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submitted by

THE GOVERNMENT OF FINLAND
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NINETEENTH PERIODIC REPORT
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE REVISED EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER

SUBMITTED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF FINLAND

DECEMBER 2025

NINETEENTH PERIODIC REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REVISED EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER

on the situation pertaining on 29 December 2025, made by the Government of Finland in accordance with Article C of the Revised European Social Charter and Article 21 of the European Social Charter as well as the decision of the Committee of Minister CM(2022)114-final on the Implementation of the Report on Improving the European Social Charter system, on the measures taken to give effect to Articles 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 20 of the Revised European Social Charter (Finnish Treaty Series 78 and 80/2002), the instrument of acceptance of which was deposited on 21 June 2002.

In line with the new reporting procedure Finland was sent targeted questions to be answered in the report relating to some Articles of the first group of provisions. The first group of questions entails Articles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 28 and 29. Finland has accepted the Articles from this group with the exception of Articles 3 §§ 2 and 3 and Articles 4 §§ 1 and 4. The Government was requested to respond to these questions only in so far as it has accepted the provisions to which the questions relate. No information was expected in respect of accepted provisions for which no questions have been defined. Furthermore, in a spirit of simplification, States Parties were not requested to provide information in response to previous conclusions of non-conformity or deferrals.

In accordance with Article C of the Revised European Social Charter, copies of this official report in English language will be communicated to the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK), the Finnish Confederation of Salaried Employees (STTK), the Confederation of Unions for Academic Professionals in Finland (AKAVA), the Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK) and the Federation of Finnish Enterprises (FFE).

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ARTICLE 2: THE RIGHT TO JUST CONDITIONS OF WORK

Article 2 § 1: Reasonable daily and weekly working hours

Question a

1. Chapter 3 of the Working Time Act *(työaikalaki, arbetstidslag*; 872/2019) lays down provisions on statutory organisation of regular working time. Under section 5 of the said Act, regular working time shall not exceed 40 hours per week (*i.e.* eight hours per day). However, weekly working time may be organised in such a way that it averages 40 hours over a period of no more than 52 weeks without exceeding the regular daily working time of eight hours.

2. Section 7 of the said Act stipulates on period-based working time, allowing for a derogation from weekly working hours so that the working time does not exceed 120 hours over a period of three weeks or 80 hours over a period of two weeks. Such derogations only apply to specified duties and activities, including

- security and guard duties, surveillance and traffic control duties, rescue duties and prison administration;
- press services, editorial radio and television work, and comparable generation and transmission of online content, film production and postal services as well as telecommunications services requiring night work;
- family day care referred to in the Act on Early Childhood Education and Care (540/2018), other early childhood education and care services requiring night work, and social welfare, health care and veterinary services operating for most of the day;
- passenger and freight transportation and the loading and unloading of ships and railway cars;
- mechanical forest and forest improvement work and in short-distance timber transport, performed off-road;
- dairy operations;
- the hospitality and cultural sectors and camp operations;
- in support functions essential to the ongoing performance of the duties and operations referred to above.

3. It is also laid down in section 7 of the Working Time Act that to organise work in a practical way or to avoid impractical shifts for employees, regular working time may, however, be organised so that it does not exceed 240 hours during two consecutive three-week or three consecutive two-week periods. Regular working time may not exceed 128 hours during either of the three-week periods or 88 hours during any of the two-week periods.

4. The key provisions on safeguards are contained in chapter 6 of the Working Time Act and concern rest periods. The said chapter provides for daily breaks and daily rest periods, and, in separate sections, on a daily rest period of motor vehicle drivers and on a weekly rest period which is subject to derogation.

5. The Working Time Act also provides on maximum working time. Under section 18, the working time of an employee, including overtime, may not exceed an average of 48 hours per week over a period of four months. Provisions on agreeing on the length of the adjustment period by collective agreement are laid down in section 34 (see below). In addition to the above, the working time of motor vehicle drivers may not exceed 60 hours per calendar week. Provisions on the right to agree on the length of the weekly maximum working time of motor vehicle drivers by collective agreement are also laid down in section 34.

6. Under section 34 of the Working Time Act, an employer or an association of employers and a national association of employees or its member association may agree on working time by way of derogation from the provisions laid down it. The said section lists the provisions that can be derogated from by mutual agreement. One of them concerns regular working hours. It is stipulated that regular working time may average no more than 40 hours per week over a period of no more than 52 weeks.

7. Finnish collective agreements typically have provisions on working time. In Finland, solely the number of collective labour agreements that have been declared generally applicable is about 160 with slight variation. An overview of the provisions of different collective agreements in terms of working times was not feasible in this context.

8. A non-binding English translation of the Working Time Act can be read in the Finlex database, a public and free online service owned by the Ministry of Justice: https://www.finlex.fi/en/legislation/translations/2019/eng/872.

Question b

9. The Seafarers' Working Hours Act (*merityöaikalaki, sjöarbetstidslag*; 296/1976) applies to work performed by persons serving on board a Finnish vessel plying in foreign transport, for the said vessel or otherwise on the orders of a superior on board the vessel or elsewhere. The provisions of the said Act shall be observed even when such vessel makes voyages between ports in Finland. There are some exceptions to the scope of the Act.

10. Section 4 determines the regular working hours of employees. The regular working hours shall not exceed eight hours a day or 40 hours a week. The regular working hours for catering staff on a day in port that falls on a holiday or Saturday shall not, however, exceed five hours on board a vessel other than a passenger vessel and on board a passenger vessel when there are no passengers aboard. Under section 9 of the Act, an employee may be required to work overtime in return for remuneration. An employee may be required to work overtime in excess of the regular daily working hours for a maximum of 16 hours a week. Moreover, section 10 lists derogations from the restrictions on the requirement to work overtime and on rest periods.

11. Section 9 c provides for maximum working time on board a maritime fishing vessel where the average weekly working time may not exceed 48 hours during a 12-month period.

12. The Act on Working Hours on Vessels in Domestic Traffic (*laki työajasta kotimaanliikenteen aluksissa, lag om arbetstiden på fartyg i inrikesfart*; 248/1982) applies to work performed under the Seafarers' Employment Contracts Act (*merityösopimuslaki, lag om*

sjöarbetsavtal; 756/2011) on a Finnish vessel used in domestic traffic or, on the employer's instructions, temporarily elsewhere. There are some derogations to the scope of this Act.

13. Under section 4 of the Act on Working Hours on Vessels in domestic traffic, regular working hours shall not exceed eight hours a day and 40 hours a week. Provisions on weekly overtime are contained in section 9 which states that, in addition to the daily overtime referred to in section 8, the employee is obliged to do up to 16 hours per two weeks in overtime that exceeds the regular weekly working hours laid down in section 4, subsection 1, but does not exceed the regular daily working hours. If the shift system referred to in section 8, subsection 2, is observed in determining the employee's working hours and free time, the employee shall nonetheless be obliged to do up to 16 hours a week in weekly overtime.

14. Section 8 of the same Act provides for daily overtime. Under subsection 1, the employee is required to work up to 16 hours of paid overtime per week in addition to the regular daily working hours. However, working hours must not exceed 14 hours per day. The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment may grant exceptions to these maximums in individual cases. The Advisory Committee for Seamen's Affairs shall, however, be reserved an opportunity to be heard in the matter. Under subsection 2 of the same section, when the work is arranged in two shifts, the employee is obliged, contrary to what is provided in subsection 1, to do up to 28 hours of daily overtime a week, plus up to 7 hours a week with his or her consent, if he or she is entitled to periods of free time at regular intervals of a maximum of 30 days. Such period of free time shall last at least 7 days, and it shall include a complete weekend.

