



I COMMITTEE FOR POLITICAL AND OFFICIAL ISSUES

1. Promoting postal voting on an equitable basis and delivery of election documents by e-mail

Postal voting was introduced in 2019, significantly improving the possibilities of expatriate Finns to vote. A person who is eligible to vote and lives abroad, either permanently or temporarily, at the time of an election is now able to vote by post in general elections instead of visiting an advance polling station.

The voter turnout of Finns abroad in the first election where postal voting was possible, i.e., the parliamentary election of 2019, was 12.6%. The voter turnout among expatriate Finns increased by a record-high 2.5 percentage points. The voter turnout in Finland, correspondingly, rose by 2 percentage points. Out of the 254,574 persons living abroad and eligible to vote, a total of 41,127 people voted in the parliamentary election: a total of 40,914 persons voted in embassies and other advance polling stations organized by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (in a total of 219 advance polling stations in 86 countries), and 213 persons voted on board ships at sea. The number of people who voted abroad was about 5,600 higher than in the previous parliamentary elections. A total of 6,166 Finns abroad voted by post. This number also includes persons living in Finland who voted by post from outside Finland. A total of 47,293 votes were thus cast abroad. The service for ordering postal voting materials was opened three months before the election. A week before the election, 12,000 postal voting material packages had been ordered to other countries. It remains to be studied why almost half of the postal voting documents were not used at all.

In the light of statistics, it is obvious that the efforts to disseminate information about the possibility of postal voting must be continued in order to increase voter turnout among expatriate Finns. The postal voting procedure involves a tight schedule, from the ordering of materials to the arrival of the vote, including the time it takes for the mail to travel. The election authorities in Sweden, for example, have found that the most frequent reasons why votes have been rejected were that either the letter arrived too early or too late, or the vote was mailed in the wrong envelope – in other words, there were unintended mistakes and a lack of information. As much time as possible should be reserved for postal voting. As some postal voters may have difficulties in finding out the return address for themselves, it is crucial that the instructions clearly indicate who the voter has to contact in order to find out the central election committee of the municipality that has been entered as the voter's domicile, voting municipality or registered municipality of residence in Finland.

A person who is eligible to vote and wishes to vote by post shall order the postal voting documents. Having received them, the person shall cast their vote and send it to the central election committee of their municipality of residence in Finland in a closed

envelope. However, postal voting largely depends on the activity and technical skills of the voters themselves, because postal voting documents have to be ordered separately for each election.

Postal voters shall send their votes in an envelope as instructed to the central election committee of their registered municipality of residence (which is specified as their voting municipality in the voter registry). Voters must find out for themselves what their voting municipality is. If the voter's current foreign address is registered in the Digital and Population Data Services Agency that maintains the Finnish Population Register, the voter will have received – perhaps even on time – a polling card by post. This card will show the mailing address of the central election committee of the voter's voting municipality. The voter can write this address on the return envelope or insert the polling card in the envelope so that the address is visible through the envelope window. It is always possible to vote without the polling card. Voters who do not have a polling card can call the helplines of the Ministry of Justice or the Digital and Population Data Services Agency to ask about their voting municipality. A list of the addresses, e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers of all the [central election committees in municipalities](#) is available on the [vaalit.fi](#) website, operated by the Ministry of Justice.

Postal voting could be made easier, for example, by automatically sending the postal voting documents to all expatriate Finns. It must be noted, however, that only 70% of the Finnish citizens abroad who have the right to vote have an address registered in the Finnish population information system, allowing polling cards to be sent to them. In other words, 30% of expatriate Finns have not registered their addresses in the population information system. Having the correct address registered in Finland makes it easier for the authorities to send the polling card about a month before the elections. When a polling card is sent abroad, it will typically arrive too late. It is possible to vote without a polling card, but the card indicates the address of the central election committee of the voting municipality, which is needed for mailing the postal vote, if the voter chooses to vote by post instead of visiting an official polling station.

If the voter has not registered their address, this can be corrected when ordering postal voting documents. Regarding the procedure of ordering postal voting documents, it could be considered whether voters should be required to register their name and foreign address 3 months in advance. This way, the polling card and return address could be used. Receiving a polling card may provide an incentive for people to update their contact details, which will also make things easier for both citizens and the authorities in the context of other services, such as applying for a passport or ID.

Another possibility could be to record one's wish to vote by post in the Population Register. This way, before every election, postal voting documents would be automatically sent to everyone with a right to vote who has registered such a wish.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Finnish authorities to continue disseminating information about postal voting and to make it easier for Finns abroad to vote by post, for example, by investigating the possibility of sending the postal voting documents by e-mail to the address given by the recipient, when the recipient so wishes. Any solution that enhances election security in postal voting

should be investigated and promoted, such as improving the clarity of the voting procedure and its timetable.

2. Election documents for advance voting by post to be sent by e-mail

In 2017, the right to postal voting was introduced by an amendment to the Election Act. This was the most significant amendment of the act in 110 years of Finnish history. The first time postal voting was possible was in the parliamentary elections and European elections of 2019. There were issues with the functioning of postal voting, primarily attributable to the postal services of different countries. There were many people who did not receive the voting documents in time, and many who never received them despite ordering them in good time.

Here are some examples of the messages received from different southern European countries:

1. But it is the postal services that are causing problems: there are few countries in which they operate properly - not even Finland is among those countries. The documents never arrived.
 2. We ordered the voting documents for the European elections almost a month ago. They have not arrived.
 3. In the latest Finnish elections, the voting documents arrived at the last minute, although I had also ordered them well in advance!!! I was forced to send my vote to Finland by express mail, which cost me 42 EUR.
- The voting documents for the European elections have not arrived at all.

Finnish authorities could send the voting documents by e-mail to those who want to receive them in this form. The ballot could be printed out in black and white and inserted in a regular envelope on which the voter would have to write the required text. The same procedure would be followed with the envelope in which the vote is sent. The Finnish government would also save money in postal expenses.

Combined with resolution 3

3. Voting in Finnish national elections to be made easy for expatriate Finns (who are Finnish citizens)

It is necessary for Finnish citizens abroad that the Finnish Expatriate Parliament take a firm stand to further improve their possibilities to vote in national elections. A large number of Finnish citizens (approximately 300,000) live abroad. More attention should be paid to their possibilities to exercise their civic rights.

There are a little over 254,000 expatriate Finns with the right to vote. Of them, 109,000 live in Sweden. In 2015, a total of 242,096 people with the right to vote represented approximately 5.4% of all the people entitled to vote. In other words, this group is about the same size as all Swedish-speaking Finns with a right to vote. This group corresponds in size to the constituency of Central Finland, which has 10 MP's. There are many more Finns abroad who identify as ethnically Finnish, at least 1.6 million. In Spain alone, there are about 30,000 Finns during the winter season. The number of Finns in Sweden, for example, is still growing: there are more than 719,000 people in Sweden who have their roots in Finland. They represent 7.2% of the population. Their number has grown by 7,000

in four years, at the same time as the number of first-generation Finns in Sweden decreased by more than 10,000 (according to a study commissioned from Statistics Sweden in 2017 by the Finnish-speaking radio station Sisuradio, operating in Sweden).

The possibilities of any expatriate Finns to vote abroad in Finnish national elections are limited in terms of both time and place, although postal voting has now become possible.

The right to vote in national and municipal elections and referendums is a fundamental right of every Finnish citizen. Under Section 14, subsection 4 of the Constitution of Finland, public authorities shall promote the opportunities of the individual to participate in societal activity and to influence the decisions that concern them. As postal voting was introduced into the Election Act, expatriate Finns were brought in an equal position with others in the voting situation. Finns abroad can be considered as not to be in an equal position with Finns living in Finland, as well as with other Finns abroad who live closer to a polling station. Therefore, postal voting promotes fundamental rights by improving the access of Finns abroad to their constitutional rights: the actual implementation of the electoral and participatory rights, under Section 14, and equality, under Section 6, with persons living in Finland who are entitled to vote.

It is time to lobby political parties to improve the preconditions for voting. In Estonia, for example, it is possible to vote online. Finland, like Estonia, is proud of its IT expertise and its achievements in the IT sector. It is also time to investigate even the possibilities of online voting as well as creating methods of strong electronic identification for Finns abroad without, for example, online banking codes.

It is difficult for Finns abroad to obtain a method of strong electronic identification, as in Finland these are largely controlled by commercial entities (for example, online banking codes provided by banks and mobile IDs provided by telecoms operators). This is evident in the small number of Finns abroad who have ordered the electronic polling card. The electronic polling card benefits postal voters who get the document in their Suomi.fi inbox at the moment when it is sent, so that no time is wasted in the post. The parliamentary elections of 2019 were the first elections when it was possible to obtain the polling card electronically instead of as a paper copy. To make this possible, voters have to register with the Suomi.fi service. This is only possible if you have access to strong electronic identification. A polling card and information about the relevant constituency are sent by the Digital and Population Data Services Agency to everyone with the right to vote, whose address has been registered in the population information system. The more citizens that start using the Suomi.fi inbox, the more time will be saved when items do not travel by post.

This way, electronic voting documents could even be sent to Finns abroad as attachments to the electronic polling card.

The postal voting system in place is based on the principle of having the right to vote remotely. Another project that will take more time to accomplish is online voting, which is a question of the method used for voting. In Estonia, for example, both postal voting and, since 2005, online voting are possible. The country is a pioneer in online voting. Criticism has been voiced about personal data security, but experiments have even been made on voting by mobile phones in parliamentary elections.

Sipilä's government decided in its strategy meeting on October 24, 2016, that online voting would be introduced into all elections and referendums in Finland. In 2017, the Ministry of Justice started a parliamentary preparation process with the aim of drafting a preliminary report on the matter. The Ministry's task force on online voting operated under

parliamentary guidance. The final report of the task force was submitted to the Minister of Justice on December 19, 2017. <https://vaalit.fi/sahkoinen-aanestaminen> The risks of online voting, such as reduced trust, were deemed to exceed the benefits. However, according to a survey conducted by the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities in the autumn of 2020, 46% of respondents were in favor of allowing online voting in municipal elections. In the municipal sector, it is particularly young people, aged 30 to 39 (63%), who would like to see online voting taken into use. In the light of international comparisons, the online voting task force at the Ministry of Justice did not believe that online voting would increase voter turnout. According to the task force, it would mostly benefit Finns abroad and others who live far away from polling stations.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament appeals to the Finnish authorities that they create further possibilities to vote, such as by promoting online voting and voting by proxy, that the possibility of strong electronic identification be established, and that a task force be set up to investigate these matters.

4. Expatriate Finns to be allowed to choose their electoral district in parliamentary elections

Every Finnish citizen who reaches the age of 18, no later than on the election day, has the right to vote in parliamentary and presidential elections. A person can only lose their right to vote by giving up their Finnish citizenship. Finland has equal suffrage based on Finnish citizenship. In European elections carried out in Finland, every Finnish citizen who reaches the age of 18, no later than on the election day, has the right to vote regardless of where they live (and so do nationals of other EU member states who meet certain conditions). In municipal elections, residents of the municipality, who reach the age of 18 no later than on the election day, have the right to vote. If a person moves abroad to live there permanently, they lose the right to vote in municipal elections. The right to vote is determined by the time when the voting register is established:

For each election, the Digital and Population Data Services Agency compiles an electronic register of persons entitled to vote (a voting register) no later than on the 46th day before the election day. The voting register includes the data of each person who has the right to vote (name, personal ID number, electoral district, domicile, and polling station, among others) that was available in the population information system on the 51st day before the election day. (Source: vaalit.fi/aanioikeus)

The voting register defines the municipality in which a person is entitled to vote (and, for persons living in Finland, the polling station where the person is supposed to vote on election day proper). Voting is possible when candidate numbers have been confirmed. Voters have to find out the number of the candidate they want to vote for. The candidate numbers are confirmed about a month before the election day. The details of the candidates are available, for example, on the website vaalit.fi. In parliamentary elections, Finland has been divided into 13 electoral districts.

The problem is that the voting municipality is determined by the latest Finnish domicile, in other words the municipality in which the person had their last permanent domicile in Finland. If a person never had a domicile in Finland, the domicile for the purposes of the population information register is determined by the domicile of their mother, father, or spouse. If such a domicile is no longer part of Finland, Helsinki is entered as the person's domicile. This way, the right to vote is based on the population information system.

Therefore, many Finns abroad are forced to vote for candidates from an electoral district in which they lived a long time ago and possibly only for a short time, even though they may have since formed connections to a completely different area in Finland. For example, a person who moved from Finland to the United States in 1980, in other words, 41 years ago, only lived in Imatra while studying in upper secondary school:

“We lived in Imatra only because my father had a job there at the time. My parents also moved away 22 years ago. These days, all my closest relatives live in Helsinki, where I also have an apartment of my own. For this reason, I feel Helsinki is my domicile in Finland, and I would like to vote for candidates from the electoral district in Helsinki.”

In another case, a person moved abroad in 1992 from Varkaus, which was their domicile at the time and still continues to be their electoral district in Finland in 2021. However, the person no longer has “anything to do” with the municipality of Varkaus, as all their contacts and also their holiday home in Finland have been located in Leppävirta for years. In Finland, this person would like to be identified as “someone from Leppävirta who lives permanently abroad” rather than “someone from Varkaus”. The situation may also be quite the opposite: people may be more familiar with the parties and their agendas and candidates in the area where they grew up or in the municipality where their holiday home is located, and therefore may be better motivated to vote there. Second-generation Finns who were born abroad may completely lack any contact with their voting municipality.

In the parliamentary elections of 2019, almost 255,000 out of 4,255,000 persons with the right to vote lived abroad. The voter turnout was 72% in Finland but only 12.6% among Finns abroad (source: vaalit.fi) Even though the voter turnout rose in the elections last spring, certainly thanks to the new possibility of postal voting, it still remains far lower than in many other countries in which it is around 30% for citizens living abroad. It is likely that voter turnout will further increase in the next elections, but there are also other ways to motivate Finns abroad to vote. The right of Finns abroad to vote is not realized if they - unlike all other Finns - are not allowed to vote for candidates from the city/electoral district with which they are most connected. The possibility to vote in an electoral district where you feel you belong would increase the voter turnout of Finns abroad in parliamentary elections.

When comparing the reasons why Finns abroad do not vote with the reasons of Finns living in Finland, the second most important reason (18.7%) is the *felt* ignorance about the political situation in Finland. On the other hand, their interest in Finnish elections or Finnish politics is not remarkably different from those of Finns living in Finland. In addition, people who lived abroad for 6 to 10 years, for example, are three times more likely to vote than those who lived abroad for less than five years. Only 3.1% of Finns abroad take no interest in Finnish elections, and only 3% (in 2014) find politics uninteresting and voting unimportant, whereas the corresponding figure for Finns living in Finland was 12.4% in 2011. “Reasons directly linked with motivation or indifference were not as relevant for Finns abroad as they were for Finns living in Finland.” (Finns abroad 2014 and survey on parliamentary elections 2011, table Peltoniemi 2015, 218). In other words, Finns abroad are motivated to vote but they lack knowledge.

It also seems that there is not enough information available about political parties, candidates, and their election agendas. Parties should take an interest in their voters living abroad and consider what issues are particularly important for them. It is important

to receive relevant information from parties and especially from their candidates, because in Finnish elections, you vote for both. What are their election agendas like?

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that Finland provide Finnish citizens who live abroad and have the right to vote in Finnish elections the right to change their electoral district to one to which they feel most connected and with which they justifiably have the strongest ties.

5. Determination of electoral district for expatriate Finns

According to the current law, the electoral district of Finns abroad is determined by their latest permanent address in Finland.

Therefore, many Finns abroad are forced to vote for candidates from an electoral district in which they lived a long time ago and possibly only for a short time, even though they are now connected to a completely different location in Finland.

This is also the case for myself. I moved from Finland to the United States in 1980, in other words, 41 years ago, after having only lived in Imatra while studying in upper secondary school: We lived in Imatra only because my father had a job there at the time. My parents also moved away 22 years ago. These days, all my closest relatives live in Helsinki, where I also have an apartment of my own. For this reason, I feel that Helsinki is my domicile in Finland, and I would like to vote for candidates from the electoral district of Helsinki. (Outi Papamarcos)

The right of Finns abroad to vote is not realized if they - unlike all other Finns - are not allowed to vote for candidates from the city/electoral district with which they are most connected.

Combined with resolution 4.

6. Expatriate Finns (who are Finnish citizens) to have an electoral district of their own

Low voter turnout is a serious problem politically, because if the number of voters remains low, the election result may not be representative. The voter turnout among Finns abroad has remained at around 8–12%. On average, only 8.4% of Finns abroad voted in parliamentary elections between 1995 and 2015, whereas the corresponding figure among Finns living in Finland was 69.2% (Peltoniemi 2015:213, 2016:145). In other words, more than 90% of Finns abroad chose not to vote, whereas about a third of Finns living in Finland chose to do the same.

Representation is also undermined by the electoral system in which votes from Finns abroad are dispersed into different electoral districts. From the point of view of equality, there is room for improvement, because this means that, in practice, Finns abroad have no political representation in Finland. In other countries, the problem has been solved by introducing separate electoral districts for citizens living abroad or by concentrating their

votes into one electoral district, says Johanna Peltoniemi, postdoctoral researcher at the University of Helsinki.

A separate electoral district would allow Finns abroad to be directly represented in the political groups of the Finnish Parliament and improve their possibilities to promote matters related to Finns abroad. It is also highly likely that this (together with more alternative methods of voting) would significantly increase interest among Finns abroad in participating in Finnish parliamentary elections and thereby also provide an incentive for political parties to campaign outside Finland. There are more than 254,000 persons living permanently abroad who are entitled to vote. This number corresponds to an electoral district with about 10 Members of Parliament.

In order not to give rise to concern among voters living in Finland, and not to create a situation that is unreasonable for them, there should be, for example, a graded system in which a full number of mandates in the electoral district for Finns abroad (in proportion to the total number of Finns abroad) would only be reached if the voter turnout in this constituency was, for example, 75% of the average voter turnout in Finnish constituencies. A voter turnout abroad of more than 50%, but less than 75% of that in Finland, would produce fewer mandates, and so on.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that a working group be established to investigate whether a separate electoral district would improve the political representation of Finns abroad and whether it would increase voter turnout and the attention of political parties to Finns abroad.

7. An advance voting station in Benalmadena

Finns living in Benalmadena would like to vote in their municipality of residence. The facilities owned by their association, Benalmadenan Suomalaiset ry, can be used as an advance voting station. Having an advance voting station in Benalmadena would increase voter turnout in the Spanish Costa del Sol. For the time being, people have to travel to either Fuengirola or Torremolinos in order to vote.

It is not possible to offer as extensive a network of advance voting stations for Finns abroad as for citizens living in Finland. In the parliamentary elections, in the spring of 2019, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs arranged for 219 advance voting stations in 86 countries. In Spain, there were 10 advance voting stations where a total of 7214 people cast their vote. The voting station in Torre Vieja (1420 voters) had the second largest number of voters after Fuengirola (3650 voters). In the presidential election in 2018, a total of 10,351 Finns voted in the voting stations in Spain, with Torre Vieja (1418 voters) ranking second immediately after the liveliest voting station in Fuengirola (4382 voters). It is the Ministry for Foreign Affairs that organizes voting stations abroad, taking into consideration the feasibility, appropriateness, and location of the proposed polling station, as well as the voter turnout in previous elections and the opinion of the local diplomatic mission.

Since postal voting was introduced in 2019, expatriate Finns and Finns happening to stay abroad at the time of an election now have an alternative model for voting, in addition to

the network of Finnish diplomatic missions. This may, in part, help remove the unreasonable obstacles to voting that expatriate Finns are experiencing.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament takes into consideration the fact that various methods designed to make voting easier mobilize citizens to participate in elections, and that Finns living in Benalmadena would like to see an advance voting station established in the municipality.

II COMMITTEE ON CITIZENSHIP ISSUES

8. Price of passport when applied for outside Finland

Under the Passport Act (Chapter 5, Section 34), a fee is charged for a passport in accordance with the criteria laid down in the Act on Criteria for Charges Payable to the State ([150/1992](#)).

Rates for passports issued abroad are specified in the decree issued by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs concerning the charges payable to the Foreign Service. The decree is made for a fixed term, and the current decree ([650/2020](#)) will be valid until December 31, 2022.

The price of a passport consists of costs related to the manufacturing, personalization, and delivery of the passport, as well as administrative fees. The real costs of a passport vary by country and continent, but the passport handling fee must be the same in all offices of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

The price of a passport issued by the police is specified in the decree of the Ministry of the Interior concerning the charges payable to the police, ([1117/2020](#)) which is issued every year.

To Finnish citizens living abroad, passports are issued by Finnish diplomatic missions: a Finnish embassy or a consulate led by a Finnish career official, or other Finnish diplomatic mission whose employee, a Finnish citizen, has been individually authorized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to grant passports. Passports and ID cards may be issued by the following honorary consulates: Sweden: Gothenburg; Germany: Hamburg, Frankfurt am Main; Spain: Barcelona, Malaga, Las Palmas, Palma de Mallorca, Pilar de la Horadada. The applicant must be physically present when collecting the passport. It is not possible to submit an electronic application.

In Finland, passport applications are submitted to the police. Submitting an electronic passport application, i.e. using the police online service while located abroad, has not been prevented, but it cannot be guaranteed that the level of the service will be the same as it is within Finnish borders. It is possible to renew one's passport electronically by doing it manually, if

- the applicant has access to electronic authentication (with Finnish online banking codes, a mobile ID, or a Citizen Certificate embedded in an ID card) and the possibility to pay the handling fee in the online service of the police.
- the applicant's former Finnish passport is biometric and was issued no earlier than 6 years ago, at which time their fingerprints were taken
- the applicant is able to attach a digital passport photo to the passport application, which meets the photo requirements provided by the police. Photographers abroad cannot send photos directly to the server

- the applicant is able to collect the passport from a chosen R-kioski shop in Finland or to authorize a person to collect it on their behalf

When using the online services of the Finnish police while abroad, it is especially important to note that the electronic application may need to be complemented by a visit to a Finnish police station so that the applicant can be identified. **Finnish diplomatic missions abroad do not have the necessary equipment required for receiving and complementing electronic applications, so if applicants must be identified, it has to be done at a police station in Finland.**

The police have the sole responsibility for handling electronic passport applications. For the time being, Finnish diplomatic missions cannot offer help in complementing or correcting incomplete applications in any other way except by initiating a completely new application.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that an investigation be made into the reasons behind the high price charged for passports when applied for outside Finland, and that the price be lowered. Reference is made to resolution no. 21 — Facilitating easier use of e-services by expatriate Finns (strong electronic identification) — and to its potential lowering effect on the costs.

9. Applying for a passport in Benelux (implemented in September 2021)

It used to be possible to apply for and be issued a passport at the Finnish embassy in the Hague. Currently, consular and passport services are available in the Finnish embassy in Brussels. The embassy in the Hague only takes care of emergency passports and cases where urgent assistance is needed. Even having the possibility to apply for a passport once a month in the Finnish embassy in the Hague would make the situation much easier, especially for aging Finnish citizens, as well as families with children.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the possibility to apply for a passport at the Finnish embassy in the Hague be restored.

10. Mobile passport units to be established in Europe

For many expatriate Finns in Europe, applying for a passport involves unreasonably long travel, which takes a lot of time and causes financial loss. For elderly people, such travel may even be impossible.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that mobile passport units be introduced in Europe to shorten the travel required in order to apply for a passport. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament requests that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs investigate the possibility that one of the mobile passport units in Spain be shared

with embassies in other Southern European countries so that it can travel from one country to another, for example, every 6 months. It is also requested that another mobile passport unit be established for use in Central European countries. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs is further requested to investigate the possibility of training honorary consuls or resident Finns to use the mobile passport unit in order to prevent situations where it cannot be used in different countries due to a lack of resources in diplomatic missions.

