

The Finnish Board of
Inter-Country Adoption Affairs

Annual Report 2006



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Title of publication The Finnish Board of Inter-Country Adoption Affairs. Annual Report 2006			
Summary <p>The Finnish Board of Inter-Country Adoption Affairs (Finnish Adoption Board) is the expert body in inter-country adoption affairs in Finland. It is subordinated to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The Board was founded in 1985 and has since 1 July 1997 acted as the central authority meant in the Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption (Hague Convention).</p> <p>Granting permissions for inter-country adoption is one of the most significant tasks of the Board. In recent years, inter-country adoption has become increasingly popular. In 2005 the Board handled 275 permission applications. In 2006 a total of 413 applications were handled. The number was higher than ever before. The number of children arriving in Finland decreased from 308 to 218. This was first and foremost due to the tighter adoption regulations in China. 140 children were adopted from China in 2005 while in 2006 only 49 children arrived from China. In 2006 most adoptive children came to Finland from Russia, China, Thailand, and South Africa.</p> <p>The Board had 31 meetings in 2006. 11 of them were meetings of the full composition and 20 of the limited composition.</p> <p>The Board issues expert opinions for example to the courts of justice. In 2006 the Board issued five expert opinions to the Helsinki Court of Appeal. The Board also approves the Finnish service providers' international co-operation bodies. In 2006 the Board approved the applications of seven Finnish service providers concerning co-operation with a foreign service provider.</p>			
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KUVAILULEHTI

Julkaisija Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriö		Julkaisun päivämäärä 31.8.2007	
Tekijät (toimielimestä: toimielimen nimi, puheenjohtaja, sihteeri) Suomen kansainvälisten lapseksiottamisasioiden lautakunta Puheenjohtaja: Virpi Kølhi Sihteeri: Kaarina Koskela Tilastot: Vappu Kananen		Julkaisun laji Toimintakertomus	
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Julkaisun nimi Suomen kansainvälisten lapseksiottamisasioiden lautakunta. Toimintakertomus 2006			
Tiivistelmä Suomen kansainvälisten lapseksiottamisasioiden lautakunta on sosiaali- ja terveysministeriön alainen kansainvälisten lapseksiottamisasioiden asiantuntijaviranomainen. Lautakunta on perustettu vuonna 1985. Lautakunta on toiminut 1.7.1997 lähtien lastensuojelua ja yhteistyötä kansainvälisissä lapseksiottamisasiossa koskevassa yleissopimuksessa (Haagin sopimus) tarkoitettuna keskusviranomaisena. Kansainväliseen lapseksiottamiseen tarvittavien lupien myöntäminen on lautakunnan merkittävimpiä tehtäviä. Viime vuosina kansainvälisen lapseksiottamisen suosio on entisestään lisääntynyt. Vuonna 2005 lautakunta käsitteli 275 lupahakemusta. Vuonna 2006 hakemuksia käsiteltiin 413. Määrä oli suurempi kuin koskaan aikaisemmin. Suomeen saapuneiden lasten lukumäärä puolestaan laski 308 lapsesta 218 lapseen. Syynä tähän oli ennen kaikkea Kiinan tiukentuneet adoptiosäännökset. Vuonna 2005 Kiinasta adoptoitiin 140 lasta, kun vuonna 2006 Kiinasta saapui enää 49 lasta. Eniten lapsia adoptoitiin vuonna 2006 Venäjältä, Kiinasta, Thaimaasta ja Etelä-Afrikasta. Vuoden 2006 aikana lautakunta piti 31 kokousta. Näistä 11 oli täyden kokoonpanon ja 20 suppean kokoonpanon kokouksia. Lautakunta antaa asiantuntijalausuntoja muun muassa tuomioistuimille. Vuonna 2006 lautakunta antoi viisi asiantuntijalausuntoa Helsingin hovioikeudelle. Lautakunta myös hyväksyy suomalaisten palvelunantajien ulkomaiset yhteistyötahot. Vuoden 2006 aikana lautakunta hyväksyi seitsemän suomalaisen palvelunantajan jatkolupahakemusta yhteistyöstä ulkomaisen palvelunantajan kanssa.			
Asiasanat: Adoptio, ottolapset, ottovanhemmat, toimintakertomukset			
Muut tiedot www.stm.fi Julkaisu ilmestyy myös suomen- ja ruotsinkielisenä.			
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PRESENTATIONSBLAD