15. The Seamen's Working Hours Act and the Act on Working Hours on Vessels in Domestic Traffic also have provisions under which an employer or an association of employers and a national association of employees or its member association may agree on working time by way of derogation from the provisions laid down in the said acts.

16. A non-binding English translation of the Seafarers' Working Hours Act can be read in the Finlex database: https://www.finlex.fi/en/legislation/translations/1976/eng/296.

17. Similarly, a non-binding English translation of the Act on Working Hours on Vessels in Domestic Traffic can be read in the Finlex database: https://www.finlex.fi/en/legislation/translations/1982/eng/248.

Question c

18. Section 4 of the Working Time Act stipulates on stand-by. An employer and an employee may agree on stand-by and on the compensation paid for it. When on stand-by, the employee shall be available to the employer so that the employee can be called for work. Time spent on stand-by shall not be regarded as working time unless the employee is required to remain at the workplace or in its immediate vicinity. Stand-by may not unduly hamper the employee's leisure time.

19. The employee shall be aware of the amount of compensation for stand-by or the grounds for the determination of the compensation and of the terms of the stand-by when concluding an agreement on stand-by. The restrictions imposed by stand-by on the employee's leisure time shall be taken into consideration in the amount of the compensation.

20. It is laid down in the same section that a public servant and an officeholder must be available for stand-by duty if it is essential due to the nature of the work and for extremely compelling reasons. Under such circumstances, they cannot refuse to be on stand-by.

21. Section 34 of the Working Time Act stipulates that an employer or an association of employers and a national association of employees or its member association may agree on working time by way of derogation from the provisions laid down in it. The provision on stand-by is one of provisions that may be derogated from by mutual agreement.

ARTICLE 3: THE RIGHT TO SAFE AND HEALTHY WORKING CONDITIONS

Article 3 § 1: Health and safety and the working environment

Psychosocial risks, including in jobs requiring intense attention or high performance and in jobs related to stress or traumatic situations at work

22. Psychosocial risks are one of the main focus areas of occupational safety and health (OSH) inspection. Supervision is focussed on employers' measures to prevent and manage harmful psychosocial stress factors at work and to promote occupational health care cooperation. Through supervision, it is ensured that employers identify psychosocial stress factors at work and target measures so that harmful psychosocial stress can be prevented, reduced and managed.

23. In the supervision of psychosocial stress and other activities, the aim is to influence the management of psychosocial stress at work in workplaces. The goal is that workplaces are able to utilize the expertise of occupational health care in managing psychosocial stress.

The gig or platform economy

24. The definition of self-employment / employee status in the gig and platform economy remains challenging. In May 2025 Finland's Supreme Administrative Court ruled that food couriers are employees, not self-employed entrepreneurs. According to the Supreme Administrative Court ruling, couriers have been subordinate to the company, with the result that their independence was in part only illusory and masked a genuine employment relationship. At the same time, however, the court also held that the working time legislation does not apply to the work of the couriers.

25. The OSH authorities are forming their enforcement policies based on the ruling.

Telework

26. There is no separate legislation on telework. It is also not a separate focus area in inspections. However, possible OSH issues regarding telework are dealt with on a case-by-case basis, upon request.

Jobs affected by climate change risks

27. Climate change does not yet affect Finnish working environment as much as more southern regions. No binding limit values have been set for thermal conditions. However, it is the

employer's responsibility to ensure that air temperature, humidity and air flow as well as surfaces that radiate heat or cold pose as little danger or risk as possible to workers' health and safety. The assessment of thermal conditions is a key component of any workplace survey, and it is the employer's duty to ensure that their occupational health care provider carries out a sufficiently thorough assessment.

28. The employer should try, principally by using technical solutions, to prevent the workers from experiencing any hazardous strain caused by hot or cold conditions. If this is not possible, the strain should be interrupted by allowing for regular breaks.

Legislation concerning the questions posed under Article 3 § 1

29. The Occupational Safety and Health Act (*työturvallisuuslaki, arbetarskyddslag*; 738/2002) is the main legal framework on occupational safety and health in Finland. It has a wide scope of application. The Act applies to all employers and employees in all places of work and in all sectors. It applies broadly to all employment relationships, including platform workers who meet the criteria of an employment contract under the Employment Contracts Act. Platform workers who are considered to be self-employed entrepreneurs fall outside the scope of the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

30. In 2025 Finland's Supreme Administrative Court (KHO:2025:41) has ruled that food couriers are employees, not self-employed entrepreneurs. The case concerned couriers operating on the platform of the food delivery company Wolt. The KHO judgment found that even though there are some features of self-employment in the work of food delivery workers, this work nevertheless fulfils all of the criteria of employment specified in the section on the scope of application of the Employment Contracts Act (*työsopimuslaki; arbetsavtalslag*; 55/2001).

31. To implement the EU Directive on improving working conditions in platform work, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment has set up a tripartite working group. The term of the working group is 29 January–31 December 2025. The task of the working group is to prepare a report in the form of a government proposal that includes proposals for the legislative amendments required to implement the directive. The working group has representatives from the Ministry responsible for occupational safety and health.

32. The Occupational Safety and Health Act applies to all forms of work, including telework. According to section 5 of the Act, the law applies to work performed by an employee at home or another location of their choosing, as agreed upon in the employment contract. Certain provisions of the Act apply only in a limited manner to telework. The law acknowledges the limitations of the employer's ability to influence work and working conditions in remote settings when complying with obligations set out in sections 9, 10, and 12, as well as chapters 3 and 5 of the Act. Employers are obligated to systematically identify and assess risks and hazards that may arise from or during telework. However, the employer's ability to fulfill these obligations using the same methods and practices as in on-site work may be limited. On the other hand, certain provisions of the Act become more emphasized in remote work, for example the employer's obligation to provide instruction and guidance (section 14).

33. The Act explicitly covers psychosocial risks and emphasizes the protection of both physical and mental health. According to the section 8, employers have a general duty to take care of the safety and health of their employees by taking the necessary measures. For this purpose, employers are required to consider the circumstances related to the work, working conditions and other aspects of the working environment as well as the employees' personal abilities. Employers shall design, select and implement the measures necessary for improving the working conditions following the principles of risk prevention as far as possible.

34. Section 10 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act requires employers to systematically identify and assess hazards and risks. A legislative amendment in 2023 clarified that both physical and psychosocial workload factors must be taken into account as part of the risk assessment. The employer must consider "workload factors related to the content of work, the organisation of work and the social interaction of the work community". The employer must, taking the nature of the work and activities into account, identify and assess all relevant psychosocial risks such as cognitive risk factors, high emotional job demands, third-party violence and harassment, high workload and time pressure. If the employer lacks the required expertise to carry out the risk assessment, the services of external experts must be used.

35. The Occupational Safety and Health Act also includes a general provision taking workload factors into account in work design. Section 13 emphasizes the need to balance the demands of work with employees' physical and mental capacities already during the planning and dimensioning phase. According to the section, in designing and planning work, the physical and mental abilities of employees shall be considered to avoid or reduce risk or hazard from workload factors to the safety and health of the employees.

36. In addition, the Act specifically addresses certain psychosocial risks, including the threat of violence (section 27), working alone (section 29), night work (section 30), and work pauses (section 31). The Act also includes reactive obligations. Employers have a duty to act when an individual is suffering from health-endangering work-related strain at work (section 25) and when harassment occurs at work (section 28).

