and based on several kinds of data. In the most recent Quality of Working Life survey, respondents were asked to report the gender of people working in the same occupation as them in their workplace. The responses indicate that it is far less common than before for employees to be in a workplace with men only or women only. It would thus seem that the starkest segregation has been mitigated at the workplace level. The Quality of Working Life survey indicates that changes happening in the occupational structure are, little by little, reducing gender segregation on the labour market.

The digitisation of both work and leisure time prompts questions about how artificial intelligence and algorithms work: do they replicate the inequalities of society at large also in the digital environment? According to the OECD, there is a risk of gender stereotypes and minority prejudices being carried over to the cyber environment, thereby continuing to threaten equality trends as work and leisure time become increasingly digital. The goal, obviously, would be for artificial intelligence to be fair and neutral. It is likewise noted in the EU Gender Equality Strategy that it is very important for women to be involved in building our digital future.

According to the Quality of Working Life survey, women have considerably more experiences of sexual harassment in the workplace than men. The incidence of sexual harassment experienced in the workplace during the past year was 10% for women employees and 2% for male employees. Nearly one in five women

(18%), compared to 4% of men, reported having been sexually harassed in the workplace at some time in the past. For both women and men, the incidence of such experiences was higher than average in the social welfare and health care sector, and in service occupations. Young women are particularly susceptible to sexual harassment in working life: nearly one in three women aged 15–24 reported being sexually harassed in the past year. According to a study commissioned by the Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK), 58% of those who had experienced sexual harassment in the past two years never reported it to anyone. The most common reason for not reporting was the fear that it would not be taken seriously. The second most common reason was the fear of repercussions.

Men and women occupy different positions in the working life hierarchy. There are far more men than women in management roles. About one third of managers are women. The higher up we go in any organisation, the fewer women there are; this is true in both the public and the private sector. The percentages of women and men in management roles has been monitored through data compilation for instance in the management statistics network led by the Ministry of Finance. One way of boosting gender equality in financial decision-making would be to ensure a balanced representation of women and men on the boards of enterprises.

Since 2004, the Government Action Plans for Gender Equality have included equality goals for State-owned companies. As a result of this policy, in 2018 the gender distribution on the Boards of Directors of State-owned companies was 41% women and 59% men on average. At the Annual General Meetings in 2018, the percentage of women among government appointments (44%) was slightly lower than in 2014 (45%). The percentage of women on the Boards of Directors of commercial enterprises wholly owned by the State decreased somewhat (2018: 42%; 2014: 45%) but remained favourable. In publicly traded companies where the State has a majority holding, the similar percentage fell slightly under the 40% goal.

Women have increasingly gained seats on the Boards of Directors of publicly traded companies in the 2010s. This progress has happened on a self-regulatory basis. However, in the past two years this favourable development seems to have ground to a halt. On average, the Boards of Directors of publicly traded companies had 29% women and 71% men among their members (2019).

Government goals

A headline goal of the Government is to increase the employment rate to 75% and to increase the number of people employed by at least 60,000. As part of its sustainability road map, the Government intends to set a new employment growth goal at the next government budget session, higher than the current 60,000. There is also much to improve in the quality and equality of working life. It is noted in the Government Programme that employment trends will be evaluated not only on the basis of the employment rate but also the number of hours worked, the employment rate converted into full-time equivalents, and the type and quality of employment relationships. The goal is for the jobs created to be of a good quality and to provide a sufficient income. The greatest employment growth potential is in groups that now have a low employment rate, such as women with immigrant background.

The gender pay gap will be narrowed between 2020 and 2023 through a systematic series of actions in accordance with the Government Programme. The gender pay gap will be narrowed by increasing pay transparency through legislation, by R&D projects led by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, and by joint efforts undertaken by the Government and the labour market organisations. The Government aims to curb pay discrimination. In order to curb pregnancy discrimination, the Government will further specify the legislation on fixed-term employment relationships and explore how to improve the employment security of employees returning from family leave.

Measures

2.1. Promote pay transparency through legislation. Set up a tripartite working group to prepare the Government goals of adding provisions to the Act on Equality between Women and Men to grant personnel collectively, personnel representatives and individual employees the right and the effective means for gaining information on pay, and for addressing pay discrimination more effectively. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

2.2. Prevent pregnancy discrimination. Further specify legislation so that pregnancy and taking family leave shall not influence the continuation of a fixed-term

employment relationship. Explore how to improve the employment security of employees returning from family leave and take legislative and other action as warranted by the findings. This matter is to be discussed in the tripartite working group led by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment preparing for the implementation of the Work-life Balance Directive. - Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

2.3. Improve the status of employees on zero-hour contracts and in temporary work. Conduct a study and strengthen the legislation. Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment.

2.4. Ensure access to integration and language education for immigrant women as part of the Government Action Plan on Integration (report). Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment.

2.5. The Government aims to promote gender equality on the Boards of Directors of publicly traded companies. The goal is that both genders have a representation of at least 40% on the Boards of Directors of large and medium-sized publicly traded companies. This equal representation should be principally achieved in keeping with the recommendations in the Corporate Governance Code of the Securities Market Association and through the companies' own actions. The Government will monitor progress towards this goal and evaluate its effectiveness on an annual basis. The Government will also commission a study or report on the factors why women do not make up a higher percentage of Board members, management group members and CEOs in publicly traded companies. Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

2.6. The Government will continue its systematic efforts to increase the percentage of women among members of Boards of Directors and management groups in State-owned companies, based on goals set in 2004. Progress towards these goals and the gender equality goals defined in the Government Resolution on State-ownership Policy will be monitored on an annual basis in the Government's reports to Parliament. Prime Minister's Office.

3 Reconciling work and family life, and distributing care responsibilities more equitably

Current situation

Potential for reconciling work and family life has been improved over the decades in various ways, including advancements in family leave, day care, school meals and care for the elderly. The goal has been to contribute to the wellbeing of families, to give parents more opportunities to spend time with their children while allowing the parents to also go to work. However, a fully functioning reconciliation of work and family life and the equitable sharing of caring responsibilities still require further action. The EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025 stresses that taking care of the family is the right and the responsibility of both parents. The Work-life Balance Directive specifies minimum requirements for employees' family leave and flexible working hours arrangements while promoting the equitable sharing of caring responsibilities. It also specifies that parents shall each have at least two months of dedicated parental leave. The Directive is to be implemented in national legislation by the beginning of August 2022.

Caring responsibilities are not equally divided between women and men in families, and this manifests itself in the use of family leave. Fathers only use around 10% of the parental allowance days available. Even fewer men make use of the child home care allowance. There has been some increase in the 2000s with the creation of leave quotas for fathers, but among the Nordic countries Finland has the lowest rate of family leave taken by fathers. Fathers typically take the shorter portion of paternity leave, which can be taken together with the mother's maternity leave, at

the birth of the child; 84% of all fathers did so in 2018. About 60% of fathers took the longer portion of paternity leave after parental leave. These percentages have been increasing year on year. One in four fathers of children born in 2015 took no family leave at all. The following are more likely to take longer paternity leave: fathers over the age of 30, fathers with a high income, first-time fathers, and fathers with a spouse who has a high income and a good occupational status.

There is a feeling that attitudes towards family leave at workplaces are now more permissive. A clear positive trend can be identified between 2013 and 2018. However, it is still easier for women than men to take various kinds of family leave. An exception to this rule is caring for a sick child, or temporary child care leave, which is slightly easier for fathers to take than mothers. Analysed by sector, central government employees find it the easiest to take extended family leave. By contrast, extended family leave was felt to be the most problematic by fathers working in the private sector. Although attitudes to fathers' family leave have shifted towards the favourable at workplaces, several studies have found that while it is considered self-evident for fathers to take the leave that is earmarked for them, the rest of all family leave available is perceived as belonging to the mother. What is crucial for fathers making use of family leave is how their work will be organised while they are away. Workplaces rarely hire family leave substitutes for fathers; instead, the work is divided up between co-workers, or the fathers manage it themselves.

After parental leave, parents may claim child home care allowance until their youngest child's third birthday. About 93% of those claiming this allowance are women (2018), and an even higher percentage of the days spent on this allowance is taken by women. Overall, the use of the child home care allowance has decreased in the 2010s. Nearly half (47%) of those families that would be entitled to the child home care allowance do not claim it at all, or only claim it until the child is just under 1.5 years old. Only 10% of all families claim the child home care allowance until the child's third birthday, and this percentage is further declining. More than half of the mothers who rely thus extensively on the child home care allowance have no job to return to. They have a lower educational attainment than other mothers; more than one in four have only completed basic education.

The employment rate of mothers of small children has increased by more than that of mothers overall. The employment rate of all mothers rose by three

percentage points, to 77%, between 2014 and 2018. The greatest increase, nearly five percentage points, was in the employment rate of mothers of children aged 1–2, which went from 53% to 58%. There is a clear difference in employment rates between the parents of small children. For mothers, the employment rate declines markedly when their youngest child is under 3 years old but then rises again. For fathers, having children does not reduce their employment rate; if anything, the opposite is true. However, the employment rate is not the best possible indicator for making comparisons between countries of how the parents of small children are going to work. The most common point of comparison to Finland is Sweden. If we consider the work attendance rate, we find that it is nearly the same for Finnish women (58.1%) and Swedish women (60.5%) (2015), but when we zoom in on mothers of children under 3 years old, we find a clear difference. This difference is at its greatest when the youngest child is aged 1–2, at which point the work attendance rate is 43% for Finnish women and 58% for Swedish women, yet the difference is almost completely absent among mothers of children aged 3–6. By contrast, it is more common in Finland than in Sweden for fathers of small children to be at work.