Utgivare Social- och hälsovårdsministeriet		Utgivningsdatum 31.8.2007	
Författare (Uppgifter om organet: namn, ordförande, sekreterare) Nämnden för internationella adoptionsärenden i Finland Ordförande: Virpi Kølhi Sekreterare: Kaarina Koskela Statistik: Vappu Kananen		Typ av publikation Verksamhetsberättelse	
		Uppdragsgivare Statsrådet	
		Projektnummer och datum för tillsättandet av organet SHM012:00/2005, tillsättningsdatum 28.4.2005	
Publikations titel Nämnden för internationella adoptionsärenden i Finland. Verksamhetsberättelse 2006			
Referat Nämnden för internationella adoptionsärenden i Finland, som är underställd social- och hälsovårdsministeriet, fungerar som särskild sakkunnigmyndighet i internationella adoptionsärenden. Nämnden har grundats år 1985. Nämnden har sedan 1.7.1997 verkat som en central myndighet i internationella adoptionsärenden i enlighet med vad som avses i konventionen om skydd av barn och samarbete vid internationella adoptioner (Haagkonventionen). Beviljande av tillstånd för internationell adoption är en av nämndens främsta uppgifter. Under senare år har intresset för internationella adoptioner ökar ännu mer. Under år 2005 handlade nämnden 275 tillståndsansökningar. År 2006 handlades 413 ansökningar. Antalet var större än någonsin tidigare. Antalet barn som anlände till Finland gick däremot ned från 308 barn till 218 barn. Den främsta orsaken till detta var de strängare adoptionsbestämmelserna i Kina. 140 barn adopterades från Kina år 2005 medan år 2006 endast 49 barn anlände från Kina. De flesta barn år 2006 kom från Ryssland, Kina, Thailand och Sydafrika. Under år 2006 höll nämnden 31 möten. 11 av mötena hade full sammansättning och 20 inskränkt sammansättning. Nämnden avger sakkunnigutlåtanden till bland annat domstolar. År 2006 gav nämnden fem sakkunnigutlåtanden till Helsingfors hovrätt. Nämnden godkänner också de finländska adoptionstjänstorganens utländska samarbetspartners. Under år 2006 godkände nämnden sju ansökningar från ett finländskt adoptionstjänstorgan om rätt att samarbeta med ett utländskt adoptionstjänstorgan.			
Nyckelord Adoption, adoptivbarn, adoptivföräldrar, verksamhetsberättelser			
Övriga uppgifter www.stm.fi/svenska Verksamhetsberättelsen ges ut även på finska och svenska.			
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	General facts about inter-country adoption	11
2	Composition of the Finnish Adoption Board.....	12
3	Activities of the Finnish Adoption Board.....	13

Appendices:

Appendix 1. Statistical data on children arriving in Finland, on permission applications, and on applicants.....	16
Appendix 2. Foreign co-operation partners of the Finnish service providers.....	20
Appendix 3. List of the Hague Convention contracting states.....	22
Appendix 4. Decree on the Finnish Board of Inter-Country Adoption Affairs (509/1997)....	23

1 General facts about inter-country adoption

In Finland, the provisions regulating adoption and the relations between adoptive children and their parents are included in the Adoption Act (153/1985) and in the Adoption Decree (508/1997). Further provisions on inter-country adoption are contained in the Decree on the Finnish Board of Inter-Country Adoption Affairs (509/1997) and in the Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption (the Hague Convention). Finland acceded to the Hague Convention in 1997.