37. Although climate change-related risks are not explicitly mentioned in the Occupational Safety and Health Act, its provisions are applicable to emerging risks such as extreme heat, poor air quality, and exposure to new chemical or biological hazards. Under section 10, employers are required to identify and assess all workplace risks – including those arising from climate change – and, in accordance with section 8 and chapter 5, reduce exposure to a level that does not endanger employees' safety or health. The Act is supplemented by several subordinate statutes that contain more detailed provisions on prevention measures, such as those related to biological and chemical risks.

ARTICLE 4: THE RIGHT TO A FAIR REMUNERATION

Article 4 § 3: Right to equal pay for work of equal value

Question a

38. According to the Act on Equality between Women and Men (*laki naisten ja miesten välisestä tasa-arvosta, lag om jämställdhet mellan kvinnor och män;* 609/1986, so-called Equality Act) persons performing the same work or work of equal value must receive equal pay regardless of sex. This principle is addressed in national legislation in the Non-discrimination Act (*yhdenvertaisuuslaki, diskrimineringslag*; 1325/2014), Act on Equality between Women and Men and in the Employment Contracts Act.

39. The concept of equal work and work of equal value is not currently defined in national legislation. The ongoing implementation of the EU Pay Transparency Directive might bring some changes.

Question b

40. The Finnish labor market and employers have a wide range of job evaluation and classification systems and remuneration systems at their disposal. Some of these systems are based on an analytical assessment of job requirements and recognize the principle of equal pay fairly well. However, many systems still need improving in terms of reflecting the equal pay principle. Many systems are commercial, and Finland does not have a nationally developed tool.

Question c

41. Since 2006, the Government, together with central labour market organisations, has been implementing Equal Pay Programmes to reduce the gender pay gap. In Finland, the average pay gap between women and men is around 16 per cent. The gap has been narrowing slowly, indicating the need for further action.

42. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health continues the tripartite Equal Pay Programme, which brings together the measures of the Government and central labour market organisations to narrow the gender pay gap. The Equal Pay Programme 2024-2027 was adopted in 2024, and its objective is to reduce the pay gap to at least 14,5 per cent.

43. The measures focus on promoting equality planning and pay surveys at workplaces, the dismantling of the gender-based division of education and labour and the reconciliation of work and family life. Due to changes in the operating environment, the Programme includes discussions between private sector trade unions about their possible participation in Equal Pay Programmes. A study of the factors affecting changes concerning the difference in average earnings between women and men will also be carried out during the programming period.

44. The national implementation of the EU Pay Transparency Directive is ongoing and might bring about changes to national legislation.

45. The development of the pay gap is constantly monitored using indicators and statistics produced by Statistics Finland. These are available separately for the public and the private sector.

Table 1. Gender distribution of full-time employees, average regular working hours earnings by gender, women's earnings as a percentage of men's earnings in different sectors 2023

Year 2023							
	Number	Share		Averige regular working hours earnings			Women's earnings / men's earnings, %
Sector	In total	Men, %	Women, %	Total	Men	Women	
In total	1 469 578	47,6	52,4	3 929	4 296	3 596	**83,7**
Private sector	884 734	61,0	39,0	4 085	4 343	3 683	**84,8**
Local government	400 050	21,5	78,5	3 516	3 853	3 424	**88,9**
Central government	74 992	49,2	50,8	4 366	4 640	4 100	**88,4**
Other	109 802	33,6	66,4	3 875	4 293	3 664	**85,3**

Source: Statistics Finland

Table 2. Women's earnings as a percentage of men's earnings 2005–2023

Year	Private	Municipal	State	In total
2004	81,1	84,7	81,3	80,5
2005	82,2	83,4	81,9	80,7
2006	82,3	83,2	82,0	80,8
2007	82,2	83,2	83,1	81,0
2008	82,6	84,0	83,7	81,2
2009	84,5	84,4	84,1	81,8
2010	83,6	85,1	84,4	82,8
2011	83,9	85,4	85,6	83,2
2012	83,8	85,4	86,0	83,1
2013	84,0	85,6	86,1	83,1
2014	84,5	85,9	86,1	83,3
2015	84,5	86,1	86,0	83,2
2016	84,9	86,5	86.8	83,7
2017	85,3	87.,0	87,1	83,9
2018	85,3	87,4	87,8	83,9
2019	85,1	87,6	88,4	84,1
2020	85,2	87,8	88,4	84,2
2021	85,5	87,9	88,6	84,3
2022	85,7	87,8	88,8	84,5
2023	**84,8**	**88,9**	**88,4**	**83,7**

Source: Statistics Finland

ARTICLE 5: THE RIGHT TO ORGANISE

Questions a to c

46. Section 13 of the Constitution of Finland (*Suomen perustuslaki, Finlands grundlag*; 731/1999) provides for freedom of assembly and freedom of association. Everyone has the right to arrange meetings and demonstrations without a permit, as well as the right to participate in them. Everyone also has the freedom of association, which entails the right to form an association without a permit, to be a member or not to be a member of an association and to participate in the activities of an association. The freedom to form trade unions and to organise in order to look after other interests is likewise guaranteed in the said section.

47. Section 1 of chapter 13 of the Employment Contracts Act stipulates on freedom of association The said section confirms the right of employers and employees to belong to associations and to be active in them. They also have the right to establish lawful associations, and they are free not to belong to any association. Prevention or restriction of this right or freedom is prohibited, and any agreement contrary to the freedom of association is null and void.

48. Other provisions on the freedom of association regarding public servants and officeholders are contained in the Act on Public Officials in Central Government (*valtion virkamieslaki, statstjänstemannalag*; 750/1994) and in the Act on Officials in Local Government and Wellbeing Services Counties (*laki kunnan ja hyvinvointialueen viranhaltijasta, lag om tjänsteinnehavare i kommuner och välfärdsområden*; 304/2003), among others.

49. Section 1 of the Collective Agreements Act (*työehtosopimuslaki, lag om kollektivavtal*; 436/1946) stipulates on the definition of a collective agreement within the meaning of the same Act. A collective agreement is any agreement concluded by one or more employers or registered associations of employers and one or more registered associations of employees, concerning the conditions to be complied with in contracts of employment or in employment generally. Subsection 2 of the same section gives a definition of associations of employers and employees. “Association of employers” means any association whose specific objects include that of safeguarding the employers' interests in the matter of employment; and “association of employees” means any association whose specific objects include that of safeguarding the employees' interests in the matter of employment. When assessing the purpose of an employee association, the actual goals and activities of the association must be considered, in addition to its formal purpose.

50. The last sentence of section 1, subsection 2 of the Collective Agreements Act, stipulating on the purpose of such an association, entered into force on 1 January 2025. The addition of the last sentence reinforces the principle that a collective agreement cannot be regarded as valid if the association entering it does not genuinely represent the contracting party in whose interest it has concluded the agreement. In practice, such an association has been called a “yellow association” and such agreements are known as “yellow collective agreements”. This typically means that the employee association has in fact been established in the interests of the employer company, which then exercises such influence in the employee association that the content of the collective agreement ends up reflecting the employer’s interests inappropriately. This amounts to an artificial

arrangement because the employee association does not genuinely represent the interests of the employees' side.

51. Based on the new provision, the actual goals and activities of the association should be assessed in addition to its formal purpose laid down in its by-laws. This includes evaluating, among others, whether the employer company can be seen to exercise undue influence on or maintain another type of dependency relationship with the activities of the employee association. Factors such as the credibility of the association's stated goals and the scope of its activities in safeguarding the employee association's interests may also be considered.

52. Compared to many other European countries, Finland has a high rate of unionisation among wage earners, although recent studies indicate a downward trend. According to a study published in 2023 ("Organisation of wage and salary earners in 2021"; publications of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment in 2023:19), trade unions had altogether 1,889,000 members at the end of 2021. However, 572,000 or 30.3 per cent of them were members whose interests were not represented. They include pensioners, students, non-paying members and self-employed persons.