11. A mobile passport unit to be regularly available in New Zealand

Resolution 9/2017 concerns the same topic.

In New Zealand, there is no Finnish diplomatic mission, which means that persons who need to renew their passports have the following options:

1. fly to Canberra to apply for a passport
2. fly to Finland to apply for a passport.

If the previous passport application was made in Finland using biometric identification, it is possible to apply for a new passport online. In this case, however, an arrangement must be made with a friend or relative living in Finland so that they are authorized to collect the passport in Finland and forward it to New Zealand.

A trip to Canberra to apply for a passport involves expensive travel and accommodation, and during the Covid-19 pandemic it is almost impossible to carry out such a trip. Many people are facing a difficult situation as their passports expire. In addition, newborn children also need passports.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs arrange for a mobile passport unit to visit Auckland at least once a year so that Finns living in New Zealand can renew their passports without unreasonable extra cost. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament hopes that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs can arrange for a mobile passport unit to visit Auckland already during 2021, because the passports of many Finns living in New Zealand have expired during the Covid-19 pandemic, as renewing them in time has not been possible. If it is not possible to get a mobile passport unit to regularly visit Auckland, the Finnish Expatriate Parliament requests the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to investigate other possibilities to establish a permanent passport application facility in New Zealand.

12. The validity period of passports to be extended back to 10 years

Earlier resolutions on this topic have been passed in 2010, 2012, 2015 and 2017. Many countries (such as the Netherlands, Norway, Germany, and the USA) allow passports to be valid for ten years, whereas in Finland the maximum validity period is five years. Often when travelling outside Europe, the actual validity period of a passport is not more than four years. For Finns living in the UK, there is the additional effort of having their settled status updated every time their passport is renewed. Finland must quickly re-introduce the 10-year validity period of passports.

The Ministry of the Interior has last given an opinion on the matter on May 28, 2018, stating that the reasons why passports can be valid for a maximum of five years have to do with making sure that the data security features of the chip are up to date, that the passport book is secure, that the passport holder can be identified from the photograph, and that any abuse of the passport can be prevented.

The older the photograph is, the more unreliable both visual and automatic facial recognition becomes. Automatic facial recognition in particular requires an up-to-date photograph. Automatic facial recognition is used, for example, in automatic passport control at airports. In addition, the biometric identifiers embedded in the passport are being used increasingly in border control, which means that they have to be of a high quality. The passport holder's photograph plays a key role as border control is being increasingly automated at border crossing points. It has been found in practice that facial recognition with Finnish passports is highly functional in an international comparison, which has a direct impact on the smoothness of traveling.

The chip of the passport has high-level data security features. The data security is regularly updated. If the validity period of passports were extended from the present five years to, for example, ten years, the data security features of the chip might become obsolete before the life cycle of the chip comes to an end. The longer the validity period is, the longer it takes before old passport models are replaced by new models with more advanced data security features.

The need to ensure the security of the passport booklet also speaks for a validity period of five years. With a shorter validity period, it is possible to follow developments in security technology faster and better and to adopt new technologies and security features. This makes it possible to prevent fraud and, for example, make it more difficult to forge passports."

The Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior also notes that during the past decade, police services have become increasingly available online. This makes it possible for Finns abroad, in certain circumstances and subject to certain preconditions, to also avail themselves of the online services of the Finnish police when applying for passports, regardless of what country they live in.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament encourages the Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior to actively continue and speed up their investigations into the possibility of issuing Finnish passports for ten years, as is the practice in most other countries.

13. Transferring unused months of validity from old to new passport

Unused months of validity remaining in an old passport that have been paid for must be added to the validity period of the new passport. Corresponding initiatives were dealt with by the Finnish Expatriate Parliament in its sessions in 2015 and 2017, and the Ministry of the Interior has issued an opinion (Request for opinion VNK/716/09/2018) in which it stated the following:

The need for a passport holder to renew their passport may arise at any time during its validity period. The passport may be filled with stamps, it may be damaged, it may

contain stamps which prevent travelling to a certain country, or there may be changes to the personal data of the passport holder. The price of a passport consists of costs related to the manufacturing, personalization and delivery of the passport booklet as well as administrative fees.

The validity period of passports is limited to a maximum of five years by law. If the validity period of passports was extended from five years, in the way proposed, the validity period would be a maximum of five years, a maximum of five and a half years, or anything in between. According to the assessment of the National Police Board, this would reduce the usability of the passport, because foreign authorities would not necessarily become familiar with the procedures concerning Finnish passports which deviate from normal international practice.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that when a passport is renewed, its period of validity be extended by the remaining period of validity of the old passport. Six months could be set as a maximum extension.

14. Long-stay visas for Finland

A foreigner who wants to visit Finland for a maximum of 90 days usually needs a visa. For a longer stay, a residence permit is needed. Citizens of visa-free countries may stay in Finland for 90 days without a visa or a residence permit.

More information about visas for Finland is available on the [website of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs](#).

More information about residence permits is available on the [website of the Finnish Immigration Service](#).

Persons with Finnish roots or otherwise close connections to Finland may, on certain conditions, get a residence permit for Finland without any further grounds, such as employment or study. More information is available on the website of the Finnish Immigration Service at [Paluumuutto \(Remigration\)](#).

A national type D visa is used in all other Schengen countries except Finland. A national type D visa entitles persons arriving from outside Europe to stay in the country for a longer time (more than 90 days), and the application procedure is faster than the procedure of applying for a residence permit. Such a visa would allow a person arriving in Finland from outside Europe to attend, for example, long-term courses in the Finnish language organized by folk high schools (student visas are not granted to persons attending courses in folk high schools in Finland).

Combined with resolution 15.

15. Abolishing the limit of days per stay in Finland for close relatives of Finnish citizens

Contacts between children living in Finland and their parents living in Russia suffer from the 90-day maximum limit for a single use period of a 180-day visa. After 90 days, the person has to return to Russia for 90 days before they can spend the remaining 90 days in Finland.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that Finland introduce a type D visa allowing longer stays (of more than 90 days) in Finland for persons arriving from outside the EU and the EEA.

16. Finland to join the US Global Entry Customs and Border Protection Program

More information: [Global Entry | U.S. Customs and Border Protection \(cbp.gov\)](https://www.cbp.gov/global-entry)

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The US Global Entry Customs and Border Protection Program allows persons traveling to the United States from countries included in the program to apply for Global Entry membership which allows expedited security and customs clearance upon arrival in and departure from the United States. Finland joining the US Global Entry program would offer Finnish citizens, who regularly travel to the United States, access to expedited clearance when entering the United States.

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that Finland join the Global Entry program.

17. Finnish citizenship to be made permanent

Under Section 34 of the Nationality Act ([359/2003](#)), Finnish citizens who are also citizens of a foreign state only retain Finnish citizenship at the age of 22 years if they have a sufficient connection with Finland.

A similar resolution was last adopted by the FEP's session in 2017. The Ministry of the Interior issued an opinion on resolution 14/2017, stating the following:

The present Nationality Act takes a positive stance towards multiple citizenship. It is in the interest of the state to keep as its citizens people who were born abroad or moved abroad, including those who hold the citizenship of another country, for as long as they maintain a close connection with their native country. On the other hand, it is not appropriate to maintain citizenship in situations where a person has no real ties or connections with Finland. The purpose of the rule on preserving citizenship is to cut the citizenship tie between an individual and a state in cases where the individual no longer has any connection with Finland or the connection is very weak.

The provision on retaining citizenship has been drafted with a view to making the procedure of retaining citizenship as easy and efficient as possible for both the individual and the authorities. Finnish citizens who have had their domicile in Finland for less than seven years are notified by the Finnish Immigration Service of the threat of losing their citizenship and the possibility of retaining it. Each year, such notifications are sent to persons who will reach the age of 18 during the year in question and whose address is available in the population information system. A person who receives such a notification will have time until they reach the age of 22 to take action as described in the Nationality Act in order to show that they have a sufficient connection with Finland in order to retain Finnish citizenship. Under the law, Finnish diplomatic missions, the police, the Defence Command Finland, and the Civil Service Center have the obligation

to notify the population information system when a person retains their Finnish citizenship on the basis of a sufficient connection with Finland.

In many respects, the possibility to retain Finnish citizenship has been made as flexible and effortless as possible. First of all, the authorities have to take an active role in both informing the individual and exchanging information between authorities, which makes the process of retaining citizenship significantly easier and smoother. A person who is in danger of losing their citizenship will be informed about the matter by the authorities, as long as their contact details are kept up to date in the population information system. As the authorities are obliged to notify each other, an individual who has taken action to show that they have a sufficient connection with Finland does not have to notify the population information system, because the information is passed on between authorities. After the person has been informed about the threat of losing their citizenship, they are also given a significant amount of time to take action and show that they have a sufficient connection with Finland. In addition, the criteria for retaining citizenship under the Nationality Act are flexible, making it possible to retain Finnish citizenship based only on the person's own wish to do so. The person only has to give written notice of the matter, in free form and free of charge, to a Finnish diplomatic mission or a Register Office.

It is also possible to regain Finnish citizenship by a declaration subject to a fee if the person has lost Finnish citizenship at the age of 22 years due to an insufficient connection with Finland.

The Ministry of the Interior does not consider it necessary or appropriate to amend the Nationality Act in the way proposed in the resolution of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament. The provision is necessary in situations where there is no longer any real connection between an individual and Finland, and retaining citizenship is not justified or necessary. Retaining citizenship is also flexible and relatively effortless for those persons with multiple citizenship who wish to retain their Finnish citizenship and ties with Finland.

Instead of the proposed deletion of the provision, the Ministry of the Interior considers it particularly important that the Finnish Expatriate Parliament inform and advise its member communities abroad about how it is possible to retain Finnish citizenship upon reaching the age of 22 years. In addition, attention should be given to the importance of keeping the address details of Finnish citizens abroad up to date in the population information system so that they can be notified about the threat of losing their Finnish citizenship.

The amendment proposed in the resolution of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament might also be problematic from the point of view of Finland's international obligations. Under Article 5, paragraph 1, of the European Convention on Nationality (SopS 94/2008, brought into force by Act No. 492/2008), the rules of a State Party on nationality shall not contain distinctions or include any practice which amount to discrimination on the grounds of sex, religion, race, color, or national or ethnic origin. Under paragraph 2 of the same Article, each State Party shall be guided by the principle of non-discrimination between its nationals, whether they are nationals by birth or have acquired its nationality subsequently.

The law amendment proposed in the resolution of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament would only concern persons who are native Finnish citizens. Section 34 in the current Nationality Act concerns both individuals who are native Finnish citizens and those who have acquired Finnish citizenship subsequently. If persons who are Finnish citizens by birth were excluded from the scope of this provision, so that it would only concern persons who obtained Finnish citizenship in other ways, the situation in the national law

would be problematic with regard to the principle of non-discrimination of nationals laid down in the European Convention on Nationality.

In the worst case, then, not having registered one's address in the Finnish population information system might lead to a situation where the authorities would not be able to send the notification, and the person would not be informed about the threat of losing their Finnish citizenship and, consequently, would not take the action needed to retain the citizenship. Upon reaching the age of 22 years, they would, therefore, lose their Finnish citizenship. The person would be entitled to apply for a restoration of their Finnish citizenship using the declaration procedure, which is subject to a fee. It is, therefore, important that all Finnish citizens abroad make sure that their information in the population information system is up to date. The data can be verified in [Tarkista omat tietosi \(Personal data\) service](#) operated by the Digital and Population Data Services Agency.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Nationality Act be amended to the effect that native Finnish citizens, who are also citizens of another country, can automatically retain their Finnish citizenship. This way, they no longer need to prove that they have a sufficient connection with Finland or notify Finnish authorities, by the age of 22, of their wish to retain their Finnish citizenship.

18. Grown-up children of Finnish mothers and/or fathers to be entitled to Finnish citizenship

A child of a Finnish citizen acquires Finnish citizenship at birth by virtue of their parents (the parentage principle). The parentage principle is always applied in accordance with the Nationality Act that was in force at the time the child was born. The current Nationality Act entered into force on June 1, 2003. The old Nationality Act is applicable to children born before June 1, 2003.

Under the Nationality Act of 1968, a child born out of wedlock acquired Finnish citizenship if the child's mother was Finnish. A child also acquired Finnish citizenship if the child's father was married to the mother and a Finnish citizen. A newborn child whose parents were married acquired Finnish citizenship on the basis of their mother's citizenship, "if the child did not acquire the citizenship of a foreign state at birth" ([401/1968](#)). As multiple citizenship was not accepted, many children born in international families acquired the citizenship of some other country than Finland on the basis of their father's citizenship.

The Nationality Act was amended in 1984 ([584/1984](#)) to the extent that a child born to a Finnish mother will always acquire Finnish citizenship. A person with a dual citizenship could lose their Finnish citizenship upon reaching the age of 22, unless they had earlier applied for a retention of their citizenship. Certain persons born after August 31, 1966, were given the possibility to apply for Finnish citizenship by declaration without having to give up their earlier citizenship.

When the current Nationality Act ([359/2003](#)) entered into force on June 1, 2003, the greatest change was a wider acceptance of multiple citizenship. A Finn does not lose their Finnish citizenship upon acquiring the citizenship of a foreign country, and a foreigner does not lose their foreign citizenship upon acquiring Finnish citizenship. Whether a

person gets dual citizenship or not will depend on the law of the other country. A person with multiple citizenship may lose their Finnish citizenship at the age of 22 years, if they do not have “a sufficient connection with Finland”. To show the existence of such a connection, it is sufficient to inform the authorities that one wishes to remain a Finnish citizen.

A child who was born out of wedlock abroad to a Finnish father on June 1, 2003, or later has the right to acquire Finnish citizenship by declaration. In this case, the child’s Finnish citizenship will only take effect on the date of the declaration. For a minor, it is the parent or legal guardian who initiates the declaration. If a child was born earlier than June 1, 2003, they need to apply for citizenship by submitting a citizenship application.

Section 60 of the Nationality Act that entered into force in 2003 contains a transitional provision on declarations for the acquisition of citizenship to be made within a fixed period of time by former Finnish citizens. According to this provision, a person who had lost his/her Finnish citizenship upon acquiring the citizenship of another state could regain Finnish citizenship by declaration. The transitional provision also covered their offspring (as well as the children of their offspring who were under the age of 18) even if they had never been Finnish citizens of/and if they had never lived in Finland. The transition period specified in the law started on June 1, 2003, and ended on May 31, 2008.

The Finnish Nationality Act was amended in 2011 to the effect that former Finnish citizens were able to regain Finnish citizenship by declaration regardless of whether they lived in Finland or abroad. Being a former Finnish citizen is the only criterion for regaining citizenship by declaration, and it is also possible to apply for citizenship for a minor under one’s custody. It is not possible to acquire Finnish citizenship by declaration on the grounds that one is a descendant (18 years of age or older) of a former Finnish citizen.

The Maternity Act entered into force on April 1, 2019, so that a child of two women who was born abroad may acquire Finnish citizenship by declaration if the birth mother’s partner was a Finnish citizen at the time when the child was born and her maternity has been established.

The Nationality Act was amended on May 1, 2019, to the effect that a person who has been found guilty of certain serious crimes may lose their Finnish citizenship. It is not possible to affect a withdrawal of citizenship retroactively. This means that citizenship can only be lost due to a crime which was committed after the amendment entered into force.

migri.fi/suomen-kansalaisuus
[migri.fi \(Finnish Nationality Act\)](https://migri.fi/suomen-kansalaisuus)

Combined with resolution 15.

19. Finnish citizenship to be granted by declaration to (grown-up) children of former Finnish citizens as well as their children under 18 years of age

Resolutions 50/2005, 2/2007, 4/2007, 15/2010, and 5/2017 concern the same topic.

It is proposed that the Nationality Act be amended by adding a provision, which was only in force for a five-year transition period from June 1, 2003, to May 31, 2008, that a native Finnish citizen who has lost their Finnish citizenship upon acquiring the citizenship of

another country could regain Finnish citizenship by declaration, and that this possibility would also be reopened for their grown-up children (18 years or older), together with their children who are under age (grandchildren of present or former Finnish citizens).

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Nationality Act be amended to the effect that grown-up children (18 years or older) of former or present native Finnish citizens and their children under 18 years of age may also regain Finnish citizenship by declaration.

20. Agreement on dual citizenship between Finland and Russia

Finland accepts multiple citizenship. If a Finnish citizen is also a citizen of another country, they shall be considered by Finnish authorities to be a Finnish citizen both in Finland and abroad. Authorities in other countries may not, however, consider them a Finnish citizen, because not every country accepts multiple citizenship in the same way as Finland. The Finnish Nationality Act does not specifically mention the acceptance of multiple citizenship. However, the Act contains no restrictions on multiple citizenship.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges Finnish authorities to specify the rights and obligations of persons who are citizens of both Finland and Russia in order to avoid potential overlaps and/or conflicts between them.

21. Facilitating easier use of e-services by expatriate Finns (strong electronic identification)

Strong electronic identification means that a person's identity is verified by electronic means. Strong electronic identification makes it possible for citizens to authenticate themselves in various online services. Identification methods include the mobile ID provided by telecoms operators, online banking codes provided by banks, and the Citizen Certificate.

Depending on individual life histories and the duration of living abroad, not all Finnish citizens are customers of Finnish banks or telecoms operators offering such identification methods. The only method of identification available in this case is the Citizen Certificate provided by the Digital and Population Data Services Agency

. To use a Citizen Certificate, a physical ID card is needed. The certificate is stored in the card and it has to be specifically activated with the help of an activation PIN that is sent home by mail. Before the Citizen Certificate can be used, however, you need to acquire a card reader with the necessary software. More information: dvv.fi/kansalaisvarmenne
Finns abroad may also face the extra challenge of accessing an office of the Finnish Foreign Service where they can apply for an ID card.

In October 2020, the Ministry of Finance launched a project to develop a system of digital identity and ways to use it. According to the government agenda, the aim is to develop electronic identification for Finnish citizens and anyone living in Finland as well as to promote the development of functional solutions for identification. The government agenda also mentions the possibility of individuals to manage their personal information in public

services and the need to establish sufficient support services for using electronic public services in order to ensure equality. More information is available on the [website of the Ministry of Finance](#).

It has been proposed by the Population Register Centre that the government develop an identification solution of its own, primarily based on a mobile application. The aim is to introduce a digital ID in Finland in early 2023. The digital ID could be downloaded in your mobile phone and used for logging in to various online services.

More information:

[Radio Sweden, April 14, 2021](#)

[Sähköinen tunnistaminen Selvitys nykytilasta sekä kehittämistarpeista \(Electronic identification: Report on current status and needs for development\) \(valtioneuvosto.fi\)](#)

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament emphasizes that all citizens must be guaranteed access to a method of identification that is easy to use, secure, and free of charge and that they can use for authentication in Finnish public services regardless of their country of residence. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament supports the Finnish government's project to develop, by 2023, a uniform and easy-to-use system of electronic identification that is available to all Finnish citizens.

III RESOLUTIONS ON SENIOR ISSUES

22. Voluntary inclusion in the Finnish employment pension system

In Finland, earnings-related pension insurance for employees in the private sector is provided by private pension insurance companies, company pension funds, and industry-wide pension funds. Seafarers and farmers have pension providers of their own. The scope of the earnings-related pension insurance is defined in a number of acts on earnings-related pensions. The pensions acts for the private sector are the following: the Employees' Pensions Act (TyEL), the Self-Employed Persons' Pensions Act (YEL), the Farmers' Pensions Act (MYEL), and the Seafarers' Pensions Act (MEL). Earnings-related pension insurance for employees of the public sector, i.e. the state, local authorities, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church, is managed by one pension provider, Keva. The earnings-related pension insurance for public sector employees is covered by the Public Sector Pension Act (JuEL).

In Finland, the statutory earnings-related pension insurance is managed by private pension insurance companies. Each employer may choose a pension provider with which to sign a pension insurance policy for their employees. The employer disburses both the employer's share and the employee's share of the pension contribution to the pension insurance company of their choice. The pension contribution in total is, on average, 24.4% of the employee's salary or wages. In 2021, the employee's share of the contribution is 7.15% of the salary or wages for employees under 53 or over 62 years of age, and 8.65% for employees from 53 to 62 years of age. This share is withheld by the employer upon payment of the employee's salary or wages. The employer's share of the pension contribution is 16.95% on average.

A pension insurance company may be either a limited liability insurance company (including a public one) or a mutual insurance company. A mutual insurance company is owned by the policyholders, in other words, employers and the insured employees, as well as any holders of guarantee shares. Pension insurance companies mostly handle the statutory pension insurance of private sector employees and the self-employed. The majority of all persons insured under the earnings-related pension acts have their insurance in a pension insurance company. Approximately 2.7 million persons are insured under the earnings-related pension acts, and roughly 70% of them were insured with pension insurance companies.

The following pension insurance companies operate in Finland: Veritas Pension Insurance, Ilmarinen Mutual Pension Insurance Company, Elo Mutual Pension Insurance Company, and Varma Mutual Pension Insurance Company.

A pension insurance company is a strictly regulated company form, which is governed by the Act on Pension Insurance Companies (354/1997) and the Insurance Companies Act (521/2008). In Finland, a pension insurance company may be founded by one or several natural or legal persons (for example, a company or a corporation). At least half of the founders have to live in (or for legal persons, have their domicile) in the European Economic Area, unless the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health grants an exemption from this.

Foreign pension insurance companies cannot directly engage in statutory pension insurance in Finland, but a foreign corporation or natural person may establish a pension insurance company in Finland. A company established in this way will be subject to the same restrictions regarding the line of business and license as a pension insurance company established by Finns. So far, no foreign insurance company is engaging in the earnings-related pension insurance business in Finland.

The minimum initial capital required for a pension insurance company is 5 million euro. A pension insurance company providing statutory earnings-related pension insurance is required to have a license granted by the Council of State. The license may include conditions that are necessary to safeguard the interests of the policyholders and the insured, to ensure the stable functioning of the company and to promote a healthy development of the earnings-related pension insurance business. Moreover, a pension insurance company's Articles of Association and any amendments to them must be confirmed by the Financial Supervisory Authority.

The Act on Earnings-Related Pension Insurance Companies: finlex.fi (> Legislation > Translations of Finnish acts and decrees > 1997 > 354/1997 English)

Sources: etk.fi, tyoelake.fi, keva.fi

Company pension funds and industry-wide pension funds

A company pension fund is an insurance and pension provider which grants statutory or voluntary pensions and comparable benefits to persons belonging to their sphere of operation as well as to their beneficiaries. An industry-wide pension fund is an insurance fund handling corresponding pensions and benefits and usually covers an entire industry.

A company pension fund provides pension insurance to the employees of one or more employers or groups of companies. A company pension fund is not allowed to engage in

any other kind of insurance business. Apart from statutory pension insurance, a company pension fund may, however, offer voluntary supplementary pensions. In company pension funds, voluntary supplementary pensions are solely financed by the employer. There are ten company pension funds which provide statutory pension insurance, such as Orionin Eläkesäätiö, Telian Eläkesäätiö, UPM Sellutehtaiden eläkesäätiö (of UPM pulp mills), and Yleisradion Eläkesäätiö (of the Finnish Broadcasting Company)

The Act on Company Pension Funds (in Finnish): finlex.fi (> Lainsäädäntö > Ajantasainen lainsäädäntö > Vuosi 1995 > 29.12.1995/1774)

An industry-wide pension fund provides pension insurance for persons employed by one employer, one group of companies or the employers within a whole industry. An industry-wide pension fund may also provide pension insurance to self-employed persons. An industry-wide pension fund is not allowed to engage in any other kind of insurance business. Apart from statutory pension insurance, an industry-wide pension fund may, however, offer voluntary supplementary pensions. In industry-wide pension funds, voluntary supplementary pensions are financed either by the employer alone or by the employer and employees together.

