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FINLAND

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# Foreword

This is a parallel report prepared by the Coalition of Finnish Women’s Associations on behalf of a group of NGO’s for the eighth periodic report of Finland concerning the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) 83rd session.

This parallel report was compiled and prepared by the Coalition of Finnish Women’s Associations NYTKIS on the basis of materials and comments provided by five associations and networks. The NGOs that provided content for this report are Women’s Line, Left Women and the Finnish Social Democratic Women and also from the Women's network of Disabled Organizations. In addition, the report uses statements and material provided by the Feminist Association Unioni, the National Council of Women of Finland, and Rusetti – Disabled Women's National Association, as well as the parallel Beijing+25 report.

With this report, we wanted to highlight the topics that are an important issues and the themes that require measures. Many of these were already noted by the CEDAW committee in the last periodic report. Although some progress has been made in equality, areas such as preventing violence and protecting victims have not received enough attention and resources in political decisions made in recent years.

# Article 2

## Gendered hate speech against minorities

According to the 2017 Gender Equality Barometer, minority women experience inappropriate behaviour or sexual harassment, gendered hate speech and underestimation clearly more often than men. In addition, 27 per cent of the women and 9 per cent of the men who classified themselves as being part of a minority had experienced gendered hate speech. One-fourth of the women and one-fifth of the men had limited their evening activities for fear of violence. The number of respondents who had changed their behaviour was almost as high as the number of respondents who had experienced hate speech.

## Sámi women

The research data available on Sámi people in Finland is gender neutral, and there is little research data available on Sámi women and girls.

There are no shelters for victims of violence in the Sámi homeland; the only shelter in Lapland is located in Rovaniemi, which is hundreds of kilometres away from the area inhabited by the Sámi. Long distances to shelters makes it difficult to get help for victims of violence. The Istanbul Convention requires the states to set up enough shelters, and the implementation of the Convention should be ensured also with regard to national minorities.

## Immigrant women

 There are no topical surveys on the extent of violence against immigrant women in Finland. Based on Monika-Naiset Liitto Multicultural Women’s Association statistics, immigrant women experience violence from both the native Finnish population and immigrant men and communities. According to a survey by the National Research Institute of Legal Policy (2014[[1]](#footnote-1)), the risk of assault is two and a half times higher among immigrants compared to the native Finnish population.

[According to THL,](https://thl.fi/fi/web/maahanmuutto-ja-kulttuurinen-moninaisuus/kotoutuminen-ja-osallisuus/tyoelama) finding employment is more difficult for immigrant women than Finnish women, and the most typical fields of employment among immigrant women are the care, cleaning and trade sectors. The [2019 Integration review](http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/162005/TEM_oppaat_10_2019_Tutkimusartikkeleita_kotoutumisesta_20012020.pdf) of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment concludes that the labour market position of immigrant women is poor and only half of immigrant women work outside the home. Immigrant women have difficulties finding employment, even when they are highly educated[[2]](#footnote-2). High education in the country of origin does not always help in finding employment, and according to the Integration Survey, the employment rate of women becomes as high as the employment rate of men only after 15 years of living in Finland. In addition to employment seeking, immigrant women experience discrimination, abuse and unequal pay also in working life, and according to the Statistics of Finland [in 2014](https://www.sak.fi/ajankohtaista/uutiset/maahanmuuttajanaisen-euro-62-senttia), employed immigrant women earned 62 cents for every euro earned by men.

## Women with disabilities

The Finnish Disability Forum and the Human Rights Centre carried out a survey on the realisation of the rights of people with disabilities in 2018. More than 1,500 disabled persons responded to the survey, and two-thirds of the respondents were women. In the survey, the particular issues brough up by female respondents were inappropriate conduct in relation to parenting and family planning, motherhood, and personal relationships. Infertility treatment might be refused. The working life discrimination experienced by disabled women and their difficulties in finding employment cause poverty. The survey revealed that disabled women (57.1%) reported poverty more than disabled men (47.1%). Poverty increases the risk of not having access to sufficient healthcare, the necessary medications, healthy food, and moving outside the home.