Efforts have been made to increase employment among mothers for instance by encouraging them to take part-time employment instead of staying at home full-time on the child home care allowance. At the beginning of 2014, the partial care allowance available to parents of children under 3 years old was revised into the flexible care allowance, which is available if a parent applies to their employer for partial care leave. This reform caused a slight increase in part-time employment among parents of small children: in 2018, the flexible care allowance was used in the care of 10% of children under 3 years old. Partial care leave supported by the flexible care allowance is taken by mothers who have a job to return to from care leave. Mothers who do not take partial care leave report as reasons that they do not have a job, that they prefer full-time care leave, that there are financial reasons for not doing so, or that part-time employment is not possible because of the nature of their job duties. Some were excluded from eligibility because of the six-month employment requirement. There are research findings indicating that part-time employment does not alleviate mothers' or fathers' experiences of not having time to spend with their families or of neglecting their domestic responsibilities. Income problems associated with part-time employment undermine the wellbeing of both parents and children, being particularly stressful for mothers.

The increasing percentage of the elderly in the population has multiple impacts on families. The percentage of elderly people living alone is already high, and the need for care is increasing at a considerable rate. The working-age population has experienced an increasing responsibility for care of ageing relatives, especially if they live at home, and this will continue to increase in the future. Because women have a longer life expectancy, the majority of the elderly population are women. The majority of people employed in care for the elderly are also women. Therefore, this demographic shift is in many ways also a gender issue and an equality issue. An increasing number of people of working age have a responsibility of care for ageing relatives. According to the Gender Equality Barometer, about one in three of all employed persons assisted a sick or impaired person at least once a month, women slightly more often than men. According to the Quality of Work Life Survey, 18% of wage earners visited persons outside their household to provide assistance on a weekly basis (and 4% on an almost daily basis), typically their own parents or their spouse's parents. Analysed by age group, the incidence of providing such care was highest in the 45–55 age group (women 48%, men 37%). There are about 46,000 informal carers in Finland, the majority of them women.

According to demographic change data compiled by Statistics Finland, the fertility rate declined for the ninth year running, but in 2019 the rate of decline was less than before. The fertility rate in 2019 was 1.35 (children per woman). The easing of the decline in the fertility rate was particularly due to the last months of the year, in which the number of babies born no longer continued to decrease as it had in the early part of the year. There were 45,613 children born in 2019. The total fertility rate indicates how many children an average woman would have in her lifetime if the fertility rate remained at the same level as in the year under review. The total fertility rate varies by educational attainment, declining the most among those who have only completed basic education. The total fertility rate is higher than average among women from a foreign background. The fertility figures for the first months of 2020 do not look as low as before, but we will not be able to see for some time yet whether the downward trend is reversing.

There are multiple reasons for fertility decline, and so far studies indicate that they cannot be unambiguously defined. Social policy is supposed to facilitate having children for those who wish to have children. At present, people put off having children for instance because of being in fixed-term employment relationships. Pregnancy discrimination and family leave discrimination are well-known

phenomena, and this may have an impact on the fertility rate. There have also been changes in how various aspects of life are appreciated. According to recent research findings, 66% of women and 61% of men consider paid employment to be a highly important element in their lives. This percentage has increased significantly among women since 2013, and for the first time in 40 years it is higher than among men.

Diversity of families is a commonplace today, and various family types are acknowledged better than before: families with children, divorce families, single-parent families, reconstituted families, LGBTQ families, multiple-birth families, adoption families, etc. The life situations of various types of families are increasingly taken into account in legislative reforms. Among families with children, households with two parents have on average a higher income level and are less likely to be a low-income household than households with a single parent, the latter having the lowest median income of all population groups along with single-person households. Children of single parents have a particularly elevated risk of poverty. The percentage of single-parent families that are low-income, 20%, is nearly three times higher than the same figure for two-parent families (7%). According to registry data, most single-parent families consist of a mother and children. There is little data available as yet on alternating residence.

Government goals

The Government's objectives include the goals of families dividing family leave and care responsibilities equally among parents, non-discrimination and gender equality being reinforced in working life, and the gender pay gap being reduced. Choices and flexibility available to families for planning their family leave will be increased. The Government Programme states that the family leave reform will be designed to cater to all kinds of families equally, including diverse families, and to allow for various kinds of entrepreneurship. This reform must be executed so that both parents will have an equal quota of months of leave. Earnings-related leave quotas for fathers will be extended without decreasing the leave currently available to mothers. Also, family leave is to include a period of parental leave that can be taken by either parent. Both parents will be paid an earnings-related portion at an increased rate corresponding to the current benefit for mothers. The reform must comply with the requirements of the Pregnant Workers Directive and the Work-life

Balance Directive. The child home care allowance will continue as at present. The possibility of paying this allowance directly to a grandparent caring for a child will be investigated.

Support is to be provided for people to have the number of children that they want. All types of family are equally valuable.

Most families cope well with their lives, but everyone needs some kind of support from their community or from society at large. The plurality of families and life situations will be taken into account in decision-making. The aspirations of the involuntarily childless will be supported in a variety of ways, and the equitable availability of fertility treatments will be ensured.

The family leave reform will facilitate a considerable advance in distributing responsibility for care more equitably between genders. This will require that gender equality goals set for the reform in the Government Programme are attained. The family leave reform is currently in tripartite preparation and is progressing according to its own timetable. It is therefore not entered as a measure in this Action Plan for Gender Equality.

Measures

3.1. Explore possibilities for increasing flexibility in working life to balance the reconciliation of work and family life and to help people cope at work in order to extend careers. The aim here is particularly to improve the potential for the part-time employment of parents of small children and persons caring for their ageing relatives. Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment.

3.2. Combine the Maternity Act and the Paternity Act into a single Parenthood Act. Ministry of Justice.

3.3. Promote the proposals given in the report on shared residence. Ministry of Justice.

3.4. Support equitable shared parenting. Enable a child to have two equally valid addresses of residence. Ministry of Finance.

4 Promoting gender equality in early childhood education and in school education

Current situation

Early childhood education fosters equality and non-discrimination among children and prevents social exclusion. Knowledge and skills learned in early childhood education reinforce the participation and agency of children in society at large. The EU Gender Equality Strategy acknowledges the crucial role of upbringing and education in promoting gender equality. In an equal society, education and school education are available to everyone as far as their abilities will take them. At present, however, there are increasingly clear regional, socioeconomic and gender-based differences in how people undertake education and school education. Intergenerational inheritance of educational attainment is also an important factor.

According to the Act on Early Childhood Education (540/2018), the purpose of early childhood education is to promote gender equality and non-discrimination. The mandatory National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education (2018) stresses the gender-sensitivity of early childhood education. Strict gender roles inhibit the potential of children and do not allow for gender plurality. The assumed gender of a child affects things such as others' expectations of the child's communicating abilities. Gender-oriented attitudes to children affect role development and a number of other factors such as linguistic development: it has been found that girls of day care age are expected to have richer language skills than boys. Children adopt gender roles at an early age, so it is vital for early childhood education to be gender-aware. Children must be able to improve their skills and to make

choices independent of their gender, origin, cultural background or any other personal characteristic. Gender-sensitivity means that every child should have equal opportunities, rights and responsibilities regardless of their gender and that every child must be considered as an individual. Attending early childhood education helps level the playing field with regard to some factors due to the children's backgrounds, such as socioeconomic differences. Therefore, early childhood education plays a substantial role in promoting equality, for both the children and their families, and it is for this reason that raising the participation rate is justified. The participation rate of children aged 3–5 in early childhood education in Finland increased between 2005 and 2017 (from 68% to 79%), but it is still lower than the OECD average (87%) and much lower than the average for the other Nordic countries (94%–98%).

The Finnish school system is one of the best in the world, and children and adolescents continue to perform very well at school. Differences in performance between schools are smaller in Finland than in other countries. According to the results of the most recent PISA study (2018), Finland's average point score went down from the previous one, but the reading skills of Finnish children and adolescents are still good. Finland leads the field among OECD countries together with Estonia, Canada, Ireland and South Korea. However, the difference in literacy between boys and girls in Finland has been among the greatest in all participating countries in every PISA study, and in the latest study this difference was the greatest among all OECD countries. One of the key reasons for why girls do better at school than boys is that their literacy is better: in Finland, girls outperformed boys in this respect by 52 points, compared to the OECD average of 30 points. Also, for the second time running girls performed better in mathematics than boys, and the difference was statistically significant. It is also remarkable that the level of mathematics skills varies more among boys than it does among girls. There are also clear differences both between genders and between population groups in literacy and in entering secondary education. An estimated 10% to 15% of adolescents are not feeling well. Social exclusion and mental health problems, for instance, affect all genders, but social exclusion is more common among boys, while mental health problems are more common among girls. It is also noteworthy that there may be a high threshold for seeking help. These challenges cause not only human suffering but also societal costs in cases where the need for help is not identified. Discrimination against minorities is also a challenge in schools.

Factors underlying education choices and differences in learning need to be examined intersectionally: inequality often manifests itself as the result of a cluster of factors.

Gender, socioeconomic background and immigrant background often produce a combined impact. Studies show that children’s literacy and school performance, and also their choices of subjects and educational paths, are influenced not only by their gender but also by their parents’ education, occupation and socioeconomic status. In Finland, the correlation between parents’ socioeconomic status and childrens’ performance at school has increased over the past decade.

There are huge differences in literacy between pupils with immigrant background and pupils in the ‘native population’²; both first-generation and second-generation immigrants at school have a lower literacy score on average than the average for pupils in the native population.

An immigrant background is not in itself a factor in any pupil’s school success. What is noteworthy is that among immigrant-background pupils there may be less of a difference in school performance between boys and girls, apparently because girls in some immigrant groups do less well academically at school than girls in the native population. A particularly negative impact on the school performance of girls from an immigrant background is caused by the mother of the family being unemployed or excluded from the labour force. Education segregation remains evident in Finland in the educational attainment of persons with foreign background³ even after comprehensive school: in 2018, 27% of girls and 25% of boys with foreign background had completed a secondary qualification, while 29% of women and 22% of men with foreign background had completed a higher education degree.