The general planning, steering and supervision of the inter-country adoption service is the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The expert body in inter-country adoption matters is the Finnish Board of Inter-Country Adoption Affairs (the Finnish Adoption Board), which is subordinated to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The Board is the central authority referred to in Article 6, paragraph 1, of the Hague Convention.

Practical tasks relating to inter-country child adoption are attended to by the inter-country adoption service providers. Finnish legislation on child adoption requires the use of a inter-country adoption service. The service providers, which have a licence granted by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health to act as service providers for inter-country adoption, are the City of Helsinki Social Welfare Board, Interpedia and Save the Children Finland/Pelastakaa Lapset ry.

In 2006 there were 3,124 children in Finland who arrived via inter-country adoption. They were adopted under the terms of the Adoption Act, which entered into force in 1985. In some cases the adoption of children takes place in a foreign state, in accordance with that country's legislation, without permission granted by the Finnish Adoption Board. In such cases the Helsinki Court of Appeal can recognise the validity of the adoption in Finland. Most adoptive children have come to Finland from Russia, China, Thailand, Colombia and Ethiopia.

Foreign children have been adopted to Finland since the 1970s. In the 1980s less than hundred children arrived in Finland annually. In the beginning of the 1990s the number of children was still under one hundred, but since 1993 more than a hundred children have arrived in Finland annually and in several years the number has been nearly two hundred. The number of children arriving in Finland has continued to increase in the 2000s. In 2005, 308 children arrived in Finland via inter-country adoption. In 2006 the number of children decreased substantially. A total of 218 children arrived in 2006. The most significant factor to this decrease was the tighter adoption regulations in China. 140 children were adopted from China in 2005 while in 2006 only 49 children arrived from China. Although the number of adopted children in 2006 was less than in recent years in general, this does not signify decrease in the interest for international adoption. On the contrary, the interest for international adoption has notably increased both in Finland and elsewhere in the world. Indeed in 2006 the Finnish Adoption Board handled 413 applications for adoption. The number is higher than ever before.

2 Composition of the Finnish Adoption Board

Provisions on the composition, appointment and tasks of the Finnish Adoption Board are laid down by Decree (509/1997). The Board has a chairperson, a vice-chairperson and the necessary number of other members. The last-mentioned members have a personal deputy each.

Representatives of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health act as the chairperson and vice-chairperson of the Board. Of the other members, at least one must represent the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, one the Ministry of Justice, one the Directorate of Immigration, one the expertise in municipal child welfare work and one expertise in social sector research and development, in addition to which one member is appointed by each licensed service provider. The Government appoints the Board for a five-year term. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health appoints a secretary for the Board.

Composition of the Finnish Adoption Board in 2006:

Chairperson	Ms Virpi Kölhi , Lawyer Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
Vice-chairperson	Mr Kari Ilmonen , Ministerial Adviser Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
Members (Deputy members)	Ms Désirée Söderlund , Special Expert (Mr Tuomo Antila , Legislative Counsellor From 9 November 2006, Ms Kirsti Kurki-Suonio , Special Expert) Ministry of Justice
	Ms Hanna Rantala , Lawyer From 9 November 2006, Ms Tiina Nurmimäki , Lawyer (Ms Minna-Kaisa Liukko , Lawyer) Ministry for Foreign Affairs
	Ms Marja Pajukoski , Lawyer National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (Mr Esa Eriksson , Development Chief National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health) Social sector research and development expertise
	Mr Tapani Unkila , Chief Social Welfare Worker City of Tampere (Mr Olli-Pekka Alapiessa , Director of Social Work City of Vantaa) Municipal child welfare work expertise
	Mr Jarmo Tiukkanen , Senior Officer (Ms Arja Kallakivi , Head of Unit) Directorate of Immigration

Mr **Risto Pomoell**, Ministerial Counsellor, Health/Medical Affairs
(Mr **Sakari Lankinen**, Ministerial Counsellor, Health/Medical Affairs)
Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

