



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Concluding observations on the eighth periodic report of Finland*

1. The Committee considered the eighth periodic report of Finland (CEDAW/C/FIN/8) at its 1911th and 1912th meetings (CEDAW/C/SR.1911 and CEDAW/C/SR.1912), held on 11 October 2022. The list of issues and questions raised by the pre-sessional working group is contained in CEDAW/C/FIN/Q/8, and the responses of Finland are contained in CEDAW/C/FIN/RQ/8.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates the submission by the State party of its eighth periodic report. It also appreciates the State party's follow-up report to the previous concluding observations of the Committee (CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7/Add.1). It welcomes the oral presentation by the delegation and the further clarifications provided in response to the questions posed orally by the Committee during the dialogue.

3. The Committee commends the State party on its multisectoral delegation, which was headed by the Director of the Unit for Human Rights Courts and Conventions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Krista Oinonen, and included representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Parliament of Finland and the Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva.

B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved since the consideration in 2014 of the State party's previous report in undertaking legislative reforms, in particular the adoption of the following:

* Adopted by the Committee at its eighty-third session (10–28 October 2022).



(a) Amendment to chapter 20 of the Criminal Code of Finland, providing that the offence of rape is based on lack of consent (entry into force January 2023);

(b) Family Leave Law, which provides equal leave for all parents, as well as leave for unpaid carers (December 2021);

(c) Law concerning the establishment of the post of an independent rapporteur on violence against women (October 2021);

(d) Law amending the Marriage Act (234/1929), abolishing the dispensation for persons under the age of 18 to marry (June 2019);

(e) Maternity Law 2018;

(f) Law (381/2018) amending the Law on State Compensation to Providers of Shelter Services (1354/2014) to fund domestic violence shelters from the national budget instead of from municipal budgets (May 2018);

(g) Law of the Parliament of Åland giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) (1 April 2015);

(h) Law (1329/2014) amending the Act on Equality between Women and Men (609/1986; Equality Law), adding provisions on the prohibition of discrimination based on gender identity or gender expression (December 2014).

5. The Committee welcomes the State party's efforts to improve its institutional and policy framework aimed at accelerating the elimination of discrimination against women and promoting gender equality, such as the adoption or establishment of the following:

(a) Action Plan for the Istanbul Convention for 2022–2025;

(b) Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings for 2021–2023;

(c) Government Action Plan for Gender Equality for 2020–2023 (25 June 2020), which coordinates the gender equality policy of the Government of Finland;

(d) Equal Pay Programme for 2020–2023;

(e) Action Plan for Combating Violence against Women (October 2020);

(f) Åland Islands strategy on zero tolerance towards violence in intimate relationships for the period 2020–2030;

(g) Åland Islands gender equality agenda for 2019–2030;

(h) Revised Defence Forces national plan for gender equality and non-discrimination (2017);

(i) Committee for Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, established by government decree 1008/2016;

(j) Ombudsman for Non-Discrimination (2015);

(k) Post of Anti-Trafficking Coordinator (2014).

6. The Committee welcomes the fact that, in the period since the consideration of the previous report, the State party has ratified or acceded to the following international treaties:

(a) The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2016);

(b) The Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) of the International Labour Organization (2015);

(c) The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (August 2015).

C. Sustainable Development Goals

7. The Committee welcomes the international support for the Sustainable Development Goals and calls for the realization of *de jure* (legal) and *de facto* (substantive) gender equality, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, throughout the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Committee recalls the importance of Goal 5 and of the mainstreaming of the principles of equality and non-discrimination throughout all 17 Goals. It urges the State party to recognize women as the driving force of the sustainable development of the State party, and to adopt relevant policies and strategies to that effect.

D. Parliament

8. The Committee stresses the crucial role of the legislative power in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention (see [A/65/38](#), part two, annex VI). It invites the Parliament of Finland, in line with its mandate, to take necessary steps regarding the implementation of the present concluding observations between now and the submission of the next periodic report under the Convention.

E. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

Women's rights and gender equality in relation to the pandemic and recovery efforts

9. The Committee takes note of the government research project on the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on gender equality in the labour market, in the economy and in relation to well-being and health. The Committee expresses concern, however, at reports that the pandemic resulted in a decrease in employment, particularly within female-dominated industries, such as services and tourism.