Social exclusion is more common among boys and men than among girls and women. Health differentials among men are particularly significant. Many of the contributing factors of social exclusion – lack of education, illness, lack of income, homelessness, mental health problems, intoxicant use, violence and criminal activities – already emerge at school age. Socially excluded persons account for approximately 5% of those aged 15–29, and two thirds of them are men. The aim is for everyone completing comprehensive school to go on to complete secondary education, because this would prevent social exclusion among young people, particularly boys and young men. In 2018, there were 102,673 people aged 20–29 in

2 In the interests of terminological consistency, we are using the concepts *immigrant background* and *native population* as in the statistics given in the PISA study.

3 In the interests of terminological consistency, we are using the concept *foreign background* as in the PISA study.

Finland who had only completed basic education. This represents 15% of that age group (17% of men and 13% of women).

Obvious differences in the educational paths chosen by girls and boys are already apparent in secondary education: 64% of girls applied principally for upper secondary school, while 55% of boys applied principally for vocational education. In 2018, 58% of upper secondary school students were girls and 42% were boys, compared with 49% boys and 51% girls in basic vocational education. Girls are more likely than boys to select optional foreign language courses in upper secondary school. The choice between basic and advanced mathematics is important from the gender perspective, because it governs the choice of humanities and natural sciences subjects for the matriculation examination. The choices in mathematics and in humanities and natural sciences subjects, in turn, profile the degree programmes that the students are likely to apply for and affect the admissions policies of those programmes. In 2017, 36% of girls and 50% of boys chose advanced mathematics.

It has long been the case that in Finland's working-age population women have had a higher educational attainment than men. In 2017, women outnumbered men as students at academic universities and universities of practical sciences by 53% to 47%. Similarly in 2017, women accounted for 60% of those completing a Bachelor's degree, 57% of those completing a Master's degree, 72% of those completing a Licentiate's degree and 52% of those completing a doctorate.

These gender differences are independent of background: any and all girls and women tend to educate themselves better and to do better at their studies than boys and men. As described above, gender segregation in education can be detected in choices of subject and educational path and in learning outcomes but also in practical teaching, in student assessment and in the gender distribution of school employees and teaching personnel. According to a study commissioned by the Government, teacher behaviour may be unconsciously governed by gender stereotypes. These stereotypes were identified as a risk factor for the pursuit of equality.

Higher education student admission procedures will be reformed. As of 2020, students will be admitted to university studies principally on the basis of their school certificates. The joint assessment procedure where points are awarded for both school certificates and entrance examination results will be abandoned. In

the future, entrance examinations will be reserved for applicants who cannot be admitted on the basis of their school certificates, for instance if they did not get sufficiently high grades in their matriculation examination or if they do not have a qualifying school certificate. The aim is for selection criteria, particularly the weighting of grades on school certificates, to be announced far enough in advance that they will be known to potential applicants only just beginning their secondary-level studies, since this may influence their choice of subjects. To ensure gender-equal educational opportunities, it is vital to monitor and evaluate the gender-specific impact of this change in the admissions criteria of universities. A follow-up study will be commissioned on the student admissions reform.

Government goals

The Government aims to promote gender equality and non-discrimination systematically across all levels of education and in early childhood education.

The Government will enact a subjective right to full-time early childhood education. The relevant amendment to the Act on Early Childhood Education was passed by Parliament in autumn 2019 and will enter into force on 1 Aug 2020.

The compulsory school age will be raised to 18.

The Government will prepare an education policy report for the year 2030. This report will present long-term measures for raising Finland's educational attainment and competence level, for fostering equality in education and for narrowing learning differentials. This includes the specific aim of increasing the percentage of young people completing higher education to 50% by 2030.

At present, RDI expenditure amounts to about 2.8% of the GDP. The Government aims at increasing this to 4% by 2030.

The Government will continue the experimental programme of free early childhood education for children aged 5 (20 h per week) in 2020–2021. The aim is to increase the participation rate in early childhood education, to promote women's employment and to improve pedagogics.

Measures

4.1. Enact mandatory gender equality plans for early childhood education. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

4.2. Execute projects in the 'Right to Learn' programme to prepare legislation, permanent funding arrangements and practices and procedures that foster non-discrimination. The aim here is to curb and prevent learning differentials that are due to socioeconomic background, immigrant background or gender. Ministry of Education and Culture.

4.3. Execute a development project in the 'Right to Learn' programme to provide continuing education for teachers in basic education, personnel and management in early childhood education, and school managers. The aim here is to promote gender equality and to neutralise gender segregation in education and in working life. Ministry of Education and Culture.

4.4. Ensure the professional and pedagogical competence of teaching personnel and instructors. Grant funding for hiring teachers and instructors for vocational education and for support measures for teaching and instruction. The aim here is to prevent school dropouts, to boost completions, to prevent social exclusion and to promote equality among students. Ministry of Education and Culture.

4.5. In spring 2020, the Ministry of Education and Culture is to produce a brief preliminary report on the current situation at academic universities and universities of applied sciences in how gender equality and non-discrimination are being promoted in R&D activities. This report is to be based on the gender equality and non-discrimination plans of universities. The results will be leveraged in the performance agreement negotiations with universities in spring 2020. The situational awareness will be enhanced by launching a more extensive study into the current state of gender equality and non-discrimination in research, development and innovation activities (RDI activities) in 2020. Ministry of Education and Culture.

4.6. Prepare a higher education accessibility plan. Review how well higher education complies with the principles of social, regional and language equality, and chart the obstacles that members of various minority groups may encounter in applying for higher education. Take action as warranted by the findings of the review. Neutralising gender segregation in higher education should be examined under the broader topic of the accessibility of higher education. Ministry of Education and Culture.

5 Reducing violence against women and intimate partner violence

Current situation

Violence against women remains a serious human rights problem in Finland. Violence or the threat of violence may be physical, mental or sexual in nature. This violence may take the form of intimate partner violence and domestic violence such as psychological domination, intimate partner rape, beating, assault, sexual harassment, sexual abuse of children, forced marriages, or harassment or stalking through digital media. Violence against women may also appear as domination and sexual abuse in connection with human trafficking, or female genital mutilation, child marriages and other ‘honour-related violence’.

According to the National Crime Victim Survey, 5.1% of women and 3.6% of men had experienced violence or a threat of violence from their current or former partner in 2018. By contrast, there was no difference between men and women in terms of violence committed against them by other persons (whether relatives, acquaintances or persons unknown). Women are more likely than men to be the victim in cases of intimate partner violence reported to the police. In 2017, the Police, Customs and Border Guard recorded a combined total of 8,300 victims in such cases. Women accounted for 68% of all victims of intimate partner violence and 83% of the victims who were adults. The majority of intimate partner violence was committed by the current or former partner of the victim: in 85% of cases for women victims and in 57% of cases for men.

The incidence of intimate partner violence among women in Finland is the second highest among EU Member States. Nearly one in three women who were or are in

an intimate relationship have been subject to violence by their current or former partner. Women are most likely to encounter violence in intimate relationships or in their job. Age, place of residence, income level, family background, religion and educational attainment are also relevant factors for security in this respect. According to a report, young people with immigrant background or with disabilities as well as young people belonging to sexual or gender minorities are more likely than others to encounter violence or the threat thereof. The violence, discrimination and hate speech encountered by immigrants and other ethnic minorities are prominent examples of inequality in personal safety. Disabled women and immigrant women are 2–3 times more likely to suffer violence than women in the native population. Immigrant women are nearly twice as likely to be raped than women in the native population.

Sexual harassment and gender-based harassment constitute discrimination as referred to in the Act on Equality between Women and Men. Since 2014, sexual harassment including physical action has been a punishable offence. According to the Gender Equality Barometer, 38% of women and 17% of men had experienced sexual harassment during the previous two years. Sexual harassment was a particular problem for women under 35 years; more than half of them had experienced sexual harassment.

The Ministry of Justice is preparing an action plan for combating violence against women. This is to cover the following topics: prevention of violence and perpetrator rehabilitation; protective measures to assist victims of repeated violence (restraining orders, etc.); and honour-related violence and new forms of violence such as digital violence and harassment. In order to avoid overlaps, these topics are largely excluded from this Action Plan for Gender Equality.

According to the Gender Equality Barometer (2017), the accumulating risk of harassment is significantly elevated for women, young people, members of minorities and low-income individuals. Young women are at a particularly high risk of sexual harassment. The term 'harassment' meant disturbing sexual propositions or unwelcome advances and sexuality-based insults. These experiences were more common than average among young people with immigrant background or belonging to sexual or gender minorities or being physically impaired. According to a separate study exploring the wellbeing of LGBTI young people (rainbow youth), more than 80% of young trans-people had experienced some form of harassment.

The EU-MIDIS II survey conducted by the FRA investigated the experiences of immigrants coming to Finland from sub-Saharan Africa and of their children. According to the survey, 47% of the respondents in Finland had experienced harassment because of their immigrant background in the previous 12 months. The incidence of harassment in Finland was the highest among all the 12 EU Member States in which the survey had been conducted within a similar domain of respondents. The average figure for the relevant countries was 21%.

Sexist hate speech is defined as offensive speech or expressions that spreads, incites, promotes or justifies hatred based on gender. It stems from the power hierarchies of society, creating inequality between genders. Sexist hate speech is typically aimed at women, inter alia journalists and politicians. According to the National Crime Victim Survey in 2018, women were more likely than men to encounter sexual and other harassment online too: 19% of women and 10% of men had experienced sexual harassment online at some time in their lives.

