

# Appendix II

## Finland

The Government is requested to include in the reports due

**between 1 June and 1 September 2024**

replies to the points raised in the following comments made by the  
Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations

## Forced labour

**C029** - Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)

**P029** - Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930

### Finland

#### Direct Request, 2021

The Committee notes that the first report of the Government on the application of the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930, has not been received. **The Committee hopes that the Government will provide the first detailed report on the Protocol along with its next report on the Convention due in 2024.**

*Articles 1(1), 2(1) and 25 of the Convention. Trafficking in persons. 1. Law enforcement and sanctions applied.* In its previous comments, the Committee requested the Government to provide information on the enforcement of the sections of the Criminal Code that criminalize trafficking, aggravated trafficking and extortionate work discrimination (Chapters 25 and 47 of the Criminal Code).

The Committee notes from the Government's report that, between 2017 and 2020, the police carried out 127 investigations, among which there were 44 related to trafficking, 27 to aggravated trafficking, and 56 to extortionate discrimination at work; for its part, the Finnish Border Guard carried out three investigations, one each relating to trafficking, aggravated trafficking, and extortionate discrimination at work. The Government also indicates that a national police network of experts, established in 2020, and a national investigation team focusing on the detection and investigation of human trafficking crimes, established in early 2021, work closely together in the fight against human trafficking. In addition, the Government indicates that between 2015 and 2019, there were 20 convictions in cases of trafficking and aggravated trafficking in human beings; 14 convictions in cases of extortionate work discrimination; 12 convictions in cases of abuse of a victim of sexual trade; and 30 convictions in cases of pandering and aggravated pandering. **The Committee requests the Government to continue to provide information on the number of investigations – including those led by the national investigation team – prosecutions and convictions applied for trafficking in persons cases, specifying the penalties imposed on perpetrators.**

*2. Victim protection.* The Committee previously took note of the provisions of the Aliens Act (301/2004) on temporary residence permits for victims of trafficking, as well as the legislative amendment (388/2015) to the Act on the Reception of Persons Seeking International Protection (746/2011), aimed at affirming by law the duties of the national assistance system for victims of human trafficking.

The Committee takes note of the statistics provided by the Government regarding the number of victims of trafficking that were admitted to the system of assistance from 2017 to 31 May 2021. In that timeframe, 844 victims were admitted to the assistance system, among which 291 were victims of labour exploitation. The Government indicates that victims are entitled to: (i) counselling and guidance; (ii) safe accommodation; (iii) allowance/income support; (iv) social services; (v) health care services; (vi) interpretation and translation; (vii) legal aid and advice; and (viii) support for safe return. The Government also indicates that the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has set up a working group to draw up a new act to assist victims of trafficking. The aim of the reform is to improve the status, rights and equality of victims of human trafficking. Furthermore, residence permit practices concerning victims of human trafficking are being reviewed, as a result of a Parliament request that the Government find out whether legislative amendments were needed, in particular in relation to the grounds for issuance of residence permits to trafficking victims. **The Committee welcomes the Government's continued efforts to ensure adequate and effective protection to victims of trafficking and requests the Government to pursue its efforts and provide information in this regard. It also requests the Government to provide information on the progress made on the adoption of the new act to assist victims of trafficking, as well as on the review of the legislative provisions on residence permits for victims of trafficking.**

*3. National Action Plan.* The Committee notes the Government's indication on the adoption of a new Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings for the period 2021–2023. The Action Plan is based on five strategic objectives and 55 actions. The five strategic objectives relate to: (i) the identification of victims; (ii) the provision of support and assistance to victims; (iii) the establishment of criminal liability in human trafficking offences; (iv) the reinforcement of collaboration between national authorities and ministries and various civil society actors; and (v) the development of anti-trafficking action based on data. The Committee observes that the Government established an inter-sectoral working group to prepare the action plan with a view to gaining a comprehensive picture of the challenges of anti-trafficking and to accumulate perspectives for its development. A working group has also been established to monitor and report on the implementation of the Action Plan 2021-2023. **The Committee takes due note of the coordinated action that led to the adoption of the new Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings 2021-2023 and requests the Government to provide information on the activities undertaken for the implementation of the five strategic objectives of the Action Plan, as well as on the assessment of its implementation by the working group in charge of its monitoring.**

## Employment policy and promotion

C122 - Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122)

### Finland

#### Direct Request, 2022

The Committee notes the observations made by the Federation of Finnish Enterprises (SY), the Central Organization of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK), the Finnish Confederation of Salaried Employees (STTK), the Confederation of Unions for Academic Professionals in Finland (AKAVA) and the Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK), transmitted together with the Government's report.