10. The Committee, in line with its guidance note on the obligations of States parties to the Convention in the context of COVID-19, issued on 22 April 2020, recommends that the State party:

(a) Implement institutional, legislative and policy measures to redress long-standing inequalities between women and men and to give renewed impetus to the achievement of gender equality by placing women at the centre of COVID-19 recovery strategies as a strategic priority for sustainable change, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals;

(b) Ensure the equal participation of women and girls, including disadvantaged and marginalized groups of women, in the State party's official national recovery programmes and strategies;

(c) Ensure that women and girls benefit from stimulus packages, including financial support for unpaid care work, aimed at mitigating the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic;

(d) Ensure that gender equality and non-discrimination are primary considerations in the allocation of funds under the NextGenerationEU recovery plan.

Visibility of the Convention, the Optional Protocol and the Committee's general recommendations

11. The Committee welcomes the information that the Committee's concluding observations are directly distributed to the President of the Republic, the Parliament, the ministries, the Supreme Court, the national human rights institution, the special ombudsmen, advisory boards, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, the Government of Åland, churches, religious communities, human rights institutes at universities and civil society organizations. It also notes that the State party has provided capacity-building programmes for prosecutors, the police, other law enforcement officers, teachers and military conscripts. It nevertheless regrets the absence of information on the inclusion of specific information on the Convention and the Committee's views under the Optional Protocol thereto, as well as the Committee's general recommendations, in such programmes. The Committee is concerned that the formats in which information related to the Convention is made available may exclude certain groups, such as migrant women who do not speak or read the national languages and may therefore not be aware of their rights under the Convention or the remedies available to them.

12. Recalling its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7, para. 9), the Committee recommends that the State party further strengthen its efforts to make widely known and give publicity to the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto, including through means that will allow access to women and girls who are not conversant in the State party's official languages, as well as to facilitate access to information about the general recommendations and the views and recommendations of the Committee on individual communications and inquiries under the Optional Protocol.

Legislative framework, legal status of the Convention and harmonization of laws

13. The Committee notes with appreciation that international human rights treaties, such as the Convention, are considered binding in domestic law. Nevertheless, it notes with concern that:

(a) There is a lack of court decisions making direct reference to the Convention;

(b) Despite the fact that the Government Action Plan for Gender Equality for 2016–2019 sought to continue gender mainstreaming in all government departments, only 15 per cent of all government initiatives considered in Parliament in 2020 incorporated a gender perspective or gender impact assessments, a percentage that has been decreasing since 2018;

(c) The wording of the new criminal legislation on sexual harassment and stalking is gender-neutral.

14. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Carry out capacity-building and awareness-raising activities for judges, prosecutors and lawyers with the aim of encouraging the invocation of the Convention in court proceedings;**

(b) **Ensure that gender mainstreaming and gender impact assessments are included in all government proposals put before Parliament;**

(c) **Include gender-sensitive rather than gender-neutral language in its legislation, policies and programmes, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 28 (2010) on the core obligations of States parties under**

article 2 of the Convention, and comprehensively assess the gender-neutral approach in legislation and policymaking, with an emphasis on the potential adverse effects of gender-neutral policies for public funding of programmes for women.

National machinery for the advancement of women

15. The Committee welcomes the fact that Finland ranks fourth in the Gender Equality Index 2022 of the European Institute for Gender Equality. It notes with concern, however, that Finland is progressing towards gender equality at a slower pace than many other States members of the European Union. The Committee also notes with concern the absence of a high-level coordinating mechanism responsible for advancing gender equality and the rights of women.

16. **Recalling the Committee's previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7, para. 13), the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Undertake an in-depth analysis of its progress towards achieving substantive gender equality, with a view to understanding the obstacles and challenges affecting this progress, and put in place effective measures to address them;**

(b) **Consider establishing a high-level coordination mechanism within the Government, with adequate human, technical and financial resources, and with a robust mandate to ensure effective gender mainstreaming in all government policies, formulate new policies and effectively carry out strategies and measures to eliminate discrimination against women;**

(c) **Establish a dedicated government entity, at the highest level and independent of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, that is responsible for the advancement of women and gender equality, equipped with sufficient human, technical and financial resources to effectively carry out its mandate to promote and protect women's rights.**

Temporary special measures

17. The Committee welcomes the efforts of the State party to strengthen the participation of migrant women in political and public life, education and the labour market. It also takes note of the government resolution of 2015 requiring the boards of large and medium-sized listed companies to have a minimum of 40 per cent of both women and men on their boards. The Committee is, however, concerned that there have been no positive developments towards this minimum quota for women in recent years.