Mr **Jari Meklin**, Adoption Co-ordinator
From 12 January 2006, Ms **Aulikki Haimi-Kaikkonen**, acting Chief
Social Welfare Worker
(Ms **Aulikki Haimi-Kaikkonen**, acting Chief Social Welfare Worker
From 12 January 2006, Ms **Raija Panttila**, Chief Social Welfare
Worker)
City of Helsinki Social Welfare Board

Ms **Tuula Kumpumäki**, Chief of Inter-Country Adoption Service
(Ms **Marja Miikkulainen**, Development Chief)
Save the Children/Pelastakaa Lapset ry

Ms **Tarja Monto**, Executive Director
From 9 November 2006, Ms **Anja Ojuva**, Chief of Adoption Service
(Ms **Anja Ojuva**, Chief of Adoption Service
From 9 November 2006, Ms **Eija Kiiskinen**, Adoption Officer)
Interpedia

Ms **Kaarina Koskela**, Senior Officer, has acted the secretary for the Board in 2006.

3 Activities of the Finnish Adoption Board

According to the Decree on the Finnish Board of Inter-Country Adoption Affairs (509/1997), the tasks of the Finnish Adoption Board are as follows:

- to grant families the permission for inter-country child adoption;
- to approve the foreign co-operation partners (foreign service providers) of Finnish service providers;
- to maintain a file on the adoption legislation of foreign states;
- to issue expert opinions;
- to make initiatives on the development of inter-country child adoption activity;
- to monitor international development in inter-country adoption affairs;
- to monitor the way in which the Hague Convention is complied with in Finland and, if necessary, to set about measures to produce conformity with it;
- to cooperate with the central authorities of states parties to the Hague Convention in order to achieve the objectives of the Convention and to exchange information referred to in the Convention;
- to attend to the tasks of the central authority under the Hague Convention which have not been assigned to another body by a law, decree or decision of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

Since 1 July 1997, the Finnish Adoption Board has been the central authority meant in the Hague Convention. Among the co-operation states of Finnish service providers, the Convention has been ratified by South Africa, the Philippines, India, China, Colombia, Poland, Thailand and Estonia. A list of the states, which have acceded to the Hague Convention, is attached (Appendix 3).

The Adoption Board had 31 meetings in 2006. 11 of them were meetings of the full composition and the remaining 20 were meetings of the limited composition. The limited composition includes, in addition to the chairperson, the member representing expertise in social sector research and development and the member representing expertise in municipal child welfare work. The competence of the limited composition includes dealing with the permissions to be granted for inter-country adoption.

Granting permissions for inter-country adoption is one of the most significant tasks of the Board. In 2006 the Board handled 413 permission applications. Two permission applications were withdrawn. 36 supplemental reports regarding the applications were requested. Nine actual applications were rejected during the year of operation.

The permission applications are forwarded to the Finnish Adoption Board through service providers. In regard to 181 applications the service provider was Save the Children Finland, in 178 applications Interpedia and in 54 applications the City of Helsinki Social Welfare Board. During the year, two notifications of change of service provider were made to the Board.

The Board made its decision on 171 applications within one month from their receipt. The processing of 95 applications took more than one month but less than two months. The processing of 115 applications and the decision-making concerning them took more than two months but less than three months and 32 applications more than three months. The processing was prolonged, inter alia, by the requested supplemental reports.

During the past year the Board received reports of altogether 218 arrivals of adoptive children in Finland. A total of 50 children arrived in Finland from Russia. 49 children were adopted from China. After Russia and China, next most children came from Thailand (37), South Africa (22), and the Philippines (21). More detailed statistical data on the children arriving in Finland and on the permission applications are attached (Appendix 1).

The Finnish Adoption Board gave five expert opinions to the Helsinki Court of Appeal for the recognition of adoption that had taken place in a foreign state.

During the year 2006, the Board dealt with and accepted seven Finnish service providers' applications for co-operation with foreign service providers. All of the applications concerned license to continue the already existing co-operation. No new contacts were established. A list of the foreign co-operation partners of the Finnish service providers is enclosed (Appendix 2).