*Articles 1, 2 and 3 of the Convention. Implementation of an active employment policy. Consultation with the social partners.* The Government refers to the negative effects of the COVID-19 crisis on the Finnish labour market and on various measures taken to mitigate those effects. In this regard, the Committee notes the detailed information provided in the Government's report in relation to legislative changes, including temporary amendments made to national legislation and regulations. These include: amendments made to the Unemployment Security Act 129/2002 (amendments 1267/2018 and 1311/2019) to allow unemployed jobseekers to undertake education and training without losing their unemployment benefits; the Act on Public Employment and Business Services 916/2012 which identifies "studies leading to a university degree" as labour market training; the Act on municipal experiments to promote employment (1269/2020) and its pilots (Act on Local Government Pilots on Promoting Employment) which entered into force on 1 March 2021. The Government indicates that Local Government Pilots on Promoting Employment are aiming to increase the effectiveness of employment services by integrating central and local government resources, skills and services. It further indicates that one of the main purposes of the policy and its pilot projects is to increase employment among unemployed jobseekers and to improve access to the labour market, especially for the long-term unemployed and those in vulnerable situations. With regard to labour market policy, the Government indicates that, since December 2019, it has taken a long-term approach to raise the employment rate, strengthen general Government finances and create new jobs. In particular, the Government refers to the "Välittäjä Oy" project, established to advance the employment of people with partial work ability who occupy the weakest position in the labour market. In this regard, the SY observes that wage subsidies for promoting the employment of persons with disabilities should not be used as a permanent solution and that the operation of "Välittäjä Oy" should be limited to groups of people with only the most severe difficulties in finding employment so as not to distort competition. The SY also expresses the view that employment and labour market policies should play a more active role in solving labour market problems and increasing the employment rate. The SY and EK both observe that labour market policy must be based on the jobseeker's obligation to actively seek employment and public employment services must operate efficiently and appropriately, taking into account the needs of each jobseeker. In this respect, the SAK, the STTK and the AKAVA acknowledge the employment policy and employment services reforms adopted and observe that labour market organizations should not become overly complicated and mechanical. With regard to labour market trends, the Committee notes the information provided by the Government on employment and unemployment trends, disaggregated by age and sex. In particular, it notes that, in spite of the fall in the employment rate during the pandemic (from 72.6 to 70 per cent) and the increase in the unemployment rate (from 6.7 to 8.4 per cent), the employment rate began to recover and increase in 2021 and is expected to catch up with pre-crisis levels. ***The Committee requests the Government to continue to provide information on the impact of the active labour market measures implemented under the Local Government Pilots on Promoting Employment, particularly those targeting specific categories of workers vulnerable to decent work deficits, such as persons belonging to minority groups, persons with disabilities, migrant workers and the long-term unemployed. The Committee also requests the Government to indicate the manner in which the impact of employment policy measures, such as the "Välittäjä Oy", are evaluated within the framework of an overall coordinated economic and social policy. The Committee further invites the Government to continue to provide updated labour market data, disaggregated by age, sex and region, on the level and trends of employment, unemployment and underemployment.***

*Public employment services.* In response to the Committee's previous comments, the Government refers to various measures implemented by the TE Offices, including the TE Services Strategy, the local government pilots on employment, preparation of a permanent service structure for employment and business services, the Nordic labour market service model, the reform of the lifelong learning service organization, the integration of multidisciplinary services, and the creation of international recruitment models. The Government indicates that the TE Service Strategy policy (12/2020) focuses on the individuality of services and provides individualised solutions based on a versatile assessment of the specific needs of the candidates; the local government pilots on employment – TE services transferred to municipalities (involving 25 areas and 118 municipalities) is designed to strengthen the role of local governments as organiser of employment services and to transfer Employment and