The #metoo campaign highlighted the widespread prevalence of sexual harassment and unwelcome advances and publicised the experiences of victims of sexual harassment. In Finland, the #metoo campaign has had an impact in several areas of society, including working life in general, sports, politics, theatre and cinema.

The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, known as the Istanbul Convention, entered into force in Finland in 2015. It has helped boost efforts to prevent intimate partner violence and to assist the victims thereof. Capacity has been added to shelters, and Seri Support Centres for victims of sexual violence have been set up along with an emergency helpline. However, there is still scope for improvement in identifying and intervening in violence against women, in every administrative branch from social welfare and health care services to crime prevention. The EU, according to the Gender Equality Strategy adopted in March 2020, intends to step up its efforts to prevent and tackle violence against women, to support and protect victims of violence and to bring perpetrators to justice. One of the top priorities of the Commission is for the EU to accede to the Istanbul Convention.

Human trafficking involving sexual abuse also constitutes violence against women. Finland is bound by several international conventions and obligations concerning

the prevention of human trafficking, such as the EU Anti-trafficking Directive, a supplementary Protocol to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking.

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) recommends that human trafficking be addressed in national gender equality action plans and in action plans to combat violence against women, because human trafficking is a highly gender-based phenomenon. Up to 69% of human trafficking detected in the EU involves sexual exploitation, and up to 80% of the identified victims of human trafficking are women or girls. In Finland too, the majority of the identified victims referred to the system of assistance for victims of human trafficking are women. Women and girls are more likely than men to fall victim to human trafficking involving sexual exploitation. By contrast, boys and men are more likely than women to fall victim to human trafficking related to labour exploitation. It is difficult to estimate the true number of victims of human trafficking, because it is estimated that the majority of these victims are never identified.

Under the EU Anti-trafficking Directive, EU Member States shall enact measures to reduce demand that encourages human trafficking, to launch information campaigns and to provide training for officials so that they will be able to identify actual and potential victims of human trafficking and engage with them. Addressing and reducing demand are judicially significant actions to combat human trafficking.

Commercial sexual abuse is criminalised in Finnish legislation in several provisions in the Criminal Code, designed to prevent offences against sexual self-determination and integrity. Finland's Criminal Code criminalises not only human trafficking and aggravated human trafficking but also procuring, aggravated procuring and abuse of a person subject to sex trade.

Finland has a system of assistance for the victims of human trafficking. Any person who may have been a victim of human trafficking may be referred to the system of assistance. In 2019, 229 people were admitted to the system. The system of assistance does not undertake any investigative work; victims must be referred to it by other authorities. Victims may also contact the system themselves. Statistics on which bodies have identified and referred potential victims of human trafficking to

the system of assistance reveal where human trafficking is recognised and where it should be recognised better: the leading sources of referrals to the system of assistance are reception centres, the Finnish Immigration Service, lawyers and victims at their own initiative. By contrast, the police only referred 10 persons to the system in 2019. This may indicate that the police have limited resources for detection in this field, which would be essential for uncovering the hidden crime of human trafficking. Human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation is more likely to be discovered in the work of the police (under actions against the black economy) than human trafficking for sexual abuse.

The Government Anti-Trafficking Coordinator was posted at the Ministry of Justice as of the beginning of 2020. The Coordinator brings together cross-administrative measures for combating human trafficking and participates in international cooperation. The Coordinator will lead the preparation of an Action Plan against Human trafficking, and the issue of how to organise coordination in central government going forward will be resolved at the same time. The Non-Discrimination Ombudsman is Finland's National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings. The Ombudsman submits a report to the Government annually and prepares a report with recommendations for Parliament every four years.

Human trafficking for sexual exploitation is found in prostitution and procuring. At the turn of the millennium, what was then the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (STAKES, now the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare) ran a project titled 'Prevention of violence against women and prostitution 1998–2002'. When legislation addressing human trafficking was being prepared, there was public debate on whether to criminalise prostitution and commercial sex, but since then prostitution has practically vanished from the national gender equality agenda. It would nevertheless be important to explore what this phenomenon is like at the moment and how widespread it is, and what aspects of exploitation are actually involved in these operations. This was required of Finland by the UN CEDAW committee in its recommendations in 2014.

Government goals

The actual and perceived safety of citizens are at the core of Finnish democracy and the Finnish welfare society. Shared values, wellbeing, equality, democracy, reliable governance, the rule of law and functioning institutions form the foundation of a stable society and internal security.

Key challenges from the perspective of the rule of law for the current electoral term include: the changing security situation; the increased plurality of threats; the increase of inequality and increase of social exclusion; problems in equal attainment of rights; maintaining a sense of public security; trust in society at large and good relations with the general public; and the functional capacity of the security authorities.

Implementation and monitoring of international human rights treaties must be promoted and strengthened, including the Istanbul Convention on violence against women. An action plan for combating violence against women is in preparation. It is progressing according to its own timetable and is thus not included in this Action Plan for Gender Equality as a measure to be monitored.

Measures

5.1. Introduce cross-administrative measures during the current electoral term to address with increased effectiveness the phenomena of systematic disruption, intimidation and targeting that are undermining freedom of speech, official activities, research and communications. Secure the resources and expertise required for the prevention and investigation of the aforementioned offences. Promote systematic monitoring of the situation in discrimination offences and hate crimes, nationally and internationally. Ministry of Justice.

5.2. Enact a comprehensive reform of legislation on sexual offences on the premises of integrity and the right of sexual self-determination. Amend the definition of rape in the Criminal Code so as to be based on absence of consent, while ensuring legal protection. Ministry of Justice.

5.3. Reform the legislation concerning restraining orders so as to better safeguard the rights of the victim. Ministry of Justice.

5.4. Enact a provision whereby grounds for increasing the punishment pursuant to chapter 6 section 5 of the Criminal Code include committing the offence with a gender-based motive. Ministry of Justice.

5.5. The Minister for Social Affairs and Health and the Minister for Nordic Cooperation and Equality shall organise round-table discussions on sexual harassment with experts. Prepare recommendations for preventing sexual harassment based on these discussions involving various administrative branches. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

5.6. Do not apply conciliation in cases where it might compromise the legal protection of the victim. Evaluate the continuation of conciliation in cases of intimate partner violence. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

5.7. Enact an Act on assisting victims of human trafficking, empowering local authorities to provide such assistance. Add references to victims of human trafficking to social welfare and health care legislation. Update the Reception Act so as to erode the link to the criminal justice process as required by international obligations. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

5.8. Enact national legislation for and take care of safe and supported housing services for victims of human trafficking as required in EU legislation. Assign the duty of monitoring and steering these operations to the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

5.9. Conduct a survey on the current situation of prostitution in Finland. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

6 Improving the status of gender minorities

Current situation

Gender identity is an individual characteristic and is not necessarily the same as the sex assigned to a person at birth. The Constitution of Finland provides strong protection for the human dignity, equality, personal integrity and other fundamental rights of the individual. Moreover, the Act on Equality between Women and Men prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender identity and gender expression. 'Gender identity' means an individual's inner sense of their own gender, while 'gender expression' means how a person expresses their gender outwardly, e.g. in how they dress and/or behave. 'Gender minorities' include trans-people, nongendered people and genderfluid people. The aim is to provide support for people belonging to gender minorities, especially children and adolescents and for their families, through customised and timely services. There are still multiple challenges for the rights of such individuals, and more attention needs to be paid to securing the rights of those in a vulnerable position.

The criteria for gender confirmation are given in the Act on Legal Recognition of the Gender of Transsexuals (563/2002), hereinafter the Trans Act. The Trans Act sets several conditions for the confirmation of legal gender. Finland is currently the only Nordic country that requires infertility as a criterion for gender confirmation. The infertility requirement is problematic from the perspective of fundamental and human rights. The current legal situation is not rooted in the right of self-determination, and it subjects transgender people to discrimination and other rights infringements. A Resolution adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in 2015 demands that the Member States respect and protect

the right of trans-people to non-discrimination and that Member States create a quick, transparent and accessible procedure for confirmation of legal gender that is founded on the right of self-determination. The most urgent need for legislative reform is overturning the infertility requirement. The recommendations issued by the UN CEDAW committee and the report on Finland published by the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe also note that Finland should urgently amend the Trans Act so that infertility is no longer required for gender confirmation. The Employment and Equality Committee of Finnish Parliament stated in its report responding to the report of the Equality Ombudsman on 1 Mar 2019 (TYVM 16/2018 vp) that it was in favour of initiating a reform of the Trans Act. According to the report 'Alternative regulatory models for providing for the legal status of gender minorities' (authored by the working group appointed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and published on 31 Jan 2020), implementing the core concepts of the entries made in this respect in the Government Programme would be justifiable in accordance with the corresponding legislation in Denmark, Norway and Iceland. Moreover, the legislation would be in accordance with the recommendations of national and international actors in the field of fundamental and human rights. Specifically, separating gender confirmation from medical examinations, studies and treatments must be regarded as justifiable not only from the perspective of fundamental and human rights but also because of resourcing in the health care system.

Because of the current personal identity number system in Finland, information available to the authorities is largely based on the judicial binary gender concept. Consequences of this include a lack of sufficient statistical tools that would allow non-binary genders to be taken into account in statistical analyses guiding gender equality efforts. Gender equality must be also considered from the perspective of non-binary gender identity. Introducing a third gender category would allow non-binary gender identity to be taken better into account in registry data. The aim is to compile statistical data so that gender data collected as background information would also identify other genders and non-gendered people.

