

## Goals for the Government Programme 2023–2027 by the National Council of Women of Finland

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- **Government programme:** The government will commit to advancing gender equality by creating an ambitious equality programme, increasing the assessment of gender impact in legislation projects, and developing gender-aware budgeting.
- **Education:** Gender segregation will be dismantled on all education levels and sex education developed, including the concept of consent.
- **Working life:** Narrowing the wage gap will be accelerated with a more efficient Equal Pay programme and wage transparency. By continuously reforming the family leave, Finland will become a country where fathers take the most family leave.
- **Violence against women** will be terminated by enacting a law to clarify preventative work against domestic violence, by strengthening the position of victims of violence through support services, and by executing criminal liability.
- **Well-being:** The Social Security Reform will be executed in a way that advances gender equality. Gender impact of the reform will be assessed already at preparation stage.
- Government grants for **sports, physical activities and culture** will be linked to effective measures to stop sexual harassment, and the 50% quota principle of European Commission's High-Level Group will be implemented in the management of sports and physical activity communities.
- **Foreign policy:** Implement Feminist Foreign Policy and advance women's participation in development cooperation and peace delivery across the world, particularly in Ukraine and Afghanistan.

### Finland will become an equality leader

In many ways, Finland is one of the most equal countries in the world. Still, gender equality is far from complete, and many equality issues are being addressed very slowly if at all. Equality and democracy are requirements for sustainable peace and strengthening them is the best way to support stability and peace. We must act to ensure that human rights of women and girls are completely realised.

- The government will commit to advancing gender equality and working against all discrimination systematically and with ambition in Finland and internationally by
  - acting anti-racist and considering intersecting differences in all decision-making
  - conducting a gender impact assessment of the Government Programme in advance and afterwards
  - committing to and implementing the goals of the equality analysis
  - creating an ambitious equality programme and allocating sufficient funding for it
  - mainstreaming gender equality in the entire central government.
- Reform the Equality Act, with emphasis on the promotion of equality, non-discrimination principles, and the effectiveness and adequacy of supervision and legal remedies.
  - Identify the conditions under which the National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal may be given the right to order a compensation for discrimination.
- Evaluate the gender impact of all major reforms so that the results impact further preparation.
  - Increase the proportion of gender impact assessed bills to 40% by the end of the government term.
  - Each ministry is appointed a responsible party for the impact assessments whose responsibility is the human, including gender, impact assessment.

- Continue developing gender-responsive budgeting as a part of sustainable development budgeting.
  - The Ministry of Finance will incorporate guidelines by article for gender impact assessment in their budgeting guidelines.
  - Add a traffic light model to the website "tutkibudjettia.fi" to measure gender impact by article, as well as information on the distribution of funding by gender wherever possible.
- Strengthen the funding of equality work to increase impact.
  - In the central budget framework, women's organisations' statutory government grants will be established at the level of 2020–2022 to ensure the continuity of work.
  - Increase the funding for the Ombudsman for Equality to match the additional obligations and strengthen the position and resources of other equality authorities (Gender Equality Unit, Council for Gender Equality, Centre for Gender Equality Information, National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal).
- Ensure that equality information is used in decision-making.
  - Systematically collect and utilize information categorised by gender and other intersecting differences.
  - Pay attention to the gender perspective and women's rights in crisis reconstruction.

## Education will be gender-sensitive on all levels

In Finland, fields of education are highly gender segregated. In some fields, the division into men's and women's jobs is even increasing. Dismantle gender segregation and gender norms in education through gender-sensitive education in early childhood, school, and higher education.