An industry-wide pension fund must have at least 300 insured members but does not need a license. However, the by-laws of the industry-wide pension fund and any amendments to them must be confirmed by the Financial Supervisory Authority, and the pension fund must be registered in the insurance funds register within a prescribed time limit. As a precondition for confirming the by-laws and their amendments, the Financial Supervisory Authority may require that the fund has a certain amount of guarantee capital or initial capital. Industry-wide pension funds are specific to either one employer or one industry. In Finland, the following industry-wide pension funds provide statutory pension insurance: Apteekkien Eläkekassa (for pharmacies), Eläkekassa Verso (for the forestry sector), Reka Eläkekassa and Valion Eläkekassa

The Act on Insurance Funds (in Finnish): finlex.fi (> Lainsäädäntö > Ajantasainen lainsäädäntö > Vuosi 1992 > 27.11.1992/1164)
tela.fi (The Finnish Pension Alliance TELA)
esy.fi/esy-ry/elakesaatiot-ja-kassat (Finnish Pension Funds ESY)

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Speakers' Council and the Secretariat to inform the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Kela (the Social Insurance Institution of Finland), and the Finnish Centre for Pensions about the need to establish a governmental earnings-related pension fund for voluntary pension contributions paid by private individuals, as well as to recommend that they carry out a more detailed investigation of this need.

23. Refunds of national pension

Kela (the Social Insurance Institution of Finland) recovers any overpaid amounts of national pension. This may happen, for example, in cases where there has been a change to a pensioner's income. The pensioner is given a decision on recovery which is subject to appeal. If Kela (the Social Insurance Institution of Finland) does not deem it justified to

change its decision, the pensioner can file a complaint with the Appeal Board. On average, the process at the Appeal Board takes less than one year.

Kela's decision states a time period within which the overpaid amount may be refunded to its net amount, i.e. net of tax. If the refund is made after the specified time period, the withholding of tax can no longer be rectified, which means that the overpaid amount must be refunded to its gross amount, i.e. including the share of the tax. If the overpaid amount is recovered to its gross amount, Kela (the Social Insurance Institution of Finland) will automatically declare the recovered benefits to the tax authorities and they will be taken into consideration in calculating the taxes for the year during which the refund was made. Source: [kela.fi/etuuksien takaisinperintä](http://kela.fi/etuuksien_takaisinperintä).

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges Kela (the Social Insurance Institution of Finland) and the Tax Administration to handle the defective decisions concerning pensioners and their appeals within a reasonable time.

24. Accrual of pension during unpaid periods, such as while studying or caring for children at home

As the reform of the earnings-related pension system in 2005 took effect, the pension accruals for employment contracts which were continuing at the turn of the year 2004/2005 were calculated according to the old law until the end of 2004, and the new accrual rates took effect from the beginning of 2005. With the reform of the earnings-related pension system in 2017, pensions started to accrue from the age of 17 instead of the earlier 18.

Since 2005, earnings-related pension is accrued from the age of 18, from studies leading to a basic vocational qualification or a university degree. Earnings-related pension in Finland is also accrued from studies leading to a degree abroad, if the student receives a study subsidy from Finland for the studies in question. Since 2005, earnings-related pension also accrues from parental leaves for which a person receives either a maternity, paternity or parental allowance or a home care allowance.

The accrual of national pension in Finland is linked to the period of time the person has lived in Finland between the ages of 16 and 65 years. The minimum requirement is that the person has lived in Finland for three years. The national pension is reduced by the Finnish earnings-related pension and most pensions received from other countries. If the total amount of other pension income and benefits is approximately EUR 1220-1360 per month, it may be that the person is not entitled to receive any national pension. Statutory pensions from EU member states and EEA countries, which are based on the period of living in the country in question or the duration of the insurance, do not reduce the amount of national pension. To get a full national pension, a person must have lived in Finland for 40 years. If the period is shorter, the amount of national pension is calculated in proportion to the number of years the person has lived in Finland. In addition to the EU/EEA countries, Finland has agreed on the payment of pensions in social security agreements with the United States, Canada and Australia, among others.

The Act on National Pension (in Finnish): finlex.fi (> Lainsäädäntö > Ajantasainen lainsäädäntö > Vuosi 2007 > 11.5.2007/568)

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament expresses no opinion on the initiative but observes that an absence from working life due to family obligations, which was taken up in the initiative, does not have an impact on the accrual of national pension, which is based on the number of years the person has lived in Finland. In addition, under the Act on Earnings-related Pensions that entered into force in 2005, earnings-related pension is accrued from periods of family leave.

25. Pension to be accrued from the age of 15 years instead of 23 years

In the Finnish system of earnings-related pensions, it used to be the case that pension only started accruing from the age of 23 onwards. This was the situation under the law that was in force until the end of 2004. Since the reform of the earnings-related pension system in 2005, pension starts accruing from the age of 18 onwards.

The purpose of the Finnish national pension is to secure a basic livelihood. The amount is determined on the basis of the number of years that a person has lived in Finland between the ages of 16 and 65. The minimum age limit for employment is 15 years or higher, depending on the age in which compulsory education ends in each EU member state. Compulsory education ends when the student has completed the school curriculum, or ten years after it has started. For most students, the latter alternative means the summer in the year in which they reach the age of 17. In Finland, compulsory education ends at 17 years of age, and as of August 1, 2021, it ends when the student reaches the age of 18. There are several points in the law that regulate the employment of persons under 18 years of age.

The guarantee pension is a benefit that is only paid to pensioners who live permanently in Finland and whose other pension income remains below the pension income limit for the guarantee pension, in other words, below EUR 837.59 (in 2021). The amount of the guarantee pension is reduced by any other pension income received from Finland or from abroad, but not by earnings, capital income, or assets. In order to receive the guarantee pension, a person must have lived in Finland for a minimum of three years after the age of 16.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament rejects the initiative, observing that earnings-related pensions in Finland accrue in accordance with the pension acts in force at any given time. For earnings-related pensions, the amendments proposed in the initiative have already been implemented in pension reforms, and for the national pension, the pension accrual is determined on the basis of the amount of time a person has been living in Finland.

26. Organizing the return to Finland of a Finnish citizen who is ill or suffers from a memory disorder

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and its different departments are responsible for bilateral cooperation agreements between Finland and other countries in the social and health sector and for their implementation. The International Affairs Unit of the Ministry develops, plans, and coordinates international affairs in the Ministry's sector of government. Its responsibilities include, among other things, planning, developing, and coordinating EU-level matters and other international cooperation with the Ministry's departments and agencies, as well as other ministries.

Coordination of social security between Finland and the EU:

The rights to social security in international situations and the coordination of social security systems are regulated in national law, in EU law, and in social security agreements between governments.

The social security of persons moving between EU member states, EEA countries, and Switzerland is regulated by the social security regulations of the EU, the purpose of which is to coordinate the different social security systems of the member states. In cross-border situations, EU-level rules on social security take precedence over Finnish law. The main principles of the coordination rules include the following: only one country's social security law shall be applicable at a time, people shall be equally treated, the periods of work in different countries shall be added up for the purposes of determining benefits, benefits shall be payable to persons living in other member states, and countries shall adhere to the principles of good administrative cooperation.

The EU's social security regulations have been in place since the 1950's. There is an Administrative Commission at the European Commission working on the coordination of social security systems. Its mandate includes all matters of administration and interpretation of EU social security regulations. The Administrative Commission consists of members representing each member state. Finland is represented in the Administrative Commission by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The EU legislation is complemented by the Nordic Convention on Social Security. The Nordic countries have also entered into a mutual Nordic Convention on Social Assistance and Social Services. Source: stm.fi (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)

The Nordic Convention on Social Assistance and Social Services:
finlex.fi > [Valtiosopimukset](#) > [Valtiosopimukset](#) > 1996 > 69/1996

Article 9

Relocation to another Nordic country of persons in need of long-term care or treatment

1. When a person to whom this Convention is applicable needs long-term care or treatment and wishes to be able to move from one Nordic country to another with which the person has a special connection, the responsible authorities in both countries shall promote the relocation if it would improve the situation of the person in question.
2. The responsible authorities in the country of departure and destination may, as part of the agreement concerning the relocation, decide upon the distribution of the costs of the care or treatment between the authorities of the two countries.
3. If the agreement referred to in paragraph 2 concerns the distribution of health care costs, it shall be considered as an agreement of the kind referred to in Article 23, first paragraph, of the Nordic Convention on Social Security made on June 15, 1992.

Finnish citizens abroad can get help and advice from Finnish diplomatic and consular missions.

The following are included in the duties of the Consular Services Unit in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs:

- general planning, guidance and control of consular services
- expert assistance and advice related to consular services
- legal matters and official assistance related to consular services
- matters related to consular co-operation within the European Union
- other duties related to consular matters, unless they belong to the mandate of another unit

um.fi/konsuliasioiden-yksikko

The Consular Services Act specifies the consular services available to Finnish communities and persons who are Finnish citizens.

Section 1

Scope of application

This Act lays down provisions on the consular functions referred to in Article 5 of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (Finnish Treaty Series 50/1980), which may be exercised by diplomatic and consular missions that are part of the Finnish foreign service (missions) for the purpose of providing assistance to persons or entities or overseeing their interests and rights, and the exercise of which falls within the competence of the foreign affairs administration under this Act or other legislation (consular services).

Chapter 3 of the Consular Services Act

Section 11

Services for persons in distress

Persons in distress

Consular services provided for in this chapter may be afforded to persons referred to in section 2, subsection 1, and to unrepresented citizens of the European Union who are temporarily residing abroad within the consular district of a mission, and whom the mission has found to be in distress because of illness, injury, accident, crime, or other comparable reason.

Section 12

Assistance provided for persons in distress

A mission shall advise and assist a person in distress as necessary in obtaining medical treatment, arranging repatriation, obtaining legal assistance, reporting an offence, and obtaining any other necessary help required by the situation.

The Consular Services Act: finlex.fi (> Legislation > Translations of Finnish acts and decrees > 1999 > 498)

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Speakers' Council and the Secretariat to investigate what development measures have been taken by cooperation networks working with Finnish senior citizens abroad. It also urges them to investigate what possibilities are offered by agreements between EU member states to make sure that Finnish senior citizens suffering from memory disorders and

lacking care are offered appropriate care and assistance by competent authorities in a coordinated manner.

27. A house for expatriate Finnish pension recipients who return to Finland

The idea of a home for returning expatriates has been included in the plans of activities of the association of Finnish repatriates (Suomen Paluumuuttajat ry.) since the association was established in 1996. The association applied for funding from the Slot Machine Association (the financing functions of which were later transferred to the Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organizations STEA), but the applications were not successful. To some extent, the senior housing project was modeled after the collective housing community for senior repatriates in Denmark (Fredensborg Houses), which has been in operation since the 1960's. In the late 1990's, the City of Riihimäki promised to donate a suitable plot of land, should the need arise.

In the 2000's, the committee Finnish Seniors Abroad (with members from the Finland Society, the Ministry to Finns abroad within the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, the Finnish Seamen's Mission, and the Finnish Institute of Migration) investigated the possibility of establishing a home for returnees in the form of a trust. The committee found that the funding and administration of a trust would be difficult to implement. Meetings were held with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the representatives of the Slot Machine Association, but the project did not advance.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Speakers' Council and the Secretariat to investigate the possibilities to establish a housing community in the Helsinki area for Finnish senior citizens abroad who are planning to return to Finland.

28. Maintenance of graves and expiry of grave contracts in Finland

Under the Funeral Services Act (Chapter 1, Section 3), parishes or parish unions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland have the obligation to maintain public cemeteries. A cemetery may be operated jointly by more than one parish or parish union.

The cemeteries operated by the parishes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church are public cemeteries where anyone has the right to be buried, regardless of whether they are members of the church or not. In many cemeteries, there are burial plots for both casketed and [cremated remains](#), as well as gardens for scattering ashes. Upon request, a deceased individual may be buried in a section of a cemetery that is not affiliated to any religious community. Parishes have mutual agreements on the maintenance of such cemetery sections.

Burial plot

A burial plot is acquired from the cemetery office of the parish. A funeral home can be authorized to take care of acquiring the plot from the parish. The type of plot depends on whether the remains of the deceased are going to be cremated or buried in a coffin. A plot can be acquired for a fixed term. Different parishes and cemeteries offer different options. The charges payable for burial plots and burials are determined each year by the parishes. A burial plot may be more expensive for someone living outside the parish area.

In many parishes, burial plots are free of charge for war veterans with a service badge and their spouses.

It is no longer possible to acquire permanent ownership of a burial plot, but it may still be possible to bury a deceased individual in an existing grave with permanent ownership. Fixed-term ownership of a grave may be extended as necessary by paying the fee determined by the parish. If the family does not wish to extend the ownership of an existing grave, the plot will be returned to the parish. In this case, the parish will offer the grave owner the opportunity to remove the grave monument. It will then become possible to bury the remains of a new deceased individual in the plot in question, but the church records will also continue to show the information of the individual who was buried there earlier.

evl.fi/perhejuhlat/hautajaiset/hautaus-ja-hautapaikka
The legislation on burials comprises the Act on the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, the Funeral Services Act, the Decree on Health Protection, and the standing orders for funeral services in each parish.

Under the Act on the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, all parishes of the church must have their own standing orders for funeral services. These standing orders contain detailed rules on graves, grave records, the requirements for grave maintenance, the approval of grave monuments, and the rules of procedure to be applied in the cemetery. The parish standing order for funeral services takes account of the local special features of cemeteries and the local culture of funeral practices as well as provides instructions regarding appropriate arrangements.

Fixed terms for grave ownership

- Until 1956, it was possible to acquire permanent ownership of a burial plot. A plot with permanent ownership will remain in possession of the family of the deceased for as long as they take care of the grave.
- From 1957 to 1980, burial plots were assigned for a fixed term of 50 years.
- Since 1981, burial plots have been assigned for a fixed term of 25 years.

When the fixed term of ownership ends, the rights of burial to the grave will expire without having to be cancelled (Act on the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, Chapter 17, Section 2), and the ownership of the plot will return to the parish. The term of ownership means the time during which a burial plot is in possession of the family of the deceased individual. In the case of burying casketed remains, the grave must remain intact for a certain period of time. The remains of a deceased individual can be buried in a burial plot that is vacant, or in a plot where a sufficient period of time has passed since it was last taken into use. Under the Act on Health Protection, the period of time during which a plot must remain intact is 15 years, but in some cemeteries, it may be longer, such as 25 to 30 years. The periods are determined when the cemetery is established.

Term of grave ownership

When grave ownership is about to expire, the grave owner or a person who has the right to be buried in the grave in question is offered the opportunity to extend the grave ownership for another 25 years. The parish has a price list showing the current price of extending grave ownership. No special application needs to be made in order to extend the ownership. When the parish informs the grave owner that their ownership has expired, it will be sufficient for the owner to contact the parish and agree on an extension.

Maintenance of graves

A grave shall be maintained by, for example, mowing the lawn and planting flowers on the grave. The family shall appoint a grave owner, who shall be responsible for the maintenance of the grave and represent the family in matters related to the grave. The maintenance of the grave shall be agreed upon with the parish or a company providing grave maintenance services. Various grave maintenance services are available for purchase.

The Funeral Services Act (457/2003) lays down provisions on the burial and cremation of human remains and the handling of ashes, as well as the establishment, maintenance, care and abolishment of a cemetery and an individual grave, and the establishment of a crematorium (Chapter 1, Section 1).

Legislation on burial services is drafted by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The maintenance of public cemeteries is a task entrusted to the church by the law. Anyone has the right to be buried in the cemetery of the Evangelical Lutheran parish of their hometown or in a section of the cemetery which is not affiliated to any religious community.

The Regional State Administrative Agency for Eastern Finland has a nationwide responsibility for the permit and enforcement matters as well as cadastral responsibilities referred to in the Funeral Services Act, as well as for state aid towards the maintenance of cemeteries and the war graves of the displaced population in the ceded territory.

In practical matters concerning burials, it is advisable to contact the parish in charge of the cemetery in the domicile of the deceased individual.

Burial plots and burial services are subject to a charge. The charges may not exceed the cost of producing the services, and they must be the same for everyone who has the right to be buried in the cemetery of the parish in question.

Funeral Services Act

Chapter 5: Rights of burial and the maintenance and abolishment of a cemetery

Section 11: Rights of burial

Regarding rights of burial in cemeteries operated by parishes or parish unions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, and by parishes of the Orthodox Church of Finland, the provisions in and following from the Act on the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Act on the Orthodox Church of Finland, as well as any agreement between the keeper of the cemetery and the grave owner, shall apply.

Regarding rights of burial in other cemeteries, what is agreed between the keeper of the cemetery and the grave owner shall apply.

Section 12: Grave records

The keeper of a cemetery shall maintain records showing the following information about every deceased individual:

- 1) last name and given names;
- 2) date of birth or personal ID number;
- 3) date of death;
- 4) date of burial;
- 5) type of burial; and
- 6) location of the grave.

The records may also contain the name and postal address of the grave owner, the term of grave ownership and information about which individuals may be buried in the grave. In addition, the records may contain information about any monuments with a special artistic or historical value located in the cemetery, as well as their specific location. In the case of deceased individuals whose ashes have been placed in a garden of remembrance, the records shall contain the information listed in subsection 1, with the exception of the exact location of the ashes. The records referred to in this Section shall be permanently archived. When the community or foundation referred to in Section 8 ceases to operate, the records referred to in this Section shall be transferred to the National Archives for permanent archiving.

Section 13: Maintenance of the cemetery and grave

The keeper of the cemetery shall maintain the cemetery in a dignified way, showing respect to the memory of the deceased. Regarding the maintenance of individual graves, the provisions in and under Section 11, as well as any agreement between the keeper of the cemetery and the grave owner, shall apply.

The Funeral Services Act (in Finnish): finlex.fi (> Lainsäädäntö > Ajantasainen lainsäädäntö > Vuosi 2003 > 6.6.3003/457)

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland has 378 local parishes. Of these, 49 are Swedish-speaking. Every parish enjoys extensive operational, financial and administrative independence. As a rule, parish boundaries follow the geographical boundaries of municipalities. There may be both a Finnish-speaking and a Swedish-speaking parish in one municipality. In large towns, there are usually several parishes which are grouped together to form a parish union. Sometimes, a parish union may also cover the area of two or more municipalities. In a parish union, the financial administration, the HR function, and possibly some other functions are centralized.

The contact details of all the parishes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland are available via the search function at evl.fi/seurakunnat.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges Finns abroad to make sure that the contact details of the owner of the rights of burial to the grave of their deceased family member are up to date at the parish keeping the cemetery in which the grave is located. The family shall appoint a grave owner who shall be responsible for the maintenance of the grave and represent the family in matters related to the grave. The contact details that can be given include postal address, e-mail address, and phone number. At the same time, the Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges Finnish expatriate associations and the Unit for Ministry to Finns Abroad within the Evangelical Lutheran Church to intensify their information efforts regarding the procedures related to graves and the fixed terms of grave ownership.

IV RESOLUTIONS ON SOCIAL ISSUES

29. Student financial aid for expatriate Finns for studies to be completed in the EU area and other foreign countries

Finnish citizens can get financial aid for completing an entire course of study abroad, if they had a domicile in Finland for at least two years during the five-year period preceding the beginning of their studies (i.e., the studies have to be started within less than three years from moving abroad), or if, on the basis of their circumstances, they have a close connection with Finland. In the latter case, Kela (the Social Insurance Institution of Finland) will take into consideration periods of residence in Finland, family relations, livelihood, occupational and other corresponding circumstances.

The study program must be full-time and comparable with a course of study in Finland that would qualify the student for financial aid. Further, the educational institution must be supervised by public authorities, in other words, subsidized by the state, supervised by the educational authorities, or accredited by an accreditation agency. A private educational institution may also be supervised by public authorities.

Persons who stay abroad for a short time can usually receive Kela benefits if their stay abroad lasts for a maximum of 6 months. However, students or researchers staying abroad are entitled to Kela benefits for a longer period: as a main rule, for as long as the studies, research work or artistic work abroad are conducted on a full-time basis. For this to be possible, it is required that they have been entitled to Kela benefits already before they started their studies or research work abroad. Students must study full time in a program which leads to a degree or professional qualifications and which is organized by a state-accredited educational institution.

Receiving student financial aid is not something to which every Finn automatically has a subjective right. To get aid, students must meet the criteria laid down in the Act on Student Financial Aid. For studies completed abroad, student financial aid shall be granted to a Finnish citizen (and a person referred to in subsection 2), who:

- 1) has had a domicile in Finland as provided in the Municipality of Residence Act (201/1994) for at least two years within the five-year period preceding the start of their studies; or
- 2) otherwise, based on their circumstances, has a close connection with Finland, considering their family relations, livelihood, occupational, and other corresponding circumstances.

The general criteria for receiving student financial aid include being enrolled as a student in an educational institution, pursuing full-time studies and making progress in the studies, as well as having a need for financial aid.

It is important that applications for student financial aid (by expatriate Finns) are processed in accordance with the principles of good administrative practice, and that processing and decision making are done under regular forms and on equal terms with a view to earlier decisions.

According to the information provided by Kela (the Social Insurance Institution of Finland) to the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, they only have a few employees who work on aid applications of persons who are completing an entire study course abroad. These employees continuously monitor the case law of the Student Financial Aid Review Board and the Insurance Court to make sure that Kela's decisions follow a uniform policy.

As was mentioned above, students have the right to get financial aid even if they do not meet the criteria concerning domicile in Finland, if they otherwise have a close connection with Finland. This will be determined by taking into consideration their family relations, livelihood, occupational, and other corresponding circumstances.

According to Governmental Bill 40/2015, such consideration shall be based on a holistic review of the person's circumstances, and the connection with Finland has to be so close

that it is comparable to the requirement of having a domicile in Finland. For example, a person who has lived most of their life in Finland and has attended school or worked in Finland can be considered to have a close connection with Finland. The kind of close connection referred to in the section quoted can also be considered to exist in the case of a person whose parent or spouse lives in Finland and who has been regularly spending long periods of time in Finland. The close connection, referred to in the law, cannot be considered to be established in circumstances that only last for a short period of time. In principle, for a close connection to be established, it is required that there is a period of at least several years during which the circumstances exist. However, it is also possible to take into consideration the significance of the close connection.

Kela's guidelines on student financial aid were last updated on May 17, 2021, and are publicly available at [kela.fi](https://www.kela.fi)

(<https://www.kela.fi/documents/10192/3239899/Opintotuki.pdf>). The guidelines include a number of examples illustrating the interpretation of the concept of 'close connection with Finland'.

There may be cases in which it may not be possible to grant Finnish student financial aid to an expatriate Finn for a study course in another EU member state, and the person is also not entitled to receive student financial aid or social security benefits from the other EU member state. This should be taken into consideration already when choosing where to study, in order to avoid any unpleasant surprises of being left without income. There are many countries, including EU member states, that do not offer any kind of financial aid or other social security for students. It is worth keeping in mind that a Finnish citizen can always get financial aid for studies to be completed in Finland. If a Finnish citizen cannot afford to finance studies abroad, it is good to keep in mind the alternative of studying in Finland.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament demands that applications for student financial aid (by expatriate Finns) be processed in accordance with the principles of good administrative practice, and that processing and decision making be done under regular forms and on equal terms with a view to earlier decisions.

30. Determination of municipality of residence for expatriate Finns

The population information system includes information about the municipality of residence determined under the Municipality of Residence Act, the actual place of residence in that municipality, and the registered domicile of a Finnish citizen who lives permanently abroad. The population information system also includes information about any temporary place of residence that a citizen has notified to the authorities. Anyone who moves from one place to another is obliged to notify this to the authorities: when someone changes their municipality of residence or place of residence within that municipality, they shall notify the Digital and Population Data Services Agency about the change no earlier than one month before moving and no later than one week after moving.