18. **In line with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Provide incentives such as gender scorecards, strengthen targeted recruitment and set time-bound goals and quotas in all areas covered by the Convention and at all levels where women are underrepresented or disadvantaged, including on boards of large and medium-sized listed companies;**

(b) **Consider extending the use of quotas to smaller and unlisted companies;**

(c) **Continue and further strengthen specific temporary special measures to accelerate the participation of women belonging to disadvantaged groups, such as migrant women, Roma women, Sami women, single mothers, older**

women and women with disabilities, in political and public life, decision-making, education and the labour market.

Discriminatory gender stereotypes

19. The Committee notes that the Parliament is discussing a government proposal to make committing a crime on a gender-based motive an aggravating circumstance for hate speech offences and other offences. The Committee nevertheless notes with concern that:

(a) Hate speech, including misogynist speech, has risen considerably as a percentage of all hate crimes, from 37 per cent in 2016 to 52 per cent in 2020;

(b) A high incidence of hate speech is gender-related, particularly when directed against ethnic minority women and women politicians;

(c) The media and the advertising sector reportedly convey stereotyped images and messages regarding women, particularly with regard to gender-based violence against women, and that there are no self-regulatory mechanisms.

20. **Recalling the Committee's previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7, para. 15), the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Take steps to criminalize sexist, misogynist and other forms of gender-related hate speech, including against migrant women and women belonging to national minorities;**

(b) **Strictly enforce the October 2021 amendment to the Criminal Code concerning the right to bring charges for threats in cases of gender-related hate speech;**

(c) **Further strengthen measures to address gender-related hate speech and the portrayal of stereotyped images of women in the media, including by encouraging the media and the advertising sector to institute effective self-regulatory mechanisms to prohibit the use of such hate speech and promote positive and non-stereotypical portrayals of women and girls.**

Harmful practices

21. The Committee notes the proposed amendment of the law on verification of gender to remove the requirement of proof of sterilization for a transsexual person. It also notes that a working group was established to prepare best practice guidance to help health-care professionals advise parents with intersex children. The Committee further notes that forced marriage is punishable as human trafficking or as coercion. The Committee notes with concern, however:

(a) The absence of legislation specifically criminalizing female genital mutilation and the reported lack of capacity-building and awareness-raising for public health professionals regarding female genital mutilation;

(b) The performance of surgical interventions on intersex children with the aim of "normalizing" their genitalia;

(c) The failure of the State party to repeal section 2 of the Sterilization Law, which permits the sterilization of women with mental disabilities who have limited legal capacity or who have been deprived of their legal capacity without their consent;

(d) That forced marriage is not explicitly criminalized in the Criminal Code and that victims of forced marriage are often not identified as such, resulting in low prosecution rates.

22. **Recalling joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2019) on harmful practices, and the Committee's previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7, paras. 17 and 29), the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Continue and further strengthen efforts to eliminate female genital mutilation, including by raising awareness of its harmful effects for girls and women in the communities that continue to engage in this practice and by specifically criminalizing female genital mutilation;**

(b) **Specifically criminalize surgical interventions on the genitalia of intersex children, unless medically necessary;**

(c) **Take immediate steps to repeal section 2 of the Sterilization Law and provide effective remedies for women victims of forced or involuntary sterilization;**

(d) **Explicitly criminalize forced marriage in the Criminal Code, ensure that all suspected cases of forced marriage are effectively investigated and that those responsible are prosecuted and adequately punished, and that victims receive appropriate care, support and reparations.**

Gender-based violence against women

23. The Committee welcomes the reform of legislation governing sexual offences and the establishment of the post of independent rapporteur on violence against women. It notes the State party's efforts to prevent gender-based violence against women, including through capacity-building for the police, the establishment of sexual violence referral centres throughout the country and the launch of a national campaign against sexual harassment in 2016. The Committee nevertheless notes with concern:

(a) Reports of an increased number of cases of gender-based violence against women and girls and a high rate of intimate partner violence, as well as reports that organizations, mechanisms and action plans that provide support to women and girl victims of violence, such as the Action Plan for the Istanbul Convention, the newly established post of independent rapporteur on violence against women and the Committee for Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, lack adequate funding;

(b) The fact that mediation in cases of intimate partner violence remains a possibility and is reportedly being increasingly used;

(c) That only serious abuse of a particular position of power is included in the definition of rape, while other situations of sexual abuse by abuse of power are defined as sexual abuse, which carries a lighter penalty, and that sexual intercourse with a minor under the age of 16 is punished under the offence of sexual abuse;