- Ensure that education is used to dismantle gender segregation.
  - Add the requirement for gender sensitive education and teaching in laws on early childhood education, primary and lower secondary education, vocational and upper secondary education, and liberal adult education.
  - Textbooks on all education levels are subjected to gender impact assessment to ensure the representation of a diversity of people and roles.
  - Particularly support girls and women applying in the fields of science, mathematics, and technology.
- Increase work against gender-based and sexual harassment, bullying and violence in schools as part of equality and non-discrimination work.
  - The educational institution's actions are defined as discriminative under the Equality and Non-Discrimination Acts if the institution does not intervene in harassment (in accordance with Article 8d of the Equality Act and Article 14 of the Non-Discrimination Act).
  - Improve teachers' and principals' abilities to identify harassment through continuing professional development.
- Ensure that early childhood educators, teachers and student counsellors at all levels have sufficient equality knowledge through higher education and continuing professional development.
  - Research and report on equality-related content in teachers' basic and continuing education.
  - Promote the inclusion of courses on gender equality and women's rights in their education and continuing professional development.
  - Offer obligatory training on executing the Gender Equality Planning Obligation.
- Increase the inclusion of right to sexual self-determination and bodily integrity, including consent, in sex education in schools.
  - Dismantle norms regarding sexual and gender minorities through sex education.

- Develop and harmonise sex education across Finland.
- Prevent and address as early as possible the increased depression, anxiety and eating disorders of girls for example by improving guidance counselling and making social worker and psychologist services more accessible through school health services.

## Increased equality in working life through salaries and management positions

Less than 10% of all employees are in professions with at least 40% women and men, and narrowing the gender pay gap is virtually stagnant at 16%. Dismantle sector segregation, intervene in working life discrimination, and ensure that the polarization of working life does not increase inequality. Reduce unjustified wage differences faster than at present. Promote a more even distribution of care responsibilities and well-being at work.

- Implement the family leave reform ambitiously in a way that makes Finland the country where fathers take the most family leave.
  - Set numerical goals for women's and men's use of family leave, evaluate the results at the end of the government term, and continue taking action until care responsibilities are evenly distributed.
  - Update the name of the maternity pack to match the gender-neutral terminology in the family leave reform.
- Prevent discrimination based on pregnancy and family leave, and support the coordination of work and family life
  - by improving the protection against unjustified dismissal of those returning from family leave
  - by clarifying labour legislation so that the use of pregnancy and family leave does not negatively affect the continuation of a fixed-term employment relationship
  - by promoting a more equal distribution of the costs of parenting
  - by supporting non-custodial parenting, e.g., by granting the right to temporary care leave to the spouse of the non-custodial parent.
- Continue reforming the family and child-care leave.
  - Initiate the reform of home care allowance.
  - Monitor the gender impact of the use of dependant care leave and, if necessary, continue taking action until care responsibilities are evenly distributed. Ensure that caregivers are better compensated for their work.
  - Update the calculation base for parental allowances so that one can select either their annual income or their income in the previous tax period as the calculation base.
- Expedite the minimising of unjustified wage differences by implementing a structurally reformed and more effective equal pay programme than the current one.
  - Set a numerical goal for narrowing the wage gap.
  - Increase pay transparency by increasing the right to information about salaries in the Equality Act for staff, staff representatives, and employees who suspect discrimination.
  - Promote comprehensive legislation on pay transparency in the EU.
  - Include a definition of work of equal value in the Equality Act and introduce a method for evaluating job requirements between different industries and collective agreements.
  - Develop pay survey regulations to include reviewing the organisation's entire staff, regardless of their collective agreements, and different salary components instead of average salaries.
  - Lower the threshold of 30 employees in the Equality Act and Non-Discrimination Act.
- Promote employment and pay equity for immigrant women, women with disabilities and in other minorities in a cross-cutting manner.