The Parliamentary Ombudsman has received numerous complaints during COVID-19 about the restrictions in the institutional care of disabled and elderly persons. There have been cases where the instructions of authorities have prohibited visitors (family etc.) even when not required in the Infectious Diseases Act, to which the authorities have referred in their instructions. In service housing units for the elderly and those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, leisure time activities have not been offered during COVID-19 pandemic. [[3]](#footnote-3)

The National Supervisory Authority on Welfare and Health (Valvira) supervises service provision and quality in institutions together with the municipal authorities most often maintaining institutions for the disabled and the elderly. The municipalities tasked with maintaining services regularly report to Valvira, which also conducts monitoring activities. The agency can also conduct monitoring activities in the case of complaints.

The European Disability Forum has released reports during COVID19 and the situation of disabled people during pandemic. According to the Women’s Network of disabled organizations, there are not enough data and statistics from the situation of institutionalized women in Finland during COVID19.

**Recommendations:**

* The volume of statistics and research data on the circumstances of disabled and minority women must be increased, particularly concerning their social and economic position, living conditions, and violence against them.
* Disabled girls and women must be provided with information on their rights and on protecting their own bodies, along with tools for recognising violence directed at them.

# Article 5 – Violence Against Women

Violence against women is one of the most significant human rights violations related to women. According to Statistics Finland, 76.5% of the victims of domestic violence and intimate partner violence were female (in 2009–2018).[[4]](#footnote-4)According to a survey by the EU’s Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA)[[5]](#footnote-5) (2015), 47% of Finnish women have encountered physical and/or sexual violence after turning 15 and 53% have experienced psychological violence in their current or previous relationships. According to the statistics on homicides[[6]](#footnote-6), a total of 131 Finns were killed by their intimate partner in 2011–2017. Of these, 78% were women and 22% men.

Over the course of five years, the additional direct healthcare costs caused by physical partner violence experienced by women are 150 million euros per year (based on a population survey, 146,000 women are victims of physical partner violence). According to the population survey, 44% of Finns aged 16–74 had experienced intimate partner violence and 65% experienced intimate partner violence in childhood. 48% of women and 39% of men had experienced intimate partner violence. Those who had experienced intimate partner violence had 60–90% higher costs in social services and 70% higher in legal services (including the police) compared to those who had not experienced intimate partner violence. In turn, violence experienced in childhood was reflected in 50% higher costs of social and legal services in adulthood. [[7]](#footnote-7))

Finland is not doing enough to eliminate violence against women, although several human rights bodies and advocates have remarked on the insufficiency of Finnish anti-violence action and funding. As stated in the Beijing+25 report[[8]](#footnote-8), no separate financial or personnel resources have been allocated to performing and coordinating the measures required by the Convention, which endangers the implementation of the Convention. Since 2012, disability organisations have demanded an accessibility survey at shelters from the authorities, but it is still not known if this has been carried out, and no extensive accessibility data is available.

There are also challenges related to living arrangements after leaving the shelter: difficulties finding an apartment and the risk of homelessness might force the women to return to the violent relationship. Minority women are in a particularly vulnerable position. They are subject to prejudice and stereotypical thinking that make finding an apartment on the free market significantly more difficult.

NGO’s consider it positive that more SERI centers have been opened and regional coverage has improved in recent years. The time limit for receiving the SERI center's service (only 1 month) is problematic. It excludes the majority of those who have experienced sexual violence from the services (not much, for example, women with an immigrant background or those who have experienced violence in a relationship/marriage in their statistics).

## Low-threshold services

There are not enough low-treshold services for victims of violence. Support services are mainly provided by NGOs, and their long-term funding is often uncertain. With regard to violence against women, the services should be female-specific and take into account the diversity of women.