(d) Underreporting and low prosecution and conviction rates in rape cases;

(e) Reports that prosecutors and law enforcement officers are not systematically trained to address cases of gender-based violence against women, and that such training is often on a voluntary basis and does not cover specific forms of violence against women and girls, such as stalking, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and crimes committed in the name of so-called "honour";

(f) The lack of adequate shelters for victims of gender-based violence against women, particularly in the northern region, namely the Sami homeland, and the inaccessibility of most shelters for women with disabilities;

(g) That eligibility to receive services from sexual violence referral centres is limited to a period of one month after an incident, potentially excluding victims of domestic violence from such services;

(h) Reports that more than 50 per cent of women under the age of 35 have experienced harassment.

24. Reiterating its previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7, para. 19), and recalling its general recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Effectively implement the Action Plan on the Istanbul Convention and provide the Action Plan, as well as the organizations and mechanisms supporting women and girls who are victims of gender-based violence, such as the independent rapporteur on violence against women and the coordination unit (the Committee for Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence), with adequate human, technical and financial resources to allow them to effectively carry out their mandate;**

(b) **Give priority to prosecution over the use of mediation in cases of intimate partner violence and domestic violence and ensure that referral to mediation does not result in the discontinuation of criminal investigation and prosecution in these cases;**

(c) **Amend chapter 20 of the Criminal Code, on sexual offences, to ensure that all non-consensual sexual acts involving abuse of power are defined as rape, regardless of whether the abuse of power is considered serious, and that all cases of sexual intercourse with a minor under the age of consent are automatically considered and punished under the offence of rape;**

(d) **Provide adequate shelters for victims of gender-based violence in all regions, including the Sami homeland, and ensure that all shelters are accessible for women with disabilities;**

(e) **Address the causes of underreporting in cases of rape and provide mandatory capacity-building for judges, prosecutors and the police on gender-sensitive interrogation methods and on the strict application of relevant criminal law provisions;**

(f) **Wherever necessary, grant exemptions from the one-month time limit for the receipt of services from sexual violence referral centres;**

(g) **Take measures to address sexual harassment of women, including through awareness-raising campaigns directed at the media, teachers and employers, and ensure the strict enforcement of legislation criminalizing sexual harassment.**

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

25. The Committee welcomes the organization of training courses on trafficking in human beings and takes note of the State party's indication that, under the national action plan against trafficking in human beings, the application of the provision of the Aliens Act on suspicion of selling sex as grounds for denial of admittance or stay will be reviewed and the need for legislative amendments and for developing practices will be assessed. The Committee further notes that a government proposal amending the Act on the Reception of Persons Seeking International Protection and on the Identification and Assistance of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings (388/2015) concerning assistance to victims is expected to be submitted to Parliament at the end of 2022. The Committee is nevertheless concerned:

(a) That crimes of trafficking in persons continue to be processed in the same manner as other types of crimes and that victims remain unidentified;

(b) That the Aliens Act (301/2004) has not yet been amended to reduce the risk of deportation of victims of trafficking and that the practice of applying the Aliens Act to grant residency to victims of trafficking is inconsistent;

(c) About the lack of information on measures taken by the State party to reduce the demand for prostitution and provide alternative income-generating opportunities to women who wish to leave prostitution.

26. Recalling its previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7, para. 21), and its general recommendation No. 38 (2020) on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Provide training for law enforcement officers, border control personnel, health-care providers and other first responders on the early identification of victims of trafficking and their referral to appropriate services for their protection and rehabilitation;**

(b) **Expedite the amendments to the Aliens Act and strengthen the capacity of police officers, prosecutors and the judiciary to apply properly the legally guaranteed principle of non-punishment of victims of trafficking;**

(c) **Take appropriate legislative and other measures, including awareness-raising activities and the criminalization of the demand for prostitution, based on the results of the survey on the current situation of prostitution in Finland carried out under the Action Plan for Gender Equality for 2020–2023, so as to reduce the demand for prostitution, and put in place programmes to assist women and girls who wish to leave prostitution, including programmes providing alternative income-generating opportunities.**

Equal participation in political and public life

27. The Committee welcomes the high percentage of women in the State party's parliament (45.5 per cent), among the State party representatives in the European Parliament (57.1 per cent) and as ambassadors in the civil service (50 per cent). The Committee notes with concern, however, that:

(a) The majority of candidates in municipal elections are men;

(b) Migrant women, women with disabilities, women from ethnic minorities and Roma women are underrepresented in political and public life, and notes the lack of statistical data on their situation;

(c) In the Sami Parliament, only 8 out of 21 members and 1 out of 4 deputy members are women. Only 10 out of 30 members of the Parliament of Åland are women;

(d) Women are underrepresented in high-ranking roles in the defence forces.