- Identify how many cents per a man's Euro women with disabilities and immigrant women earn.
- Promote diversity considerations in recruitment through anonymous recruitment and diversity clauses in job advertisements.
- Implement the Integration Act in a way that emphasises the services for those outside the labour force.
- Initiate an action program regarding pension equality.
- Create permanent structures to dismantle gender segregation between different fields in education and working life.
- Promote non-discrimination and effectively intervene in sexual harassment in the workplace.
  - Make it mandatory to incorporate sexual harassment countermeasures in equality plans and occupational health and safety action programs.
  - Update the Occupational Safety and Health Act so that the employer's obligation to prevent and intervene in harassment, sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviour is stricter, and add to the law the employer's obligation to ensure the end of harassment or other inappropriate behaviour without delay. Make neglect of duty punishable as an occupational safety violation.
- Ensure well-being at work in female-dominated industries.
  - Include the prevention of psychosocial stress in the Occupational Health Care Act and the Occupational Safety and Health Act, and research the possibility to provide mental health support as a statutory occupational health service.
  - Establish a tripartite working group including equality, parity, and family organizations to consider legislative reforms and new practices to reduce discrimination and other psychological violence in working life.
- Increase the share of women on the boards of listed companies to 40% by introducing gender quotas.

## End violence against women

Finland has the questionable honour to be the second most violent country towards women in the EU. Effectively intervene in violence against women and guarantee low-threshold support services for every victim of violence. Make Finland a pioneer in combating violence against women.

- Continue working to combat violence against women.
  - Reserve sufficient resources for the implementation plan of the Istanbul Convention and monitor, measure and evaluate the implementation of the programme.
  - Extend the Ministry of Justice's action plan and working group for combating violence against women.
  - Increase multidisciplinary work to prevent intimate partner homicides targeting women.
  - Monitor and evaluate the needs for further development of the National Rapporteur on violence against women and their sufficient funding.
- Enact legislation on the prevention of intimate partner violence.
  - The law will clarify the cooperation, roles and responsibilities of municipalities, wellbeing services counties, and the central government in the prevention of intimate partner violence and violence against women.
  - Ensure multidisciplinary cooperation by defining the form, necessary actors, tasks, and responsibilities of the various institutions in the cooperation structure in preventing violence.
- Effectively implement the overall reform of the legislation on sexual offences.

- Educate the police, prosecutors, judges, and other law enforcement agencies on the content of the new law and on different forms of violence against women and how to recognize them.
- Secure the police's and judicial system's resources to investigate serious crimes, such as violence against women.
  - The police will carefully and without delay investigate all violence against women across Finland.
  - Ensure the police's expertise in violence against women, sexual violence, digital violence, and human trafficking by focusing the investigation onto specially trained investigators in the Criminal Investigation Act.
  - Investigate the possibility to enact legislation on the order of priority of criminal suspicions under investigation.
- Regularly increase resources for services for victims of violence.
  - Increase the number and accessibility of shelter places in accordance with the recommendations of the Council of Europe.
  - Ensure the accessibility of shelter services.
  - Increase the regional coverage of Seri support centres for victims of sexual assault, secure THL's coordination funding, and extend the period to seek help to half a year.
  - Expand the multidisciplinary MARAK action model for intimate partner violence risk assessment and support to a national and statutory one.
  - Institutionalize the Barnahus project coordinating support for children facing violence and the project's funding.
  - Ensure available post-shelter housing for everyone in need, for example by adding an obligation to the land use, housing, and transport agreements.
  - Secure funding for organizations working to combat violence.
- Exclude violence against women and intimate partner violence from mediation by legislation.
- Include the aggravating factors according to the Istanbul Convention as aggravating circumstances in the Criminal Code.
- Support the ambitious implementation of the EU directive combatting violence against women.
- Tackle hate speech and digital violence more effectively.
  - Influence making hate speech punishable at EU level.
  - Increase the responsibility of internet service providers to eradicate gendered hate speech and harassment at EU level and in Finland.
  - Enact legislation to make online shaming punishable by the Criminal Code.
  - Increase research and authority awareness of online hate and allocate resources to combating the issue.
  - Develop an approach for supported disengagement from online hate speech.
- Enhance working against honour-related violence and recognising it.
  - Enact a section in the Criminal Code to make forced marriages punishable as a specific offence and enable annulment of forced marriages.
  - Create an action model for the state, regions and municipalities for work and services against female genital mutilation, ensure the appropriateness of legislation, and secure funding for work against female genital mutilation.
- Enhance anti-trafficking action, considering the gender impact, and improve the status and support of victims of human trafficking.
  - Create an action programme for anti-trafficking work and allocate sufficient human resources for the coordinating.