During covid19-pandemic only 26 000€ of the financial covid19-support from the Finnish Government was pointed for Nollalinja, the national low-treshold services provider for the victims of violence. [[9]](#footnote-9)

## Sexual harassment, abuse and violence against girls

Sexual abuse is common among young people. According to the 2021 school health survey[[10]](#footnote-10), 48,4% (32% 2019) of girls and 10,5% (8% 2019) of boys in the 8th and 9th grades of comprehensive school had experienced abusive sexual proposals or harassment. According to a study, girls with disabilities experienced sexual harassment at all school levels about one and a half times. Experiences of sexual violence were reported by 13,4% (10% 2019) of the girls and 5% (4% 2019) of the boys. Experiences of sexual violence were reported by over 20% of the girls with disabilities. These figures are strongly gendered, and it is particularly worrying that the amount of sexual harassment and abuse had increased from the 2017 school health survey. Sexual harassment of girls over the telephone and online had increased the most according to 2019 survey.

A survey by Save the Children[[11]](#footnote-11)revealed that there is commercial sexual abuse of children and sexual violence against children in Finland, particularly on digital media, but it is not adequately recognised.

Girls report sexual harassment more often than before. From the 8th and 9th graders of elementary school and the 1st–2nd graders of upper secondary schools and vocational schools. about 50 percent of the year's student girls have faced sexual harassment during the corona virus. In 2019, the corresponding figure was 30 percent.

The regional differences in sexual harassment in public places are big. During the epidemic, it has occurred most in big cities. For example, 33 of the girls in 8th-9th grade in Helsinki have faced sexual harassment, while in smaller towns it varies from a few percent to around 25 percent.

The increase in sexual harassment against girls can be related, among other things, to the fact that more time than usual has been spent online during the corona restrictions. [[12]](#footnote-12)

Rape legislation
For a long time, several NGOs have demanded that Finland should amend its rape legislation so that all forms of sexual intercourse without the other person’s consent would always be regarded as rape. The revised, consent-based rape legislation has accepted at the parliament and will come into effect in the beginning of January 2023. In the new legislation, abuse of power in e.g. institutions would still be sexual abuse, and it’ll effect on especially disabled women.

In 2009–2018, approximately 97% of the victims of rape crimes known to the police were women. [[13]](#footnote-13)Amnesty International Finland carried out an analysis on the realisation of the rights of rape victims. In 2017, over 1,200 suspected rapes were reported to the police.

Around 70 per cent of the reported cases proceeded to prosecution, but a conviction was reached in only 209 cases. Only 17% of the cases concluded with a conviction. In addition to the outdated legislation, also the authorities need further training on how to encounter the victims with respect. Negative rape stereotypes continue to affect the treatment of the victims and the processing or rape cases.

## Sexual violence and particularly vulnerable women

The Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare (THL) published a study done with two NGOs (Network of Women with Disabilities represented by Invalidiliitto and Kynnys) in 2022 with alarming results about the frequency of domestic violence experienced by persons with disabilities and the factors related to it. The research data used in the study included seven population study data sets and a survey and interview data collected in the project (2021).

The study showed that domestic violence is more common for persons with disabilities than in the rest of the population. In general girls and women with disabilities face more violence than men and boys with disabilities. Already amongst four-year-old children the boys with disabilities even half of the face more violence at home, at kindergarten and freetime activities than others.

Youngsters with disabilities face **1,5 time more** violence than others. 76–81 % of girls and 46–54 % of boys face violence, and different forms of violence also cumulate with youngsters. They face more sexual harassment (60-62%) and violence (22-26%), physical (13-24% of girls and 9-18% of boys) or emotional (48-57% of girls and 27-33% of boys) violence from their parents or caretakers and physical threat and bullying. The boys with disabilities face more physical threat (31 %) and bullying (14%) and the girls with disabilities face all the forms of violence more than others.