Under Section 2 of the Municipality of Residence Act, a person's municipality of residence is (with certain exceptions) the municipality in which they live. If someone has multiple homes or no home at all, their domicile will be the municipality which they consider to be their domicile due to family relations, livelihood, or other corresponding circumstances, and with which they have the closest connection in the light of these factors. If it is not possible

to establish someone's own understanding of what their domicile is, it shall be considered that their domicile is the municipality with which they are considered to have the closest connection in the light of their living, family relations, livelihood, and other corresponding circumstances.

Provisions on determining the municipality of residence for persons moving from Finland to another country are laid down in Section 5 of the Municipality of Residence Act, which concerns anyone moving from Finland regardless of their nationality. As a main rule, persons who have moved abroad for a period exceeding one year do not have a municipality of residence in Finland. However, they may have a domicile in Finland, if based on their life circumstances, they have a closer connection with Finland than their foreign country of residence.

Provisions on determining the domicile to be recorded in the population information system are laid down in Section 6a of the Municipality of Residence Act: for Finnish citizens permanently living abroad, their domicile in the population information system shall be the municipality which was their last municipality of residence in Finland. If a person never had a domicile in Finland, the domicile for the purposes of the population information register shall be determined by what is the municipality of residence or domicile in the population information register of their mother, father, or spouse (considered in this order). The domicile for the purposes of the population information register shall be the municipality which was the municipality of residence or domicile in the population information register of their parent or spouse at the time when the person became Finnish citizen. If the parents or spouse did not have a municipality of residence or domicile in the population information register at the time, the domicile of the person will be Helsinki.

From 2020 onwards, the Digital and Population Data Services Agency is responsible for maintaining the population information system. The data registered is obtained from statutory notifications submitted by citizens and authorities. The population information system serves many administrative purposes, such as the organization of elections. For elections, the Digital and Population Data Services Agency compiles an electronic register of persons entitled to vote (a voting register) no later than on the 46th day before the election day. The voting register includes the data of each person who has the right to vote, such as name, personal ID number, electoral district, municipality of residence, and polling station.

For Finnish citizens permanently living abroad, their domicile in the population information system (for the purposes of compiling the voting registers for electoral districts) shall be the municipality which was their last municipality of residence in Finland. However, many Finns abroad feel that they have no connection with their domicile in the population information system. This may be the case in situations where the person has only lived in the municipality in question for a short time before they moved abroad, for example, because of studying there. In this way, their domicile in the population information system is the municipality in which they last lived in Finland but to which they may not have any emotional and/or family connection. As the electoral district for parliamentary elections is determined by the domicile recorded in the population information system, a person who only spent a very short time there and has little knowledge of the constituency will lose interest in voting and feel increasingly like an outsider. This may even impact their national identity.

It would be advisable to amend the Municipality of Residence Act to the effect that the domicile of an expatriate Finn for the purposes of the population information system would be their last municipality of residence in Finland, unless they had changed their domicile in the population information system to another municipality with which they have the closest connection due to family relations and/or emotional ties. A free-form notification of a

change of domicile in the population information system could be made in writing to the Digital and Population Data Services Agency.

A working group was set up to investigate the need to amend the Municipality of Residence Act and proposed a complete reform of the Act in May 2020. The current Act dates back to 1994 and should be replaced by a new one. In the context of the reform, consideration should be given to, among other things, other legislative developments since the Act was enacted, as well as the requirements and opportunities brought about by digitalization and the case law accumulated over the years by authorities and courts of law. Based on the proposals made by the working group, the Ministry of Finance is going to start drafting the law amendments related to the amendment of the Municipality of Residence Act in the fall of 2021. A separate legislative project should be started for the overall reform and a task force should be established for this purpose, consisting of representatives from the core ministries, agencies, and other bodies relevant for the application of the law. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the wish of expatriate Finns concerning the possibility to change one's domicile in the population information system is taken into consideration when reforming the Municipality of Residence Act.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes to the Ministry of Finance that the Municipality of Residence Act be amended so that it would become possible for expatriate Finns (Finnish citizens permanently living abroad) to change their domicile in the population information system to the municipality with which they have the closest connection based on family relations and/or emotional ties. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament also proposes that instructions be prepared on how to notify such a change of domicile to the Digital and Population Data Services Agency.

31. Travel registration: Finland as the country of destination

Travel registration is a service offered by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, in which persons traveling, moving, or already living abroad may submit information about their travel and their contact details to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

In case of a crisis or an emergency, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will be able to contact the persons who have registered with the service. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs recommends that a travel registration should be made especially when traveling to a risk zone. A travel registration can be done either by creating a user account in the system or without an account. Creating an account is recommended, because the information from the previous travel registration is stored in the system, and can be updated as necessary. A travel registration means that you give the Ministry your personal data, your contact details that are valid during the trip, and information about your trip at matkustusilmoitus.fi. The data is submitted to be used in case of emergency or crisis.

A travel registration can only be made when traveling from Finland to another country, not when traveling from another country to Finland. However, expatriate Finns feel that the travel registration system causes problems when they travel to Finland. When Finnish citizens who live abroad permanently travel to Finland, they should be able to modify the travel registration they made when they announced their permanent relocation to another country. Otherwise, if there is a crisis in their country of residence, the Ministry for Foreign

Affairs will have misleading information about the whereabouts of these persons. If they did not create an account in the system when they made the travel registration to announce their permanent relocation to another country, they have no way of modifying their registration. Expatriate Finns feel that the travel registration system would be much easier to use if it was possible to choose Finland as the travel destination.

According to the civil servant who is responsible for consular services in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, there are no plans to add Finland as a possible travel destination in the system. The civil servant states that the system of travel registration is intended for situations when travelers or persons permanently living abroad need to be informed about something happening in another country. Providing information in Finland does not fall within the mandate of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Unfortunately, persons who live permanently abroad may get messages concerning their country of residence even when they are on holiday in Finland, unless they have modified their travel registration. If you have created an account in the travel registration system, it is easy to modify the travel registration and change dates. It is useful to make the necessary changes to the dates when traveling to Finland.

A reminder feature will be introduced into the travel registration system in the summer. When a year has passed since a travel registration without an end date was made, the system automatically requests a confirmation that the travel registration is still valid. This will also be helpful for those who did not create an account when they made their travel registration.

Expatriate Finns traveling in Finland may follow the local media if there is a crisis in Finland during their trip. One way to develop the travel registration system would be to make it possible to choose Finland as the destination but to also clearly indicate that when Finland is selected as the destination, no e-mail and text message notifications will be sent regarding any crises in Finland and that anyone traveling in Finland has to follow the local media.

Information measures could also be stepped up: for example, it is a good idea to prepare a video clip with instructions on how to make a travel registration and to use the system. This would certainly encourage people to use the travel registration system more often and would benefit both individual citizens and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. In 2018, there were 240,486 persons who used the travel registration system, whereas in 2019 their number was only slightly higher, 249,609. In 2020 their number was 137,777 — this is probably attributable to the decline of travel during the pandemic. Correspondingly, the number of messages sent from the SULO system of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs was 128 in 2018, 148 in 2019, and 905 in 2020, the year of the pandemic.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs makes it possible to choose Finland as a travel destination in the travel registration system. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament also proposes that more information is provided on how to use the travel registration system (including travel to Finland of a Finnish citizen permanently living abroad) by, for example, preparing a video clip with instructions.

32. Renewal of driver's license of Finnish citizens permanently residing abroad outside the EU and EEA

In mainland Finland, driving a car is possible with all driver's licenses issued in countries which Finland has recognized or with which Finland has established diplomatic relations. However, a foreign driver's license is not accepted if the license holder was living in Finland at the time when it was issued.

A driver's license issued in an EU member state or an EEA country authorizes its holder to drive vehicles belonging to the vehicle categories indicated in the license for as long as the license is valid, regardless of whether the person is visiting Finland as a tourist or lives permanently in Finland. A temporary driver's license issued in another Nordic country is also valid in Finland.

Driver's licenses issued in countries which are party to the Geneva or Vienna Conventions on Road Traffic, or in Hong Kong, Macao, or Taiwan (hereinafter States Parties) are valid for driving when traveling in Finland as a tourist, unless the license has expired. When a holder of a driver's license moves to Finland permanently, the license will be accepted for two years, however not longer than until the expiry of the license. Whenever necessary, the driver's license must be accompanied by an international driver's license or a Finnish or Swedish translation of the driver's license, made by a reliable body. The United States, Canada, and Australia are States Parties and belong to this category. A detailed list of the States Parties is available [here](#).

Driver's licenses issued in other countries recognized by Finland and corresponding to categories A1, A2, A and B are valid for driving when traveling in Finland as a tourist, unless the license has expired. After the holder of the driver's license is entered into the Finnish population information system, the foreign driver's license will be valid for one year. The information in the foreign driver's license must be written in the Latin alphabet or it must be accompanied by a reliable translation of the license in Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, English, German, or French. In addition, anyone driving in Finland with a foreign driver's license shall meet the age and health requirements in force in Finland.

The Finland Society contacted the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency Traficom to inquire whether a foreign driver's license issued by a State Party (outside the EU and EEA) is sufficient if the license is originally in English, as a US driver's license, or has been translated into English, or whether a translation into Finnish or Swedish is required. According to Traficom, the matter belongs partly to the mandate of the police, because it concerns the supervision of road traffic. However, Traficom's interpretation of the Act on Driver's Licenses is that a translation (or an international driver's license instead of a translation) is only needed if the national driver's license is not written in the Latin alphabet and/or if it does not show the necessary information, such as the validity period and the authorized vehicle categories.

Under the current rules, if a person wishes to renew their driver's license, they have to have a normal residence in Finland. Under Section 3 of the Act on Driver's Licenses, 'normal residence' means the place where a person, for reasons other than studies in a university or other educational institution, usually lives, that is for at least 185 days in each calendar year, because of family and occupational ties, or, in the case of a person with no occupational ties, because of family ties which show close links between that person and the place where they are living; if the person lives in two or more states, because their

family ties are in a different place from their occupational ties, their normal residence shall be regarded as being the place of their family ties, if the person returns there regularly or is living in another country in order to carry out a task of a definite duration.

The requirement of a normal residence in the context of issuing a driver's license is based on the Directive on driving licenses. This is also a precondition for issuing a driver's license in the Act on Driver's Licenses. This principle of a single driver's license is based on the Directive on driving licenses. It has been agreed between the EU/EEA member states that the country in which the person has their normal residence should issue the driver's license. The Act on Driver's Licenses (Section 62) also includes the obligation to surrender the foreign driver's license when it is replaced by a Finnish driver's license.

In other words, a person who is only visiting Finland for, say, one summer, cannot renew their driver's license in Finland. In practice, the person's place of residence is verified in the population information system. Therefore, the law would need to be amended if it were to be possible for an expatriate Finn living outside the EU/EEA member states to renew their Finnish driver's license when visiting Finland.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges Traficom to clarify their instructions at Ajokortti-info.fi regarding the use of a driver's license issued by a State Party so that it clearly mentions that a foreign driver's license in English, written in the Latin alphabet (including one issued outside the EU/EEA member states), is accepted in Finland.

33. The need of expatriate Finns to participate in decision making and receive information from Finnish services in cases of emergency, for example if their parents residing in Finland are ill

It is important to remember that it is only possible to influence the decisions concerning treatment or other measures related to grown-up loved ones on the condition that this is something the loved one in question wishes and agrees to, unless they have a guardian. The Finland Society advises expatriate Finns and returnees in matters related to planning their old age and making a lasting power of attorney and an advance decision regarding their care, as well as reminds them of the importance of having legally valid documents in international situations. More information is available on the Finland Society's senioritmaailma.fi website, as well as from Finland Society's Senior advice service and in the guide for returning senior citizens that you can order free of charge.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The initiative does not merit a resolution.

34. Easier return migration for expatriate Finns

The initiative is about the need to make return migration smoother and to provide support to returnees in finding work and integrating into Finnish society.

The Finnish population is aging, and the birth rate is not sufficient to maintain population growth. The working age population is also declining, and there are not enough workers

for all sectors. It has been proposed in Finland that one solution to the problems in the labor market and in keeping up the welfare society is the immigration of workforce. Resources have also been allocated to promoting this solution by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment and Finnish municipalities. However, various projects to promote employment have practically overlooked the potential of a skilled Finnish expatriate workforce.

According to the statistics published by Statistics Finland on May 12, 2021, the net migration to Finland from abroad in 2020 was 17,814 people, an increase from 15,495 in the previous year. The main reason to this increase in net migration, according to Statistics Finland, was a decline in emigration. It must be noted, however, that the number of Finnish citizens returning to Finland in 2020 was the highest in at least 30 years, and the net migration of Finnish citizens was positive for the first time after a long period of negative figures. Immigration of Finnish citizens increased by more than one thousand to 9,638, while emigration dropped by more than one thousand to 8,529, which resulted in a net migration of 1,109 in 2020.

Relatively little research has been done in Finland about return migration from abroad. Also, very little is known about work-motivated and skills-based return migration to Finland. Based on the surveys and studies that have been made, however, we know that returnees feel that the qualifications and work experience they have acquired abroad are not recognized or valued in Finland. Therefore, returnees particularly need help with finding work, and they are not very happy with the help currently available, for example, from the public employment services. Finnish laws on immigration, employment services, unemployment benefits, and social security are partly conflicting, and their application is not always uniform. The studies also highlight the need for support targeted to foreign spouses and family. As challenges pile up, skilled returnees may not stay in Finland permanently.

The Finland Society is working on a pilot project called *Osaajaväylä Suomeen* (An expert channel to Finland), which is intended to bring together (expatriate) Finnish skilled workers and Finnish employers. The Finland Society's partners in the project at the moment include the TE Services in Southwestern Finland, the Talent Hubs of Business Turku and Business Oulu, Tampere International House, and a private company called Urapark that was established in April 2021 and offers personal career planning and coaching services for returnees. The Finland Society's pilot project will raise awareness of skilled Finnish expatriate workforce as part of the solution to the growing need of workforce in Finland. Its goals are identical with the Finnish government's Talent Boost program. Project funding has been applied for and the plan is to pilot the project towards the end of 2021.

The *Osaajaväylä Suomeen* model emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach to the needs of families, including multilingual and multicultural spouses and children. In order to attract skilled expatriate Finns to Finland, with their multilingual and international families, attention must be given to finding employment opportunities for the spouses, facilitating language learning for the family, and supporting the organization of their everyday lives. The model aims to increase the appreciation and availability of and demand for the know-how possessed by expatriate Finns, to help Finnish employers find skilled expatriate Finns, to facilitate the return of skills capital to Finland, and to make it easier for returnees to integrate into the Finnish society.

In resolution 31/2010 on return migration, the Finnish Expatriate Parliament stated the following: The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that when developing policies and

action plans related to promoting work-related migration, the Finnish authorities pay attention to expatriate Finns as a special group so that their work-related return migration is made into a political priority.

In 2013, the Finnish Government issued a decision in principle regarding a Strategy on the future of migration for 2020. In this document, special attention is paid to, among other things, the development of work-related migration by taking into consideration workforce needs, demographic development and the changing dependency ratio.

In 2017, the government adopted the current Government Policy Programme for Expatriate Finns for 2017—2021. The program was jointly drafted by representatives of the Finland Society and the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, as well as various ministries and government agencies. The program seeks to advocate for Finns abroad by various measures: section 3.5 (p. 33) lists such aspects as the preconditions for return migration, as well as policies and various practical measures.

The Finland Society is now involved in a project aiming to prepare a strategy on expatriate Finns for 2022—2026. Part of the project will involve consultations with returnees in the Suomi Village (on week 23). The consultations will be organized by the TE services in Southwestern Finland in cooperation with the Finland Society. The semi-structured thematic interviews in the consultations are based on information gathered in webinars organized by the TE services in Southwestern Finland to support returnees in finding work, as well as in a survey conducted with the Facebook group for returnees titled *Paluumuuttajat*. The aim is to have return migration and the related challenges taken into account in the strategy on expatriate Finns.

In Nordic cooperation, working life plays a crucial role in the evolution of the Nordic welfare state, in business growth, and in the personal development of the people. The joint Nordic labor market is one of the cornerstones of Nordic cooperation, which includes work on employment, the labor market, the working environment, and employment law. The aim is to make the Nordic region increasingly open by promoting cross-border freedom of movement. Cross-border relocation, mobility, entrepreneurship, and studies must be made possible without the risk of exclusion or obstacles due to unclear laws and rules.

The Nordic Council of Ministers is the official body for inter-governmental cooperation in the Nordic Region. Its Presidency rotates between the five Nordic countries, and Finland holds the Presidency in 2021. The vision of the Nordic Prime Ministers is that the Nordic region will become the most sustainable and integrated region in the world by 2030. The Prime Ministers' Vision 2030 has been adopted by the Ministers for Nordic Cooperation and it will be in force from 2021 to 2024. Three priorities have been specified in order to achieve the vision: A green Nordic Region, a competitive Nordic Region, and a socially sustainable Nordic Region. The aim of a socially sustainable Nordic Region is together to promote an inclusive, equal, and interconnected region with shared values and strengthened cultural exchange and welfare. Digitalization is a cross-cutting theme in the vision and the priorities. In the agenda for the Finnish presidency, the priority of promoting a competitive Nordic Region lists such elements as digital integration, new trends in business and working life, cross-border mobility, and removing and preventing obstacles to cross-border freedom of movement. Integration and the competitiveness of the Nordic Region are also promoted by the presidency project established by the Ministry of

Finance, aiming for the world's smoothest cross-border mobility and daily life through digitalization.

It is extremely important to increase the appreciation and availability of and demand for the know-how possessed by expatriate Finns in Finland, thus making use of a significant potential skills capital. Also, in order to develop appropriate support for the return migration and integration of the expatriate skills potential in Finland, new studies are needed about how returnees found work and what experiences they had.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment should allocate more resources to supporting and developing extensive employment and integration services for skilled returnees in Finland. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament also urges the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment to allocate resources and support to research on work- and skills-motivated return migration as well as on the attitudes of Finnish employers and their ability to make use of the international work experience and language skills of returnees.

35. Finnish banking services for expatriate Finns

Banks are private companies free to determine their own procedures. Recently, there has been discussion in the media about the decline of banking services available for those who are not domiciled in Finland. General information about Finnish banking services is available on the Finland Society's website. However, the Finnish Expatriate Parliament encourages expatriate Finns to contact banks directly to compare the services they offer.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament does not express an opinion on the content of the initiative, because it is a matter of private companies, but encourages expatriate Finns to contact the different banks directly to compare the services they offer. However, the Finnish Expatriate Parliament is of the opinion that as this matter concerns a large number of expatriate Finns and returnees, it is important to try to find a solution.

The Secretariat is tasked with exploring, together with the Finnish Financial Ombudsman Bureau FINE, the possibilities available to Finns abroad to open a bank account in Finland for taking care of their finances.

36. Vaccinating expatriate Finns against the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes Covid-19

On March 10, 2021, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health published an information bulletin concerning Covid-19 vaccinations of persons without a municipality of residence in Finland: [It is recommended that vaccines against Covid-19 are given to persons who do not have a domicile in Finland \(in Finnish\)](#). The Ministry's recommendation to vaccinate people without a domicile in Finland against Covid-19 has been sent to all municipalities.

In the bulletin, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health recommends that municipalities and federations of municipalities give Covid-19 vaccinations to persons who do not have a domicile in Finland or who do not otherwise have the right to preventive public health care

services in Finland. However, the recommendation does not concern tourists or persons on short visits to Finland. According to the Ministry's recommendation, it is not possible to specifically travel to Finland to get vaccinated.

The recommendation of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health concerns all persons without a domicile. Thus, persons who live permanently in EU member states, EEA countries, the Nordic countries, the UK, countries with which Finland has signed a convention on social security, or third countries, and who are staying in Finland otherwise than for a short visit or for tourism, are entitled to get vaccinated against Covid-19.

Under the Government Decree on voluntary Covid-19 vaccinations (1105/2020), municipalities are responsible for organizing the vaccinations. Municipalities are responsible for vaccinating and for any related arrangements, such as information measures and booking, within their territory. Information about which groups are currently eligible to get vaccinated and how to book an appointment is available on the website of the municipality in which you are staying. Municipalities have different ways of informing about the order in which people can get vaccinated. A lot of municipalities offer the possibility to book an appointment either online or by phone. Persons without a domicile can contact the municipality in which they are staying, when it becomes possible to book an appointment to get vaccinated. For individuals without a domicile, municipalities will assess whether they can get vaccinated against Covid-19 in Finland.

It is also extremely important that expatriate Finns who are temporarily staying in Finland can get vaccinated in accordance with the vaccination system. This is why the Finland Society contacted the authorities before the recommendation of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health was drafted, and has also disseminated information about the recommendation in various media.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament does not express an opinion on the content of the initiative, but encourages expatriate Finns to contact the municipality in which they are staying in order to get vaccinated against Covid-19. If it is not possible to book an appointment online, they should telephone the municipal health care services.

37. Improved co-operation between Kela (the Social Insurance Institution of Finland) and German health insurance funds

Medical treatment in international situations means that a person receives treatment in some other country than their country of residence, or that their country of residence is not responsible for the costs for medical treatment.

When you travel or stay temporarily in an EU or EEA country or Switzerland, you will get medically necessary treatment for the same user fee that the local residents pay, if you have [a European Health Insurance Card](#). Medically necessary treatment means treatment which cannot wait until you return home. The European Health Insurance Card also makes it possible to receive treatment in connection with a chronic illness, pregnancy, or childbirth.

If you suddenly get ill while in another EU or EEA country or Switzerland, you can choose reimbursement either under the Finnish law or the law of the country in which you receive the treatment. In either case, Kela cannot give advance information on the amount of the

reimbursement. Reimbursement under the Finnish law means that the costs are reimbursed as if you had received treatment in a similar situation in the Finnish public healthcare system. Kela will obtain the necessary information from the public healthcare provider of your municipality of residence. If you choose to be reimbursed according to the law of the country in which the treatment was provided, Kela will ask the relevant country for the amount of the reimbursement.

You can also receive reimbursement for travel expenses. Travel expenses in the EU or EEA countries and Switzerland are reimbursed based on the cost of travel to the nearest local place of treatment. If you get ill in a country other than an EU or EEA country or Switzerland, your travel expenses will not be reimbursed. When you return to Finland, only the travel expenses incurred in Finland are reimbursed, — such as the cost of transfer from the airport to the hospital. It should be noted that the travel reimbursement does not cover, for example, the flight to Finland from the other country. Reimbursement is also paid for [medicines purchased abroad](#).

Instructions on seeking reimbursement for medical costs are available on Kela's website: [Medical treatment abroad - kela.fi](#)

Information about health care services in different countries is available at [EU-healthcare.fi](#). The purpose of the website is to help citizens who need treatment for a sudden illness while traveling abroad. It is also helpful if you wish to [seek treatment abroad](#).

Finnish citizens who are living abroad temporarily (in other words, less than 6 months) are usually entitled to receive Kela's benefits as if they were still living in Finland. This means that existing benefits continue to be paid to the person who has moved abroad and new benefit applications may be granted. [However, basic social assistance cannot be paid to a person who is living abroad](#).

If you live abroad on a permanent basis (for more than 6 months), you are normally not eligible for benefits from Kela (the Social Insurance Institution of Finland). The payment of benefits ends on the day when you move.

More information about medical treatment costs abroad and their reimbursement is available here: [Costs and reimbursements of treatment abroad - EU-healthcare.fi](#)

Germany has a dual health insurance system, which consists of a statutory health insurance, (GKV) handled by statutory health insurance funds, and a private health insurance (PKV). The GKV is available for everyone, while the private health insurance is subject to certain conditions.