- Concentrate competences in the wellbeing services counties to identify and help victims of human trafficking and to increase professional guidance for health and social service professionals who work with customers.
- Ensure safe and supported housing for victims of human trafficking in shelters, through legislation if necessary.
- Make permanent the Police's National Human Trafficking Investigation Team.
- Enact legislation to secure integration support for labour immigrants in a vulnerable position.
- Identify the necessary changes in Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure Rules and, if necessary, take measures to improve combating human trafficking and related crimes.
- Ensure with legislation the exchange of information between authorities and proactive sharing of information regarding violence against women and human trafficking.
  - Remove the confidentiality of disability status in the police register to access information regarding the prevalence of violence against women with disabilities.
- Ensure better consideration of the violence and intimate partner violence experienced by immigrant women in the criteria for a residence permit.
  - Update the criteria for a residence permit for victims of human trafficking to include "vulnerable position" instead of "particularly vulnerable position".
- Criminalise purchasing sex in accordance with the other Nordic countries and provide support for disengaging from prostitution.
- Develop and systematize the management of female prisoners' work.
  - Improve women-specific health care services, mental health work, and intervention in sexual violence, prostitution, and human trafficking.
- Offer perpetrators intervention and prevention programs that recognize the gender-based nature of violence.

## Women's well-being is a question of equality

There are gender-based differences in well-being, the need for services and using them. Promote women's well-being and sexual health and ensure that our social security system supports equality.

- Ensure that the social security reform is planned and implemented from a people-centred perspective and that it promotes gender equality, considering intersecting differences.
  - Assess the gender impact of the reform already in the preparation phase and ensure that these results have an impact on further preparation and implementation of the reform.
  - Ensure that, regarding the concepts of individuality and household, the social security system is developed with focus on improving equality and women's status. Critically review the concept of household during the reform.
  - In the development work, pay attention to the situation of children living under shared parenting.
- During financial discussions, wellbeing services counties are instructed to:
  - organize equality and non-discrimination work in both personnel and operational policies
  - ensure with strategies, budgets, and operational equality programs that equality is realised and that the services suit the needs of diverse women
  - train councilmembers and authorities to implement equality and non-discrimination work.
- Conduct a comprehensive human rights-based reform of the abortion law in a manner that further enhances the pregnant person's right to self-determination.

- Ensure the accessibility of social and health services and the suitability of tools, e.g., regarding cancer screenings.
- Balance the care deficit created by the Covid pandemic in a gender-sensitive manner.
  - Pay particular attention to mental health as well as the well-being and mental health issues of young people and women.
- Guarantee free contraception nationwide to everyone under the age of 25.
- Ensure that the human rights of trans and intersex people are guaranteed in the Finnish legislation.
  - Allow legal recognition of gender for those over 15 years old in accordance with the "Oikeus olla" ("Right to be") citizens' initiative.
  - Outlaw so-called "conversion therapies".
  - Outlaw unurgent, medically unnecessary body-shaping procedures for intersex children in early childhood.
  - Create and implement an action program of rainbow policies.
- Reduce the value added tax rate on menstrual and incontinence pads to 10%, in line with other essential health items.
- Ensure the quality and availability of gynaecological care as a public service across Finland.
  - Guarantee nationally uniform and effective treatment paths and create Current Care Guidelines for gynaecological diseases and syndromes, such as endometriosis, adenomyosis, PCOS and vulvodynia.

## Equality in physical activity, sports and culture

Sexual harassment in culture, physical activity and sports is still too common, and women's funding is only a fraction of the funding received by men. Pay particular attention on making decision-making and resources more equal in sports, physical activity, and culture, and on eliminating sexual harassment and violence.