Intersex is defined as a congenital state where an individual's physical sexual characteristics do not fit the typical descriptions of male and female. Care for intersex children in Finland is governed by the general provisions for health care. There is no specific legislation on this matter. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) has studied the human rights situation of intersex persons in various European countries. According to the summary of the report (2015), EU Member States must

revise their legislation to prevent discrimination. They also must investigate and if necessary, issue guidelines concerning surgical and medical treatment of intersex children. In Resolution 2191 (2017), the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly issued recommendations to the Member States regarding the prevention of discrimination against intersex persons and the enforcement of their human rights. The Assembly calls on Member States to prohibit non-urgent medical procedures to alter the sex characteristics of a child. Except in cases where the life of the child is at immediate risk, any treatment that seeks to alter the sex characteristics of the child, must be deferred until such time as the child is able to give informed consent. The Assembly further encourages Member States to provide all intersex people with health care offered by a team comprising not only medical professionals but also other relevant professionals such as those providing psychological support who have expertise in the ethical and human rights issues involved.

Children and adolescents belonging to gender minorities are particularly vulnerable. According to an anonymous school health survey conducted by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare in 2017, the wellbeing of sexual and gender minority adolescents is not as good as that of cis/hetero adolescents⁴. Here, sexual and gender minority adolescents were examined as a single group; this subsumes various subgroups, and there are substantial differences between individuals in it. Sexual and gender minority adolescents were found to be more anxious and have poorer perceived health than others. Experiences of bullying, intimidation and violence were common among them. Sexual and gender minority adolescents in secondary education felt less able than cis/hetero adolescents to talk to other people about their matters or their concerns, whether friends, parents, school nurses or anyone else. These findings are consistent with earlier research. However, illbeing is not a defining characteristic of all sexual and gender minority adolescents; the majority reported that they are able to be themselves in their respective educational institution. The challenge is in finding the specific individuals that do need support. *Minority stress* is a condition that is generated by the gender assumptions and norms of society at large, by feelings of being different, by experiences of otherness and by social stigmatisation. Fears and experiences of inappropriate treatment, discrimination,

4 The term *cis* refers to gender identity. Cis is used to describe individuals whose gender identity and gender expression are consistent with the sex assigned to them at birth and with the expectations generally associated with it in their culture. The majority of human beings are cisgender. Heterosexuality refers to sexual orientation. Hetero, heterosexual or 'straight' individuals are sexually and/or emotionally attracted to individuals not of their own gender; in practice, women are attracted to men and vice versa.

bullying and violence exacerbate stress and give rise to mental health problems. Sexual and gender minority people tend to have more mental health challenges throughout their lives than cis/hetero individuals. Being a member of a sexual and gender minority does not create mental health problems in and of itself; the causes are in the structures and attitudes of society at large.

The Act on Equality between Women and Men includes equality requirements for educational institutions, the purpose of which is among other things to prevent and eliminate gender-based harassment. Teachers, nurses and other adults at educational institutions play an important role in supporting the wellbeing of sexual and gender minority adolescents. The ability of other adults working with adolescents to detect discrimination, to intervene in it and to support its victims must be improved. Similarly, social welfare and health care professionals need a heightened awareness of how to engage with minorities and what their special needs are. The difficulties experienced by sexual and gender minority adolescents in talking to their parents, as discovered in the school health survey, indicate that parents also need support and information on sexual and gender minorities.

More detailed information is needed on the wellbeing and health of gender minority adolescents. Awareness of minority stress, exclusive norms and fears of discrimination should be included on the agenda of basic school education and continuing education for the relevant professionals. Including adolescents' own experiences of their gender will help achieve a fuller understanding of status of gender minority adolescents in the society.

A working group appointed by the Ministry of Finance proposed in its report (2020) that personal identity numbers that do not encode gender or dates of birth should be introduced. The proposal states that the change would be implemented over a transition period from 2023 to 2027 so that all operators in society that use personal identity numbers to identify individuals would have time to overhaul their systems to accommodate personal identity numbers that do not encode personal data.

A rainbow cooperation network was set up by the Government in 2020 to promote national rainbow policy through improved communications and cooperation. The members of this network are several ministries and the NGOs SETA, Trasek, Sateenkaariperheet (Rainbow families) and the Finnish division of Amnesty International. The network meets regularly to discuss current issues concerning the

fundamental and human rights of sexual and gender minorities, including legislation projects, measures to promote equality and non-discrimination, needs and practices of information gathering, and policies regarding sexual and gender minorities in Finland.

Government goals

The Government will ensure that fundamental and human rights can be enjoyed by everyone and will combat infringements of these rights.

Awareness of how to engage with gender minorities and their special needs shall be increased among social welfare and health care professionals.

A zero tolerance policy on school bullying shall be adopted, and pupils, students and personnel at educational institutions shall be provided with training on how to identify bullying and how to intervene. Recognising and preventing discriminatory bullying shall also be considered.

Measures

6.1. Enact an Act on gender confirmation that is consistent with the right of self-determination. Remove the requirement of infertility and separate medical treatments from legal gender change. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

6.2. A gender confirmation may be made on application for any adults who present a justified explanation of perceiving themselves as belonging to the gender to which they wish to confirm. There will be a reconsideration period for the gender confirmation procedure. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

6.3. Abandon gender encoding in personal identity numbers in the personal identity number reform, as proposed in the Ministry of Finance report. Ministry of Finance.

6.4. Strengthen the right of self-determination of intersex children and discontinue cosmetic and medically non-essential genital surgical procedures on small children. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

7 Promoting gender equality in major reforms and mainstreaming the gender perspective

Current situation

There are two principal approaches in promoting gender equality: goalsetting, implementation and monitoring in measures to promote gender equality; and mainstreaming the gender perspective. Mainstreaming is sometimes referred to as operative gender equality work, as opposed to gender equality planning concerning personnel in various organisations.

Mainstreaming the gender perspective simply means incorporating gender equality considerations permanently into normal preparation and decision-making processes, instead of separate, dedicated projects. It could be described as continuous development in administration, requiring the exerting of influence at appropriate times and a readiness to revise operating procedures. If successful, mainstreaming can render decision-making in society significantly more favourable for gender equality and prevent discriminatory decisions.

A structure was set up in the 2010s for gender equality efforts covering all ministries. This involves gender equality working groups at the ministries promoting the mainstreaming of the gender equality perspective in a purposeful and systematic way, as required in the Act on Equality between Women and Men. Although the effectiveness of gender equality efforts is somewhat hampered by their less than ambitious goals and a lack of resources, there is nevertheless an ongoing campaign to integrate the gender aspect into key processes at ministries

(strategies, law drafting, budgeting, projects and programmes, performance management, training, communications).

A study conducted in 2014 concludes that Finland's approach in mainstreaming the gender perspective in administrative processes is feasible. However, as of yet the promoting of gender equality has not established itself in the preparation and decision-making processes at ministries, and substantial gender equality goals have yet to be included in preparation processes to any significant extent. Steps were taken to correct this in the Government Action Plan for Gender Equality 2016–2019, where ministries defined key gender equality challenges in their respective policy areas. However, it is still a challenge that not many gender equality goals have been introduced and that these goals tend to remain separate from other policy areas. Gender-analysed data are not always available or are not used, and this makes it difficult to define gender equality goals, let alone consider them. Ministries differ greatly from one another in the quality of basic information on and competence in gender equality at present.

Gender equality researchers have criticised the effort to mainstream the gender perspective precisely because of its lacklustre implementation and ineffectiveness. It is also considered that the focus on mainstreaming has had the effect of reducing gender equality policy to numbers, statistics, studies and the mastery of specific techniques.

The purpose of gender impact assessment is to establish the impact on women and men of a particular piece of legislation, decision or project being drafted, and as far as possible the impact on other genders too. Of the Government Proposals adopted in 2018, 21% included a gender impact assessment of some kind, or an evaluation of the focus of the legislation from the gender angle. The same figure in 2019 was 18%.

Including the gender perspective in projects and programmes was found to be challenging in previous electoral terms. The decision to promote gender equality in any given project, programme or reform must be made well ahead of time and communicated clearly for instance in the strategic policy and implementation programme, and included in monitoring.

Gender budgeting is an essential and potentially significant method for promoting gender equality. According to the budget drafting guideline issued by the Ministry of Finance, ministries must include in the justifications for their main title of expenditure a summary of actions included in the budget proposal that have significance for gender equality. All ministries have some sort of gender equality statement in their budget proposals, but the present practice yields no information on the gender distribution of budget revenue and expenditure. In a separate project led by the Ministry of Finance in 2017–2018, gender budgeting was further developed and recommendations were made on amendments of the budgeting process.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has provided support for gender equality efforts at other ministries by producing data disaggregated by gender on policy areas, by providing training and by offering consultant services for development work. There is a continuous need for gender equality training. The Centre for Gender Equality Information (THL) and Statistics Finland are major producers and distributors of data disaggregated by gender. The management statistics network led by the Ministry of Finance has played an important role in compiling gender-analysed data on management with operators in the public and private sectors.

Government goals

The objective of the Government is to make Finland a pioneer in gender equality. The Government proposes an ambitious range of measures to improve gender equality in various areas of society.

A monitoring system covering all state administrative sectors will be set up for monitoring gender equality.

Gender impact assessment shall be a compulsory part of public administration functions of all public bodies subordinate to ministries.

Measures

7.1. Commit to promoting gender equality in budgeting processes. Promote gender budgeting as part of developing sustainable development budgeting. Ministry of Finance.

7.2. Emphasise and specify the budget drafting guideline issued to ministries as regards recording gender impacts. Ensure through steering and monitoring that gender impact assessments are included in budget drafting processes. Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, other ministries.

7.3. Ministries shall systematically include the gender perspective in their key processes, particularly budgeting, performance management and law drafting. Monitor the quantity and quality of gender impact assessments on an annual basis. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, all ministries.