In Germany, the statutory health insurance is covered by the principle of benefits in kind. This means that health care services are provided to insured persons without an advance payment to the health care provider (such as their doctor). Instead, the health care provider provides the necessary service and invoices the statutory health care fund to which the patient is affiliated.

The offering of available benefits is regulated by law. Many health insurance funds supplement the statutory benefits by offering additional benefits. However, under the law, more than 90% of the benefits offered are available to all patients who are covered by the statutory health insurance. In addition, there are benefits which are not included in the

common price list (Einheitlicher Bewertungsmaßstab — EBM). These benefits are called individual health services (individuelle Gesundheitsleistungen — IGeL) and they are available only to patients who pay for them out of their own pocket. Costs related to these services are not reimbursed even though the patient is affiliated to the statutory health insurance.

The principle of benefits in kind does not apply to private health insurance. If a patient has private health insurance, the health care provider will invoice the cost of treatment when it has ended. The prices of individual benefits are determined in price scales. In an ordinary case, the patient will first pay the bill and send it to their health insurance company, which will reimburse the cost either partly or in full.

Nationals of the European Economic Area (EEA) as well as nationals of countries with which Germany has signed a social security convention may still continue to be covered by an insurance in their home countries.

The Contact Point for Cross-Border Health Care at Kela (the Social Insurance Institution of Finland) is responsible for communicating with German health insurance funds.

Communication is needed, especially in the case of clients who move from Germany to Finland and only receive pension from Germany. When people move from one country to another, it has to be established which country shall be responsible for the cost of their medical treatment. This is why Kela has to establish contact with their health insurance fund in the country which is paying their pension.

According to the information received from the Contact Point for Cross-Border Health Care, cooperation with German health insurance funds, and also other foreign health insurance funds, is mainly smooth and problem-free. In the case of Germany, the biggest problem is that unless Kela has the name and address of the correct health insurance fund, they are not able to proceed with matters like requesting documents or additional information. The German contact point for cross-border healthcare (Deutsche Verbindungsstelle Krankenversicherung — Ausland, DVKA) informed Kela (the Social Insurance Institution of Finland) that they do not have a common database in which they could check the health insurance fund affiliation of individual clients in Germany. In many other European countries this is possible, which makes it relatively easy for Kela to obtain the contact details of a client's health insurance fund and to request the necessary documents.

Kela also uses the European Commission's search function for social security institutions known as CAI. In this search function, it is possible to search health insurance institutions from different countries; but especially in the case of Germany, it is important to know the name of the relevant health insurance fund to be able to find it in the search. Usually, Kela sends a letter to a pension recipient who has moved to Finland, requesting them to either send Kela the document needed to determine the responsibility for reimbursing medical treatment costs (form E121 or S1) or, alternatively, to give Kela the contact details of their health insurance fund in Germany to allow Kela to request the relevant document directly from the fund. In the letter, the client is also requested to provide the name of the body paying the pension — sometimes the pension fund may know which health insurance fund the client is affiliated with, as health insurance contributions are withheld from the pension amount and disbursed to the health insurance fund. These alternatives are listed in the letter sent to clients, who are not automatically obliged to send the relevant documents to Kela themselves, because they have the alternative of giving the contact details of either the health insurance fund or the pension fund, so that Kela can proceed to request the document directly from the health insurance fund. Having received the necessary contact

details, Kela is usually able to track down the correct health insurance fund and send them the document request. The good news is that Kela is in the process of developing the letter template to make it easier for clients to understand what information they need to send to Kela.

Electronic data interchange will be taken into use at Kela in the beginning of June, which will certainly help speed up the process of requesting documents. Nevertheless, in most cases, Kela has to ask the client to provide the contact details of the health insurance fund. It is understandable that elderly people in particular may not know where they can find the contact details that Kela needs or which foreign health insurance fund they are affiliated with, because this information is simply not available in any single register of institutions. The client may, however, have correspondence from their German health insurance fund in which the name and contact details of the fund are given. The client could also check their bank statement for the name and possibly the contact details of the body that pays their pension and send these to Kela. According to a representative of the Contact Point of Cross-Border Health Care, the biggest problem seems to be identifying the relevant health insurance fund rather than communication or exchange of information between Kela and the German health insurance funds.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The initiative does not merit a resolution. The challenge seems to be in identifying the relevant health insurance fund rather than communication or exchange of information between Kela and the German health insurance funds. The good news is that Kela is in the process of developing the template of the letter to be sent to clients in order to make it easier for them to understand what information they need to send to Kela.

V RESOLUTIONS ON STUDY AND TRAINING ISSUES I

38. Support funding for students with learning difficulties or in need of other support measures

Under Section 31 of the Basic Education Act, a child with special educational needs has the right to get assistance services. Concentration and/or learning difficulties should not prevent a child from attending school. Special needs education and support should be available in the child's native language, especially when the learning difficulties are related to learning the native language and to studying in a foreign language.

According to the Ministry of Education and Culture, subsidies granted to schools are not earmarked. The subsidies are subject to the same rules as in schools in Finland. It is possible to explain the need for financing in greater detail in the application for state subsidy.

It is the responsibility of the provider of education to make sure that the plan for student welfare is put to practice in accordance with the curriculum or the decision of the provider of education referred to in Section 99, paragraph 1, of the Act on Vocational Education and Training.

Resolution 33/2015: The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Finnish authorities take action to improve the learning conditions of Finnish pupils in the European Schools, to increase the effectiveness of catering to pupils with special educational needs, *and to introduce allocations for the necessary personnel into the budget of the relevant administrative sector.*

Resolution 34/2017: The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes... In addition, the support services for learning and studying (student welfare services) *and the relevant staff resources* should be secured *in the way required by Finnish law.*

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that in the context of allocating state aid for Finnish schools abroad and European Schools, pupils and students with special educational needs should be taken into consideration in order to improve the support for learning in the way required by Finnish law.

39. The distance education provided by the Kulkuri/Nomadskolan School of Distance Education to students in basic education age who reside abroad

According to the Act on General Upper Secondary Education, distance education is allowed, and students living abroad can participate in general upper secondary education in their native language free of charge. For students who live abroad on a temporary basis and attend a local or international school, the learning of their native language and the second national language must also be guaranteed in the Basic Education Act.

The Kulkuri School of Distance Education, operating under the auspices of the Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation KVS, has been dependent on discretionary funding for 45 years. During this time, the Kulkuri School of Distance Education has developed methods of distance education for students in basic education age and set up a modern online school which has more than 400 students of basic education age abroad per year.

The Kulkuri School of Distance Education is a highly recognized body: at the end of 2019, it was the first provider of online education in Finland to receive the Sustainable Development Certification of Educational Establishments awarded by the OKKA Foundation for Teaching, Education and Personal Development, as well as the first provider of online education in the world to be awarded the status of a UNESCO Associated School. In 2020, the Kulkuri School of Distance Education was shortlisted for the Cygnaeus Award, which is awarded by the Finnish National Agency for Education. In 2018, the Kulkuri School of Distance Education came second in the Lukuklaani (Reading Clan) competition and used the award funds to set up an e-library for students living abroad.

There are six Finnish schools abroad providing basic education. As a rule, children in basic education age, who live abroad, attend their local school. However, there are exceptional situations when attending the local school is not possible or appropriate: The student lives in a developing country, where local schools do not have the necessary resources to enroll students with a different native language, and there is no international school in the area.

A student who moves abroad for the duration of the 9th grade of school does not speak the language of the local school and wants to complete basic education in their own native language and earn a Finnish certificate of basic education.

A student who has lived abroad for years and attended school in a foreign language is preparing to move back to Finland and return to a Finnish school.

A student has special educational needs that the local schools cannot meet (for example, dyslexia).

A student cannot attend school in a classroom due to social or psychiatric issues.

The Kulkuri School of Distance Education has students in about 60 different countries. For students who live abroad on a temporary basis, it is important to maintain and develop their skills in their native language so they can successfully return to a Finnish school.

The Kulkuri School of Distance Education allows the students to follow the Finnish national curriculum in the Finnish language and literature. The Kulkuri School of Distance Education also makes it possible for students to study Swedish as the second national language, which makes it easier to return to a Finnish school. Correspondingly, the Nomadskolan School of Distance Education allows Swedish-speaking Finns who live abroad to study Swedish as their native language and Finnish as the second national language.

An amendment of the Finnish Basic Education Act entered into force on January 1, 2021, allowing exceptional teaching arrangements and distance learning in exceptional situations. For students living abroad, who cannot attend a local school, such an exceptional situation is always present. It should be possible, on certain conditions, to organize appropriate distance learning for them in accordance with the law.

The chair of the Finnish Parliament's friendship group for Finns abroad, Ms. Sari Sarkomaa, submitted a written question in Parliament regarding the development and funding of Finnish language schools as well as distance learning offered to students in basic education age living abroad. The question refers to the report of the task force on the status and future of schools abroad (Ministry of Education and Culture 2019:28). According to this report, it is necessary to investigate the development possibilities and change needs regarding online education that is more accessible than today, carefully planned, and of a high quality. "Finland does not have a systematic concept of distance and online learning for learners abroad that is recognized by law."

Resolution 27/2017: The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Ministry of Education and Culture to comply with the will of the Finnish Parliament and take action to increase the annual state subsidy for the Kulkuri School of Distance Education run by the Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation to at least 200,000 euro per year, so that online tuition is made possible. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament emphasizes that these funds must be specifically allocated to the Kulkuri School of Distance Education, so that the funding for other operators included in the budget line in question is not reduced.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Ministry of Education and Culture to take action to have the distance education provided by the Kulkuri/Nomadskolan School of Distance Education to students in basic education age who reside abroad included in the scope of the Basic Education Act.

40. Level of the state subsidy granted to the Summer High School Association

In 2015, the Summer High School Association had to discontinue its course activities for expatriate Finnish children and young people because of reduced state subsidies. An increase of at least EUR 130,000 in the current state subsidy would be needed in order to start the activities again.

Earlier, the Summer High School Association used the same state subsidy to organize both courses for Finns abroad and summer high schools. Due to the constant fluctuations and reductions of the state subsidy over several years, it has become too challenging and financially uncertain to organize courses for Finnish children living abroad. For example, in 2014, the state subsidy was suddenly cut by EUR 98.000, and the following year it continued at the same low level.

The Association's Board decided to allocate the entire state subsidy to summer high school activities, because the subsidy was insufficient for organizing both kinds of courses. The Board did not consider it to be in line with the values of the Association to radically increase the course attendance fees. In its current activities, the Association is only able to take into consideration young expatriate Finns who are 15 years or older. For them, summer high schools in the Finnish language and culture have been organized during four summers.

Camp activities for Finnish expatriate children and young people represent an important contact with their other home country, as well as an opportunity to practice their Finnish and to get to know Finnish culture in a completely Finnish-speaking environment outside their homes and the Finnish language schools.

In the proposed state budget in 2021, the state subsidy proposed for the Summer High School Association is EUR 128,000. The current state subsidy is still not enough to organize anything other than summer high schools. In order to reconsider organizing the summer courses for Finns abroad, the annual state subsidy for the Summer High School Association should be at least EUR 260,000.

Increasing the state subsidy alone, however, is not sufficient. The state subsidy should facilitate predictability and planning as well as regularity in the annual activities. To organize courses in the summer, planning and practical preparations have to be started already in the preceding autumn. When participants arrive from abroad, it is necessary to be able to plan their travel arrangements in good time.

The Summer High School Association had a long history of organizing courses for Finns abroad. Courses had been organized since the 1970's, bringing together a total of almost 200 children and young people from all over the world, aged between 7 and 18 years. There is still a high demand for the camps, and it still keeps coming as a surprise for many families that the courses have been discontinued.

As it is now, the Summer High School Association is not able to make use of the expertise it has gathered in the field of supporting the language skills and cultural identity of Finnish children and young people abroad. The Association would like to continue the valuable work of supporting the Finnish language skills and cultural identity of children and young people.

Resolution 28/2017: The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Ministry of Education and Culture to increase the state subsidy allocated to the Summer High School Association, at least to the same level as in 2013, to make it possible to restart the important summer camp activities for Finnish expatriate children and young people. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament emphasizes that these funds must be specifically allocated to the Summer High School Association, so that the funding for other operators included in the budget line in question is not reduced.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Ministry of Education and Culture to restore the state subsidy allocated to the Summer High School Association to a level that makes it possible to restart the important summer camp activities for Finnish expatriate children and young people.

41. The education of Finnish children and young people residing in Costa del Sol, Spain, to be secured within the Finnish educational system

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament recommends that the Ministry of Education and Culture clarify and specify their interpretation regarding the funding per student granted to Finnish schools abroad as well as the requirement based on the Municipality of Residence Act. It is necessary to safeguard the possibility of Finnish citizens to flexibly receive education within the Finnish education system, including Finnish schools abroad, throughout their schooling.

42. Amending the licenses of and securing the funding for Finnish schools abroad

There are Finnish schools providing education in line with the Finnish national curriculum in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Tallinn, Tartu, Brussels, and Fuengirola in Costa del Sol, Spain. The Finnish school in Costa del Sol also provides upper secondary school education in accordance with the Finnish national curriculum.

For a long time, the existence of these schools has facilitated the mobility of Finnish families with children and young people between the country of destination and Finland, making it possible to receive education abroad within the Finnish school system and facilitating a seamless return to Finland.

In 2014, there was a change of the criteria for the funding granted to these schools per student. The law was not amended, but the interpretation of the law by the authorities changed. Earlier, the relevant criterion was to be a Finnish citizen, whereas now it was required that the student must have a domicile in Finland. The new interpretation had a direct impact on the operating capacity and financial situation of the schools.

Different Finnish families spend different periods of time in their countries of destination, and it is not always possible to keep a domicile in Finland in the way required according to the current interpretation. It should also be noted that when the Municipality of Residence Act is applied as the criterion for granting state aid per student, the requirements regarding residence permits in EU member states are overlooked. The purpose of the Municipality of Residence Act is to balance municipal economies, which means that it is not suitable for determining the funding of Finnish schools abroad.

The authorizations to provide education state "temporary residence" as the criterion for student enrollment, and the interpretation of this requirement in accordance with Section 5 of the Municipality of Residence Act, as well as the requirement of the Ministry of Education and Culture to provide an extract from the Population Register, have been causing problems in defining the length of temporary residence. In their discussion (379/1981) of the justification for the law, the legislator stated that in the case of schools abroad, the temporary nature of residence may sometimes be difficult to determine.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament recommends that the Ministry of Education and Culture clarify and specify their interpretation regarding the funding per student granted to Finnish schools abroad as well as the requirement based on the Municipality of Residence Act. It is necessary to safeguard the possibility of Finnish citizens to flexibly receive education within the Finnish education system, including Finnish schools abroad, throughout their schooling.

43. Act amending the Act on Liberal Adult Education

Over the years, the Finnish Association of Adult Education Centres (Kansalaisopistojen liitto KoL) received a lot of requests to organize courses for adults in Finnish in Costa del Sol. With the help of project funding, course activities were organized by the Finnish Adult Education Association between 2004 and 2008. When the project ended, the Finns residing and visiting Costa del Sol, Spain, acted on the advice given by the ministry and established the association *Sofian kannatusyhdistys* to continue the operation from the beginning of 2009 onwards.

It is not mentioned in the Act on Liberal Adult Education that an authorization to run an adult education center could be given to a provider of education operating abroad, as it is in the Basic Education Act and the Act on General Upper Secondary Education. An authorization to run an adult education center would increase the stability of the operation.

Resolution 33/2017: The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Act on Liberal Adult Education (1765/2009) be amended by inserting the following into Section 4: "The authorization may also be granted for education provided abroad".

Regarding the resolution from 2017, the ministry is of the opinion that the scope of the funding can be extended to Finns living in other countries if the Finnish Parliament allocates the necessary funding into the budget heading.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament supports the proposal by the Sofia-opisto Institute that the Act on Liberal Adult Education (1765/2009) be amended to the extent that an authorization for an Adult Education Center may also be granted for education provided abroad.

VI RESOLUTIONS ON STUDY AND TRAINING ISSUES (II)

44. Review of the state subsidy criteria for Suomi Schools and an increase in their basic funding

The funding of Suomi Schools has been relatively uncertain over the years. For years, the state subsidy allocated for the operation of the Suomi Schools amounted to EUR 450,000. As a result of persistent lobbying and efforts by the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, an additional appropriation of 200,000 euro was granted by the Finnish Parliament in 2011. After 2011, the amount of the additional appropriation has varied annually. The Finnish Parliament has thus clearly indicated that the funding allocated to Suomi Schools by the Ministry of Education and Culture is not sufficient. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Education and Culture has reduced the basic funding allocated to Suomi Schools. It was at its lowest in 2016, when the amount was EUR 390,000, representing a decrease of 13%. The amounts of the basic funding granted by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the additional appropriation allocated by the Finnish Parliament have varied from one year to the next:

Year	Ministry of Education and Culture	Finnish Parliament	Total
2009	450,000 €	-	450,000 €
2010	450,000 €	-	450,000 €
2011	450,000 €	200,000 €	650,000 €
2012	450,000 €	150,000 €	600,000 €
2013	450,000 €	150,000 €	600,000 €
2014	450,000 €	150,000 €	600,000 €
2015	450,000 €	150,000 €	600,000 €
2016	390,000 € (decrease 13.4%)	200,000 €	590,000 €
2017	424,000 €	230,000 €	654,000 €
2018	429,000 €	150,000 €	579,000 €
2019	429,000 €	250,000 €	679,000 €
2020	429,000 €	300,000 €	729,000 €

The overall development as such has been favorable, but the situation is very vulnerable, because getting the Parliament's additional appropriation requires a new fight every year. The funding allocated to Suomi Schools by the Ministry of Education and Culture should be set permanently to a sufficiently high level, so that the operation of the schools would not depend on the additional appropriation granted by the Parliament.

On May 24, 2021, Member of Parliament Ms. Sari Sarkomaa submitted a written question in Parliament about the funding of Suomi Schools (https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/vaski/Kysymys/Sivut/KK_336+2021.aspx?fbclid=IwAR2whqMeFljR88sL9jIjNjTjI7hEYap8WMeaE_XdC9J6kfFShp6I5SILeyg).

The state subsidy reserved for Suomi Schools is included in the state budget heading 29.10.51, subheading 29.10.51.3 (State subsidy for NGOs). According to the justifications given for the budget heading, the appropriations may be used to allocate subsidies to several different actors (NGOs promoting co-operation between the school and home, to the Development Centre Opinkirjo, to supporting free-form hobby activities in schools, to the Finnish Association of Art Schools for Children and Young People, to the Finnish Association for Environmental Education, to the Summer High School Association, to the Association Supporting the Finnish Language Schools Abroad and the operation and development of Suomi Schools, to schools of distance education, to support certain organizations arranging student exchange, and to support international science olympiad activities for upper secondary school students).

However, since 2011, the Finnish Parliament has, as proposed by the Finance Committee's Subcommittee for Education and Science, allocated an additional appropriation to the state subsidy, which is intended for Suomi Schools and is added to the budget heading mentioned above. Each year, however, there have been issues in actually getting the funds paid to the Suomi Schools, because the same budget heading contains funding allocated to several different actors. It is only due to the active efforts of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament and the Finland Society that the additional appropriation granted to Suomi Schools by the Finnish Parliament has been correctly allocated.

According to the Government Policy Programme on Expatriate Finns for 2017-2021, "Suomi Schools have been the most successful effort of Finns abroad in the field of education in the past few decades". In order to guarantee the successful operation of Suomi Schools, the state subsidy for these schools must be transferred to a separate heading in the state budget. This is also justified by the large number of Suomi Schools and the large number of students in them (around 120 schools with more than 3400 students in the academic year 2020-2021, despite the pandemic).

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament repeats its demand of several years that the Ministry of Education and Culture comply with the will of the Finnish Parliament and increase the funding of Suomi Schools by bringing the budget appropriation permanently to a sufficient level and that a separate budget heading be established in the state budget for Suomi Schools.

45. Reducing the group size in Suomi Schools

An increasing number of children who either speak Finnish very little, or not at all, are seeking a place in Suomi Schools. Teaching them together with children who speak more Finnish is very challenging and may hinder language learning for both groups. The most appropriate alternative would be to teach them in separate groups. This requires additional funding so that the group size can be reduced from six to four, six students being the current criterion of eligibility for state subsidy. (Publication of the Ministry of Education and Culture no. 2019:28, 46, 49-51). Reducing the group size would also make it easier to establish new Suomi Schools.

Cf. In basic education and general upper secondary education in Finland, the group size criterion for state subsidy applied to teaching in the student's native language (other than Finnish or Swedish) is four pupils (Decree of the Ministry of Education 1777/2009, Section 3: <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/alkup/2009/20091777>).

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Ministry of Education and Culture to reduce the group size requirement for state subsidy applied to Suomi Schools from six to four pupils, and to increase the subsidy allocated to the Suomi Schools correspondingly. This way, high-quality teaching in the Suomi Schools can be guaranteed for students with varying levels of language skills.

46. All children under school age to be covered by the state subsidy for Suomi Schools

The Finnish government supports Suomi Schools by a subsidy payable for *students between 3 and 18 years of age*. The support funding for Suomi Schools should be extended to cover children under three years of age, because the first years of life are crucially important for language development. A number of Suomi Schools have a lot of children under 3 years of age wishing to attend, and it depends on the resources available in each school what kind of services can be offered to this group.

Take the Finnish School in Seattle as an example: The Finnish School in Seattle has been in operation since 1995. Every year, for more than 20 years, about half of the school's students have been under 3 years of age. In 2017, 41 out of 94 students in the school were under 3 years old. In recent years, about 70 new Finnish families with children have relocated to the Seattle area. This has led to an explosive growth in the number of students in the Finnish School. The rapid growth and large demand bring challenges in terms of running the everyday operations of the school and planning for the future. This year, new families have had or are going to have about 20 new babies. The music groups for babies and groups for children under school age in the Finnish School in Seattle are so popular that parents are even registering their unborn babies to the school. By registering in advance, parents wish to secure a place in the Finnish School for their children. Because of sparse resources, the Finnish School is not able to offer places to everyone who would like to attend.

Language learning and growing up multilingual starts from birth. Including children under 3 years of age in the state subsidy would bring significant help and support to all Suomi Schools in the world. This would mean that developing and growing Suomi Schools would be able to hire new competent teachers, rent additional space, and increase the number of

groups offered to the youngest Finns abroad. ([Publication of the Ministry of Education and Culture no. 2019:28](#), pp. 46, 49-51).

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament calls for the Ministry of Education and Culture to extend the state subsidy to also cover the teaching of children under three years of age in Suomi Schools and to increase the funding of the schools accordingly. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament emphasizes that this appropriation must be specifically allocated to children under 3 years of age so that the funding already allocated to those aged 3 to 18 years is not reduced.

47. Funding to be guaranteed for training events for teachers and administrators in Suomi Schools

Sufficient funding must be allocated to the annual international training events organized by the Support Association of the Finnish Language Schools Abroad, the Finland Society, and the Finnish National Agency for Education, as well as for the regional training events for teachers in Suomi Schools, so that all teachers wishing to attend are able to do so. An international training event is organized every year in Helsinki. Participants pay the cost of their travel and accommodation, otherwise the training is free of charge.

To make it possible for even small Suomi Schools in different parts of the world to send their teachers to the training event, the schools should be given funding to facilitate participation. In this way, the number of people attending would certainly increase. At the moment, most participants pay for their travel and accommodation out of their own pocket. The cost of regional training events for teachers of Suomi Schools varies between countries. It would obviously attract even more participants to these events if the schools had the opportunity to apply for grants for covering the cost of participation. Not all Suomi Schools have enough funds. The aim should be that all teachers who are willing could participate in the training events for teachers of Suomi Schools, both in Helsinki and in the regions.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that sufficient annual funding should be allocated to international and regional training events for teachers and administrators of Suomi Schools, in order to guarantee regular and equitable continuing education.