- Ensure that a prerequisite for receiving government grants in sports, physical activity, and culture and for operators in these fields is to commit to preventing and stopping violence against women, sexual harassment, and other inappropriate behaviour.
  - Require systematic actions and monitoring of violence and harassment, and that these are managed and monitored on an annual basis.
  - Pay particular attention to any inappropriate use of power by coaches and instructors, particularly in relation to children and young people.
- Connect the criteria of government grants for sports organizations and communities promoting physical activity to their gender equality goals and responsibility criteria closer than before.
  - Implement a 50% quota of women working in trustee, coaching and operational management in sports organizations and communities promoting physical activity, in accordance with the recommendations of the European Commission's High-Level Group on equality in sports and following the Swedish model. Systematically monitor the situation on an annual basis.
- Promote gender equality in physical activity and sports in accordance with the 2022 recommendations of the European Commission's High-Level Group on Gender Equality in sport.
- Require equality of salaries and national team compensations of sports organizations receiving government grants. Distribute resources for sports and physical activity equally to women and girls at various levels of physical activity and sports.

- Include gender equality as a key criterion for government grants to sports facility construction and other conditions for physical activity and sports, in accordance with the "Liikuntapaikkarakentamisen suunta" ("Guidelines for Sports Facility Construction") document.
- Create structures to support elite athletes' return to work after pregnancy.
- Ensure that the gender equality perspective is considered during the implementation of ethical guidelines for the cultural sector.
- Require through legislation, if necessary, that the bodies distributing public funds in the film industry and in culture and art in general promote gender equality and
  - distribute their funding equally
  - adhere to transparent decision-making criteria and transparently and uniformly provide statistics on the distribution of funding by gender and by genre
  - also require the parties receiving funds to consider equality and responsibility.

## **Equality, women, and girls at the centre of human rights, development and security policy**

Equality is of vital importance in constructing wider security and democracy. Ensure that women and girls are at the centre of human rights, development and security policy and their construction.

- Finland commits to systematically promoting equality and the rights of women and girls globally
  - by implementing Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP) as recommended by IONK, the Advisory Board for International Human Rights operating under the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and by preparing a respective strategy that includes goals, a monitoring system and reporting
  - by establishing a Gender Policy unit under the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and appointing focal persons responsible for equality in the Finnish representations.
- The threat posed by the anti-gender movement, which opposes human rights and equality, will be met with determination in Finland's foreign, EU and domestic policies by consistently supporting women's rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the rights of sexual and gender minorities and other minorities.
- Promote the implementation of the UN resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in conflict areas, for example in Afghanistan and Iran, as well as a Regional Action Plan 1325 in response to the situation in Ukraine.
- Promote the status and rights of women and girls as the main goal of development policy.
  - Finland will include equality as a significant objective or as a principal objective in at least 85% of all new development programmes by the end of the government term and will double the share of projects where equality is the main goal.
  - Other programmes are required to conduct a gender impact assessment.
- Ensure that gender impacts and equality are considered in preventing and combating climate change and in the implementation of the Agenda2030 goals, both in Finland and globally.
  - Integrate a gender aspect into the national climate and energy policies.
- Enact corporate sustainability due diligence legislation to ensure that Finnish companies respect human rights globally.
  - Require legislation to consider the human rights of women and girls in an intersectional manner.
- Provide targeted support for women's human rights defenders.
- Eradicate sexual harassment and violence against women in the Defence Forces and Crisis Management effectively.
  - Include the reduction of sexual harassment in the Defence Forces' performance goals.

- Create strategies to support the promotion of volunteer women to management positions in the Defence Forces, Crisis Management, Border Guard, Rescue Services, Customs, and other Comprehensive Security sectors.
  - Increase the share of women to 15% among peacekeepers and to 25% among military observers by 2028.
  - Promote opportunities for women in the reserve to participate in military crisis management tasks.