Adults with disabilities face **two times more** violence. Men with disabilities face more violence or threat and women with disabilities face more sexual harassment and violence. There are major challenges associated with acquiring help, and these challenges deserve attention and require taking measures to improve the situation. Improving the situation of persons with disabilities, who have experienced domestic violence in our society, begins by identifying the phenomenon, its diversity and persons who experience it.[[14]](#footnote-14)

The study reaffirmed the report of ministry of interior and THL study on Finnish school survey 2017 already with shocking figures. The women with disabilities face 2-3 time more violence than other women. The risk of sexual violence is especially high on women with mental disabilities, maybe even then times higher. The youngsters with disabilities have more background. They faced **three times** more discriminating bullying and over **two times more** physical threat, boys with disabilities more commonly. They faced **three times more** sexual violence, girls with disabilities more commonly. [[15]](#footnote-15)

Although there is data about the violence, the challenges to receive help is continuous problem. The legislation should protect the people with disabilities, but this doesn’t take place in practice. Human rights -based interpretation, accessibility and availability of services are an issue. Recognition of intersectional discrimination and disablism are an issue in public services.

## Digital violence

According to research by Amnesty International (2017), 23% of women have experienced harassment online, and around 40% of those who had experienced harassment felt that their physical safety was threatened.[[16]](#footnote-16)

Based on research, women are at a notably higher risk of being harassed online, and women also feel more threatened by the harassment than men. However, the problems are not only limited online, but a more extensive discussion on the effects of digitalisation on the human rights and safety of girls and women is necessary.

Digital abuse means violence or stalking with the help of digital technologies, such as phones, social media platforms, computers, or tracking devices. Digital abuse is a form of psychological violence.[[17]](#footnote-17)

The situation of women who live in a violent relationship or are stalked by their former partner is particularly alarming, and professionals and authorities do not have, in the NGOs’ view, sufficient resources for helping victims. The understanding of the use of technology as a tool for violence must be increased among professionals and authorities, and access to help and support must be made easier for the victims of digital abuse. The Turv@verkko 2020–2022 project by Women’s Line provides training on digital abuse to authorities and professionals and organises low-threshold services to victims, but its funding is project-based with no guarantee for continuation.

## Mediation of intimate partner violence

In Finland, violent crimes can be settled without prosecution at the initiative of the police or the prosecutor. The prosecutor may decide to (under Chapter 1, Sections 7–8 of the Criminal Procedure Act and certain special provisions) waive prosecution, in which case the conciliation and the suspect’s willingness to settle are taken into account by applying the so-called reasonability principle. If the prosecutor decides to press charges, the court can take the settlement reached between the parties into account as a mitigating circumstance (Chapter 6, Section 6 of the Criminal Code). The Act on Conciliation in Criminal and Certain Civil Cases does not exclude any offences from the scope of application of the Act, but its provisions and preparatory materials contain some limitations regarding crimes against minors, intimate partner violence crimes, and serious crimes, stating that these crimes are poorly suitable for mediation and settling them through conciliation requires particular discretion. This is not the case in Finland.

At the current Government program says “Mediation will not be used in situations where it could compromise the legal protection of the victim. The possibility to continue mediation in cases of intimate partner violence will be assessed.” NGO’s are worried about the situation of this issue.

Intimate partner violence is often settled through conciliation in Finland. According to the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL),[[18]](#footnote-18) the percentage of intimate partner violence cases was 36,3% of all criminal and civil cases referred to conciliation in 2020. The majority of these concerned violence by a man against a woman in an intimate relationship. In 2011, the percentage of intimate partner violence cases was smaller, at 14.75%[[19]](#footnote-19). This suggests that the mediation of intimate partner violence is becoming more common. One reason behind this is that petty assaults were moved under public prosecution.