48. Informing Finnish youth abroad about educational, traineeship, and work opportunities

Suomi Schools and parents invest a lot of time and energy to keep up children's skills in the Finnish language. Efforts to keep up the Finnish language are valued in Finland, which is evidenced by the fact that the Finnish government continues to grant subsidies to Suomi Schools. However, there is not much effort to maintain these young people's connection with Finland after they have finished their studies in Suomi Schools. We propose that information should be provided in Suomi Schools about educational and work opportunities in Finland. The Finland Society's website, nuoretmaailmalla.fi (Young people

abroad), is an excellent way to provide additional information about educational, traineeship, and work opportunities to Finnish youth abroad.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Finland Society continue to collect information about the educational, traineeship and work opportunities available in Finland and to disseminate this information to Finnish youth abroad with the help of Finnish expatriate communities.

49. Information about the possibilities of Finnish children and youth abroad to attend Finnish schools in Finland and to participate in camps organized in Finland

Recently, there has been increasing awareness about how important returning expatriate Finns are for Finland. It often happens that when the children of Finns abroad grow up, they would like to move to Finland even though their parents continue living abroad. This has been happening in Italy, among others, where opportunities in terms of education and work are not as good as in Finland. To have the interest and courage to move to Finland when they grow up, Finnish youth abroad need to have at least reasonably good skills in Finnish. Not all children of Finns abroad have the opportunity to attend a Suomi School. For many children, the development of their language skills depends on their parents' persistence in keeping up the language in a foreign culture. To keep up the motivation of their children and youth, many parents have managed to arrange for opportunities for their children to attend classes in a Finnish school while the family is having a holiday in Finland. Such an opportunity to attend school in Finland and to get to know the Finnish school world increased the children's motivation to learn Finnish. Even short periods of attending school in Finland helped the children make friends in Finland and become part of the Finnish society for a while. The children had extremely positive experiences of attending school in Finland, something that seemed to be particularly suitable for children in the first six grades of basic education. Many Finnish schools are also happy to host international guests. It is also possible to organize, for example, a year as an exchange student in a Finnish upper secondary school.

Participating in a language camp is another motivator for Finnish children and youth abroad to keep up their Finnish language skills. However, there is nobody in Finland who organizes such camps after the Summer High School Association discontinued their camp activities for Finnish children abroad. In recent years, there were some summer camps open to all Finnish children abroad that were organized by a few teachers in Suomi Schools (a camp in Hanko 2017, organized by the Finnish School of New York, and camps in Huittinen in 2018 and 2019, organized by teachers in the Suomi Schools in Strasbourg and Lyon). The Support Association of the Finnish Language Schools Abroad carried out a survey in 2020 to inquire about the willingness of Finnish families involved in Suomi Schools to send their children to a summer camp in Finland. According to the survey, there is a huge amount of interest in such camps. Within the Support Association of the Finnish Language Schools Abroad, there is discussion about the possibility to organize a summer camp in co-operation with the Summer High School Association. However, funding is needed from Finland in order to keep the cost reasonable so that the cost would not form an obstacle for participating. Information about the camp opportunities could be disseminated on the perhemailmalla.fi (family abroad) website.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Support Association of the Finnish Language Schools Abroad and the Finland Society to inform Finnish families abroad about the possibility to visit Finnish schools in Finland and to investigate possibilities to organize camps for Finnish expatriate children and youth.

VII RESOLUTIONS ON YOUTH ISSUES

50. Digital libraries in Finland to be made widely accessible to expatriate Finns

Library services in Finland are being brought online, which makes it possible to access the collections regardless of where you live. A lot of libraries are already lending e-books, and the scope of the service is expanding all the time. During the Covid-19 pandemic, demand for various online services has increased. Finns abroad would benefit from access to the nationwide library network in Finland, because e-books (both standard and fixed-layout formats), audiobooks (downloadable), and other digital media products are easy to access from all over the world.

In Finland, libraries are municipal services that can be accessed with a library card. To get a library card, you need to have an address in Finland. When applying for a library card, you need to give your address and present an ID with a photo and your personal ID number. With conditions like these, Finns abroad cannot benefit from library services in Finland. As the share of digital products and online services increases, access to library services would be important for people of all ages who speak Finnish, and it would be a nice way to support the contact of Finnish youth abroad to the country where they or their parents were born. Library services could provide a wonderful link to the home country and the Finnish culture, and a way to keep up their Finnish identity.

If Finns abroad are allowed access to the varied online services of Finnish libraries, information about this possibility must be widely disseminated among Finns abroad.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Finland Society to investigate and disseminate information about possibilities to get access to the online services of libraries in Finland for those who live permanently abroad and do not have an address in Finland.

51. Group access rights to digital media

Finns abroad need access to books, magazines, and newspapers in Finnish about Finland. Media products are important for keeping up the language, receiving topical information, and maintaining connections. The distance to Finland and other Finns abroad makes it difficult to obtain and use printed media. Digital products and online services are increasingly becoming available and offer a solution to this problem.

The share of both e-books and audiobooks of the total book sales is continuously increasing (sellers of audiobooks include Adlibris, Elisa Kirja, Suomalainen Kirjakauppa). Most e-books are sold to readers for a price per book (sellers of e-books include: Akateeminen kirjakauppa/Academic Bookstore, iTunes, Elisa Kirja, Ellibs, Suomalainen Kirjakauppa, Suuri Suomalainen Kirjakerho). Monthly subscriptions are another option that is becoming increasingly popular; for example, Storytel and Bookbeat offer unlimited access to their offering for a monthly fee. Contrary to expectations, however, the prices of digital books, magazines, and newspapers are not necessarily much different from the prices of printed ones — even after the VAT rate of 24% on e-books and e-papers was reduced to 10% from July 1, 2019 onwards, to correspond to the VAT rate on printed books and papers. The reduced VAT rate did not significantly reduce the prices of e-books, perhaps partly because printing costs only represent approximately 5% of the total production costs of a book, whereas the costs of publishing printed books and e-books contain a number of shared elements.

Not everyone can afford to buy a subscription of their own, so group access rights are needed. These days, publishers usually grant access rights for up to five devices, but they must be used by the members of one family. We would like to have a possibility to acquire digital books and papers to be used by communities. We propose that it should be possible to buy access rights for, say, 5 / 10 / 20 / 50 persons who are members of the same non-profit association, such as Suomi Schools operating abroad.

We ask publishers to open up such a new service, because we believe it would benefit both parties. The service company in the book trade Kirjavälitys Oy, which was established in 1919 and is owned by Finnish publishers and bookstores, could expand their clientele (which currently includes publishers, book and web shops, retail, schools, libraries, clubs, media companies, and printing houses, among others). Kirjavälitys Oy offers online services for schools via Kirjavalitys.fi (the online service Kouluväylä). This would bring

- new customers for Finnish publishers: Finns abroad and their families are a new, interesting and growing target group
- an international audience for the products of Finnish publishers
- easy and attractive access to Finnish digital products for Finns abroad
- increased importance for Finnish expatriate communities in supporting the Finnish language and culture, strengthening their activities in areas where sharing printed products is difficult due to long distances.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes to Finnish publishers that they extend the digital access rights to their books, magazines, and newspapers so that it would become possible to buy group access rights for Finnish expatriate communities.

52. Activities for young people after Suomi School

There are approximately 120 Suomi Schools in the world, with a total of around 3,400 students. Suomi Schools are language schools for children who speak Finnish either as their mother tongue or as a second or foreign language. Teaching in Suomi Schools is focused on supporting children in learning the Finnish language and culture and maintaining their language skills.

Suomi Schools and parents invest a lot of time and energy to keep up children's skills in the Finnish language. Efforts to keep up the Finnish language are valued in Finland, which is evidenced by the fact that the Finnish government grants subsidies to Suomi Schools. Suomi Schools enroll Finnish children abroad between the ages of 3 and 18 years. According to the information available from the schools' applications for state subsidy, most of the students in Suomi Schools are under 12 years of age.

However, there is not much effort to maintain these young people's connection with Finland after they have finished attending Suomi Schools. Few opportunities are available for them to keep up their skills in the Finnish language and culture with the help of a teacher. Events and networking opportunities are rarely organized, and they have no shared community or continuity. One way to solve this problem could be to establish a community or network of former students of Suomi Schools, like an alumni network, with someone to take responsibility for running the activities. In fact, there have already been preliminary discussions between the Finland Society, the Support Association of the Finnish Language Schools Abroad, and the Finnish National Agency for Education about starting such alumni activities for former students of Suomi Schools.

Part of the Finnish youngsters abroad attend vocational education and training after their years in Suomi School. Even at this stage of their educational careers, it is important to offer them opportunities to keep up and improve their Finnish language skills and strengthen their connection with Finland. It would be interesting and useful for them to establish contacts with Finland and Finnish companies, for example, through traineeships. For the Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK) and the Finland Chamber of Commerce, for example, these second-generation Finns abroad participating in vocational education and training could represent an important target group from the point of view of their members. These organizations would be able to inform Finnish expatriate youth about available traineeship options. In their work to represent and defend the interests of the Finnish business community, the Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK) focuses on skills, education and training, and immigration. Young people are also needed for seasonal work. The Finland Chamber of Commerce represents more than 20,000 Finnish businesses and works to improve their operating conditions. Part of their 12 independent regional Chambers of Commerce might be interested in marketing the idea to their member businesses in practice. The challenge is not so much about being able to communicate the idea to the businesses as it is about transforming the idea into concrete practice together with experts of education and immigration so that it could be introduced to the businesses.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK) and the Finland Chamber of Commerce as well as Finnish chambers of commerce operating abroad should introduce their members to the idea of offering traineeships and jobs to Finnish youth abroad. The Finland Society, EK, and chambers of commerce might cooperate in order to find the best way to advertise the vacancies.

53. The Edufi trainee program in expatriate Finnish newspapers and magazines in Canada to be continued

The well-functioning, long established exchange of Finnish journalist trainees with expatriate Finnish magazines and newspapers in Canada was interrupted, because Canada requires a legal basis for this activity. Bilateral negotiations between Finland and Canada to remedy the situation have taken longer than expected. For this reason, the Edufi trainee program is facing discontinuation, although none of the parties have questioned the benefits of the exchange program.

The Finnish National Agency for Education, operating under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Culture, organizes an annual application round for trainees. In order for Finland to cover the costs of the trainee, the National Agency for Education has to approve the traineeship in a Finnish expatriate media organization which meets certain criteria. Trainee journalists, for example, should preferably be advanced majors in journalism, although other major subjects may also be considered. The challenge facing Finnish expatriate media in Canada does not concern the trainees in Finnish senior homes in Canada. They do not need a work permit because they are all health care students.

For four years now, the weekly *Kanadan Sanomat* (FinnishCanadian.com, published by Vapaa Sana Press Ltd.) has not been able to recruit Finnish journalist trainees (unlike *Finnish American Reporter* in the United States, where the trainee program is continuing). Because of this lack of resources, the paper is suffering from a shortage of staff.

Expatriate Finnish media play a role in communications in the countries in which they operate, also helping to preserve language skills and a Finnish identity.

We hope that this initiative helps support the aim of Finland that Canada could accept the proposal and the negotiations could be finalized.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament supports the effort of the Finnish National Agency for Education to facilitate the fast completion of bilateral negotiations between Canada and Finland, allowing the continuation of the Edufi trainee program. It is hoped that the Finnish National Agency for Education communicates regularly and openly about the progress of the negotiations.

VIII RESOLUTIONS ON CULTURAL AND INFORMATION ISSUES

54. Reduced service level in audiobooks for Finnish-speaking persons with visual impairments in Sweden

Celia is an expert in accessible literature and publishing. It both produces and distributes literature in accessible formats, such as talking books and braille books, thus working towards equality in reading. Celia belongs to the administrative sector of the Ministry of Education and Culture and cooperates with the Swedish talking book service Legimus by making available talking books in Finnish.

These Finnish and Swedish operators, Celia and Legimus, exchange material every year, thereby making material in Finnish available via the Legimus service. In May 2021, according to a representative of Celia, there were a little over 4000 books in Finnish available in Legimus. About 15 new books are made available every month. The way the

system works is that when a book in Finnish is included in the archives of the Swedish Agency for Accessible Media (Myndigheten för tillgängliga medier, MTM), it is made available to Finns all over Sweden at the same time. The Swedish Agency for Accessible Media does not lend talking books directly to private individuals.

Celia offers a talking book service free of charge for the use of persons with, for example, visual impairment, but their mobile app can only be downloaded in Finland. According to Celia's website, "if you live outside Finland, you can access Celia's talking books and e-books online if you need to use books in Finnish or Finland Swedish, and your own library cannot give you access to such books". However, this promise only covers countries in which it is not possible to borrow talking books in Finnish from the library in your hometown, as in Sweden. The Finland Society investigated this matter in May 2021 and contacted Celia regarding the needs of Finns abroad.

Because Celia cooperates with Legimus, the advice from Celia is for Finns in Sweden to borrow books from their local libraries. However, Celia's current system does not provide equal service to all Finns abroad who need talking books. There is only a limited selection of talking books in Finnish available in Swedish municipal libraries. It should also be noted that the digitalization of services has led to increasing inequality between different user segments, as particularly a lot of elderly Finns in Sweden cannot access online services because they have no Internet connection, and Celia no longer sends talking books by mail.

Talking books represent an extremely important form of cultural content in the lives of people with a visual impairment, because a number of other forms of cultures are not accessible. This is why the Finnish government must work actively to make sure that the cultural and educational rights of Finnish-speaking persons with a visual impairment are also realized for Finns abroad.

Observations: Comments from the Ministry of Education and Culture will be distributed to the participants of the committee to support the report.

Sources: Celia's website (celia.fi), a discussion with an expert from Celia in May 2021, Legimus's website (legimus.se), and a report drafted by the persons behind the initiative.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes to the Ministry of Education and Culture that the possibility to borrow talking books in Finnish and Finland Swedish is extended to equally cover all Finns abroad who need talking books, regardless of their country of residence.

55. Completing a National Certificate of Language Proficiency outside Finland or online

The National Certificate of Language Proficiency (YKI) is a language proficiency test for adults, which assesses their knowledge of a language in everyday situations. Since the National Certificate of Language Proficiency is part of the official system of language proficiency testing in Finland, you can use the certificate to officially demonstrate your language skills when applying for a job or a place to study, or when applying for Finnish

citizenship (in the case of the tests in Finnish and Swedish). Four skill components are assessed in a YKI test: speaking, listening comprehension, writing, and reading comprehension. It can be done in three different levels: basic, intermediate, and advanced. In Finland, the National Certificate of Language Proficiency is available in nine languages, but this initiative only concerns tests in the official languages of Finland that are completed outside Finland and/or online. Under the law, it is the Finnish National Agency for Education that is responsible for the administration and development of the system of National Certificates of Language Proficiency. The Agency has the right to contract universities to carry out the tests.

At the moment, with some exceptions, it is not possible to take a National Certificate of Language Proficiency test outside Finland. Tests are regularly organized at Tallinn University in Estonia, but the responsible organizer is the University of Jyväskylä from Finland. In Singapore, there was a recent pilot to organize a test at the premises of the Finnish embassy. It was, however, rather expensive to take the test at the embassy. Earlier, there have been a few exceptional cases when National Certificate of Language Proficiency tests have been organized at least in London and Düsseldorf. These were positive experiences with successful arrangements.

The Finland Society contacted the Finnish National Agency for Education about the matter in May 2021. According to the Finnish National Agency for Education, the Covid-19 pandemic brought an increase in the number of inquiries about taking a National Certificate of Language Proficiency test online or abroad. The Finnish National Agency for Education does not see any actual legal obstacles to taking the test outside Finland.

During the pandemic, not everyone willing to take the test in Finland has been able to do so — the number of people left waiting increased. Discussion about an online test has been going on for years, and some parts of the test, such as registration, are available online. However, it would take years to bring the entire test online. An important piece of news is that the Ministry of Education and Culture is going to set up a working group on digitalization to take the matter forward.

Finland's membership in the European Union also gave the Finnish language a new kind of international status that it never had before. Finnish is a living national language and it is we, the Finns, who are responsible for its future. Our language deserves our full support and appreciation, also outside Finland. One opportunity to “market” our language is to make it possible to complete a National Certificate of Language Proficiency outside Finland.

It is likely that interest in organizing language proficiency tests is the greatest in countries in which there are many Suomi Schools. Their students would benefit from the opportunity to demonstrate their language skills and receive an official certificate attesting to their skills. However, Suomi Schools alone do not have sufficient resources to organize the tests. Instead, a local partner will be needed, such as, for example, a civic institute. In many cases, such potential partners also provide instruction in the Finnish language.

Sources: Finnish National Agency for Education (www.oph.fi), discussion with their expert in May 2021, and background reports on the topic from earlier years.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Ministry of Education and Culture to further promote the project of developing online versions of the National Certificate of Language Proficiency tests so that, in the future, the proficiency test in the national languages can be offered fully online and, at a reasonable price, in certain places outside Finland. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament also proposes that when the Ministry of Education and Culture has set up a working group on digitalization, it should also consult Finnish expatriate communities regarding the needs of Finns abroad for the language proficiency tests.

56. Activities of Finnish expatriate associations in the premises of Finnish cultural and academic institutes

There are 17 Finnish cultural and academic institutes around the world. Their aim is to advance the international mobility, visibility, and collaboration of Finnish professionals in the arts, culture, and research. The institutes cooperate through an association, the Finnish Cultural and Academic Institutes (SKTI), whose task it is to support the institutes and to promote cooperation between them. The institutes are located in the following places (listed in alphabetical order): Athens, Beirut, Berlin, Brussels, Budapest, Copenhagen, Hanasaari, London, Madrid, New York, Oslo, Paris, Rome, St. Petersburg, Stockholm, Tallinn and Tartu, and Tokyo. The Finnish Institute in Stockholm is different from the others in the sense that one of its aims is to support the language and culture of the Finnish minority in Sweden, whereas the other institutes do not specifically focus on expatriate Finns.

The aim of promoting cooperation between Finnish diplomatic missions and Finnish cultural and academic institutes on the one hand and expatriate Finns and their associations on the other hand is included in the Government Policy Programme for Expatriate Finns for 2017—2021.

Finnish expatriate associations find it important to investigate possible forms of future cooperation between the institutes and Finnish expatriate associations. Consideration should be given to what is the best form of cooperation from the point of view of both the Finnish expatriate bodies and the duties that the institutes have to perform. Expatriate Finns are hoping, among other things, to be able to organize activities for Finns abroad in the premises of the institutes whenever they are available.

Observations: Comments on the matter by Ms. Tove Ekman, director of the Finnish Cultural and Academic Institutes, will be distributed to the participants of the committee to support the report.

Sources: The Finnish Cultural and Academic Institutes (instituutit.fi), the Government Policy Programme for Expatriate Finns for 2017—2021.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes to the Ministry of the Interior that active measures be taken to support the cooperation between local Finnish associations, Finnish diplomatic missions and the government-funded Finnish cultural and academic institutes. This cooperation is mentioned in the Government Policy Programme for Expatriate Finns for 2017—2021. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament

also proposes to the Ministry of the Interior, which is in the process of drafting a new strategy concerning expatriate Finns, that the aim of promoting cooperation between the institutes, Finnish diplomatic missions, and Finnish expatriate associations is also recorded in the new government strategy for expatriate Finns.

57. Improving the possibilities to view Yle's programs

The program offering of Yle, the Finnish Broadcasting Company, is an important resource for Finns abroad for maintaining their native language and culture. According to Yle, most of the content in Yle Areena is available for viewing and listening outside Finland, but for contractual reasons, some of the programs are only available in Finland. The operations of Yle are funded by an annual public broadcasting tax as provided in the Act on Public Broadcasting Tax. A large number of expatriate Finns also pay the public broadcasting tax.

The EU Regulation on cross-border portability of online content services entered into force in 2018, making it possible to use on-demand video services like Yle Areena within the European Union. Under this regulation, nationals of EU member states are able to use the online content services they have subscribed to in their country of residence even when they are visiting another EU member state. The regulation is a part of the Digital Single Market strategy aiming, among other things, to improve the possibilities of consumers to use online content services in the internal market of the EU. In line with the regulation, Yle makes all content in Yle Areena available for viewing and listening within the EU to persons who have their domicile in Finland. Users have to confirm their domicile in the *Omat tiedot* (My profile) section of their Yle account. However, the portability of online content only covers the EU territory. Outside the EU, country restrictions still apply.

For copyright reasons, Yle Areena cannot be opened for global access, because for some program content, Yle will not or cannot acquire global broadcasting rights. Typically, such content includes many international programs, international inserts within programs, music content, or international sports events. However, Yle always strives to acquire as extensive broadcasting rights as possible. Finns abroad will benefit from the function available in Yle Areena that will show the user whether a certain piece of content is available abroad. All Yle's radio channels can be listened to as live broadcasts anywhere in the world.

Expatriate Finns wish to be able to watch Finnish TV programs as extensively as possible and keep abreast of events in Finland with the help of television. The duty of Yle is to serve all Finns. For Finnish children and elderly Finns abroad, for example, content in Finnish and Swedish is extremely important. Access to a program offering that is as extensive as possible, within copyright rules, is valuable for Finns abroad in terms of language, culture, and education. Communications also play a key role in informing Finns abroad about Yle's program content that is relevant for expatriate Finns, such as programs for children and young people, supporting the development and maintenance of their Finnish or Swedish language skills.

Observations: Comments from Mr. Petri Jauhiainen, Head of Media at Yle, will be distributed to the participants of the committee to support the report.

Sources: Yle Areena (<https://ohjeet.areena.yle.fi/>), Finnish Government (<https://valtioneuvosto.fi/-/1410845/digitaalisten-sisaltojen-siirrettavyysasetus-voimaan-1-4->) and background reports on the topic from earlier years.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges Yle (the Finnish Broadcasting Company) to continue negotiating copyrights and other factors related to a global program offering with the relevant stakeholders so that, in the future, as much as possible of Yle Areena's offering of TV and radio programs produced in Finland could be available globally (also on demand). The Finnish Expatriate Parliament also proposes that the Ministry of Transport and Communications investigates the injustices related to the public broadcasting tax concerning expatriate Finns, and establishes whether Finns abroad could gain wider access to Yle Areena's TV and radio program offering, for example, by paying for the service.

58. Increasing tolerance, positive communications, and awareness of expatriate Finns

There are approximately 300,000 Finnish citizens living abroad; all in all, there are almost two million Finns abroad. The Finland Society recognizes the need to give Finns abroad positive visibility in Finland and is constantly working towards this end.

Positive communication efforts are needed at many levels. According to surveys commissioned by the Finland Society, Finns abroad feel that their qualifications and work experience gathered abroad are not sufficiently recognized and valued in Finland. The Finland Society is aiming to increase the appreciation of the skills and know-how possessed by expatriate Finns with the help of active information campaigns and various projects, such as a pilot project on returning to Finland under the title *Osaajaväylä Suomeen* (An expert channel to Finland). During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Finland Society has especially been emphasizing the right of Finns to return to Finland, as well as giving voice to the perspective of expatriate Finns in the debate on vaccines.

The Finland Society has developed its communications in multiple media and is now also giving publicity to matters concerning Finns abroad in several social media platforms, including Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. The Finland Society considers the topic of the initiative to be very important and sees the matter as one of its duties, continuing to strive towards this goal.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament emphasizes the importance of this goal. The Finland Society is requested to continue, together with expatriate Finns and the FEP's Speakers' Council, positive communications and awareness-raising in Finland about Finns abroad about modern expatriatism and about Finns who have returned to Finland.