The Secretary of the Board Kaarina Koskela took part in seminar on adoption affairs in Florence, Italy in January 2006. The seminar organiser, ChildONEurope, is a unit established under, L'Europe de l'Enfance, an unofficial group of the European Union family policy officials, reporting on and examining the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. In 2004–2005 the network carried out a lot of adoption-related surveys and even Finland took part in these by responding to the network's inquiries. The January 2006 seminar focused on post-adoption services.

Tapani Unkila attended as the Finnish Adoption Board representative a panel discussion on adoptions organised in connection with PRIDE Training by the Western Finland regional office of Save the Children. The event was held in Tampere on 30 March 2006.

On 7 April 2006, Chairperson Virpi Kõlhi and Secretary Kaarina Koskela together with Marika Elmeranta from Interpedia met with Katinka Pieterse and Marita Ferreira from Interpedia's South African co-operation contact Abba Adoption.

A delegation from the Chinese central authority, China Center of Adoption Affairs (CCAA), visited the Finnish Adoption Board on 23 May 2006. Finland was represented in the meeting by Virpi Kõlhi, Chairperson of the Board, Kaarina Koskela, Secretary of the Board, Tuula Kumpumäki, Chief of Inter-Country Adoption Service at Save the Children Finland, and Anja Ojuva, Chief of Adoption Service at Interpedia. The key issue discussed in the meeting was the Chinese accession to the Hague Convention.

In May 2006 also Pia Eriksson, research social worker, visited the Board along with the steering group of her research. Eriksson presented her research on adoption counselling. In addition to Eriksson, Sanna Mäkipää, a member of the steering group, described her own research and articles. In the meeting the Finnish Adoption Board was represented by the Chairperson, the Secretary, and Lawyer Marja Pajukoski.

In 2006 it was Iceland's turn to arrange the meeting of Nordic adoption authorities. The meeting took place in Reykjavik on 21 June 2006. The meeting was attended by delegations from all the Nordic Countries. Among the topics of the meeting were the Chinese accession to the Hague Convention and pre-adoption training courses that are compulsory for example in Denmark.

On 1 September 2006 the Board Chairperson and Secretary attended a training event for social workers by providing a presentation of issues that are important for the Board's duties regarding the provision of adoption counselling and the adoption process in general.

Chairperson Virpi Kõlhi and Secretary Kaarina Koskela attended the annual working meeting of European central authorities in Basel, Switzerland on 5–7 October 2006. In the meeting for example issues relating to the age of the adoption applicants were discussed and experiences concerning co-operation in adoption affairs with different countries were exchanged. A specific concern expressed in the meeting was the so-called independent adoptions. In 2007 the meeting will take place in Vilnius, Lithuania.

Anja Ojuva represented the Board in a training event on adoption counselling that took place in Uusikaupunki on 27 November 2006.

The Secretary of the Board participated in meetings of the adoption network during the year 2006.

The Board's Internet pages are found at www.stm.fi under the heading of Neuvottelukunnat. The pages give information about the Board, service providers and inter-country adoption in general and the Board's meeting schedule.

STATISTICAL DATA ON CHILDREN ARRIVING IN FINLAND IN 2006

Number of children, country of origin, sex, service provider

Country	Save the Children			Interpedia			City of Helsinki SWB			Children in total
	Girl	Boy	Total	Girl	Boy	Total	Girl	Boy	Total	
South Africa				5	6	11	4	7	11	22
Ethiopia				7	8	15				15
Philippines	8	13	21							21
India					4	4				4
China	21	2	23	22	4	26				49
Colombia				5	7	12	3	3	6	18
Thailand	3	1	4	5	14	19	5	9	14	37
Russia	16	34	50							50
Estonia							1	1	2	2
Total	48	50	98	44	43	87	13	20	33	218

