



Ministry for Foreign
Affairs of Finland

Summit for Democracy Commitments by Finland

The backsliding of democracy, and increasing violations of human rights and the rule of law, which are further accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, call for concerted international actions to safeguard and expand the values of liberal democracies.

Democracy, Human Rights and the Rule of Law as Cornerstones of Finland's Development

Finland currently ranks 1st on Global Corruption Index as the least-corrupt country, 1st by Freedom House's Global Freedom Scores, 2nd in World Press Freedom Index, and 3rd in World Rule of Law Index.

Finland's democracy is built on a stable representative political system, well-functioning local governance, vibrant civil society, and low levels of corruption. Finland was also among the first countries to grant women the right to vote and stand in elections, more than a hundred years ago.

Finland's commitment to promote and defend democracy, human rights, and the rule of law is enshrined in the Constitution, and reconfirmed in the current government program, foreign and security policy program, as well as in the development policy program. Finland is also committed to the rule of law as a Member State of the European Union and under its obligations deriving from international treaties.

Finland's development narrative demonstrates that democratic institutions, respect for human rights, and the principle of the rule of law, are the cornerstones for peace and development. Finland remains committed to the universal values of the United Nations, including human rights, sustainable development, democracy, and peace. As an EU member state, Finland supports the EU's international engagement in building democratic institutions, defending human rights and the rule of law, and in fighting corruption.

Finland Promotes the Principle of the Rule of Law and Democracy Globally

Finland pledges to increase its support to the rule of law in response to the current global trends of increasing violations of the rule of law and undermining the independence of judiciary. With the recently established **Rule of Law Centre** in Helsinki Finland enhances its financial and technical assistance to developing countries in creating and reinforcing the foundation of the rule of law, in developing the capacity of rule of law institutions, and in strengthening legislation by providing expertise and training.

Finland promotes political dialogue and inclusive multi-party democracy through **Demo Finland**, a Finnish multi-party co-operative organization of all the parliamentary parties of Finland. In collaboration with local and international partners, Demo Finland contributes to enhancing inclusive political participation through political parties on a multi-party basis in order to create a culture of democracy where political rights are realized. Special attention is paid to enhancing the political participation of women, young people and persons with disabilities as underrepresented groups.

Finland Works for Democratic Renewal Also at Home

Finland is committed to further strengthening democracy, local governance and citizen participation at national level. With the **National Democracy Program 2025**, launched in 2019, Finland pledges to promote participation and new forms of interaction between the public administration and the civil society. The program contributes to developing new ways of participation, promoting the transparency of preparation, improving consultation practices, strengthening the operating conditions of the civil society, and promoting democracy and human rights education.

Alongside the government's actions, the **Finnish Innovation Fund**, Sitra, implements a program, known as the **Updating Democracy Project**, which aims at strengthening the capacity for the renewal of Finland's democracy. The program brings together political parties, local authorities and civil society.

Furthermore, with the objective to strengthen the rule of law, the **Government** has set a **Ministerial Group on Internal Security and Strengthening the Rule of Law** to address questions related to the development of judicial administration, prevention of exclusion and realization of fundamental rights. In addition, the Government has recently decided to prepare a comprehensive report on judicial system.

Human Rights-Based Approach at the Core of Finland's National and International Actions

Finland's foreign and security policy as well as domestic policies are based on human rights. As a member of the **UN Human Rights Council for the term 2022–2024**, Finland pledges to respect and promote the principle of universality of human rights over the sovereignty of nation states. Building on Finland's strengths, we put emphasis on four themes: the rights of women and girls, new technologies and digitalization, sustainable development and climate change, and education. These themes capture many longstanding and emerging challenges to the fulfillment of human rights, in all countries.

The Government of Finland is in the process of finalizing a **third National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights**. Shortcomings related to the recognition of human rights problems and to human rights reporting will be systematically addressed by securing the activities of ombudspersons and other relevant authorities and by guaranteeing a favorable operating environment for civil society organizations and international actors. The Non-Discrimination Act will be partially reformed.

Finland recognizes the rights and special role of women and the youth in conflicts. Finland is the first country to adopt a **National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security** in August 2021 to implement the UNSCR 2250. Young people's ownership and participation were the key principles in the preparation of the Action Plan. Its cross-cutting theme is intersectionality, while other important themes are climate change and new technologies. Similarly, Finland has been strong promoter of the Women, Peace and Security agenda and is currently drafting a new **National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325**.

Finland Fights Against Corruption Globally and at Home

As a signatory to the **UN Convention against Corruption**, Finland pledges to promote integrity and accountability domestically, and to support of international cooperation and technical assistance between all States Parties. Finland participates actively in anti-corruption efforts also within the European Union and in other multilateral and European fora. Key partners include, for example, the OECD, the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), International Anti-Corruption Academy, European Partners against Corruption, and the OSCE.

As the national coordinating authority for anti-corruption work the Ministry of Justice coordinates anti-corruption development projects, supports the anti-corruption work of various authorities, and coordinates the anti-corruption cooperation network. The recently adopted government resolution on the **National Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan**

provides a comprehensive framework for Finland's Anti-Corruption efforts. The Anti-Corruption Strategy supports the implementation of sustainable development objectives, such as those aimed at the strengthening of the rule of law and good governance, and the reduction of corruption and bribery. An Act on a **Transparency Register** will be enacted based on parliamentary preparation and consultation of the civil society.

Finland's participation in international anti-corruption work, including the fight against cross-border crime and the fulfillment of international treaty obligations at national level and as part of Finland's external relations, are incorporated across the board in the Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan.

Finland Fights for Free, Open and Safe Internet for All

The Freedom Online Coalition (FOC) is the most important intergovernmental organization, which promotes free, open and safe internet for all. Based on a partnership of 34 member governments, the FOC shapes global norms, exercises influence on global forums, and raises awareness of the objectives relating to human rights online. Finland focuses on developing the FOC's activities to protect human rights and democracy, on promoting open, safe and accessible internet for all, and on fighting against disinformation which is crucial in defending against authoritarianism. Finland's chairship of the FOC in 2021 culminated in the Ministerial Meeting and the adoption of the Freedom Online Coalition 10th Anniversary Helsinki Declaration for open and accessible internet and human rights based digitalization in December 2021.

The Generation Equality campaign, coordinated by UN Women, was launched in 2020 with the objective of bringing together multilateral organizations, states, the private sector, and civil society actors, in support of gender equality worldwide. Finland holds a lead role in the Generation Equality Action Coalition that focuses on technology and innovation. As priority themes, Finland promotes the development of gender-sensitive and participatory technologies and innovations that contribute to non-discrimination, and reducing violence against women and creating safe digital spaces for all.
