



FINLAND



TRADE UNION TAKE ON SDG IMPLEMENTATION

#HLPF2017



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ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The Finnish government has taken all SDGs into account when drafting the national plan on their implementation. The national plan is under the supervision of the Secretary for Sustainable Development who works within the Prime Minister's office, suggesting a strong political commitment to its implementation.

Many of the goals and issues prioritised by trade unions have been selected for implementation by the government: income disparity, decreasing poverty, decent wages, equal access to health and social care, life-long learning, education and skills as well as unemployment services. However, trade unions stress that they disagree with the government's approach to tackling these through economic rather than social development measures and its plans to cut costs for key initiatives such as health and social policy reform, education and the activation of the unemployed, including unemployed youth.

Consultations on the 2030 Agenda take place within the Council on Sustainable Development, coordinated by the Prime Minister's office. While trade unions, as well as other civil society representatives, have been involved in the preparations for the drafting of the national plan on sustainable development, they felt that some of their recommendations were not taken on board. An ongoing monitoring process on the implementation of the plan, coordinated by the Secretary for Sustainable Development and involving civil society, is in place. The structure is transparent, inclusive and democratic. Sustainable development budgeting has also been introduced, although trade unions regret that, so far, it only applies to ecological and not social development goals.

TRANSPARENCY



Complete access to information

CONSULTATION



There is a structured consultation/multi-stakeholder platform

SOCIAL DIALOGUE



There are individual contributions from social partners to the national government



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IS THE (DECENT) WORK BEING DONE?

Finnish trade unions stress that improvement on several key indicators are needed to achieve the SDGs in their country.

Indicators on **target 1.a (ensure significant mobilisation of resources to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions)** show that in 2014, only 2.8 % of Finnish GDP was spent on unemployment policy of which slightly over 1% was allocated to the activation of the unemployed, placing the country behind the median spending on this objective in Europe. The amount has decreased since 2011. While in 2014, 6.4% of GDP was spent on education, the government is planning to reduce this amount by 0.5 million euro between 2015 and 2020. Spending on health in 2015 was 9.4% of GDP, 0.1% less than the year before but 0.58% more than in 2010, due to aging population among other things. The budgetary allocation for all social welfare funding was 31.6% of the budget in 2015, 0.3% less than previous year.

There is a need for improvement to achieve progress on **target 5.5 (ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life)** as, in 2016, women represented only 25% of the board members of stock market companies and 20% on other companies' boards; only 4% were presidents of boards in stock market companies.

There are multiple concerns about the targets set by **SDG 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all)**. Regarding **target 8.3 (promote policies that**

support productive activities, decent job creation), in 2015, 16% of the total workforce was working on a part-time basis; the majority of part-time workers were women. On **target 8.5 (achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all)** unemployment continues to be a problem, with unemployment at 9% for men and 8.4% for women in 2016. In 2017, women's salaries were on average 3 euros per hour lower than men's. NEET indicators for **target 8.6 (reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training)** have oscillated between 8-10% of youth aged between 16-29 from 2008 to 2014. There are some concerning deteriorations with regards to **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)**, as the number of workplace injuries has risen by 3% in 2017 alone, especially among migrant or posted workers and due to sub-contracting. This is particularly concerning as the number of trained labour inspectors has been on the decrease for several years, a source of concern for trade unions. Both collective bargaining coverage and trade union density have dropped from their 2012 levels of 90% and 70% respectively.

Progress remains to be made for Finland to reach **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality)**, as the share of the bottom 10% income earners in overall GDP in 2016 was 11.8%, compared to 13.9% in 2008. This drop can be attributed to the recession. In the longer term, a steady unequal growth in wages has been a trend since the 1990s. The labour share of GDP (wages and social protection transfers) remains low, standing at 52.7% in 2015 – a decline compared to previous years.

WHERE TO NEXT?

TRADE UNION RECIPE TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

Finnish trade unions call on their government to ensure that the implementation of the SDGs leads to meaningful changes in policy with a focus on social development. This can be achieved by:

- Setting concrete policy objectives;
- Developing solid means for their implementation;
- Attributing appropriate financial allocations.



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