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Economic Development Services (TE services) to municipalities by 30 June 2023 and the Nordic labour market service model which aims to modernise and customise the job search process to facilitate the registration of unemployed jobseekers. In this regard, the EK observes that the Nordic model of employment services should make use of private employment services, which play a significant role in matching labour market supply and demand. **The Committee requests the Government to continue to provide updated information on the operation of public employment services and on any measures taken or envisaged to ensure effective cooperation between the public employment services and private employment agencies. The Committee also requests the Government to provide information on the impact of services provided by TE Offices in term of people obtaining employment, including the number of persons placed in employment through such services and the type of employment in which they are placed.**

*Education and training programmes.* The Committee notes the information provided by the Government regarding the reform of the Act on Vocational Education (531/2017) in 2018 which supports the organization of working life-oriented education and training and has increased cooperation between education providers and companies. The reform is harmonising vocational education and training and operating practices. The Committee further notes that, in 2021, two reports have been issued on the state of implementation of the reform of vocational education and training, which indicate that the implementation of the reform has progressed. In this regard, the SY observes that there is a significant skills mismatch in the Finnish labour market, both regionally and professionally. The EK also observes that there is a shortage of skilled labour in the Finnish labour market in several sectors, which is largely due to the problem of regional and professional skills mismatching. With regard to the labour market training, the Committee notes the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on training programmes, in particular on the Recruitment Training, *Täsmäkoulutus* Training (targeted training) and Change Training (*Muutoskoulutus*) which have been carried out together with employers. With respect to the participation of the social partners, the Government indicates that social partners are actively involved in the development of lifelong learning. They participate in the National Forum for Skills Anticipation and are part of the Working Life Committees which contribute to ensuring the quality of vocational education and training and working life orientation by monitoring the implementation of vocational education and qualifications. **The Committee requests the Government to provide information on the impact of the Recruitment Training, Täsmäkoulutus Training (targeted training) and Change Training (Muutoskoulutus), in terms of the access of beneficiaries to lasting jobs. The Committee also requests the Government to provide information on the coordination of vocational education and training policies with employment policy and on any measures taken or envisaged to address the shortage of skilled labour and the regional or professional skills mismatching in the Finnish labour market.**

*Older workers.* In reply to the Committee's previous comments, the Government indicates that a political agreement has been reached in December 2020 on increasing the employment rate of people over 55. The Committee notes the various measures taken by the Government to promote the employment of workers who have reached the age of 55, including: transition security packages, wage subsidies, and the possibility for persons over the age of 55 to apply for part-time work for health or social reasons. The Committee further notes the statistical information provided by the Government which indicates an increase in the employment of older workers (55–64). The Committee notes that the unemployment rate of workers aged 55 to 64 stood at 8.4 per cent in June 2021. **The Committee requests the Government to continue to provide detailed updated information, including statistical data disaggregated by age and sex, on the nature, scope and impact of measures taken to reduce older workers' unemployment.**

*Young workers.* The Government indicates that, during the reporting period, the Youth Guarantee and the One Stop Guidance Centres have remained the most important measures for promoting youth employment. There are 70 One Stop Guidance Centres in operation and the state is investing in expanding their network, strengthening their multidisciplinary services and connecting them to other services, in particular social and health services. In this regard, an evaluation of the One Stop Guidance Centres has been conducted in 2019, which establishes their effectiveness and significant potential as an accelerator of service processes. The Government also refers to other measures taken for the promotion of youth employment, in particular, the performance-based procurement of services for young people (*Nuoret töihin!* and *Nuoret kohti työtä!*) which aims to help young people under the age of 30 enter the open labour market, obtain a first education degree or become entrepreneurs. The Government further refers to the launch of local government pilots on employment in which the responsibility for youth employment services in the pilot areas was transferred from the state to municipalities. The Government indicates that youth employment (15–24) was the most affected by the COVID-19 crisis. In the spring of 2020, the number of young unemployed jobseekers increased by about 50 per cent and the regional differences in the effects of the coronavirus pandemic were very significant. The Government reports that, as a result of the COVID-19-pandemic, the percentage of young unemployed jobseekers rose to 21.4 per cent in May 2021 compared to 17.4 per cent in 2019. The Committee notes, however, that as the economy is recovering, the employment rate of young people is increasing. **The Committee requests the Government to continue to provide updated detailed information on the impact of measures taken to promote youth employment, especially the *Nuoret töihin!* and *Nuoret kohti työtä!*, as well as information, disaggregated by age, sex and economic sector, on trends in employment, unemployment and underemployment for young persons.**