7.4. Continue and enhance operative gender equality work at ministries. Ensure that the required human resources (coordinators) and support from the civil service leadership are available for this work. Ministries shall implement and actively monitor their operative gender equality plans. All ministries.

7.5. Continue the process to develop mainstreaming the gender perspective across central government. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, all ministries

7.6. Improve gender equality competence in central government. Bring into active use the digital gender mainstreaming training designed for central government. The management of agencies and institutions subordinate to ministries shall ensure that their personnel participate in the training. Ministries shall also include information on gender equality in their respective training programmes (orientation and other personnel training). The goal is to achieve a significant improvement in competence during the electoral term. The Government shall monitor progress on an annual basis. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, all ministries.

7.7. Boost the production of gender-analysed data and its use as an input for preparation and decision-making. All ministries.

7.8. Conduct a broad-based study or investigation on the gender-specific social, financial and health impacts of the coronavirus crisis in the short and long term. This shall include gender-specific impacts of measures decided on by the Government (restrictive measures, support packages, etc.). Adopt an intersectional approach to this study, considering not only gender but also age, socioeconomic status, ethnic background and minority group membership. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of the Interior, etc.

Key ministry projects promoting gender equality and incorporating the gender aspect:

7.9. Add incentives geared to reducing the gap between women and men in choosing training in technology subjects and IT coding. Ministry of Transport and Communications.

7.10. Promote gender equality in aiming to reduce food waste as part of the Climate-friendly Food Programme, which aims to minimize the climate footprint of food consumed and to improve understanding of how food is produced. Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

7.11. Under the ‘Right to Learn’ development programme, launch a study based on existing materials concerning the causes of and backgrounds to differentials in learning outcomes between genders. This study is to identify the goals of the Action Plan on Gender Equality and differentials in learning outcomes between genders as regional, socioeconomic and language phenomena, and possibly as a local issue, coming down to choice of school and how differentials in learning outcomes influence going on to further education. Ministry of Education and Culture.

7.12. Ensure the gender perspective in the Action Plan against Human Trafficking. Ministry of Justice.

7.13. The defence administration shall participate in the work of a broad-based Parliamentary committee to be appointed to look into ways to develop general conscription and to meet the national defence obligation. Include the gender perspective as a component of the general concept of equality. Ministry of Defence.

7.14. Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development includes an entry requiring action to reduce cumulative, repeated experiences of victimisation. This has to do above all with violence against women, and on the other hand on violence experienced by young men and the disproportionately high percentage of young men as accident victims. Concerning violence against women, referring victims to services shall be monitored as an indicator. Ministry of the Interior.

7.15. The Government Resolution for promoting wellbeing, health and safety of the population 2030 goes for reducing inequalities, also between genders. The gender perspective is also considered in the substance abuse and addiction strategy and related substance abuse and addiction programmes. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

7.16. Energy and Climate Strategy. Conduct a gender impact assessment when the Energy and Climate Strategy is updated. Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment.

7.17. Prepare the fourth National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security during this electoral term. Particularly take note of the observations on effectiveness in the final report on the current Action Plan, with specific reference to the goals stated in the Action Plan and attainment of the goals of the '1325 Resolution family'. Ministry for Foreign Affairs, with the Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment.

7.18. Include promoting gender equality in the policy outlines of the public administration strategy. Ministry of Finance.

7.19. Create a cross-administrative programme to halve homelessness. Ministry of the Environment.

8 Promoting gender equality in the European Union and in international operations

Current situation

Gender equality is still quite some way off in the European Union: the overall gender equality index score calculated by the European Institute for Gender Equality in 2017 was 67 out of the 100 that stands for perfect equality between women and men. The improvement trend since 2005 was modest, the score then being 62. Gender-based violence is a serious human rights violation and remains a problem in the EU: 33% of all women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence, and 55% have experienced sexual harassment. There are still substantial economic differences between genders: in the EU, the employment rate among women is on average 11 percentage points lower than among men. Women with immigrant background find it particularly difficult to get a job. The gender pay gap in the EU is nearly 16%, and the gender pension gap is 30%.

Low pay and small pensions are contributing factors to women being at a higher risk of poverty than men. An important reason for why women have a lower employment rate and less favourable labour market status is that they tend to accumulate care responsibilities: women use the majority of available family leave, and the majority of those performing unpaid care work are women. Although more women than men graduate from university in the EU, women still face obstacles in entering the labour market. Moreover, education and the labour market are segregated even in EU Member States: women account for only 17% of ICT students, while men account for only 19% of students in health care and welfare

disciplines. While the percentage of women involved in political and economic decision-making has been increasing in recent years, in the largest publicly listed companies women only hold 26% of the seats on Boards of Directors, and only 8% have a female CEO.

Promoting equality between women and men and eliminating gender-based discrimination are among the core principles of the EU, enshrined in its founding treaties and provided for in the Equality Directives. The European Commission released a Communication on the Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025 on 5 Mar 2020. The Gender Equality Strategy describes the EU's major gender equality challenges and brings together key Commission objectives and measures for promoting gender equality and for eliminating gender-based discrimination. The Commission commits to ensuring that the gender perspective will be included in all policy areas and processes of the EU. The key objectives include ending gender-based violence; challenging gender stereotypes; promoting gender-equal economy; achieving gender balance in decision-making; mainstreaming the gender perspective and gender budgeting; and promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the EU's external policy. The intersectional approach is to be strengthened in the EU's gender equality policy.

Narrowing the gender pay gap and preventing pay discrimination are also at the core of the EU's gender equality policy. Pay transparency will make it easier to combat pay discrimination and to promote the equal pay principle, i.e. that employees should receive the equal pay for equal work and work of equal value regardless of their gender. The Commission will propose binding pay transparency measures by the end of 2020.

The European Pillar of Social Rights, which outlines the social dimension of the EU, and the European Semester, which is a cycle of economic and fiscal policy coordination, are also important vehicles for promoting gender equality. The Commission is currently preparing an Action Plan to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights; its 20 principles include gender equality and the reconciliation of work and private life. The European Semester will be reformed in the near future with a view to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (including Goal 5, Gender Equality).

Finland has been an active participant in gender equality cooperation among the Nordic countries and in the Council of Europe for decades. In 2021, Finland will hold the Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM). The Presidency Programme will be confirmed in summer 2020. The following themes are proposed in the area of gender equality: early childhood education, particularly the promoting of gender equality planning in early childhood education and the dismantling of gender stereotypes; care undertaken by men, particularly fatherhood; women and technology; sexual harassment; and hate speech online.

In the global perspective, billions of people have escaped extreme poverty in the past 25 years, and the incidence of poverty in the world is now lower than ever. From 1990 to 2015, poverty decreased at an average rate of one percentage point per year (from 36% to 10%). This trend has been slowing down, however, and inequalities within countries have grown. Women are more likely than men to be living in poverty; worldwide, they earn less in wages or other income than men; they do much more unpaid care work than men; and three out of four women in developing countries work in the informal economy. Women, children (particularly girls), the disabled and the elderly often gain a smaller portion of available food, and fewer household resources on average are invested in their education and health. Divorced and widowed women are typically more likely to be poor due to discriminatory attitudes in their society. However, on a positive note, access to basic education for girls has almost doubled over the past 25 years, although there is still significant variation by continent and by socioeconomic background. Even today, two thirds of the world's 750 million illiterate adults are women.

Globally, the impression we get of the current state of gender equality is dualist. Firstly, over the past ten years progress has been made regarding the status of women and girls. The UN gender equality organisation, UN Women, has supported legislation enforcing the rights of women and girls, trained women leaders and encouraged men and boys to commit to promoting gender equality. Moreover, numerous governments have stepped up their legislation addressing violence against women. With the #metoo campaign, sexual harassment and abuse are now being targeted more systematically. Yet, on the other hand, issues of women's rights and gender equality face unprecedented global resistance on the part of conservative governments and actors. This is particularly true with regard to sexual rights, reproductive rights and the rights of sexual and gender minorities. Gender-based violence also remains a major problem worldwide. In 2019, the

Nordic Council of Ministers entered into cooperation to promote equal rights and opportunities and equitable treatment for LGBTQ individuals. Finland is one of the leading countries in the Generation Equality campaign, examining the role of technology and innovation in gender equality, which will be launched in 2020. This five-year campaign, spearheaded by the UN gender equality organisation (UN Women) and by the governments of France and Mexico, is intended to mobilise international resources, including private resources, to boost the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and to respond to new challenges to gender equality. Generation Equality also provides a platform for hearing the views of citizens and enterprises.

Finland is also promoting gender equality in the global context with the biennial International Gender Equality Prize (IGEP). The purpose of the Prize is to generate action to promote gender equality and to foster worldwide debate. Finland wants to lead by example and to show that investing in an equitable working life and equitable decision-making creates sustainable wellbeing, which we believe is good for every society. The International Gender Equality Prize will next be awarded in 2021.

Awareness of the role played by women in issues of peace and security has increased. As of September 2019, 82 UN Member States had drawn up a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. However, women are still very much underrepresented in official peace negotiations globally: only 3% of mediators in official peace processes are women. Finland is firmly committed to implementing UN Resolution 1325, 'Women, Peace and Security' and the following and related nine Resolutions. Finland's actions in this area are governed by the third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2018–2021). The gender aspect is included in the training for the security sector and for civilian crisis management.

Government goals

Finland enhances its equality work at the EU level and is in favour of a strong EU Gender Equality Strategy and its effective implementation. Finland considers it important that the Gender Equality Strategy address both specific gender equality measures and the mainstreaming of the gender perspective at all

stages of decision-making. Another goal is that the EU budget should promote gender equality. Finland considers it a positive thing that the Strategy takes an intersectional perspective acknowledging the diversity of women. Considering gender diversity at the EU level is also important. The Government aims for gender equality to be considered in the functions of the EU, particularly its leadership positions.