59. The Finnish Nationality Room Project at the University of Pittsburgh

The Finnish Room Committee of the University of Pittsburgh has been raising funds for a Finnish Nationality Classroom within the University's Nationality Rooms. The Finnish Room Committee of the University of Pittsburgh is going to use the funds to establish a Finnish Nationality Classroom in the University's Cathedral of Learning. It will be a gift to the university and will be included in the university program instead of becoming the homebase for any Finnish association.

The Nationality Rooms program of the University of Pittsburgh is unique in the whole world. The Nationality Room is a non-profit project showcasing Finnish culture and heritage to visitors in the form of a log house. The construction project suffered a backlash, as the use of old logs was prohibited.

The project also deserves to be noticed in Finland — including at the level of national government. The Finland Society is making it possible for the project to be presented in the Suomi Village in June 2021. The Finnish government should also be informed about the project, which deserves to be supported and encouraged by the government.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Finnish Parliament's friendship group for the United States should study the project of the Finnish Room Committee at the University of Pittsburgh and also make the Finnish government aware of the project to give it the support and recognition it deserves.

IX RESOLUTIONS ON FINANCIAL AND STATUTORY ISSUES

60. Regular reporting on the implementation of the Government Policy Programme/Strategy for Expatriate Finns

The implementation of the third Government Policy Programme for Expatriate Finns 2017—2021 is currently under way. The Ministry of the Interior is responsible for coordinating matters related to expatriate Finns, but in practice the responsibilities are scattered in different ministries.

There has been no systematic monitoring of how the Government Policy Programme for Expatriate Finns is implemented. This is being tackled in the process of drafting the new strategy on expatriate Finns. The Ministry of the Interior has set up a project with the task of preparing Finland's strategy for expatriate Finns for 2022—2026. Expatriatism is constantly evolving, and the aim is to improve the ways to respond to this evolution by digital means, among others. The aim is to make it possible for Finns abroad to also maintain a connection with and influence Finnish society.

During the next strategy term, a responsible government body should be designated to monitor and control the implementation of the program. Monitoring could involve an annual meeting to evaluate the implementation of the program. An annual seminar would help raise awareness of the program.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the government body responsible for coordinating matters related to expatriate Finns should monitor the implementation of the strategy for expatriate Finns and report on it to the Finnish

Expatriate Parliament at least once a year, as well as disseminate information about its implementation on the strategy website, among others.

61. An official responsible for matters concerning expatriate Finns to be appointed in state administration

Expatriate Finns constitute an important and diverse resource for Finland. An expatriate Finn is someone living outside Finland who is a Finnish citizen or has Finnish roots. There are a total of approximately 2 million Finns abroad. Most of them live in Sweden, the United States, and Canada. There are approximately 300,000 Finnish citizens living abroad. Over 254,000 of them were entitled to vote in the parliamentary elections in 2019. Awareness of Finnish roots or heritage is another factor that may encourage Finns abroad to keep up their Finnish identity and their connection with Finland.

The Government Policy Programme for Expatriate Finns for 2017—2021 is the third program of its kind, prepared for a five-year period under the guidance of the Ministry of the Interior, which is responsible for coordinating matters related to expatriate Finns. The program is currently being updated. The program comprises views, assessments and operating models to further promote interaction between expatriate Finns and Finland. The program offers perspectives into aspects that are important for expatriate Finns, described from the point of view of the different ministries that are responsible for each of them. These include things like preserving the Finnish identity (support for language and culture, support for Finnish expatriate associations, the work of the Finland Society, communications), their legal status (regaining and keeping citizenship, simplifying the process of applying for a passport or ID card, increasing voter turnout), social welfare and health care, business life and return migration, and support for research on migration and Finns abroad. The issue of securing the continuity of the Finland Society's Finnish Expatriate Parliament, allowing the views of expatriate Finns to be heard, is discussed under the topic of legal status. Activities in these areas can help enhance the interaction between Finland and expatriate Finns.

The program was adopted by the Finnish government. However, its implementation lacks continuity, because the policies put forward in the program and the resulting measures are only proposals without cross-sectoral coordination and monitoring. The program has no separate budget implications outside the spending limits of each individual ministry. As a result of the lack of annual monitoring, there is little awareness of the program.

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament operating under the auspices of the Finland Society functions as a link between the government and Finns abroad. The mandate of the Finland Society is to advocate for Finns abroad, and the Finnish Expatriate Parliament makes proposals to the government concerning matters that are important for Finns abroad. Things like dual citizenship and postal voting were accomplished in this way. The Finland Society works to support the practical implementation of the program and, in practice, its work largely resembles that of the authorities. The Finland Society and the Finnish Expatriate Parliament undeniably play a crucial role in raising awareness of and promoting matters related to expatriate Finns, but the Finland Society's resources are by far not sufficient to raise awareness of the full potential of expatriate Finns.

Before the first Government Policy Programme for Expatriate Finns was adopted in 2006, it was proposed by the Finnish Expatriate Parliament that an ombudsman's role should be

established to advocate for expatriate Finns. The FEP's second session in 2000 adopted resolution 8/2000 on *A permanent position of an ombudsman for expatriate Finns to be established/A lawyer specialized in matters related to expatriate Finns to be recruited*. At the time, the matter was being considered from the point of view of advisory services and legal assistance, and the initiative was processed by the Committee on Social Issues. The reply from the Finnish Government, dated April 19, 2001, p. 5/8, shows that the resolution "... directly or indirectly concerned the sector of the Ministry of Labor". The Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education, or what was then the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations, did not deem it necessary to reply. The main point of the government's reply was that as the FEP had already been established as an advocacy forum, with the Finland Society functioning as its secretariat, the Finland Society was de facto already playing the role of an "ombudsman for expatriate Finns" and to establish such a position in government would be superfluous. "Should the need for legal assistance remarkably increase, the Finland Society needs to consider recruiting a lawyer to complement its advisory function."

Since then, people's mobility and the way they communicate with each other have changed completely, and change is also continuous in expatriatism itself. This also means that the development of policies regarding expatriate Finns must not be limited to existing policies and forms. What is needed is a systematic strategy regarding expatriate Finns that continues over electoral periods, with inbuilt indicators, monitoring, interim assessments, and prognoses. There is a need to systematically coordinate and promote matters related to expatriate Finns in the state administration. This in itself would represent a new way of allocating resources. Expatriate Finns must be seen as a resource, not as a cost item. In this way, the benefits would by far exceed the costs at all levels of decision making.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that a permanent ombudsman for expatriate Finns is appointed in the state administration. The duties of the ombudsman are to promote effective policies on expatriate Finns, to coordinate matters related to expatriate Finns, and to promote and monitor the implementation of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament's resolutions in government.

62. Making use of the know-how possessed by expatriate Finns

The Finnish public authorities may publish requests for comments at the lausuntopalvelu.fi service. Comments may be provided by any organization or individual citizen. The purpose of the service is to increase the efficiency of the commenting procedure by offering citizens, NGOs, and authorities a uniform online service where it is possible to request, give, and process comments.

The service is intended to make it easier to request and give comments, exert influence and receive information, as well as to improve the transparency and quality of the legislative process.

The service is free of charge for its users. It is maintained by the Ministry of Justice. There are already more than 18,000 people and 5,600 organizations using the service.

In order to give an opinion, you need to register as a user and authenticate yourself. Registering as a user means that you create a user account in the service. In order to register, you need an e-mail address and a means of strong electronic identification.

Strong electronic identification means that your identity as a registered user is officially verified by using online banking codes, a mobile ID, or a Citizen Certificate.

A new government strategy for expatriate Finns is currently being drafted. For the purposes of the strategy, new kinds of channels and forums for Finns abroad to get involved are also being evaluated. These could be specific to a country or a city, but also to a given theme.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament concludes that Finnish citizens can already respond to comment requests from the authorities at the lausuntopalvelu.fi service. However, strong electronic identification is needed in order to use the service. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that other potential networking channels should also be investigated in the context of drafting and monitoring the strategy for expatriate Finns. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament wishes that the Finnish government will continue to consult the Finland Society and the FEP in matters related to Finns abroad.

63. Development of and resources available to the activities of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament

In the report of the Ministry of the Interior on the Finnish Expatriate Parliament (dated December 18, 2018), it was stated that at the moment, it is neither justified nor possible to enshrine the status of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament in legislation. The report focused specifically on the nature of the FEP and its tasks, as well as the added value or change that could follow from making it into a permanent body. The Ministry of the Interior justified their stance by pointing out that expatriate Finns are not a minority group comparable to the Swedish-speaking minority or the Sámi, whose position needs to be secured under the Constitution. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament has not been assigned any public administrative duties under any law, which means that it is not performing any public administrative duties in the way provided in the Finnish Constitution. (Source: The report of the Ministry of the Interior on the preconditions of regularizing the status of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament.)

In the spring of 2021, the Finland Society was involved in Aalto University's Design for Government project as well as in the project of the Ministry of the Interior for drafting the strategy for expatriate Finns. These projects aim to create an increasingly participatory model for consulting and involving expatriate Finns. To provide background information for the strategy for expatriate Finns, which is coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs also made a survey of the policies and practices related to expatriate citizens in peer countries or otherwise interesting countries. The views and expectations of the Finnish government regarding the activities of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament should also be consulted when developing the FEP.

The aim of the Finland Society is to develop the FEP's activities and improve the preconditions for its operation. This work makes use of surveys on the involvement and expectations of Finns abroad (such as the research project The Changing Nature of Being

an Expatriate Finn, carried out by the Migration Institute of Finland), as well as the expertise of the FEP's Speakers' Council. The aim is to make the FEP's work inclusive and interactive.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Speakers' Council, together with the Finland Society, should develop the activities of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, making use of the views and expertise of other stakeholders, such as the Finnish government, with the aim of making the Finnish Expatriate Parliament's activities even more inclusive and interactive. Any statutory amendments shall be processed in accordance with Article 12 of the FEP's by-laws. At the same time, it is proposed that the budget of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, that is included in the Finland Society's budget, be presented annually to the Speakers' Council.

64. Clarifying the division of roles and duties between the Finnish Expatriate Parliament and the Finland Society, as well as reforming the by-laws.

The Finland Society is a registered association and its by-laws have been registered at the Finnish Patent and Registration Office. Article 2 of the Finland Society's by-laws provides that the purpose of the association is to (1) strengthen the contacts of expatriate Finns with Finland and Finnishness; (2) strengthen the ties of Finland to expatriate Finns and strengthen the image of Finland abroad; (3) promote a Finnish identity and the Finnish culture abroad; (4) advocate for expatriate Finns; (5) improve the social and educational services available to expatriate Finns; and (6) promote research on Finnish expatriatism.

Under Article 3, the Finland Society shall (1) promote interaction between expatriate Finns and Finns living in Finland; (2) organize and support events for expatriate Finns, both in Finland and abroad; (3) advocate for expatriate Finns in Finland; (4) support activities that promote the social and educational services available to expatriate Finns; (5) give advice and guidance to Finns living or moving overseas or returning to Finland; (6) engage in communications and publishing related to its field; (7) organize sessions of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, meetings, lectures, training events and the like; (8) maintain contact with the authorities as well as different institutions and associations.

In its role as an advocate for expatriate Finns, the Finland Society established the Finnish Expatriate Parliament (FEP) in 1997 as a forum where Finnish expatriate communities come together to decide on matters concerning Finns abroad.

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament is an advisory forum for Finnish communities abroad. It provides information about the living conditions of expatriate Finns and makes proposals for developing policies related to Finns abroad. The number of Finnish communities abroad that participate in the FEP's activities has increased every year. At the moment, more than 540 communities are participating. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament is unique in global terms, a genuinely Finnish innovation, which has been imitated by others, such as Sweden.

In Article 11 of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament's by-laws, it is provided that the office of the Finland Society acts as the Secretariat of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament. It is

committed to act according to the decisions made by the Finnish Expatriate Parliament and to promote their execution by approaching Finnish authorities and, where possible, foreign authorities, as well as other stakeholders, and actively reporting on the decisions. In other words, the Finland Society is the body in Finland whose task it is to bring forward messages from the Finnish Expatriate Parliament.

The aim of the Finland Society is to develop the FEP's activities and improve the preconditions for its operation. The aim is to specify the FEP's duties and clarify its status. Resources used in this work include the reports on the involvement of Finns abroad, which were prepared in the context of preparing the strategy for expatriate Finns. Another important resource is the expertise of the FEP's Speakers' Council.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Finland Society, together with the FEP's Speakers' Council, to clarify the relationship between the Finland Society and the Finnish Expatriate Parliament and to specify the roles, purposes, and duties of both. The Speakers' Council will prepare a proposal for the by-laws and standing order of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, and any statutory amendments shall be processed in the next session in accordance with Article 12 of the FEP's by-laws.

65. Electronic voting to be made possible in FEP's sessions and regional meetings

During the global Covid-19 pandemic, the activities of the regions and the Finnish expatriate communities have been dependent on remote online connections already for more than a year. Many regions of the FEP have organized online meetings, and the 10th session of the FEP is being organized online for the first time. According to the Migration Institute's survey *The Changing Nature of Being an Expatriate Finn*, published in 2021, expatriate Finns are hoping that a lot of the activities and events targeted at expatriate Finns — such as the sessions of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament — were organized online. The FEP's regions are free to choose the formats in which they convene.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament encourages its regions to develop their activities to also allow online attendance in regional meetings. The Finland Society is developing the activities and sessions of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament to meet the demands of the changing operating environment. At the same time, they are investigating whether future sessions could be organized in a hybrid format.

66. Grants for participants of FEP's sessions and regional meetings

During the global Covid-19 pandemic, all activities of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament have been organized online, which has even contributed to an increase in contacts in the FEP's regions. In resolution 65, the Finnish Expatriate Parliament encourages its regions to develop their activities to also allow online attendance in regional meetings. The Finland Society grants annual allowances for the regional activities of the FEP's Speakers' Council. In addition, the Finland Society issues grants to the activities of Finnish expatriate communities out of the subsidy received from the Ministry of Education and Culture. After the pandemic, the subsidy received from the Ministry is very unlikely to

increase. Both the Finland Society and the FEP's Speakers' Council need to consider alternative ways of including participants, for example, in the form of hybrid meetings. The regions may also engage in fundraising to get support for participation in the activities.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Finland Society, its resources permitting, should support the regional activities of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament and actively investigate potential sources of funding together with the communities in the regions.

In addition, the Finnish Expatriate Parliament encourages the communities involved in the FEP's activities to also join the Finland Society.

67. Participation of Finnish expatriate social media groups in the activities of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament to be made possible

Under Article 1 of the by-laws of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, communities joining the Expatriate Parliament have to ratify the FEP's by-laws and inform the Secretariat about the ratification of the by-laws in writing. Under Article 1 of the FEP's by-laws, the Finnish Expatriate Parliament consists of the representatives of Finnish communities abroad. This loose definition is to guarantee that as many Finnish expatriate communities as possible could participate in the FEP's activities.

According to the FEP Handbook, in order for a community to participate, it has to be fundamentally Finnish and a functioning part of the local Finnish community. The By-laws and Standing Order contain no provisions or instructions on the activity, ways of working, or meeting practices of the communities. Social media offers tools, for example, for communication between members, online meetings, diversifying the means of disseminating information, and online scheduling between different stakeholders. In this way, social media is not an end in itself but primarily a tool supporting the activities of an association. The communities involved in the FEP form a very heterogeneous group. It is not important for the FEP whether a community meets online or in the same physical location.

Today, many Finnish communities and groups abroad keep contact primarily with the help of social media. It is possible to define the criteria that a social media group needs to meet in order to be approved as a member community of the FEP. Such criteria may include being a closed and organized community which operates within a given geographical area.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Finland Society, together with the Speakers' Council, define the criteria that a social media community of Finns abroad must fulfill in order to participate in the activities of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament.

68. Continuity of the Finland Society's advisory work to be secured

One of the most important duties of the Finland Society is to advise Finns abroad. Under Article 3 of the Finland Society's by-laws, the society shall give advice and guidance to Finns living or moving overseas or returning to Finland.

Each year, the Finland Society's advisory services are contacted over a thousand times. Frequently asked questions concern, among other things, the necessary bureaucracy related to moving abroad, taxation, social security, school alternatives, inheritance matters, studying, and citizenship.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the need for advice and guidance has increased, leading to an increased number of calls and messages to the advisory services and peaks in the number of visitors on the website. When flooded with information, it is difficult to identify which information is reliable and correct.

As an expert organization serving expatriate Finns, the Finland Society aims to increasingly focus its services, including online services, to expatriate Finns of different ages and in different life situations. September 2020 saw the opening of the revamped websites for young and senior Finns abroad. These are complemented by the website for families abroad, prepared in cooperation with the Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation KVS. The aim is to offer a user-friendly, multimedial, and easily accessible website. This is a unique service package designed to make the everyday lives of Finns abroad better and smoother. The websites nuoretmaailmalla.fi for youth, senioritmaailmalla.fi for senior citizens, and perhemaailmalla.fi for families are part of the Finland Society's website.

The survey *The Changing Nature of Being an Expatriate Finn* carried out by the Migration Institute of Finland (2021) shows that expatriate Finns have multiple service needs, but they are not necessarily aware of the services that are available to them. Most expatriate Finns, especially those who are considering return migration, need many kinds of support in managing their affairs in relation to Finnish society. In particular, needs related to health care, taxation, employment, language, and children kept coming up in the survey. It is important that services for Finns abroad are designed with entire families in mind, including any foreign spouses and children.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Finland Society continue to develop its advisory services for multiple platforms so that they are accessible and designed to meet the multiple services needs of Finns abroad.

It is also proposed that the Finland Society investigate the possibility of centralizing the services targeted at expatriate Finns into a one-stop shop.

69. The Finland Society's website to be made available in Russian

During the winter 2020—2021, a survey was carried out among the members of the Finland Society to chart their thoughts and wishes regarding the languages used in the Finland Society's communications. Members were also asked what types of information and content they would like to have and on which platforms these should be made available. Under the by-laws of the Finland Society, its official language is Finnish, which is also the main language used in communications. Part of the content is also made available in Swedish and English. The

Finnish Expatriate Parliament operates under the auspices of the Finland Society. In the FEP's activities, Finnish, Swedish, and English are used, partly also Russian.

A total of 377 people from different parts of the world responded to the survey. The availability of content in Finnish is the top priority, as up to 79% of the respondents were hoping that the society would continue producing Finnish-language content in the future. More material in English was requested by 52% of the respondents, while the corresponding figure for Swedish was 24%. There are also people (13%) who would like to read material in other languages, notably German. The demand for Russian was not very prominent in this survey.

The Finland Society does not have sufficient financial resources to maintain a website in Russian. It is, however, possible to discuss cooperation with, for example, a Finnish expatriate community or other volunteer regarding communications in Russian.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Finland Society, together with the communities in the East European region of the FEP, investigate potential partners (such as the Finnish Ingrian association) that could translate information about the activities of the Finland Society and the Finnish Expatriate Parliament for use in communications in the region. Finnish media abroad can apply for funding from the Finland Society to be used in their communications.

70. A Deputy Speaker to be elected from the Speakers' Council as a representative in the Finland Society's board

Under Article 8 of the Finland Society's by-laws, the society has an elections committee which shall prepare a proposal to the annual meeting for the election of the chairperson, members, and deputy members of the board. The initiative was sent to the elections committee for information.

The Finland Society's board shall have a chairperson and eight members. It is only the Ministry for Foreign Affairs that has a permanent seat in the Finland Society's board (by-laws, Article 6). The Finland Society's chairperson shall function as the Speaker of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament. Before the Finland Society's by-laws were amended in 2019, its board had 18 members, including expatriate Finns or representatives of Finnish expatriate communities. However, the Finnish expatriate communities did not have a permanent seat in the board.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Finland Society's elections committee to propose one member of the Speakers' Council for election to the Finland Society's board. This would improve the communication and flow of information between the board and the Speakers' Council.

IX RESOLUTIONS ON FINANCIAL AND STATUTORY ISSUES

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There has been no systematic monitoring of how the Government Policy Programme for Expatriate Finns is implemented. This is being tackled in the process of drafting the new strategy on expatriate Finns. The Ministry of the Interior has set up a project with the task of preparing Finland's strategy for expatriate Finns for 2022—2026. Expatriatism is constantly evolving, and the aim is to improve the ways to respond to this evolution by digital means, among others. The aim is to make it possible for Finns abroad to also maintain a connection with and influence Finnish society.

During the next strategy term, a responsible government body should be designated to monitor and control the implementation of the program. Monitoring could involve an annual meeting to evaluate the implementation of the program. An annual seminar would help raise awareness of the program.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the government body responsible for coordinating matters related to expatriate Finns should monitor the implementation of the strategy for expatriate Finns and report on it to the Finnish Expatriate Parliament at least once a year, as well as disseminate information about its implementation on the strategy website, among others.

61. An official responsible for matters concerning expatriate Finns to be appointed in state administration

Expatriate Finns constitute an important and diverse resource for Finland. An expatriate Finn is someone living outside Finland who is a Finnish citizen or has Finnish roots. There are a total of approximately 2 million Finns abroad. Most of them live in Sweden, the United States, and Canada. There are approximately 300,000 Finnish citizens living abroad. Over 254,000 of them were entitled to vote in the parliamentary elections in 2019. Awareness of Finnish roots or heritage is another factor that may encourage Finns abroad to keep up their Finnish identity and their connection with Finland.

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Strong electronic identification means that your identity as a registered user is officially verified by using online banking codes, a mobile ID, or a Citizen Certificate.

A new government strategy for expatriate Finns is currently being drafted. For the purposes of the strategy, new kinds of channels and forums for Finns abroad to get involved are also being evaluated. These could be specific to a country or a city, but also to a given theme.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament concludes that Finnish citizens can already respond to comment requests from the authorities at the lausuntopalvelu.fi service. However, strong electronic identification is needed in order to use the service. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that other potential networking channels should also be investigated in the context of drafting and monitoring the strategy for expatriate Finns. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament wishes that the Finnish government will continue to consult the Finland Society and the FEP in matters related to Finns abroad.

63. Development of and resources available to the activities of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament

In the report of the Ministry of the Interior on the Finnish Expatriate Parliament (dated December 18, 2018), it was stated that at the moment, it is neither justified nor possible to enshrine the status of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament in legislation. The report focused specifically on the nature of the FEP and its tasks, as well as the added value or change

that could follow from making it into a permanent body. The Ministry of the Interior justified their stance by pointing out that expatriate Finns are not a minority group comparable to the Swedish-speaking minority or the Sámi, whose position needs to be secured under the Constitution. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament has not been assigned any public administrative duties under any law, which means that it is not performing any public administrative duties in the way provided in the Finnish Constitution. (Source: The report of the Ministry of the Interior on the preconditions of regularizing the status of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament.)

In the spring of 2021, the Finland Society was involved in Aalto University's Design for Government project as well as in the project of the Ministry of the Interior for drafting the strategy for expatriate Finns. These projects aim to create an increasingly participatory model for consulting and involving expatriate Finns. To provide background information for the strategy for expatriate Finns, which is coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs also made a survey of the policies and practices related to expatriate citizens in peer countries or otherwise interesting countries. The views and expectations of the Finnish government regarding the activities of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament should also be consulted when developing the FEP.