53. At the end of 2021, there were a total of 1,316,000 members whose interests were represented, and the degree of unionisation calculated accordingly was 54.7 per cent. The degree of unionisation in 2017 was 60.2 per cent, which means it has fallen by 5.5 percentage points. The degree of unionisation among women was 60.9 per cent in 2021 compared to 48.5 per cent among men. The degree of unionisation was 76.7 per cent in public services, 63.4 per cent in industry, and 41.6 per cent in the private services sector.

54. The coverage of collective agreements in Finland is high by European standards. It reflects the proportion of wage and salary earners employed by organised employers of the total number of employees in the participating sector. According to a study published in 2024 ("Coverage of collective agreements in 2021/2022"; publications of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment in 2024:7), the total coverage of collective agreements in the private sector was 64 per cent. It indicates the proportion of private sector employees that worked for organised employers in 2021. When considering employees covered by collective agreements based on general applicability, coverage in the private sector was around 84 per cent. When also including the public sector, where agreements cover all employees, the total coverage in 2021 was 88.8 per cent of all salary earners.

55. A non-binding English translation of the Employment Contracts Act can be read in the Finlex database: https://www.finlex.fi/en/legislation/translations/2001/eng/55.

56. Similarly, a non-binding English translation of the Collective Agreements Act can be read in the Finlex database: https://www.finlex.fi/en/legislation/translations/1946/eng/436.

Question d

57. The Government notes that the first part of question d relates to information on the status and prerogatives of minority trade unions. However, the Government is not able to identify any such trade unions in Finland.

58. The Government, thus, refers to its reply to Question a to c above concerning the relevant legislation in general.

59. The Government notes, furthermore, that the second part of Question d relates to information on the existence of alternative representation structures at enterprise-level, such as elected worker representatives.

60. First, employees in Finland may be represented by a shop steward elected under a collective agreement. Based on the collective agreement system, the shop steward system is not regulated under any labour laws. The protection of shop stewards against unjustified termination is safeguarded both by the provisions of collective agreements and the provisions on protection against termination contained in the Employment Contracts Act.

61. In accordance with chapter 13, section 3 of the Employment Contracts Act, employees who do not have a shop steward referred to in a collective agreement applicable to the employer under the Collective Agreements Act may elect a representative from among themselves. The duties and scope of competence of such an elected representative are determined in the manner to be laid down separately in this Act and elsewhere in the labour legislation. The employees may further take majority decisions to authorise the elected representative to represent them in matters of employment relationships and working conditions specified in the authorisation.

62. Elected representatives are entitled to any information that they need to carry out the duties referred to in law and to sufficient release from work obligations. The employer must compensate for any loss of earnings caused thereby. Release from work obligations so that the elected representative will be able to carry out other duties and the compensation for any loss of earnings must be agreed on with the employer.

63. If the elected representative concludes local agreements as a personnel representative, the employer should promote this person's competence and knowledge as regards the operating environment of the workplace, to the extent necessary for the performance of the duties as a personnel representative (for local collective bargaining, see answer concerning Article 6§2 below).

64. Finnish legislation recognises the possibility of also selecting other personnel representatives in certain situations, depending on the context. For example, under the Co-operation Act (*yhteistoimintalaki, samarbetslag*; 1333/2021), it is possible to appoint a co-operation representative or a personnel representative in administration, who represents the personnel in the company's administration. The latter can be appointed in undertakings and corporations having a minimum of 150 employees.

65. A non-binding English translation of the Co-operation Act can be read in the Finlex database: https://www.finlex.fi/fi/lainsaadanto/saadoskaannokset/2021/eng/1333.

ARTICLE 6: THE RIGHT TO BARGAIN COLLECTIVELY

Article 6 § 1: Joint consultation

Questions a to c

66. Finnish labour relations are characterised by cooperative interaction between government and the social partners. This means that labour legislation, for example, is prepared in a tripartite process between the Government and organisations of employers and employees.

67. A good example of legislative drafting being initiated based on a joint proposal by the central labour market organisations comes from the field of labour legislation within the remit of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, where these organisations agreed proposals for temporary amendments to labour legislation during the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of such amendments was to help businesses adjust to changes that occurred in their labour needs due to the pandemic.

68. As a result of these temporary amendments, the notice period for layoffs and the duration of co-operation negotiations concerning them were reduced to five days. They also permitted employers to lay off fixed-term employees and terminate their contracts during the trial period on financial or production-related grounds. At the same time, the period during which the employer had an obligation to re-employ an employee dismissed for financial or production-related reasons was temporarily extended to nine months. These temporary amendments concerned the private sector.

69. The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment is not aware of whether issues related to the digital or green transition have been discussed in negotiations between employer and employee organisations. The agreement between the central labour market organisations on the implementation of the framework agreement on remote work was drawn up in 2005.

Article 6 § 2: Machinery of voluntary negotiations

Question a

Overview of the Finnish collective agreements system

70. In Finland, the terms of employment are largely determined based on sector-specific collective agreements. The eligibility of the parties to collective agreements to agree on the terms of employment is based on their general regulatory competence, laid down in section 1 of the Collective Agreements Act. Under the said provision, a collective agreement is any agreement concluded by one or more employers or registered associations of employers and one or more registered associations of employees, concerning the conditions to be complied with in contracts of employment or in employment generally. A collective agreement is therefore a normative agreement that determines the content of other agreements.

71. Section 4, subsection 1 of the Collective Agreements Act lays down provisions on parties bound by a collective agreement. Firstly, a collective agreement is binding on the employers and

associations that concluded the collective agreement or subsequently acceded to it with the consent of the parties. A collective agreement is also binding on registered associations subordinated directly to the participating associations, and on employers and employees who are or were members of an association bound by the agreement.

72. The conclusion of associative agreements must be kept separate from the binding nature of collective agreements laid down in section 4, subsection 1 of the Collective Agreements Act. An agreement between a single non-organised employer and an employee association by which the company undertakes to comply with the national collective agreement applicable to its sector is usually referred to as an associative agreement. An associative agreement is a legally independent collective agreement and concluding it does not require the consent of the parties to the actual collective agreement.

73. An employer who is bound by a collective agreement based on membership in an employers' association or directly as a party to a collective agreement is under the Collective Agreements Act obliged to observe the agreement as minimum terms of employment for employees. Under section 4, subsection 2 of the Collective Agreements Act, an employer must comply with the provisions of the collective agreement also in the employment relationships of employees who are non-organised or members of another association that has concluded the collective agreement.

74. Section 6 of the same Act contains a provision on conflict resolution in cases where the employment contract differs from the collective agreement provision to the detriment of the employee. Under the said section, where any part of a contract of employment is at variance with a collective agreement applicable thereto, such part of the contract of employment shall be invalid and superseded by the corresponding provisions of the collective agreement.

75. As observed above, collective agreements can be used to agree on the terms of employment of employees who are covered by the agreement, within the limits laid down in the Collective Agreements Act. Collective agreements between national federations, in turn, contain provisions that allow local collective bargaining on certain matters (see below).

76. The normally applicable nature of agreements, provided for in the Collective Agreements Act, is complemented by their general applicability, laid down in the Employment Contracts Act. Sectoral collective agreements are confirmed to be generally applicable if they fulfil the criteria for a generally applicable collective agreement, laid down in the Employment Contracts Act (chapter 2, section 7). Non-organised employers operating within the scope of application of the collective agreement must comply with generally applicable collective agreements without joining the very collective agreement.