In its 2019 report, GREVIO (Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence) expressed its concern for the mediation of recurring violence and the legal protection of women in cases where the mediation might have an impact on the incentive to investigate. GREVIO questions the power of the police to refer cases to mediation.[[20]](#footnote-20)

**Recommendations:**

* The violence experienced by disabled women, elderly women, and immigrant women, its prevalence, and identification involve special characteristics that must be taken into account in the services.
* The low-threshold service network should be extended to cover the entire country and all forms of violence against women and girls. In particular, the availability of specialist services aimed at victims of sexual violence is poor outside of Southern Finland.
* An accessibility survey must be carried out at sheltered homes immediately.
* Information on sheltered home services must be shared with consideration for different disabilities: in plain language, in braille and large print, in electronic form, and in audio form.
* The legislative amendment must be based on research data on intimate partner violence, information on the implementation of the current Act, the EU Victims’ Rights Directive, and international conventions.
* The mediation of intimate partner violence is excluded from mediation processes by law
* Resources and skills of the police to handle e.g. digital violence should be increased

# Article 6 – Trafficking in Women

## Human trafficking

Finland has been found to serve as a country of destination and transit in human trafficking. Victims of trafficking are brought to Finland from other countries and transported through Finland to be exploited in other countries. Human trafficking also takes place within the Finnish borders, including cases where both the victim and the perpetrator are Finnish or permanently or temporarily residing in Finland. In Finland, [the majority of victims of trafficking who receive help within the assistance system for victims of human trafficking and those who have been officially identified as victims of trafficking have an immigrant background](http://www.ihmiskauppa.fi/materiaalipankki/tilastot_ja_tilannekatsaukset). The number of identified victims and those covered by the services has increased strongly, both in terms of the official assistance system and the services provided by NGOs.

61% of the new clients admitted to the system for helping victims of human trafficking were women and girls, according to the half-year review of the system for helping victims of human trafficking 01-06 / 2022. Forced labor (45%), sexual abuse (26%) and forced marriage (27%) were particularly visible in terms of exploitation. In the period January 1 - June 30, 2022, the system for helping victims of human trafficking received a total of 185 applications to become a client. It is more than ever before in a similar period (2021: 147). At the beginning of 2022, 139 people and their 26 minor children were accepted as clients of the help system. [[21]](#footnote-21)

# **Article 7 –** Participation in Political and Public Life

## Women in politics

In the 2019 parliamentary elections, women gained more seats than ever before, 94 of 200, which made the percentage of female MPs 46%. This marked the new record for equal representation, and also the percentage of female ministers increased to 58%. Seven of the party leaders are women.

According to the Equality in Parliamentary Work survey[[22]](#footnote-22), men are perceived as having more power than women. When Members of Parliament were asked to name persons who have a lot of power within the party, 74% of these were men. The survey also revealed that the division of power was strongly gendered according to the respondents. Moreover, female MPs felt more often than the men that their original ideas were taken by others and they were interrupted.

In the European Parliament, seven out of the total 13 Finnish MEPs are women (53.85%). In 2019, Finland received its first female Commissioner.

In the 2021 municipal elections, for the first time in history, more than 40% of those elected were women. In the country's first regional elections in January 2022, historically the majority of women were elected, 53% of those elected.

Although the percentage of female decision-makers has increased, it is crucial to pay attention to the diversity of women, such as the political representation of minority women. The CEDAW Committee has expressed its concern for the underrepresentation of Roma and Sámi women in political decision-making. Immigrant women are also underrepresented in both central and local governments. Moreover, disabled women should be provided with more opportunities to participate in decision-making, in accordance with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons.

According to The Finnish Association of People with Physical Disabilities, who has asked for feedback on the accessibility of polling places and 60 percent of those who responded to the survey had encountered shortcomings related to the accessibility of the polling place. Disabled facilities even prevent the participation of disabled people in democratic decision-making.

Hate speech

Hate speech is one of the major obstacles to women’s political participation. The 2017 Gender Equality Barometer[[23]](#footnote-23) included for the first time questions on gendered hate speech, which was defined as derogatory or threatening speech or writing. It was discovered that women experience hate speech almost twice as much as men (15% and 8%, respectively). More than one-fifth (27%) of women who identify themselves as belonging to a minority had experienced hate speech.