28. Reiterating its previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7, para. 23), and recalling its general recommendation No. 23 (1997) on women in political and public life and its general recommendation No. 25, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Adopt measures, including temporary special measures such as statutory quotas or incentives, for political parties to include an equal number of women and men in their electoral lists, especially at the municipal level;**

(b) **Put in place measures, including temporary special measures, to ensure that the representation of women in political and public life, and particularly in leadership positions, reflects the full diversity of the population;**

(c) **Carry out awareness-raising activities, with a particular emphasis on the region of Åland and the Sami populations, to accelerate women's equal representation in political and public life;**

(d) **Put in place temporary special measures, including statutory quotas, for the representation of women in decision-making positions in the defence forces.**

Education

29. The Committee notes the State party's indication that legislation integrating equality and non-discrimination into the curriculum for early childhood education will enter into force in 2023. It welcomes the State party's efforts to include courses on non-discrimination, equality and intimate partner violence in military academy curricula. The Committee also welcomes the fact that the Government of Åland supports projects to encourage girls and boys to make non-traditional educational choices. The Committee welcomes the publication, in 2021, of a national action plan to prevent bullying, violence and harassment in schools and educational institutions and the publication by the Finnish National Agency for Education of a guide on preventing and intervening in sexual harassment cases in schools and educational institutions. The Committee, however, notes with concern:

(a) The reportedly high incidence of bullying against girls and boys in schools;

(b) Persistent gender segregation in the education sector and the low number of women and girls choosing non-traditional fields of study and career paths;

(c) Women's underrepresentation in high-level academic positions, despite the high number of women in higher education.

30. **Reiterating its previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7, para. 25), and recalling its general recommendation No. 36 (2017) on the right of girls and women to education, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Allocate sufficient resources for and monitor the implementation of the national anti-bullying action plan to provide safe and inclusive educational environments free from discrimination, harassment and gender-based violence, strengthen the role of counsellors in ensuring safe and inclusive educational environments, impose and implement sanctions for bullying and address intersecting forms of discrimination faced by disadvantaged groups of women and girls in the education system;**

(b) **Continue to promote women's and girls' participation in non-traditional fields of study and career paths, in particular in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and information and communications technology, adopting temporary special measures in this regard, in line with article 4 of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25;**

(c) **Encourage the introduction of temporary special measures, such as statutory quotas, to ensure the equal representation of women in high-level academic positions.**

Employment

31. The Committee welcomes the recent legislative amendments providing equal family leave for both parents and additional leave to single parents. It takes note of the State party's efforts to eliminate gender segregation in the labour market and its intention to reduce the gender pay gap to 12 per cent by 2025. The Committee nevertheless notes with concern:

(a) The persistent gender segregation in the labour market, where women are concentrated in traditionally "female" occupational sectors, such as care work, and the increased risk of gender segregation through the transition to teleworking;

(b) The persistent gender pay gap of 16 per cent, which adversely affects women's pension benefits;

(c) The difficulties experienced by women belonging to ethnic minorities, migrant women and women with disabilities in accessing secure, well-paid and full-time work;

(d) The discrimination against women based on pregnancy and maternity;

(e) The low percentage of men who take parental leave;

(f) The disproportionately low representation of women in decision-making processes and positions in the economic sector.

32. **With reference to its previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7, para. 27), the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Take legislative and policy measures, including temporary special measures in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention, such as quotas and financial incentives for employers, to promote women's representation in non-traditional career paths and to reduce gender segregation in the labour market, particularly in innovative sectors such as the digital sector, and consider developing a national plan to address these issues;**

(b) **Ensure salary transparency and that both public and private companies respect the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, and regularly review wages in sectors where women are concentrated and adopt measures to close the gender pay gap, including through gender-neutral analytical job classification and evaluation methods and regular pay surveys;**

(c) **Develop effective strategies and policies to improve women's access to secure, well-paid jobs with a particular emphasis on disadvantaged groups of women, including migrant women, women from ethnic minority groups, single mothers, older women and women with disabilities;**