77. The provisions of a generally applicable collective agreement have the same automatic and binding effect as the terms and conditions of a collective agreement binding under the Collective Agreements Act. Firstly, this means that the provisions of a generally applicable collective agreement must be automatically complied with in employment relationships. The mandatory nature of the provisions of such collective agreement, in turn, means that an individual term of an employment contract in conflict with it is null and void. Provisions to this effect are laid down in

chapter 2, section 7, subsection 2 of the Employment Contracts Act. The said subsection serves as a conflict resolution rule, showing that the provisions of a generally applicable collective agreement override the terms of an employment contract that are weaker for the employee than those of such a collective agreement. The invalidity of an individual contractual term does not affect the other terms of the employment contract; instead of a null and void term, the corresponding provision of a generally applicable collective agreement must be observed.

78. A generally applicable collective agreement unilaterally obliges the employer to comply with its provisions as minimum terms of employment. On the other hand, an employer with an obligation under the Collective Agreements Act to comply with a collective agreement whose other contracting party is a national employee association is exempted from complying with the provisions of a generally applicable collective agreement as minimum terms of employment. Under the Employment Contracts Act, a normally applicable collective agreement thus takes precedence over a generally applicable one when it has been concluded on the employees' side by a national employee federation.

79. Provisions on the general applicability of collective agreements are laid down in chapter 2, section 7 of the Employment Contracts Act. The employer shall observe at least the provisions of a national collective agreement considered representative in the sector in question (a generally applicable collective agreement) on the terms and working conditions of the employment relationship that concern the work the employee performs or nearest comparable work. The minimum terms to be applied in an employment relationship are thus determined in accordance with a collective agreement confirmed as generally applicable in the sector concerned. If the employer is not bound by a collective agreement by virtue of the Collective Agreements Act, the minimum terms of employment of its employees are determined based on a generally applicable collective agreement if the sector has one.

80. The Committee for the Confirmation of the General Applicability of Collective Agreements, operating under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, confirms by its decision whether a national collective agreement is generally applicable.

81. The parties that have concluded the collective agreement are responsible for supervising compliance with it. The labour protection authorities monitor compliance with generally applicable collective agreements and with local agreements that are based on their provisions.

Local collective bargaining

82. While Finnish labour legislation does not have specific provisions on local bargaining based on normally applicable collective agreements, the legal basis for it is ultimately section 1 of the Collective Agreements Act.

83. Parties to a collective agreement may transfer some of their decision-making powers to be used by local parties that are bound by the collective agreement. In other words, the parties to a collective agreement may delegate some of their decision-making powers to local parties bound by the collective agreement, by setting in the provisions on such exceptional agreements substantive, party-specific and procedural conditions for local collective bargaining. Collective

bargaining based on a collective agreement thus requires that the national collective agreement includes authorisation for local bargaining. A shop steward is often defined as the contracting party.

84. During the current government term, the Government has reformed the regulation of local collective bargaining. These amendments entered into force on 1 January 2025.

85. First, the Government notes that the said amendments were directed at non-organised employers complying with a generally applicable collective agreement. Prohibitions on local bargaining, which previously applied to such employers, were removed from labour legislation. Before the said legislative amendment, labour legislation prohibited non-organised employers from applying the provisions of collective agreements that deviate from the law (known as semi-dispositive provisions) and require local agreement.

86. A provision on local collective bargaining based on a generally applicable collective agreement was also added to the Employment Contracts Act (chapter 2, section 7a). According to it, a local agreement may be concluded within the limits allowed by the collective agreement in compliance with the provisions concerning the parties to the collective agreement and the procedures to be applied. However, the provision of the collective agreement concerning the process need not be observed when concluding a local agreement. Unless otherwise agreed, such agreement is binding on all employees covered by the collective agreement.

87. If, under a collective agreement, a shop steward is required to be a party to a local agreement, the agreement will be concluded with the shop steward. In this case, the shop steward represents all employees to whom the collective agreement in question applies. However, employees who are not members of an employee association bound by a collective agreement have the right to elect from among themselves, by majority vote, an elected representative alongside the shop steward to represent them in matters concerning the local agreement. In this case, the local agreement must be concluded with the shop steward and with the elected representative.

88. If, under a collective agreement, a shop steward is required to be a party to a local agreement, but no shop steward has been elected and the collective agreement does not include any provisions ensuring equitable bargaining conditions and detailing how to proceed in the absence of a shop steward, the local agreement may, notwithstanding the collective agreement, be concluded with the elected representative.

89. If the local agreement is concluded with the elected representative in the manner referred to above, the employer shall, in addition to the procedures imposed by the collective agreement, provide the elected representative with the information necessary for the conclusion of the agreement. Furthermore, when negotiating an agreement, the elected representative shall be afforded an adequate reflection period and an opportunity to discuss the importance of the agreement together with the employees. The agreement can be terminated with a three-month notice period, unless otherwise stipulated in the collective agreement or unless the local agreement provides for a shorter notice period.

90. The local agreement referred to in chapter 2, section 7 of the Employment Contracts Act shall be made in writing, and the employer shall deliver it to the occupational safety and health authorities one month after the conclusion of the agreement. However, this does not apply to contracts concluded with an individual employee (if applicable under the collective agreement).

91. These legislative amendments made it possible to conclude, in the manner corresponding to that applied in non-organised workplaces, a local agreement even in the field of normally applicable agreements in situations where the employees have not elected a shop steward but the collective agreement provisions on local collective bargaining require that the employees have a shop steward as a contracting party. Provisions on this are laid down in section 5a of the Collective Agreements Act. According to the said provision, if the collective agreement enables the conclusion of a local agreement between the employer and the shop steward but does not include any provisions ensuring equitable bargaining conditions and detailing how to proceed in the absence of a shop steward, the local agreement may, notwithstanding the collective agreement, be concluded with the elected representative. Unless otherwise agreed, the agreement is binding on all employees covered by the collective agreement.

92. When a local agreement is concluded in a situation referred to above, the procedural provisions of the collective agreement shall be complied with, apart from requirements concerning personnel representatives. In addition, the Act lays down provisions on the information to be provided to the elected representative and on the right to discuss the importance of the agreement together with the employees.

Derogation from certain legal provisions under employer-specific (company-specific) collective agreements

93. As the legislative amendments concerning local collective bargaining were introduced, it was also made possible to derogate by means of employer-specific collective agreements, more extensively than before, from labour law provisions that previously only allowed exceptions to many issues through a national collective agreement (with national employer and employee associations as contracting parties). From now on, such issues can be agreed upon by way of derogation from the main rule based on an employer-specific collective agreement. Moreover, a member association of a national employee association (such as a local union in the form of an association) is now allowed to act as the party representing the employees. These amendments entered into force on 1 January 2025.

Question b

94. The Government notes that information has been requested on the obstacles hindering collective bargaining at all levels and in all sectors of the economy (*e.g.* decentralisation of collective bargaining).

95. In Finland, the great majority of wage and salary earners are covered by collective agreements (88.8 per cent in 2021–2022). Collective bargaining mostly takes place on a sector-by-sector basis at the national level. In 2021, the Finnish forest industry withdrew from nationwide

collective bargaining operations between the federations, adopting the policy of exclusively company-specific collective agreements in the sector.

96. The Government is not aware of any obstacles that hinder collective bargaining at all levels and in all sectors of the economy.

Question c

97. Please see paragraph 96.

Question d

98. At the moment there are no plans for specific legislative measures concerning the right of the self-employed to collective bargaining.