Finland aims to ensure, as per the current Government Programme, that the EU steps up its work to counter all violence against women and that the Istanbul Convention is fully implemented in all EU activities. Finland is committed to promoting the accession of the EU to the Istanbul Convention.

The aim of Finland's foreign and security policy is to promote human rights, the rule of law, democracy, peace, freedom, tolerance and equality in all international contexts. A key goal is to systematically promote both gender equality and the full achievement of human rights by girls and women. The Government is taking a long-term approach to the reduction of poverty and inequality. Gender equality is not only a value in its own right; it is also a necessity for reducing poverty.

Finland promotes gender equality on two parallel tracks, focusing on specific measures on the one hand and mainstreaming on the other. Specific measures addressing the status and rights of women and girls focus on the right of women and girls to live their lives free of violence and harassment, including the right to decide on their own bodies and the right not to have their sexual and reproductive health and rights infringed upon. These rights shall be available to all women and girls, including the disabled. Disabled women and girls are being considered in all development policy, including humanitarian aid. In addition to specific measures, gender equality is being promoted through mainstreaming so that gender equality measures will be incorporated into actions focusing on strengthening the national economy and creating jobs in developing countries; on supporting functioning societies and democracy; and on combating climate change and ensuring sustainable use of natural resources.

Finland is supporting, strengthening and developing international law and the multilateral treaty system. Implementation and monitoring of international human rights treaties must be promoted and strengthened, including the Istanbul Convention on violence against women.

Finland is focusing particularly on the enforcement of the rights of vulnerable persons and minorities and facilitating their participation in the preparation of development policy. The experiential expertise of these groups is being leveraged for this purpose.

The Government aims to continue mainstreaming the 'Women, Peace and Security' agenda in accordance with the National Action Plan and to ensure that Finland will remain one of the leading countries in implementing and promoting that agenda. Finland supports the participation of women in peace negotiations and peacebuilding, with an emphasis on securing the rights of women and girls in peace processes. Sustainable peace cannot be built on structures that uphold inequalities.

The status and rights of women and girls constitute an important focus area in Finland's development cooperation. In accordance with the cross-cutting principles of our development policy, we will reinforce the intersectional aspects of our gender equality efforts. Finland is focusing on promoting the status and rights of disabled women and girls, in particular in our development cooperation. In human rights policy, Finland stresses the importance of sexual and reproductive health and of sexual and reproductive rights along with combating violence against women.

Measures

8.1. Step up gender equality efforts at the EU level and promote effective implementation of the EU Gender Equality Strategy through both specific measures and mainstreaming. Finland is involved in reinforcing and developing the mainstreaming of the gender perspective and related processes through concrete measures such as gender impact assessments particularly in the Commission's focus areas such as actions concerning digitalisation and demographic change, climate policy, economic policy and the implementation of Agenda 2030 in the EU. Finland promotes the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in council work and gender budgeting in the EU. Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and all ministries.

8.2. Finland is in favour of promoting equal pay by increasing pay transparency through EU legislation. Finland also considers it important to clarify the concept of 'equal pay for work of equal value'. Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

8.3. Implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights is crucial for the promotion of gender equality. Finland considers it highly commendable that the Commission has launched the process to issue the implementation plan for the European Pillar of Social Rights at the beginning of 2021 and will contribute actively to its confirmation. Enhance the promotion of gender equality and the principles of the economy of wellbeing within the European Semester. Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

8.4. Continue to actively defend the rights of women and girls in international human rights policy contexts. This theme will be prominently featured in Finland's campaign for membership of the UN Human Rights Council for the term 2022–2024. Monitor and make use of reporting on high-level speeches and statements on gender equality in the EU Gender Action Plan for external relations. Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

8.5. Through financial and operational planning, implement the goal in the Government Programme that eventually 85% of new development cooperation projects will set goals promoting gender equality. Monitor attainment of this goal annually (number of projects and amount of funding). Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

8.6. Mainstream gender equality in all development cooperation, with specific reference to the status and rights of women and girls. Evaluate and monitor gender impacts and norms more systematically than before. Boost implementation through guidelines, tools and personnel training. Monitor and systematically evaluate implementation. Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

8.7. Increase the number of experts serving as gender equality advisors and liaisons in civilian crisis management operations. Finland will offer more male applicants for these duties than at present. Ensure that the gender perspective is considered in crisis management training and exercises. Ministry of the Interior, Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

9 Monitoring and communications for the Action Plan for Gender Equality

Monitoring

Political-level group for gender equality matters

A group consisting of State Secretaries and headed by Minister Blomqvist, who is responsible for gender equality matters, will be appointed for the purpose of implementing and monitoring this Action Plan for Gender Equality. The duties of this gender equality working group include monitoring the implementation of the Government's Action Plan for Gender Equality. The group is also expected to outline the preparation of the Gender Equality Report to be submitted to Parliament in 2021. The Gender Equality Report will present national gender equality goals extending beyond the current electoral term. A monitoring system covering all state administrative sectors will be set up to oversee these national gender equality goals; there is an entry in the Government Programme to this effect.

Network of operative working groups on gender equality consisting of civil servants at ministries

The network of operative working groups on gender equality is a well-established form of collaboration on gender equality between ministries. The monitoring of this Action Plan for Gender Equality and the implementation of concrete measures will be discussed in the network on an as-needed basis going forward. The ministries shall each appoint a coordinator for this Action Plan for Gender Equality to attend meetings of the network of gender equality working group and to report on progress made in the actions of their respective ministries.

NGO collaboration

Interaction with NGOs and other stakeholders will continue to be important after this Action Plan for Gender Equality is adopted. One of the vehicles for interaction is an annual gender equality meeting where progress on the programme can be reported and NGOs and stakeholders can be widely heard from.

Communications

A communications plan shall be prepared with the Communications Unit of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

Appendix 1

MEASURES IN THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTION PLAN FOR GENDER EQUALITY BY CHAPTER	PARTY/PARTIES RESPONSIBLE
2. Improving equality in working life and financial decision-making	
2.1. Promote pay transparency through legislation. Set up a tripartite working group to prepare the Government goals of including provisions in the Act on Equality between Women and Men to increase the rights and effective means of the staff, staff representatives and individual employees for gaining information on pay and for addressing pay discrimination more effectively.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.
2.2. Prevent pregnancy discrimination. Further specify legislation so that pregnancy and taking family leave shall not influence the continuation of a fixed-term employment relationship. Explore how to improve the employment security of employees returning from family leave and take legislative and other action as warranted by the findings. This matter is to be discussed in the tripartite working group led by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment preparing for the implementation of the Work-life Balance Directive.	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.
2.3. Improve the status of employees on zero-hour contracts and in temporary work. Conduct a study and strengthen the legislation.	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment.
2.4. Ensure access to integration and language education for immigrant women as part of the Government Action Plan on Integration (Government Report).	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment.
2.5. The Government aims to promote gender balance on boards of publicly listed companies. The goal is that both genders have a representation of at least 40% on the Boards of large and medium-sized publicly listed companies. The Government's goal is to achieve equal representation in accordance with the recommendations in the Finnish Corporate Governance Code formulated by the Securities Market Association and through listed companies' own actions. The Government will monitor progress towards this goal and evaluate its effectiveness on an annual basis. The Government will also commission a study or report on the factors why women do not make up a higher percentage of board members, management group members and CEOs in publicly listed companies.	Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.
2.6. The Government will continue its systematic efforts to increase the percentage of women among members of boards and management groups in State-owned companies, based on goals set in 2004. Progress towards these goals and gender equality goals defined in the Government Resolution on State-ownership Policy will be monitored on an annual basis in the Government's Annual reports to Parliament.	Prime Minister's Office.
3. Reconciling work and family life, and distributing care duties more equitably	
3.1. Explore possibilities for increasing flexibility in working life to balance the reconciliation of work and family life and to help people cope at work in order to extend careers. The aim here is particularly to improve the potential for part-time employment of parents of small children and persons caring for their ageing relatives.	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment.
3.2. Combine the Maternity Act and the Paternity Act into a single Parenthood Act.	Ministry of Justice.

MEASURES IN THE GOVERNMENT’S ACTION PLAN FOR GENDER EQUALITY BY CHAPTER	PARTY/PARTIES RESPONSIBLE
3.3. Promote the proposals given in the report on shared residence.	Ministry of Justice.
3.4. Support equitable shared parenting. Enable a child to have two equally valid addresses of residence.	Ministry of Finance.
4. Promoting gender equality in early childhood education and in education	
4.1. Enact mandatory gender equality plans for early childhood education.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.
4.2. Execute projects in the ‘Right to Learn’ programme to prepare legislation, permanent funding arrangements and practices and procedures that foster non-discrimination. The aim here is to curb and prevent learning differentials that are due to socioeconomic background, immigrant background or gender.	Ministry of Education and Culture.
4.3. Execute a development project in the ‘Right to Learn’ programme to provide continuing education for teachers in basic education, personnel and management in early childhood education, and school managers. The aim here is to promote gender equality and to neutralise gender segregation in education and in working life.	Ministry of Education and Culture.
4.4. Ensure the professional and pedagogical competence of teaching personnel and instructors. Grant funding for hiring teachers and instructors for vocational education and for support measures for teaching and instruction. The aim here is to prevent school dropouts, to boost completions, to prevent social exclusion and to promote equality among students.	Ministry of Education and Culture.
4.5. In spring 2020, the Ministry of Education and Culture is to produce a brief preliminary report on the current situation at academic universities and universities of applied sciences in how gender equality and non-discrimination are being promoted in R&D activities. This report is to be based on the gender equality and non-discrimination plans of universities. The results will be leveraged in the performance agreement negotiations with universities in spring 2020. The situational awareness will be enhanced by launching a more extensive study into the current state of gender equality and non-discrimination in research, development and innovation activities (RDI activities) in 2020.	Ministry of Education and Culture.
4.6. Prepare a higher education accessibility plan. Review how well higher education complies with the principles of social, regional and language equality and chart the obstacles that members of various minority groups may encounter in applying for higher education. Take action as warranted by the findings of the review. Neutralising gender segregation in higher education should be examined under the broader topic of the accessibility of higher education.	Ministry of Education and Culture.
5. Reducing violence against women and intimate partner violence	
5.1. Introduce cross-administrative measures during the current electoral term to address with increased effectiveness the phenomena of systematic disruption, intimidation and targeting that are undermining freedom of speech, official activities, research and communications. Secure the resources and expertise required for the prevention and investigation of the aforementioned offences. Promote systematic monitoring of the situation in discrimination offences and hate crimes, nationally and internationally. Ministry of Justice.	Ministry of Justice.
5.2. Enact a comprehensive reform of legislation on sexual offences on the premises of integrity and the right of sexual self-determination. Amend the definition of rape in the Criminal Code so as to be based on absence of consent, while ensuring legal protection.	Ministry of Justice.
5.3. Reform the legislation concerning restraining orders so as to better safeguard the rights of the victim.	Ministry of Justice.
5.4. Enact a provision whereby grounds for increasing the punishment pursuant to chapter 6 section 5 of the Criminal Code include committing the offence with a gender-based motive.	Ministry of Justice.