Another recent study analysed the hate speech encountered by people of different genders in municipal politics.[[24]](#footnote-24) Hate speech is common in politics, and one-third of municipal decision-makers had been subject to hate speech. Almost one-third of the respondents who had experienced hate speech (28%) said that it had deterred their motivation to participate in municipal decision-making. The respondents said that hate speech and other forms of harassment increase significantly right before and during elections.

According to the study, women (42%) encounter hate speech significantly more often than men (28%) in Finnish local governments. The particular feature of hate speech targeted at women is the threat of sexual violence and, in some cases, its link to sexual harassment. Being a member of a minority (racialised, immigrant background, sexual minority, Sámi, language minority) also made people more susceptible to hate speech.

Hate speech can be impulsive and spur-of-the-moment, but often, it is deliberate and systematic, aimed at silencing certain individuals and points of view. Hate speech affects women’s – especially minority women’s – willingness to become politically active and run in elections. Since women and minority women are still underrepresented in political decision-making, the inability of society to control hate speech weakens democracy. Silencing women is a serious issue, because in a functional democratic society, politicians must be able to participate in public discussion and citizens run in elections without fear.

Gendered hate speech also has an impact on the willingness of public figures or professions such as journalists, researchers and activists to participate in public discussions.

The working group of the Ministry of Justice states in its evaluation report as the conclusion of the evaluation that grounds can be found for making doxxing a punishable offense. The evaluation report is currently in the round of statements. [[25]](#footnote-25)

Recommendations:

* Gendered hate speech and doxxing must be criminalised.
* Disability should be recognized in hate speech.
* Online shaming must be criminalised.
* The responsibilities of different online platforms for hate speech published on their sites must be made clearer, and the punishments must be aggravated in order to make moderation more consistent.
* A court interpretation is needed to determine when hate speech in political institutions can be limited without violating the freedom of speech.

# Article 10 – Training and Education

There are differences between girls and boys in applying for post-primary education i.e. for secondary education. In 2018, from girls who finished the 9th grade of elementary school 65 percent applied primarily to upper secondary school and 54 percent of boys primarily applied to another degree vocational training. Young people educational choices are particularly gendered at the stage when the young person transfers from elementary school to secondary vocational education. Different fields become familiar to girls and boys through the speeches of parents and relatives, friends and through hobbies and elementary school on-the-job learning periods and other familiarization with working life.

In Finland, there is regional variation in how gendered secondary education is vocational education choices are. The young person's place of residence can set boundary conditions for this for career choice. In places with a large labor market, boys and men have a larger one a tendency to make career choices that are atypical for one's gender. For women's professional choices the size of the labor market in the area has almost no effect, but if the residential area does industrialized, are more likely to be the choices of girls and women atypical for their gender. Also the existing educational offer of the residential area affects the choices of women and men. [[26]](#footnote-26)

# Article 11 – Equality in Working Life

Finnish working life is strongly segregated by gender, it is stronger than the average in the EU. The most female-dominated fields are the social and health sector, education, and hospitality. The most male-dominated fields are constructions, transportation and storage, and industry. Less than 10% of employees work in a sector where the representation of men and women is equal (at least 40% each).

As with the segregation of education, the segregation in working life has not been reduced effectively.

NGO’s warmly welcomes the new family leave act, which was implemented on the beginning of August 2022. It has strong elements which NGO’s has been running for years, especially the fact that fathers are given more possibilities to have family leave. We are still concerned, that according to the assesment of gender effects of the package of legislation says [[27]](#footnote-27) there is a risk, that the real amount of family leave doesn’t necessarily increase for the other parent. It is important to measure and to follow the impacts of the family leave act in the next years,

During COVID19-pandemic, it seems, that pandemic has affected the most on the lower employee and the municipal sector as in the field of study and health care. In addition, the already common experience of salary injustice among health care experts (e.g. nurses) had become even more common during the corona virus. [[28]](#footnote-28)

## Equal pay

In its responses to Finland’s country report, the CEDAW Committee has recommended that Finland launch immediately an equal pay programme in order to reduce the gender pay gap to 15%, as required in the ILO’s Convention concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value. Narrowing the pay gap is still extremely slow, and effective measures to reduce the difference are needed. At the moment, there is no statistics to sort out how much is an euro for disabled women.