99. In 2022, the European Commission published new guidelines on the application of Union competition law to collective agreements to improve the working conditions of solo self-employed persons. The publication of these guidelines did not necessitate any changes to the Collective Agreements Act and the Competition Act (*kilpailulaki, konkurrenslag*; 948/2011). However, government authorities and courts of law are under the obligation to apply EU competition law, in a manner consistent with the Union's application practice, to agreements between entrepreneurs that may affect trade between Member States. Moreover, the wording of sections 5 and 6 of the Competition Act being harmonised with Article 101 TFEU, these domestic provisions must be interpreted in the light of EU application practice. Thus, the interpretation of the Finnish Competition Authority of the application of sections 5 and 6 of the Competition Act is guided by the interpretation adopted by the European Commission on the application of Article 101 TFEU.

Article 6 § 4: Right to collective action

Question a

100. The right to industrial action is protected under the Constitution of Finland. However, the exercise of this right may be further regulated by an act.

101. The Act on Mediation in Labour Disputes and the Conditions for Certain Industrial Action (*laki työriitojen sovittelusta ja eräiden työtaistelutoimenpiteiden edellytyksistä, lag om medling i arbetstvister och om villkor för vissa stridsåtgärder*; 420/1962; hereafter the Labour Disputes Act) lays the foundation for a conciliation system for avoiding industrial action and for certain requirements to be met before industrial action can be taken. The legislation on industrial peace has also been amended during the ongoing government term. The amendments concern, among others, the Labour Disputes Act and the Collective Agreements Act. These amendments entered into force on 18 May 2024.

102. Employees and employers have the right to take industrial action. However, pursuant to section 8 of the Collective Agreements Act, industrial action may not be taken while the obligation to maintain industrial peace is in force. When the obligation to maintain industrial peace applies,

solidarity action, i.e. an industrial action in support of claims made in the context of another labour dispute, may not be implemented if deemed disproportionate under section 8a of the Act.

103. A solidarity action is disproportionate if the employer's service or production operations become restricted more extensively than merely in terms of activities that serve or benefit the employer affected by the main dispute and if the consequences of such restrictions are detrimental to the employer whose employees participate in the solidarity action or to the employer's contracting partner in such a way that they cannot be considered reasonable in view of the circumstances. Furthermore, when carried out to show support and without a direct effect on the activities of the employer who is affected by the main dispute, a solidarity action must not have detrimental consequences that are disproportionate to the main dispute.

104. The aim is that the weight of solidarity action in exerting pressure in relation to the main dispute would be realised in full, without subjecting the parties not involved in the main dispute to disproportionately detrimental consequences. These restrictions notwithstanding, the right to solidarity action is quite extensive. The said Act does not restrict solidarity action whose goal, in compliance with the proportionality requirement, is to specifically target service and production operations on which the employer involved in the main dispute is dependent, or if the company in which the solidarity action is implemented, or its contracting partners will not otherwise suffer disproportionate detrimental consequences.

105. Furthermore, the said legislative amendments do not apply to primary labour disputes in which demands are presented targeting the employees' own employer.

106. Section 8b of the Collective Agreements Act also restricts political industrial action when the obligation to maintain industrial peace is in force. Political industrial action refers to industrial action aimed at influencing political decision-making at the supranational, national, regional or local levels. During industrial peace, political industrial action implemented as a work stoppage must not continue after 24 hours have elapsed from the onset of the work stoppage. The work stoppage must be arranged in such a way that it does not cause any disruption in production beforehand or afterwards, provided that such disruptions can reasonably be avoided by the means available to the body implementing the action. However, this obligation does not prevent implementing a political work stoppage. A political industrial action implemented in another form than as a work stoppage may last no longer than two weeks. A political industrial action may not be held if the same implementing association continues, within 12 months, a previous industrial action to achieve the same goal.

107. Provisions on the restrictions on solidarity action and political industrial action outside the industrial peace obligation are laid down in the Labour Disputes Act. If the industrial peace obligation is not in force, the restrictions concerning solidarity action are narrower and will only apply to situations where the aim of the industrial action to be supported is not to conclude a collective agreement. The provisions of section 7, subsection 2 of the Labour Disputes Act on solidarity action or on a work stoppage within political industrial action as well as the provisions of sections 8a and 8b on restrictions on solidarity action and political industrial action do not apply to public-service employment relationships. According to section 8 of the Collective Agreements

Act, no industrial action concerning a valid employment relationship may be taken other than a lockout or a strike. Political industrial action is thus prohibited in the case of public officials. The same applies to public officials of Parliament of Finland, public officials of the Bank of Finland and officials of Evangelical Lutheran parishes.

108. The right to industrial action is also restricted to ensure adequate provision of essential work. A legislative reform to that effect entered into force on 16 June 2025. The new legislation aims to ensure the continuity of society's critical functions during industrial action if the parties fail to reach an agreement on the provision of essential work during such action. The Act departs from the principle that the employee association shall decide on limiting the industrial action and on essential work. In the event of a conflict, the parties should primarily negotiate on safeguarding essential functions during the industrial action. If the negotiations fail, the court may prohibit an unlawful industrial action.

109. Section 8d of the Labour Disputes Act provides for safeguarding essential functions during industrial action.

110. The section lists various tasks and activities in respect of which the association of employees, public officials and officeholders must ensure that an industrial action will not directly, concretely and seriously endanger them. Such industrial action is prohibited unless the employer is reasonably able avoid such consequences by the means at its disposal. Tasks and activities that must not be endangered by industrial action are:

- tasks necessary for human life and health assumed by healthcare services, social welfare services, rescue services, the police, the Emergency Response Centre Agency and closed institutions,
- essential maintenance, repair or supervision of machinery, equipment or other property essential for the continuation of industrial and commercial activities;
- tasks necessary to prevent environmental damage,
- tasks necessary to safeguard animal welfare,
- tasks necessary to protect Finland's territorial integrity and to maintain border security,
- functioning of the State's highest decision-making,
- availability of commodities essential for human life or health (e.g. energy, water, medicines and food),
- work of the police to investigate and prevent very serious offences,
- urgent tasks of the court system and the National Prosecution Authority and implementation related to these tasks,
- digital payment transactions and availability of cash,
- certain essential information and communications technology services and information systems.

111. If the employer is unable to safeguard alone the functions referred to in section 8d of the Act, the employer and the employee association shall negotiate on how to avoid any damaging

consequences during the industrial action. The employer has the obligation to start the negotiations.

112. According to section 8d of the Labour Disputes Act, the employer has the obligation to:

- clarify without delay any issues concerning the limits to industrial action or essential work with the association responsible for the implementation of the industrial action;
- notify the association without delay of any danger to essential functions in order to initiate negotiations;
- during the negotiations, provide the association with sufficient information on and reasoning for the need for necessary personnel and on the means available to the employer to avoid endangering the functions.

113. The Working Time Act also lays down provisions on requiring emergency work during industrial action. Pursuant to section 19 of the Act, the employer may require employees to perform emergency work if the threat of damaging consequences to life, health, property, the environment, animal welfare or national security arising from an interruption of the functions referred to in section 8d, subsection 1, paragraphs 1–10 or 13 of Labour Disputes Act is so immediate that it cannot be avoided by the means laid down in the Act or by any other reasonable means. Emergency work in addition to regular working time may only be required to the extent necessary and for a period of no more than two weeks. Upon conclusion of the emergency work, the working time shall be adjusted, and the employee shall be given a compensatory rest period in the manner laid down in the Working Time Act.

114. In an acute danger situation comparable to necessity, having emergency work performed is the employer's last resort means of preventing serious damaging consequences referred to in the said Act. The employer must notify the occupational safety and health authority of the necessity of such emergency work. Unlawful imposition of emergency work is a punishable act.