Children's age, sex, service provider

Age	Save the Children			Interpedia			City of Helsinki SWB			Children in total
	Girl	Boy	Total	Girl	Boy	Total	Girl	Boy	Total	
Under 1 year	3	1	4	15	18	33	5	6	11	48
1 year	26	11	37	20	15	35		6	6	78
2 years	3	14	17	4	7	11	4	4	8	36
3 years	5	10	15	1		1		1	1	17
4 years	2	7	9	2	1	3				12
5 years	3	1	4	1	1	2	3	1	4	10
6 years	2	4	6					1	1	7
7 years	4	1	5		1	1		1	1	7
8 -13 years		1	1	1		1	1		1	3
Total	48	50	98	44	43	87	13	20	33	218

Children's year of birth and country of origin

Year of birth	South Africa	Ethiopia	Philippines	India	China	Colombia	Thailand	Russia	Estonia	Total
2006	8	3	1			4	1			17
2005	9	5	7		23	8	12	2		66
2004	3	4	7	3	20	1	17	11		66
2003			3	1	2	1	4	11		22
2002		1	2		2		2	9		16
2001	1	1			1	2	1	6	1	13
2000			1			1		1		3
1999	1					1		7		9
1998		1						2		3
1997					1					1
1996								1		1
1995										
1994										
1993									1	1
Total	22	15	21	4	49	18	37	50	2	218

PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS IN THE BOARD IN 2006

Decisions

Contents	number
Permission granted for one child	169
Permission granted for 1 child or siblings	16
The child was born before the year x	33
The child was born after the year x	102
The child was born in xx - xx	18
Validity of a permission extended	54
Permission refused	9
Other	12
Total	413

Cancelled applications

	number
Permission applications	2
Applications for extension of permission	0
Total	2

Processing time in the Board

Time	number
Under one month	171
1 month - under 2 months	95
2 months - under 3 months	115
3 months or longer	32
Total	413

36 supplemental reports were requested.

Service provider in the decisions

Service provider	number
Save the Children	181
Interpedia	178
City of Helsinki Social Welfare Board	54
Total	413

STATISTICAL DATA ON APPLICANTS IN 2006

The statistical data on applicants does not include applicants whose permission has been extended.

Age of applicants

Age	Number of men	Number of women
25 - 29	5	13
30 - 34	62	73
35 - 39	117	124
40 - 44	93	106
45 - 49	30	35
50 -	10	8
Total	317	359

Sole applicants

Women	42
Men	0
Total	42

Applicant families with no children and families with children

No. of children	None	Biological	Adopted	Both	Foster home	Total
No children	196					196
1 child		39	74	4		117
2 children		16	12	5	2	35
3 children		5		4		9
4 or more children		1		1		2
Total	196	61	86	14	2	359

Residence of applicant families by province

Province	Families
Southern Finland	173
Western Finland	134
Eastern Finland	25
Oulu	22
Lapland	3
Åland Islands	2
Total	359

FOREIGN CO-OPERATION PARTNERS OF THE FINNISH SERVICE PROVIDERS

Foreign service providers which have been approved by the Finnish Adoption Board and the last day of approval

Save the Children Finland

China	China Center of Adoption Affairs, 5 September 2011
Philippines	Inter-Country Adoption Board, 9 May 2011
Poland	Public Adoption and Care Center in Warsaw, 31 March 2006 Children Friends Company – National Adoption – Welfare Center, 14 March 2006 Catholic Adoption – Welfare Centre, 14 March 2006
Russia	City of St Petersburg Committee on Education, 5 September 2011 Leningrad Area Committee on Education, 20 April 2008 Republic of Karelia, Ministry of Education, 3 June 2009 Administrative district of Tcheljabinsk, Educational and Science Administration 11 November 2008
Thailand	The Department of Social Development and Welfare, 15 December 2009 Holt Sahathai Foundation, 9 May 2011