The Overall Evaluation of the Equal Pay Programme 2016–2019[[29]](#footnote-29) states that during the programme period, the pay gap has only decreased to 16% (from the 17% it was during the 2014 CEDAW report).

The government’s proposal of legislation for pay transparency was withdrawn in August 2022 because of political disagreement, even it was included for the Government Program. (https://valtioneuvosto.fi/-//1271139/palkka-avoimuuden-lisaamiseen-tahdanneen-lakimuutoksen-valmistelu-on-keskeytetty)

## Pregnancy discrimination

In its report to Parliament (2022)[[30]](#footnote-30), the Equality Ombudsman concludes again that pregnancy discrimination is still a notable equality issue in Finland. The number of pregnancy discrimination cases are based on the number of people contacting the Equality Ombudsman and trade unions, which has remained unchanged. However, not all cases are known by the authorities, which means that the actual number of discrimination cases is presumably higher. Discrimination is common particularly with regard to temporary employment relationships and contract work.

The Equality Ombudsman has recommended to strengthen the pregnancy discrimination protection for temporary workers in its report for the Parliament for 2018 and 2022. The proposal to strengthen the pregnancy discrimination protection is not yet given by the Government and the NGO’s are worried about the situation and asks for immediate action from the government.

Pensions

Women’s weaker labour market position also affects their pensions. According to Finnish Centre for Pensions women’s average pension in 2021 was 1601 euros and men’s 2006 euros per month. [[31]](#footnote-31) National and guarantee pensions and widow's pensions play a significantly larger role in income generation for women than men, about a fifth of women's total pension is made up of them. It is estimated that pension gap will slowly decrease in the future, but still in 2085, the median pension for women is estimated to be 15 percentage points lower than for men.

For women, applying for disability pensions for mental health reasons is now more common than it was at its peak in the early 2000s. In 2011, a total of 2,662 young people under the age of 35 went on disability pension due to mental health reasons. In 2020, there were 3,331 young people who transferred.

**Recommendations:**

* A proposal of legislation for pay transparency needs to be given to the Parliament
* Disabled women’s information needs about matters related to working life are surveyed. Resources are allocated to finding out what a disabled woman’s euro is.
* Pregnancy discrimination protection for temporary workers must be strengthened.
* The new family leave act needs to be followed up for the next years

# Article 12 – Health

## Depression/mental health issues

According to the health and well-being survey of university students, one in three the university student suffered from symptoms of anxiety and depression in 2021. Anxiety and depressive symptoms were more common in women than in men; as many as 40 percent of women and 28 percent of men percent experienced clinically significant psychological stress. Mental stress was more common in university students than in people of the same age on average in the population. [[32]](#footnote-32)

In 2021, young people's experience of loneliness increased compared to 2019. 22‒26% of girls felt lonely. [[33]](#footnote-33)

## Sterilisation Act

In its previous conclusions, the CEDAW Committee urged Finland to take measures to abolish Section 2 of the Act on Sterilisation that enables sterilising disabled women whose legal capacity is limited or who are legally incapacitated without their own consent. The current Act is from 1970, and it is outdated in many respects, but no measures have been taken to revise it so far.

1. [https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/152441/265\_Lehti\_ym\_2014.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y](https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/152441/265_Lehti_ym_2014.pdf?sequence=2&amp;amp;isAllowed=y) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.pam.fi/en/news/news/2016/05/immigrant-women-face-difficulties-finding-work-in-finland.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://www.oikeusasiamies.fi/en-GB/web/guest/-/aoa-sakslin-tarkasti-vanhusten-palveluja-koronapandemian-aikana [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.stat.fi/til/rpk/2018/15/rpk_2018_15_2019-06-06_tie_001_fi.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
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