115. No case law exists yet on these legislative amendments.

Question b

116. Related to the reform of the legislation on essential work, a section was also added to the Labour Disputes Act, enabling a temporary prohibition of industrial action in violation of the duty of care. According to section 8e of the Act, a court may, on application by the employer and under threat of a fine, temporarily prohibit an association of employees, public officials or officeholders from implementing or continuing an industrial action where it is likely that such industrial action will have consequences referred to in section 8d which the employer cannot reasonably avoid by the means at its disposal and if the urgency of the matter requires a temporary prohibition to prevent the consequences prohibited by the Act. A further condition for the prohibition is that the employer will first have negotiated or attempted to negotiate a limitation of the industrial action or the provision of essential work with the employee association.

117. The opposing party has the right to be heard in the matter. The court may without a hearing and under threat of a fine defer or suspend the industrial action until the issue concerning the

temporary prohibition has been resolved. However, a temporary prohibition may not be imposed without reserving the opposing employee association an opportunity to be heard.

118. The court may not restrict industrial action any more than necessary. A temporary prohibition may, under section 8e of the Labour Disputes Act, only apply to such tasks or activities within the scope of the industrial action which, based on the evidence presented in the case, must be considered essential in to prevent the consequences referred to in section 8d, subsection 1.

119. An employee association may implement an industrial action in compliance with the court's prohibitive decision in such a way that the essential functions of society referred to in section 8d are not endangered in the manner referred to in the Act.

120. A temporary prohibition may also be imposed before the actual action to seek an injunction, referred to in section 8f of the Labour Disputes Act, is brought.

121. No case law exists yet on these legislative amendments.

122. A non-binding English translation of the Labour Disputes Act can be read in the Finlex database: https://www.finlex.fi/en/legislation/translations/1962/eng/420.

ARTICLE 20: THE RIGHT TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND EQUAL TREATMENT IN MATTERS OF EMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATION WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION ON THE GROUNDS OF SEX

Question a

123. The tripartite Equal Pay Programmes in Finland include measures also to reduce segregation in education and in the labor market. The measures have been prepared in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland and the central labor market organizations.

124. The measures in the latest Equal Pay Programme focus on knowledge production on horizontal and vertical segregation, supporting the network for dismantling regional segregation, promoting study guidance and dismantling stereotypes at different school levels, as well as finding ways to dismantle segregation in the workplace.

125. In 2021–2023, the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health carried out a project titled 'Dismantling segregation – tools for a more equal working life'. The project was aimed to reduce gender segregation by developing practices for a more equal working life. It produced a policy brief for decision-makers on the more permanent methods of reducing segregation, a toolbox for workplaces and a report on practices of dismantling segregation. The project also created a new type of regional cooperation with pilot organisations, working life actors, education providers and education authorities.

126. Statistics show that horizontal segregation has not decreased significantly in recent years. The Finnish labor market is strongly divided into male and female sectors. Vertical segregation also exists, as there are more men in management positions.

127. The Government refers also to its reply to Question b below.

Table 3. Number and proportion of employees working in gender-balanced occupations* in 2016–2022

Year	All employees, number	All employees except missing occupations, number	Men/women in gender-balanced occupations except missing occupations, number	Percentage of people working in gender-balanced occupations, %
2016	2 039 099	1 966 214	182 931	**9,3**
2017	2 097 703	2 032 585	181 536	**8,9**
2018	2 135 347	2 071 308	190 989	**9,2**
2019	2 133 398	2 074 652	205 254	**9,9**
2020	2 046 297	2 000 524	190 781	**9,5**
2021	2 133 908	2 067 653	209 413	**10,1**
2022	2 180 180	2 122 207	189 681	**8,9**

* where the proportion of both men and women is 40-60 %

Source: Statistics Finland

Question b

128. One of the basic objectives of the Act on Equality between Women and Men is to ensure that women and men can participate equally in societal planning and decision-making. According to the Equality Act the proportion of both women and men must be at least 40 per cent in planning and decision-making bodies of central and local government. The quota regulation applies to *e.g.* government committees, advisory boards and working groups, municipal bodies and bodies established for the purpose of inter-municipal cooperation, excluding municipal councils, wellbeing services counties, excluding county councils.

129. The equality rule is applied to executive or administrative bodies of agencies and institutions if they exercise public authority, executive or administrative bodies of companies in which the Government or a municipality is the majority shareholder, bodies of indirect public administration, if they exercise public authority. Bodies who exercise public authority are *e.g.* pension institutions, chambers of commerce, private educational institutions and student unions.

130. Authorities and all parties that are requested to nominate candidates for bodies referred to must, wherever possible, propose both a woman and a man for every membership position.

131. Current legislative and other updates in Finland include the following:

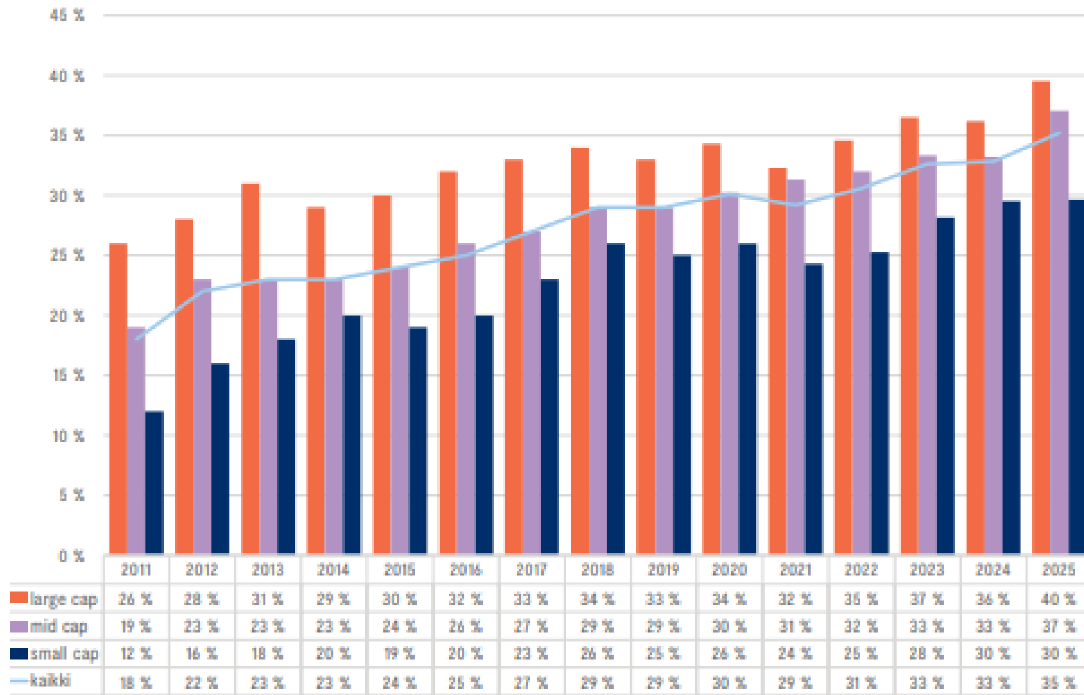
- Amendments to the Limited Liability Companies Act (new 6:9 a §), the Trade Register Act, and the Decree of the Ministry of Finance on the Regular Duty of Disclosure of an Issuer of a Security.
    - Scope of application: Large (main) listed companies; currently approx. 35 companies
- Quota target: Members of the underrepresented sex shall hold at least 40 per cent of non-executive director positions (board).
    - Listed companies would have to meet the requirements by 30 June 2026 at the latest.
- Compliance is reported as part of the corporate governance report.
- The Finland Chamber of Commerce is responsible for the promotion, analysis, monitoring and support of gender balance on boards.
- Finland postpones the implementation of provisions concerning the selection process of board members (uses member state option).
- New Corporate Governance Code 2025 includes a table specifying the minimum number of members of the underrepresented sex to meet the balance requirement on company boards (noting that the target minimum number is aligned with the 40 per cent target referred).