The aim of the Finland Society is to develop the FEP's activities and improve the preconditions for its operation. This work makes use of surveys on the involvement and expectations of Finns abroad (such as the research project *The Changing Nature of Being an Expatriate Finn*, carried out by the Migration Institute of Finland), as well as the expertise of the FEP's Speakers' Council. The aim is to make the FEP's work inclusive and interactive.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Speakers' Council, together with the Finland Society, should develop the activities of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, making use of the views and expertise of other stakeholders, such as the Finnish government, with the aim of making the Finnish Expatriate Parliament's activities even more inclusive and interactive. Any statutory amendments shall be processed in accordance with Article 12 of the FEP's by-laws. At the same time, it is proposed that the budget of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, that is included in the Finland Society's budget, be presented annually to the Speakers' Council.

64. Clarifying the division of roles and duties between the Finnish Expatriate Parliament and the Finland Society, as well as reforming the by-laws.

The Finland Society is a registered association and its by-laws have been registered at the Finnish Patent and Registration Office. Article 2 of the Finland Society's by-laws provides that the purpose of the association is to (1) strengthen the contacts of expatriate Finns with Finland and Finnishness; (2) strengthen the ties of Finland to expatriate Finns and strengthen the image of Finland abroad; (3) promote a Finnish identity and the Finnish culture abroad; (4) advocate for expatriate Finns; (5) improve the social and educational services available to expatriate Finns; and (6) promote research on Finnish expatriatism.

Under Article 3, the Finland Society shall (1) promote interaction between expatriate Finns and Finns living in Finland; (2) organize and support events for expatriate Finns, both in Finland and abroad; (3) advocate for expatriate Finns in Finland; (4) support activities that

promote the social and educational services available to expatriate Finns; (5) give advice and guidance to Finns living or moving overseas or returning to Finland; (6) engage in communications and publishing related to its field; (7) organize sessions of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, meetings, lectures, training events and the like; (8) maintain contact with the authorities as well as different institutions and associations.

In its role as an advocate for expatriate Finns, the Finland Society established the Finnish Expatriate Parliament (FEP) in 1997 as a forum where Finnish expatriate communities come together to decide on matters concerning Finns abroad.

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament is an advisory forum for Finnish communities abroad. It provides information about the living conditions of expatriate Finns and makes proposals for developing policies related to Finns abroad. The number of Finnish communities abroad that participate in the FEP's activities has increased every year. At the moment, more than 540 communities are participating. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament is unique in global terms, a genuinely Finnish innovation, which has been imitated by others, such as Sweden.

In Article 11 of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament's by-laws, it is provided that the office of the Finland Society acts as the Secretariat of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament. It is committed to act according to the decisions made by the Finnish Expatriate Parliament and to promote their execution by approaching Finnish authorities and, where possible, foreign authorities, as well as other stakeholders, and actively reporting on the decisions. In other words, the Finland Society is the body in Finland whose task it is to bring forward messages from the Finnish Expatriate Parliament.

The aim of the Finland Society is to develop the FEP's activities and improve the preconditions for its operation. The aim is to specify the FEP's duties and clarify its status. Resources used in this work include the reports on the involvement of Finns abroad, which were prepared in the context of preparing the strategy for expatriate Finns. Another important resource is the expertise of the FEP's Speakers' Council.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Finland Society, together with the FEP's Speakers' Council, to clarify the relationship between the Finland Society and the Finnish Expatriate Parliament and to specify the roles, purposes, and duties of both. The Speakers' Council will prepare a proposal for the by-laws and standing order of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, and any statutory amendments shall be processed in the next session in accordance with Article 12 of the FEP's by-laws.

65. Electronic voting to be made possible in FEP's sessions and regional meetings

During the global Covid-19 pandemic, the activities of the regions and the Finnish expatriate communities have been dependent on remote online connections already for more than a year. Many regions of the FEP have organized online meetings, and the 10th session of the FEP is being organized online for the first time. According to the Migration Institute's survey *The Changing Nature of Being an Expatriate Finn*, published in 2021, expatriate Finns are hoping that a lot of the activities and events targeted at expatriate

Finns — such as the sessions of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament — were organized online. The FEP's regions are free to choose the formats in which they convene.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament encourages its regions to develop their activities to also allow online attendance in regional meetings. The Finland Society is developing the activities and sessions of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament to meet the demands of the changing operating environment. At the same time, they are investigating whether future sessions could be organized in a hybrid format.

66. Grants for participants of FEP's sessions and regional meetings

During the global Covid-19 pandemic, all activities of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament have been organized online, which has even contributed to an increase in contacts in the FEP's regions. In resolution 65, the Finnish Expatriate Parliament encourages its regions to develop their activities to also allow online attendance in regional meetings.

The Finland Society grants annual allowances for the regional activities of the FEP's Speakers' Council. In addition, the Finland Society issues grants to the activities of Finnish expatriate communities out of the subsidy received from the Ministry of Education and Culture. After the pandemic, the subsidy received from the Ministry is very unlikely to increase. Both the Finland Society and the FEP's Speakers' Council need to consider alternative ways of including participants, for example, in the form of hybrid meetings. The regions may also engage in fundraising to get support for participation in the activities.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Finland Society, its resources permitting, should support the regional activities of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament and actively investigate potential sources of funding together with the communities in the regions.

In addition, the Finnish Expatriate Parliament encourages the communities involved in the FEP's activities to also join the Finland Society.

67. Participation of Finnish expatriate social media groups in the activities of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament to be made possible

Under Article 1 of the by-laws of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, communities joining the Expatriate Parliament have to ratify the FEP's by-laws and inform the Secretariat about the ratification of the by-laws in writing. Under Article 1 of the FEP's by-laws, the Finnish Expatriate Parliament consists of the representatives of Finnish communities abroad. This loose definition is to guarantee that as many Finnish expatriate communities as possible could participate in the FEP's activities.

According to the FEP Handbook, in order for a community to participate, it has to be fundamentally Finnish and a functioning part of the local Finnish community. The By-laws and Standing Order contain no provisions or instructions on the activity, ways of working, or meeting practices of the communities. Social media offers tools, for example, for communication between members, online meetings, diversifying the means of disseminating information, and online scheduling between different stakeholders. In this

way, social media is not an end in itself but primarily a tool supporting the activities of an association. The communities involved in the FEP form a very heterogeneous group. It is not important for the FEP whether a community meets online or in the same physical location.

Today, many Finnish communities and groups abroad keep contact primarily with the help of social media. It is possible to define the criteria that a social media group needs to meet in order to be approved as a member community of the FEP. Such criteria may include being a closed and organized community which operates within a given geographical area.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Finland Society, together with the Speakers' Council, define the criteria that a social media community of Finns abroad must fulfill in order to participate in the activities of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament.

68. Continuity of the Finland Society's advisory work to be secured

One of the most important duties of the Finland Society is to advise Finns abroad. Under Article 3 of the Finland Society's by-laws, the society shall give advice and guidance to Finns living or moving overseas or returning to Finland.

Each year, the Finland Society's advisory services are contacted over a thousand times. Frequently asked questions concern, among other things, the necessary bureaucracy related to moving abroad, taxation, social security, school alternatives, inheritance matters, studying, and citizenship.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the need for advice and guidance has increased, leading to an increased number of calls and messages to the advisory services and peaks in the number of visitors on the website. When flooded with information, it is difficult to identify which information is reliable and correct.

As an expert organization serving expatriate Finns, the Finland Society aims to increasingly focus its services, including online services, to expatriate Finns of different ages and in different life situations. September 2020 saw the opening of the revamped websites for young and senior Finns abroad. These are complemented by the website for families abroad, prepared in cooperation with the Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation KVS. The aim is to offer a user-friendly, multimedial, and easily accessible website. This is a unique service package designed to make the everyday lives of Finns abroad better and smoother. The websites nuoretmaailmalla.fi for youth, senioritmaailmalla.fi for senior citizens, and perhemaailmalla.fi for families are part of the Finland Society's website.

The survey *The Changing Nature of Being an Expatriate Finn* carried out by the Migration Institute of Finland (2021) shows that expatriate Finns have multiple service needs, but they are not necessarily aware of the services that are available to them. Most expatriate Finns, especially those who are considering return migration, need many kinds of support in managing their affairs in relation to Finnish society. In particular, needs related to health care, taxation, employment, language, and children kept coming up in the survey. It is important that services for Finns abroad are designed with entire families in mind, including any foreign spouses and children.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Finland Society continue to develop its advisory services for multiple platforms so that they are accessible and designed to meet the multiple services needs of Finns abroad.

It is also proposed that the Finland Society investigate the possibility of centralizing the services targeted at expatriate Finns into a one-stop shop.

69. The Finland Society's website to be made available in Russian

During the winter 2020—2021, a survey was carried out among the members of the Finland Society to chart their thoughts and wishes regarding the languages used in the Finland Society's communications. Members were also asked what types of information and content they would like to have and on which platforms these should be made available. Under the by-laws of the Finland Society, its official language is Finnish, which is also the main language used in communications. Part of the content is also made available in Swedish and English. The

Finnish Expatriate Parliament operates under the auspices of the Finland Society. In the FEP's activities, Finnish, Swedish, and English are used, partly also Russian. A total of 377 people from different parts of the world responded to the survey. The availability of content in Finnish is the top priority, as up to 79% of the respondents were hoping that the society would continue producing Finnish-language content in the future. More material in English was requested by 52% of the respondents, while the corresponding figure for Swedish was 24%. There are also people (13%) who would like to read material in other languages, notably German. The demand for Russian was not very prominent in this survey.

The Finland Society does not have sufficient financial resources to maintain a website in Russian. It is, however, possible to discuss cooperation with, for example, a Finnish expatriate community or other volunteer regarding communications in Russian.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Finland Society, together with the communities in the East European region of the FEP, investigate potential partners (such as the Finnish Ingrian association) that could translate information about the activities of the Finland Society and the Finnish Expatriate Parliament for use in communications in the region. Finnish media abroad can apply for funding from the Finland Society to be used in their communications.

70. A Deputy Speaker to be elected from the Speakers' Council as a representative in the Finland Society's board

Under Article 8 of the Finland Society's by-laws, the society has an elections committee which shall prepare a proposal to the annual meeting for the election of the chairperson, members, and deputy members of the board. The initiative was sent to the elections committee for information.

The Finland Society's board shall have a chairperson and eight members. It is only the Ministry for Foreign Affairs that has a permanent seat in the Finland Society's board (by-laws, Article 6). The Finland Society's chairperson shall function as the Speaker of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament. Before the Finland Society's by-laws were amended in 2019, its board had 18 members, including expatriate Finns or representatives of Finnish expatriate communities. However, the Finnish expatriate communities did not have a permanent seat in the board.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Finland Society's elections committee to propose one member of the Speakers' Council for election to the Finland Society's board. This would improve the communication and flow of information between the board and the Speakers' Council.

IX RESOLUTIONS ON FINANCIAL AND STATUTORY ISSUES

60. Regular reporting on the implementation of the Government Policy Programme/Strategy for Expatriate Finns

The implementation of the third Government Policy Programme for Expatriate Finns 2017—2021 is currently under way. The Ministry of the Interior is responsible for coordinating matters related to expatriate Finns, but in practice the responsibilities are scattered in different ministries.

There has been no systematic monitoring of how the Government Policy Programme for Expatriate Finns is implemented. This is being tackled in the process of drafting the new strategy on expatriate Finns. The Ministry of the Interior has set up a project with the task of preparing Finland's strategy for expatriate Finns for 2022—2026. Expatriatism is constantly evolving, and the aim is to improve the ways to respond to this evolution by digital means, among others. The aim is to make it possible for Finns abroad to also maintain a connection with and influence Finnish society.

During the next strategy term, a responsible government body should be designated to monitor and control the implementation of the program. Monitoring could involve an annual meeting to evaluate the implementation of the program. An annual seminar would help raise awareness of the program.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the government body responsible for coordinating matters related to expatriate Finns should monitor the implementation of the strategy for expatriate Finns and report on it to the Finnish Expatriate Parliament at least once a year, as well as disseminate information about its implementation on the strategy website, among others.

61. An official responsible for matters concerning expatriate Finns to be appointed in state administration

Expatriate Finns constitute an important and diverse resource for Finland. An expatriate Finn is someone living outside Finland who is a Finnish citizen or has Finnish roots. There are a total of approximately 2 million Finns abroad. Most of them live in Sweden, the United States, and Canada. There are approximately 300,000 Finnish citizens living abroad. Over 254,000 of them were entitled to vote in the parliamentary elections in 2019. Awareness of Finnish roots or heritage is another factor that may encourage Finns abroad to keep up their Finnish identity and their connection with Finland.

The Government Policy Programme for Expatriate Finns for 2017—2021 is the third program of its kind, prepared for a five-year period under the guidance of the Ministry of the Interior, which is responsible for coordinating matters related to expatriate Finns. The program is currently being updated. The program comprises views, assessments and operating models to further promote interaction between expatriate Finns and Finland. The program offers perspectives into aspects that are important for expatriate Finns, described from the point of view of the different ministries that are responsible for each of them. These include things like preserving the Finnish identity (support for language and culture, support for Finnish expatriate associations, the work of the Finland Society, communications), their legal status (regaining and keeping citizenship, simplifying the process of applying for a passport or ID card, increasing voter turnout), social welfare and health care, business life and return migration, and support for research on migration and Finns abroad. The issue of securing the continuity of the Finland Society's Finnish Expatriate Parliament, allowing the views of expatriate Finns to be heard, is discussed under the topic of legal status. Activities in these areas can help enhance the interaction between Finland and expatriate Finns.

The program was adopted by the Finnish government. However, its implementation lacks continuity, because the policies put forward in the program and the resulting measures are only proposals without cross-sectoral coordination and monitoring. The program has no separate budget implications outside the spending limits of each individual ministry. As a result of the lack of annual monitoring, there is little awareness of the program.

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament operating under the auspices of the Finland Society functions as a link between the government and Finns abroad. The mandate of the Finland Society is to advocate for Finns abroad, and the Finnish Expatriate Parliament makes proposals to the government concerning matters that are important for Finns abroad. Things like dual citizenship and postal voting were accomplished in this way. The Finland Society works to support the practical implementation of the program and, in practice, its work largely resembles that of the authorities. The Finland Society and the Finnish Expatriate Parliament undeniably play a crucial role in raising awareness of and promoting matters related to expatriate Finns, but the Finland Society's resources are by far not sufficient to raise awareness of the full potential of expatriate Finns.

Before the first Government Policy Programme for Expatriate Finns was adopted in 2006, it was proposed by the Finnish Expatriate Parliament that an ombudsman's role should be established to advocate for expatriate Finns. The FEP's second session in 2000 adopted resolution 8/2000 on *A permanent position of an ombudsman for expatriate Finns to be established/A lawyer specialized in matters related to expatriate Finns to be recruited*. At the time, the matter was being considered from the point of view of advisory services and legal assistance, and the initiative was processed by the Committee on Social Issues. The reply from the Finnish Government, dated April 19, 2001, p. 5/8, shows that the resolution

“... directly or indirectly concerned the sector of the Ministry of Labor”. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education, or what was then the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations, did not deem it necessary to reply. The main point of the government’s reply was that as the FEP had already been established as an advocacy forum, with the Finland Society functioning as its secretariat, the Finland Society was de facto already playing the role of an “ombudsman for expatriate Finns” and to establish such a position in government would be superfluous. “Should the need for legal assistance remarkably increase, the Finland Society needs to consider recruiting a lawyer to complement its advisory function.”

Since then, people’s mobility and the way they communicate with each other have changed completely, and change is also continuous in expatriatism itself. This also means that the development of policies regarding expatriate Finns must not be limited to existing policies and forms. What is needed is a systematic strategy regarding expatriate Finns that continues over electoral periods, with inbuilt indicators, monitoring, interim assessments, and prognoses. There is a need to systematically coordinate and promote matters related to expatriate Finns in the state administration. This in itself would represent a new way of allocating resources. Expatriate Finns must be seen as a resource, not as a cost item. In this way, the benefits would by far exceed the costs at all levels of decision making.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that a permanent ombudsman for expatriate Finns is appointed in the state administration. The duties of the ombudsman are to promote effective policies on expatriate Finns, to coordinate matters related to expatriate Finns, and to promote and monitor the implementation of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament’s resolutions in government.

62. Making use of the know-how possessed by expatriate Finns

The Finnish public authorities may publish requests for comments at the lausuntopalvelu.fi service. Comments may be provided by any organization or individual citizen. The purpose of the service is to increase the efficiency of the commenting procedure by offering citizens, NGOs, and authorities a uniform online service where it is possible to request, give, and process comments.

The service is intended to make it easier to request and give comments, exert influence and receive information, as well as to improve the transparency and quality of the legislative process.

The service is free of charge for its users. It is maintained by the Ministry of Justice. There are already more than 18,000 people and 5,600 organizations using the service.

In order to give an opinion, you need to register as a user and authenticate yourself. Registering as a user means that you create a user account in the service. In order to register, you need an e-mail address and a means of strong electronic identification.

Strong electronic identification means that your identity as a registered user is officially verified by using online banking codes, a mobile ID, or a Citizen Certificate.

A new government strategy for expatriate Finns is currently being drafted. For the purposes of the strategy, new kinds of channels and forums for Finns abroad to get

involved are also being evaluated. These could be specific to a country or a city, but also to a given theme.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament concludes that Finnish citizens can already respond to comment requests from the authorities at the lausuntopalvelu.fi service. However, strong electronic identification is needed in order to use the service. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that other potential networking channels should also be investigated in the context of drafting and monitoring the strategy for expatriate Finns. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament wishes that the Finnish government will continue to consult the Finland Society and the FEP in matters related to Finns abroad.

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In the report of the Ministry of the Interior on the Finnish Expatriate Parliament (dated December 18, 2018), it was stated that at the moment, it is neither justified nor possible to enshrine the status of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament in legislation. The report focused specifically on the nature of the FEP and its tasks, as well as the added value or change that could follow from making it into a permanent body. The Ministry of the Interior justified their stance by pointing out that expatriate Finns are not a minority group comparable to the Swedish-speaking minority or the Sámi, whose position needs to be secured under the Constitution. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament has not been assigned any public administrative duties under any law, which means that it is not performing any public administrative duties in the way provided in the Finnish Constitution. (Source: The report of the Ministry of the Interior on the preconditions of regularizing the status of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament.)

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The aim of the Finland Society is to develop the FEP's activities and improve the preconditions for its operation. This work makes use of surveys on the involvement and expectations of Finns abroad (such as the research project The Changing Nature of Being an Expatriate Finn, carried out by the Migration Institute of Finland), as well as the expertise of the FEP's Speakers' Council. The aim is to make the FEP's work inclusive and interactive.

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The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Speakers' Council, together with the Finland Society, should develop the activities of the Finnish Expatriate

Parliament, making use of the views and expertise of other stakeholders, such as the Finnish government, with the aim of making the Finnish Expatriate Parliament's activities even more inclusive and interactive. Any statutory amendments shall be processed in accordance with Article 12 of the FEP's by-laws. At the same time, it is proposed that the budget of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, that is included in the Finland Society's budget, be presented annually to the Speakers' Council.

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The aim of the Finland Society is to develop the FEP's activities and improve the preconditions for its operation. The aim is to specify the FEP's duties and clarify its status.

Resources used in this work include the reports on the involvement of Finns abroad, which were prepared in the context of preparing the strategy for expatriate Finns. Another important resource is the expertise of the FEP's Speakers' Council.

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According to the FEP Handbook, in order for a community to participate, it has to be fundamentally Finnish and a functioning part of the local Finnish community. The By-laws and Standing Order contain no provisions or instructions on the activity, ways of working, or meeting practices of the communities. Social media offers tools, for example, for communication between members, online meetings, diversifying the means of disseminating information, and online scheduling between different stakeholders. In this way, social media is not an end in itself but primarily a tool supporting the activities of an association. The communities involved in the FEP form a very heterogeneous group. It is not important for the FEP whether a community meets online or in the same physical location.

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68. Continuity of the Finland Society's advisory work to be secured

One of the most important duties of the Finland Society is to advise Finns abroad. Under Article 3 of the Finland Society's by-laws, the society shall give advice and guidance to Finns living or moving overseas or returning to Finland.

Each year, the Finland Society's advisory services are contacted over a thousand times. Frequently asked questions concern, among other things, the necessary bureaucracy related to moving abroad, taxation, social security, school alternatives, inheritance matters, studying, and citizenship.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the need for advice and guidance has increased, leading to an increased number of calls and messages to the advisory services and peaks in the

number of visitors on the website. When flooded with information, it is difficult to identify which information is reliable and correct.

As an expert organization serving expatriate Finns, the Finland Society aims to increasingly focus its services, including online services, to expatriate Finns of different ages and in different life situations. September 2020 saw the opening of the revamped websites for young and senior Finns abroad. These are complemented by the website for families abroad, prepared in cooperation with the Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation KVS. The aim is to offer a user-friendly, multimedial, and easily accessible website. This is a unique service package designed to make the everyday lives of Finns abroad better and smoother. The websites nuoretmaailmalla.fi for youth, senioritmaailmalla.fi for senior citizens, and perhemaailmalla.fi for families are part of the Finland Society's website.

The survey *The Changing Nature of Being an Expatriate Finn* carried out by the Migration Institute of Finland (2021) shows that expatriate Finns have multiple service needs, but they are not necessarily aware of the services that are available to them. Most expatriate Finns, especially those who are considering return migration, need many kinds of support in managing their affairs in relation to Finnish society. In particular, needs related to health care, taxation, employment, language, and children kept coming up in the survey. It is important that services for Finns abroad are designed with entire families in mind, including any foreign spouses and children.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Finland Society continue to develop its advisory services for multiple platforms so that they are accessible and designed to meet the multiple services needs of Finns abroad. It is also proposed that the Finland Society investigate the possibility of centralizing the services targeted at expatriate Finns into a one-stop shop.

69. The Finland Society's website to be made available in Russian

During the winter 2020—2021, a survey was carried out among the members of the Finland Society to chart their thoughts and wishes regarding the languages used in the Finland Society's communications. Members were also asked what types of information and content they would like to have and on which platforms these should be made available. Under the by-laws of the Finland Society, its official language is Finnish, which is also the main language used in communications. Part of the content is also made available in Swedish and English. The

Finnish Expatriate Parliament operates under the auspices of the Finland Society. In the FEP's activities, Finnish, Swedish, and English are used, partly also Russian. A total of 377 people from different parts of the world responded to the survey. The availability of content in Finnish is the top priority, as up to 79% of the respondents were hoping that the society would continue producing Finnish-language content in the future. More material in English was requested by 52% of the respondents, while the corresponding figure for Swedish was 24%. There are also people (13%) who would like to read material in other languages, notably German. The demand for Russian was not very prominent in this survey.

The Finland Society does not have sufficient financial resources to maintain a website in Russian. It is, however, possible to discuss cooperation with, for example, a Finnish expatriate community or other volunteer regarding communications in Russian.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Finland Society, together with the communities in the East European region of the FEP, investigate potential partners (such as the Finnish Ingrian association) that could translate information about the activities of the Finland Society and the Finnish Expatriate Parliament for use in communications in the region. Finnish media abroad can apply for funding from the Finland Society to be used in their communications.

70. A Deputy Speaker to be elected from the Speakers' Council as a representative in the Finland Society's board

Under Article 8 of the Finland Society's by-laws, the society has an elections committee which shall prepare a proposal to the annual meeting for the election of the chairperson, members, and deputy members of the board. The initiative was sent to the elections committee for information.

The Finland Society's board shall have a chairperson and eight members. It is only the Ministry for Foreign Affairs that has a permanent seat in the Finland Society's board (by-laws, Article 6). The Finland Society's chairperson shall function as the Speaker of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament. Before the Finland Society's by-laws were amended in 2019, its board had 18 members, including expatriate Finns or representatives of Finnish expatriate communities. However, the Finnish expatriate communities did not have a permanent seat in the board.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Finland Society's elections committee to propose one member of the Speakers' Council for election to the Finland Society's board. This would improve the communication and flow of information between the board and the Speakers' Council.