City of Helsinki Social Welfare Board

Colombia	Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar, 15 May 2010 Casa de Maria y el Niño, 15 May 2010 La Casita de Nicolás, 4 December 2011
Estonia	Ministry of Social Welfare of Estonia, 6 June 2012
South Africa	Johannesburg Child Welfare Society, 31 October 2010

Thailand	The Department of Social Development and Welfare, 5 September 2011
	Thai Red Cross Children Home, 5 September 2011
Interpedia	
Ethiopia	Children, Youth and Family Affairs Department, 21 August 2010
China	China Center of Adoption Affairs, 15 June 2012
Colombia	Los Chiquitines, 10 February 2012
	Fundación “Los Pisingos”, 15 December 2009
	Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar, 15 December 2009
India	Families for Children (FFC), 18 April 2010
	Delhi Council for Child Welfare, 12 October 2009
South Africa	Apostolic Faith Mission Executive Welfare Council/Abba Adoptions, 21 April 2012
Thailand	Friends For All Children Foundation, 15 December 2009
	The Department of Social Development and Welfare, 15 December 2009

THE HAGUE CONVENTION CONTRACTING STATES 8 AUGUST 2007

The following states have ratified the Convention / acceded to the Convention. The date is the date when the Convention has entered into force. A total of 73 contracting states by 8 August 2007.

Albania	1 January 2001	Italy	1 May 2000
Andorra	1 May 1997	Kenya	1 June 2007
Australia	1 December 1998	Latvia	1 December 2002
Austria	1 September 1999	Lithuania	1 August 1998
Azerbaijan	1 October 2004	Luxembourg	1 November 2002
Belarus	1 November 2003	Madagascar	1 September 2004
Belgium	1 September 2005	Mali	1 September 2006
Belize	1 April 2006	Malta	1 February 2005
Bolivia	1 July 2002	Mauritius	1 January 1999
Brazil	1 July 1999	Mexico	1 May 1995
Bulgaria	1 September 2002	Moldova	1 August 1998
Burkina Faso	1 May 1996	Monaco	1 October 1999
Burundi	1 February 1999	Mongolia	1 August 2000
Cambodia	1 August 2007	Netherlands	1 October 1998
Canada	1 April 1997	New Zealand	1 January 1999
Chile	1 November 1999	Norway	1 January 1998
China	1 January 2006	Panama	1 January 2000
Colombia	1 November 1998	Paraguay	1 September 1998
Costa Rica	1 February 1996	Peru	1 January 1996
Cuba	1 June 2007	Philippines	1 November 1996
Cyprus	1 June 1995	Poland	1 October 1995
Czech Republic	1 June 2000	Portugal	1 July 2004
Denmark	1 November 1997	Romania	1 May 1995
Dominican Republic	1 March 2007	San Marino	1 February 2005
Ecuador	1 January 1996	Slovakia	1 October 2001
El Salvador	1 March 1999	Slovenia	1 May 2002
Estonia	1 June 2002	South Africa	1 December 2003
Finland	1 July 1997	Spain	1 November 1995
France	1 October 1998	Sri Lanka	1 May 1995
Georgia	1 August 1999	Sweden	1 September 1997
Germany	1 March 2002	Switzerland	1 January 2003
Guatemala	1 March 2003	Thailand	1 August 2004
Guinea	1 February 2004	Turkey	1 September 2004
Hungary	1 August 2005	United Kingdom	1 June 2003
Iceland	1 May 2000	Uruguay	1 April 2004
India	1 October 2003	Venezuela	1 May 1997
Israel	1 June 1999		

Decree

on the Finnish Board of Inter-Country Adoption Affairs

(509/1997)

Issued in Helsinki on 30 May 1997

On the submission of the Minister of Justice, the following is enacted on the basis of section 20(3) of the Adoption Act (153/1985) issued on 8 February 1985, as amended by the Act (175/1996) of 22 March 1996:

Section 1

The task of the Finnish Board of Inter-Country Adoption Affairs (*the Finnish Adoption Board*) is to:

- 1) collect and maintain data on the legislation of foreign states concerning adoption and international adoption services and provide information about this on request to authorities and service providers;
- 2) follow the international development in inter-country adoption matters;
- 3) follow the implementation of the Convention of 29 May 1993 on Protection of Children and Co-operation in respect of Inter-country Adoption (*the Hague Convention*) in Finland and, if necessary, take measures for the implementation of it;
- 4) co-operate with the central authorities or the bodies taking care of the duties of a central authority in the states that are parties to the Hague Convention to achieve the objects of the Convention and to exchange the information referred to in the Convention;
- 5) approve for a fixed period those foreign service providers, referred to in section 21(3)

of the Adoption Act (153/1985), with which Finnish service providers may co-operate, and revoke earlier approvals;

6) grant the permissions for adoption referred to in section 25 of the Adoption Act;

7) provide the evidence referred to in section 44 of the Adoption Act and statements referred to in sections 45, 46, 47a(2) and 50(2), as well as the statements referred to in section 7(2) of the Adoption Decree (508/1997);

8) take care of those tasks of a central authority, referred to in the Hague Convention, which have not been delegated to any other body by Act, Decree or Decision of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health; and

9) submit initiatives and proposals to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health for the development of the inter-country adoption activity.

Section 2

If the Finnish Adoption Board has granted permission for adoption on the basis of sec-

tion 27(1) of the Adoption Act, the permission shall state that

- 1) the adopter has been deemed an appropriate and suitable adoptive parent; and
- 2) the adopter has received inter-country adoption service and adoption counselling.

If the Finnish Adoption Board has granted permission for adoption on the basis of section 27(2) of the Adoption Act, the permission shall state that

- 1) the foreign body has deemed the adopter an appropriate and suitable adoptive parent;
- 2) the adopter has received necessary counselling in his home state; and
- 3) according to the certificate presented by the adopter the child has the right or will get the right of entry and habitual residence in that state.

The permission referred to in subsections 1 and 2 above shall also state the period of validity of the permission as well as the possible conditions or restrictions on the adoption referred to in section 27(3) of the Adoption Act.

The permission referred to in subsections 1 and 2 above may, on the request of the adopter, be given in English.

Section 3

A permission granted on the basis of section 27 of the Adoption Act shall be sent directly to the service-provider from which the adopter has received the inter-country adoption service.

Section 4

The Board has a chairman, a vice-chairman and a necessary number of other members. Each member has personal deputy member.

Both the chairman and the vice-chairman shall represent the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. At least one of the other members shall represent the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, one the Ministry of Justice and one the Directorate of Immigration. One member shall be an expert on municipal child welfare work and one an expert on social sector research and development. In addition, one

representative will be elected from each service provider which has been licensed to provide inter-country adoption service by the Ministry of Health and Welfare. What is provided above concerning members also apply to deputy members.

The majority of the members of the Board shall represent public authorities.

Section 5

The Council of State appoints the chairmen, the members and the deputy members for a five-year period at most. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health appoints the secretary to the Board.

The chairman or vice-chairman of the Board and at least half of the other members constitute a quorum.

However, in matters relating to granting of a permission referred to in section 1(6), the Finnish Adoption Board also constitutes a quorum in the presence of the chairman or the vice-chairman and the expert on municipal child welfare work and the member representing the expertise on social sector research and development.

Section 6

Otherwise the regulations on state committees are applied to the Board.

Where necessary, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health issues more detailed instructions to the Board.

Section 7

This Decree enters into force on July 1 1997.

This Decree repeals the earlier Decree (155/1985) on the Finnish Board of Inter-Country Adoption Affairs, issued on 8 February 1985 and later amendments.

When this Decree enters into force the appointed Board will continue its work until the end of its term. A member representing the Directorate of Immigration referred to in section 4 must, however, be appointed.

Measures for the implementation of this Decree may be undertaken before the Decree enters into force.

Helsinki 30 May 1997

President of the Republic

MARTTI AHTISAARI

Minister of Justice *Kari Häkämies*

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