132. For a long time, there has been numerical target for the representation of women and men on the boards of state-owned companies. The Government Action Plan for Gender Equality 2024–2027 states that State-owned companies strive for diversity in areas such as board composition and increasing the proportion of women in the management of state-owned companies.

Question c

133. Women occupy 40 per cent of board seats in large publicly listed companies in Finland (Finland Chamber of Commerce). The chamber’s annual review showed that mid-sized listed companies now have 37 percent female board representation, while smaller listed firms remain at a record 30 percent.

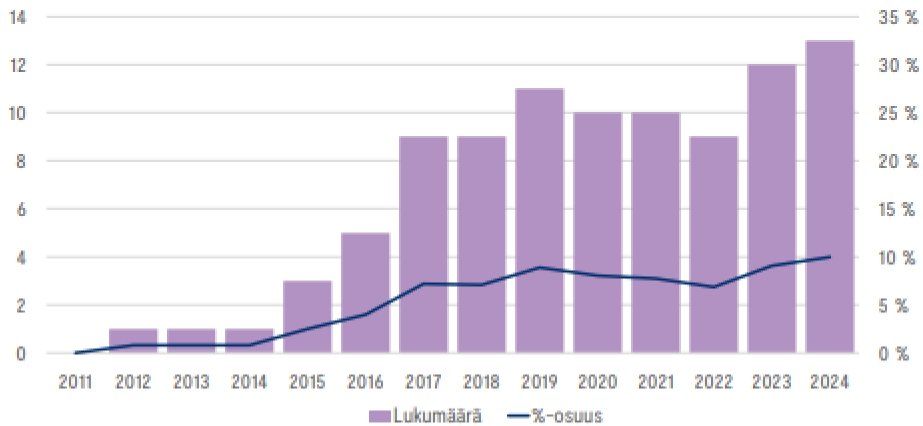
Table 4. Proportion of women on the boards of listed companies



	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
large cap	26 %	28 %	31 %	29 %	30 %	32 %	33 %	34 %	33 %	34 %	32 %	35 %	37 %	36 %	40 %
mid cap	19 %	23 %	23 %	23 %	24 %	26 %	27 %	29 %	29 %	30 %	31 %	32 %	33 %	33 %	37 %
small cap	12 %	16 %	18 %	20 %	19 %	20 %	23 %	26 %	25 %	26 %	24 %	25 %	28 %	30 %	30 %
kaikki	18 %	22 %	23 %	23 %	24 %	25 %	27 %	29 %	29 %	30 %	29 %	31 %	33 %	33 %	35 %

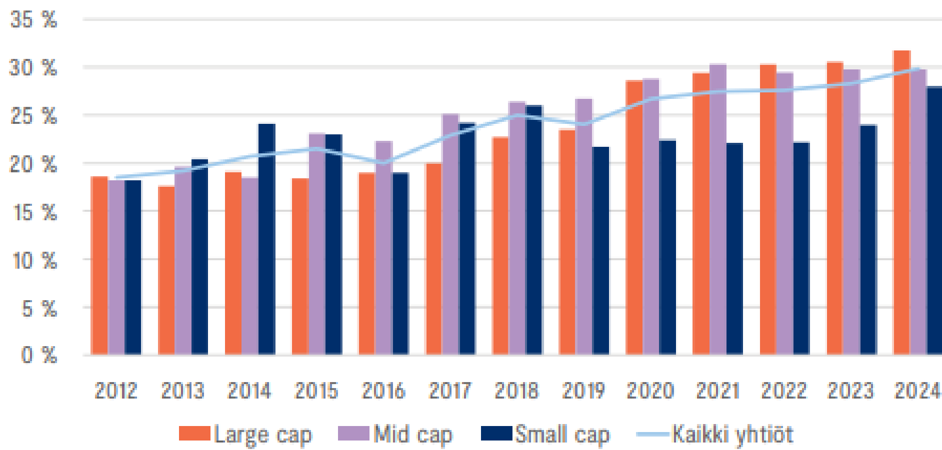
Source: Finland Chamber of Commerce: Review on female leadership 1/2025;
https://kauppakamari.fi/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Naisjohtajakatsaus_01-2025.pdf

Table 5. Number and proportion of female CEOs in Finnish listed companies



Source: Finland Chamber of Commerce: Review on female leadership 1/2025

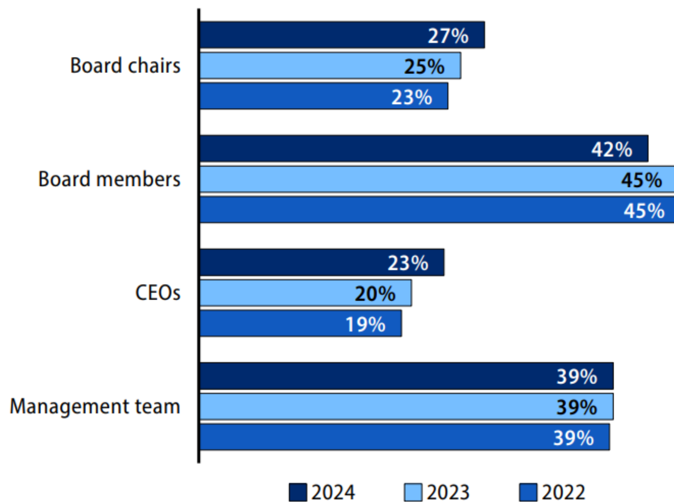
Table 6. Proportion of women in the management teams of Finnish listed companies (excluding CEOs)



Source: Finland Chamber of Commerce: Review on female leadership 1/2025

134. In 2024, the share of women on the boards of directors of all state-owned companies was 42 per cent. The share of women as the chairs of boards of directors was 27 per cent. At companies in which the State controls the composition of the board, the share of women as chair of the board was 45 per cent in 2024. In state-owned companies, the percentage of women in management teams was 39% in 2024. The number of women in CEO positions increased: at the end of 2024, 23 per cent of the chief executives were women.

Table 7. Percentage of women on boards and in senior management of state-owned companies 2022–2024



Source: Report on State Annual Accounts 2024: Annex 4 State corporate holdings

VIEWS OF CSOS AND CENTRAL EMPLOYEE ORGANISATIONS

135. This report has been drafted simultaneously with the Government's eighth periodic report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Civil society organisations (CSOs) and central employee organisations were heard in the drafting process through written statements. Owing to the overlap in the reporting processes, the written statements were taken into account in the drafting of the present report. The Government reflects below some of the observations received.

136. The statements emphasised concerns regarding recent economic and social policy reforms. In particular, the changes made to social security have raised concern, as they affect individuals who are already in a vulnerable position. CSOs are worried about the impact of these changes especially on the position and livelihood of families with children and persons with disabilities.

137. According to CSOs, the impact assessments of amendments to social security legislation are insufficient and do not adequately address inclusion or impacts on the fundamental and human rights of vulnerable groups.

138. According to central employee organisations, the statutory export model of Prime Minister Orpo's Government raises concerns regarding the promotion of equality and the principle of equal pay, for example due to labour market segregation. Moreover, these organisations point out that labour exploitation typically affects workers in a vulnerable labour market position, including persons with a foreign background, young people and persons with impaired capacity to work. For example, instances of abuse of foreign labour have been reported in seasonal berry picking work.

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