(d) **Strictly enforce the provisions of the Equality Act prohibiting discrimination against women based on pregnancy or maternity and provide adequate reparation to victims of such discrimination, including the possibility of reinstatement in their job in case of unfair dismissals;**

(e) **Implement measures to ensure the equal sharing of domestic responsibilities between women and men and encourage men to avail themselves of their full parental leave;**

(f) **Introduce relevant policies to significantly increase women's decision-making positions in the private sector, including in innovative sectors, such as the digital sector.**

Health

33. The Committee notes with appreciation that the Parliament has accepted the government proposal on health and social service reform, which includes improving the availability and accessibility of quality health services provided by skilled health-care professionals. It also notes with appreciation that the State party has taken measures to address the mental health of young women and girls, including addressing eating disorders. The Committee nevertheless notes with concern that:

(a) Despite a decrease in the number of suicides over the past two decades, the suicide rate, including among women, remains higher in the State party than in any other State member of the European Union and that the mortality rate by suicide of women under the age of 25 has increased over the past 10 years;

(b) The number of women and girls with eating disorders remains alarmingly high.

34. Recalling its previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7, para. 29), the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Conduct a comprehensive study to establish the root causes of suicide and take appropriate measures, including early detection programmes, to address mental health issues that lead to suicide among women and girls in the State party;**

(b) **Put in place early detection programmes and mechanisms for early intervention in cases of women and girls with eating disorders.**

Economic empowerment of women

35. The Committee is concerned that austerity measures, including cuts to social security benefits, taken between 2016 and 2018 disproportionately affected women and contributed to the feminization of poverty in the State party.

36. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Take measures to ensure an adequate standard of living for women and the realization of their economic and social rights;**

(b) **Develop and strengthen programmes to support women entrepreneurs, including those belonging to minority ethnic groups and those with low incomes.**

Disadvantaged groups of women

37. The Committee notes with appreciation that separate wings for women inmates will be established in six prisons to ensure the safety and well-being of women inmates. It also notes the State party's indication that proposed amendments to the law on the promotion of integration will facilitate the integration of migrant women into society and strengthen their access to the labour market. It further notes that the third national policy on the Roma under preparation focuses on the status of several groups within the Roma community, including Roma women. The Committee notes with concern, however, the lack of information on specific measures to address the situation of women who face intersecting forms of discrimination, in particular migrant women, Roma women, older women and women with disabilities.

38. The Committee recommends that in its next report the State party provide detailed information on targeted measures to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women who face intersecting forms of discrimination,

including migrant women, Roma women, older women and women with disabilities.

Marriage and family relations

39. The Committee welcomes the information on parental leave reform. It notes with appreciation the State party's indication that a parent's record of domestic violence is taken into consideration when deciding on the custody of children upon divorce. The Committee is concerned, however, that the draft law providing for the annulment of forced marriages may result in children born of such marriages losing their inheritance rights. It is further concerned about the lack of statistics on children born as a result of child marriage and forced marriage.

40. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Allow victims of forced marriage to freely choose between divorce, annulment or dissolution of marriage in accordance with their specific situations and their individual needs and rights and those of their children, particularly with regard to inheritance rights;**

(b) **Compile statistical data on children born as a result of child marriage and forced marriage in order to gain a proper understanding of the situation.**

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

41. **The Committee calls upon the State party to use the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and to further evaluate the realization of the rights enshrined in the Convention in order to achieve substantive equality between women and men.**

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

42. **The Committee calls for the realization of substantive gender equality, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, throughout the process of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.**

Dissemination

43. **The Committee requests the State party to ensure the timely dissemination of the present concluding observations, in the de facto official languages of the State party, to the relevant State institutions at all levels (national, regional and local), in particular to the Government, the Parliament and the judiciary, to enable their full implementation.**

Ratification of other treaties

44. **The Committee notes that the adherence of the State party to the nine major international human rights instruments¹ would enhance the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in all aspects of life. The Committee therefore encourages the State party to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members**

¹ The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

of Their Families and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, to which it is not yet a party.

Follow-up to the concluding observations

45. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 20, 22 (c), 24 (b), and 28 (a) and (d) above.

Preparation of the next report

46. The Committee will establish and communicate the due date of the tenth periodic report of the State party in line with a future predictable eight-year review calendar and following the adoption of a list of issues prior to reporting, if applicable, for the State party. The report should be submitted on time and cover the entire period up to the time of its submission.

47. The Committee requests the State party to follow the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a common core document and treaty-specific documents ([HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6](#), chap. I).