MEASURES IN THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTION PLAN FOR GENDER EQUALITY BY CHAPTER	PARTY/PARTIES RESPONSIBLE
5.5. The Minister for Social Affairs and Health and the Minister for Nordic Cooperation and Equality shall organise round-table discussions on sexual harassment with experts. Prepare recommendations for preventing sexual harassment based on these discussions involving various administrative branches. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.
5.6. Do not apply conciliation in cases where it might compromise the legal protection of the victim. Evaluate the continuation of conciliation in cases of intimate partner violence.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.
5.7. Enact an Act on assisting victims of human trafficking, empowering local authorities to provide such assistance. Add references to victims of human trafficking to social welfare and health care legislation. Update the Reception Act so as to erode the link to the criminal justice process as required by international obligations.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.
5.8. Enact national legislation for and take care of safe and supported housing services for victims of human trafficking as required in EU legislation. Assign the duty of monitoring and steering these operations to the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.
5.9. Conduct a survey on the current situation of prostitution in Finland.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.
6. Improving the status of gender minorities	
6.1. Enact an Act on gender confirmation that is consistent with the right of self-determination. Remove the requirement of infertility and separate medical treatments from legal gender change.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.
6.2. A gender confirmation may be made on application for any adults who present a justified explanation of perceiving themselves as belonging to the gender to which they wish to confirm. There will be a reconsideration period for the gender confirmation procedure.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.
6.3. Abandon gender encoding in personal identity numbers in the personal identity number reform, as proposed in the Ministry of Finance report.	Ministry of Finance.
6.4. Strengthen the right of self-determination of intersex children and discontinue cosmetic and medically non-essential genital surgical procedures on small children.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.
7. Promoting gender equality in major reforms and mainstreaming the gender perspective	
7.1. Commit to promoting gender equality in budgeting processes. Promote gender-aware budgeting as part of developing sustainable development budgeting.	Ministry of Finance.
7.2. Emphasise and specify the budget drafting guideline issued to ministries as regards recording gender impacts. Ensure through steering and monitoring so that gender impact assessments are included in budget drafting processes.	Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, other ministries
7.3. Ministries shall systematically include the gender perspective in their key processes, particularly budgeting, performance management and law drafting. Monitor the quantity and quality of gender impact assessments on an annual basis.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, all ministries
7.4. Continue and enhance operative gender equality work at ministries. Ensure that the required human resources (coordinators) and support from the civil service leadership are available for this work. Ministries shall implement and actively monitor their operative gender equality plans.	All ministries.
7.5. Continue the process to develop mainstreaming the gender perspective across central government.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, all ministries

MEASURES IN THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTION PLAN FOR GENDER EQUALITY BY CHAPTER	PARTY/PARTIES RESPONSIBLE
7.6. Improve gender equality competence in central government. Bring into active use the digital gender mainstreaming training designed for central government. The management of agencies and institutions subordinate to ministries shall ensure that their personnel participate in the training. Ministries shall also include information on gender equality in their respective training programmes (orientation and other personnel training). The goal is to achieve a significant improvement in competence during the electoral term. The Government shall monitor progress on an annual basis.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, all ministries
7.7. Boost the production of gender-analysed data and its use as an input for preparation and decision-making.	All ministries.
7.8. Conduct a broad-based study or investigation on the gender-specific social, financial and health impacts of the coronavirus crisis in the short and long term. This shall include gender-specific impacts of measures decided on by the Government (restrictive measures, support packages, etc.). Adopt an intersectional approach in this study, considering not only gender but also age, socioeconomic status, ethnic background and minority group membership.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of the Interior, etc.
Ministry proposals for key projects promoting gender equality and incorporating the gender perspective:	
7.9. Add incentives geared to reducing the gap between women and men in choosing training in technology subjects and IT coding.	Ministry of Transport and Communications.
7.10. Promote gender equality in aiming to minimize food waste as part of the Climate-friendly Food Programme, which aims to reduce the climate footprint of food consumed and to improve understanding of how food is produced.	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.
7.11. Under the 'Right to Learn' development programme, launch a study based on existing materials concerning the causes of and backgrounds to differentials in learning outcomes between genders. This study is to identify goals of the Action Plan on Gender Equality and differentials in learning outcomes between genders as a regional, socioeconomic and language phenomena and possibly as a local issue, coming down to choice of school and how differentials in learning outcomes influence going on to further education.	Ministry of Education and Culture.
7.12. Ensure the gender perspective in the Action Plan against Human Trafficking.	Ministry of Justice.
7.13. The defence administration shall participate in the work of a broad-based Parliamentary committee to be appointed to look into ways to develop general conscription and to meet the national defence obligation. Include the gender perspective as a component of the general concept of equality.	Ministry of Defence.
7.14. Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development includes an entry requiring action to reduce cumulative, repeated experiences of victimisation. This has to do above all with violence against women and, on the other hand, on violence experienced by young men and the disproportionately high percentage of young men as accident victims. Concerning violence against women, referring victims to services shall be monitored as an indicator.	Ministry of the Interior.
7.15. The Government Resolution for promoting wellbeing, health and safety of the population 2030 goes for reducing inequalities between genders. The gender perspective is also considered in the substance abuse and addiction strategy and related substance abuse and addiction programmes.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.
7.16. Energy and Climate Strategy. Conduct a gender impact assessment when the Energy and Climate Strategy is updated.	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment.

MEASURES IN THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTION PLAN FOR GENDER EQUALITY BY CHAPTER	PARTY/PARTIES RESPONSIBLE
7.17. Prepare the fourth National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security during this electoral term. Particularly take note of the observations on effectiveness in the final report on the current Action Plan, with specific reference to the goals stated in the Action Plan and attainment of the goals of the '1325 Resolution family'.	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, with the Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment.
7.18. Include promoting gender equality in the policy outlines of the public administration strategy.	Ministry of Finance.
7.19. Create a cross-administrative programme to halve homelessness by half.	Ministry of the Environment.
8. Promoting gender equality in the European Union and in international operations	
8.1. Step up gender equality efforts at the EU level and promote effective implementation of the EU Gender Equality Strategy through both specific measures and mainstreaming. Finland is involved in reinforcing and developing the mainstreaming of the gender perspective and related processes through concrete measures such as gender impact assessments particularly in the Commission's focus areas, such as actions concerning digitalisation and demographic change, climate policy, economic policy and the implementation of Agenda 2030 in the EU. Finland promotes the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in council work and gender budgeting in the EU.	Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and all ministries.
8.2. Finland is in favour of promoting equal pay by increasing pay transparency through EU legislation. Finland also considers it important to clarify the concept of 'equal pay for work of equal value'.	Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.
8.3. Implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights is crucial for the promotion of gender equality. Finland considers it highly commendable that the Commission has launched the process to issue the implementation plan for the European Pillar of Social Rights at the beginning of 2021 and will contribute actively to its confirmation. Enhance the promotion of gender equality and the principles of the economy of wellbeing within the European Semester.	Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.
8.4. Continue to actively defend the rights of women and girls in international human rights policy contexts. This theme will be prominently featured in Finland's campaign for membership of the UN Human Rights Council for the term 2022–2024. Monitor and make use of reporting on high-level speeches and statements on gender equality in the EU Gender Action Plan for external relations.	Ministry for Foreign Affairs.
8.5. Through financial and operational planning, implement the goal in the Government Programme that eventually 85% of new development cooperation projects will set goals promoting gender equality. Monitor attainment of this goal annually (number of projects and amount of funding).	Ministry for Foreign Affairs.
8.6. Mainstream gender equality in all development cooperation, with specific reference to the status and rights of women and girls. Evaluate and monitor gender impacts and norms more systematically than before. Boost implementation through guidelines, tools and personnel training. Monitor and systematically evaluate implementation.	Ministry for Foreign Affairs.
8.7. Increase the number of experts serving as gender equality advisors and liaisons in civilian crisis management operations. Finland will offer more male applicants for these duties than at present. Ensure that the gender perspective is considered in crisis management training and exercises.	Ministry of the Interior, Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

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Gender equality is a central value and goal in Finnish society. The Government's Action Plan for Gender Equality 2020–2023 brings together the objectives and measures of the Government of Prime Minister Sanna Marin for promoting gender equality. The Action Plan for Gender Equality includes measures for all ministries. This is the seventh Government Action Plan for Gender Equality in Finland.

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